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CHAPTER III

THE PRECIOUS AND SACRED WRITINGS OF MARTIN LUTHER

The Hero of the Reformation,
the Greatest of the Teuton Church Fathers, and the Father of
Protestant Church Literature.

BASED ON THE KAISER CHRONOLOGICAL EDITION
WITH REFERENCE TO THE ERLANGEN
AND WALCH EDITIONS.

EDITED BY
JOHN NICHOLAS LENKER, D. D.
IN CONNECTION WITH LEADING SCHOLARS
OF ALL PARTS OF THE CHURCH

LUTHER ON THE CREATION

A CRITICAL AND DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

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

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CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III.

PART I. THE TEMPTATION TO FALL.

V. 1a. *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made.*

In the preceding chapter, we were taught the manner in which man was created on the sixth day; that he was created in the image and after the likeness of God, that his will was good and perfect, and that his reason or intellect was also perfect, so that whatsoever God willed or said, that man also willed, believed and understood. And this knowledge was necessarily accompanied by the knowledge of all other creatures, etc. For wherever the perfect knowledge of God is, there must also be, of necessity, the perfect knowledge of other things, which are inferior to God.

This original state of things shows how horrible the fall of Adam and Eve was, by which we have lost all that most beautifully and gloriously illumined reason, and all that will which was wholly conformed to the Word and will of God. For by the same sin and ruin we have lost also all the original dignity of our bodies, so that now, it is the extreme of baseness to be seen "naked," whereas originally that nudity was the especial and most beautiful and dignified privilege of the human race, with which they were endowed of God above all the beasts of the creation. And the greatest loss of all these losses is, that not only is the will lost, but there has followed in its place a certain absolute aversion to the will of God. So that man neither wills nor does any one of those things which God wills and commands. Nay, we know not what God is, what grace is, what righteousness is; nor in fact what sin itself is which has

caused the loss of all.

These are indeed horrible defects in our fallen nature, to which they, who see not and understand not, are more blind than moles. Universal experience indeed shows us all these calamities; but we never feel the real magnitude of them until we look back to that unintelligible but real state of innocency, in which there existed the perfection of will, the perfection of reason and that glorious dignity of the nakedness of the human body. When we truly contemplate our loss of all these gifts and contrast that privation with the original possession of them, then do we, in some measure, estimate the mighty evil of original sin.

Great causes of gross error therefore are created by those who extenuate this mighty evil of original sin, who speak of our corrupt nature after the manner of philosophers, who would represent human nature as not thus corrupted. For such men maintain that there remain, not only in the nature of man, but in the nature of the devil also, certain natural qualities which are sound and whole. But this is utterly false. What and how little remains in us that is good and whole, we do indeed in some measure see and feel. But what and how much we have lost, they most certainly see not who dispute about certain remnants of good being still left in human nature. For most certainly a good and upright and perfect will, well-pleasing to God, obedient to God, confiding in the Creator, and righteously using all his creatures with thanksgiving, is wholly lost. So that our fallen will makes out of God a devil and dreads the very mention of his name; especially when hard pressed under his judgments. Are these things, I pray you, proofs that human nature is whole and uncorrupted?

But consider the state of those inferior things to these that pertain unto God himself. The marriage union of male and female is an institution appointed of God. How is that union polluted by the fall and by sin! With what fury of lust is the flesh inflamed! By means of sin therefore this divinely appointed union has lost all its beauty and glory as a work of God, and is

defiled with pollutions, corruptions and sins innumerable. In like manner also we have a body; but how miserable, how variously deformed by sin. It no longer retains the dignity of nakedness, but requires careful and perpetual coverings of its shame.

So also we possess a will and a power of reason. But with what multiplied corruptions are they vitiated! For as our reason is beclouded with great and varied ignorance, so our will also is not only greatly warped by self-will, and not only averse to God, but the enemy of God! It rushes with pleasure into evil, when it ought to be doing quite the contrary.

This multiform corruption of nature therefore ought not only not to be extenuated, but to be as much as possible magnified. It ought to be shown that man is not only fallen from the image of God, from the knowledge of God, from the knowledge of all other creatures, and from all the dignity and glory of his nakedness, into ignorance of God, into blasphemies against God, and into hatred and contempt of God; but that he is fallen even into enmity against God; to say nothing at the present time of that tyranny of Satan to which our nature has by sin made itself the basest slave. These things, I say, are not to be extenuated, but to be magnified by every possible description of them; because if the magnitude of our disease be not fully known, we shall never know nor desire the remedy. Moreover the more you extenuate sin, the less you make grace to be valued.

And there is nothing which can tend to amplify and magnify the nature and extent of original sin more fully and appropriately than the words of Moses himself, when he says, that Adam and Eve were both naked, and were not ashamed. No polluted lust was excited by the sight of each other's nakedness. But the one looking on the other saw and acknowledged the goodness of God. They both rejoiced in God, and both felt secure in the goodness of God. Whereas now, we not only cannot feel ourselves free from sin; not only do not feel ourselves secure in the goodness of God, but labor under hatred of God and

despair of his goodness and mercy. Such a horrible state of the fall as this clearly proves how far nature is from being in any degree sound and whole.

But with how much greater impudence still do our human reasoners make this their affirmation of there being still left something sound and whole, in the nature of the devil! For in the devil there is a greater enmity, hatred and rage against God than in man. But the devil was not created thus evil. He had a will conformed to the will of God. This will however he lost, and he lost also that most beautiful and most lucid intellect with which he was endowed, and he was converted into a horrible spirit, filled with rage against his Creator. Must not that have been then a most awful corruption, which transformed a friend of God into the most bitter and determined enemy of God?

But here human reasoners bring forward that sentence of Aristotle, "Reason prays for the best." And they attempt to confirm it by passages from the Scriptures and by the opinions of philosophers, who hold that right reason is the cause of all virtues. Now I deny not that these sentiments are true, when they are applied to things subject to reason; such as the management of cattle, the building of a house, and the sowing of a field. But in the higher and divine things, they are not true. For how can that reason be said to be right, which hates God? How can that will be said to be good, which resists the will of God and refuses to obey God?

When therefore men say with Aristotle, "Reason prays for the best," reply thou to them, Yes! Reason prays for the best, humanly; that is, in things in which reason has a judgment. In such things, reason dictates and leads to what is good and useful in a human, bodily or carnal sense. But since reason is filled with ignorance of God and aversion to the will of God, how can reason be called good in this sense? For it is a well known fact, that when the knowledge of God is preached with the intent that reason may be restored, then those who are the best men, if I may so speak, and men of the best kind of reason

and will, are those who the most bitterly hate the gospel.

In the sacred matter of divinity therefore let our sentiments be, that reason in all men stands as the greatest enemy against God; and also that the best will in men is most adverse to the will of God; seeing that from this very source arise hatred of the Word and persecution of all godly ministers. Wherefore, as I said, let us never extenuate, but rather magnify that mighty evil, which human nature has derived from the sin of our first parents; then will the effect be that we shall deplore this our fallen state and cry and sigh unto Christ our great Physician, who was sent unto us by the Father for the very end that those evils, which Satan has inflicted on us through sin, might by him be healed, and that we might be restored unto that eternal glory, which by sin we had lost.

But with reference to the part of sacred history which Moses describes in this chapter, I have already expressed my mind; namely, that this temptation took place on the Sabbath day. For Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day; Adam earlier in the day and Eve in the evening. On the following day, the Sabbath day, Adam spoke to his wife Eve concerning the will of God; informing her that the most gracious Lord had created all paradise for the use and pleasure of men; that he had also created by his especial goodness the tree of life, by the use of which the powers of their bodies might be restored, and continued in perpetual youth; but that one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was prohibited; of which it was not lawful for them to eat; and that this obedience to their merciful Creator they were solemnly bound to render. After Adam had communicated this information to Eve, he perhaps led her about in paradise and showed her the prohibited tree. Thus did Adam and Eve in their original innocence and righteousness, full of safety and security through their confidence in their God so good and so merciful, walk about together in paradise; considering together the word and the command of God; and blessing their God on the Sabbath day as they ought to do. But in the midst of all this happiness,

Oh! the grief! Satan enters, and within a few hours destroys all, as we shall in this chapter hear.

Here again is poured forth a whole sea of questions. For curious men inquire, why God permitted so much to Satan as to tempt Eve? They ask also, why Satan employed the serpent in his temptation of Eve, rather than any other beast of the creation. But who shall render a reason for those things, which he sees the Divine Majesty to have permitted to be done? Why do we not rather say with Job, that God cannot be called to an account, and that none can compel him to render unto us his own reasons for all those things which he does or permits to be done. Why do we not on the same ground expostulate with God, because the grass is not green and the trees are not in leaf all the year round now as in the beginning. For I fully believe, that in paradise, had the state of original innocency continued, there would have been a perpetual spring without any winter or frost or snow, as they now exist since the fall and its sin. All these things depend wholly on the will and power of God. This is enough for us to know. To inquire into these things farther than this is impious curiosity. Wherefore let us, the clay of his hands, cease to inquire into and dispute about such things as these, which belong alone to the will of our Potter! Let us not judge our God, but rather leave ourselves to be judged by him.

The answer therefore to all such questions and arguments ought to be this: It pleased God that Adam should be put under peril and trial, that he might exercise his powers. Just as now, when we are baptized and translated into the kingdom of Christ, God will not have us to be at ease. He will have his Word and his gifts to be exercised by us. Therefore he permits us, weak creatures, to be put into the sieve of Satan. Hence it is that we see the church, when made clean by the Word, to be put under perpetual peril and trial. The Sacramentarians, the Anabaptists and other fanatical teachers, who harass the church with various trials, are stirred up against her, to which great trials are also added internal vexations. All

these things are permitted of God to take place, not however because it is his intention to forsake his church or to suffer her to perish. But as wisdom says, all these conflicts are brought upon the church and upon the godly, that they might overcome them; and thus learn by actual sight and experience that wisdom is more powerful than all things.

Another question is here raised, on which we may dispute perhaps with less peril and with greater profit: Why the Scripture speaks of this matter thus obscurely and does not openly say, that one of the fallen angels entered into the serpent and through the serpent spoke to Eve and deceived her? But to this I reply, that all these things were involved in obscurity, that they might be reserved for Christ and for his Spirit, whose glory it is to shine throughout the whole world, as the mid-day sun, and to open all the mysteries of the Scriptures. As this Spirit of Christ dwelt in the prophets, those holy prophets understood all such mysteries of the Word. We have said above however that as the beasts of the creation had each different gifts, so the serpent excelled all other creatures in the gift of guile, and therefore it was the best adapted for this stratagem of Satan.

Of this peculiarity in the serpent the present text of Moses is an evident proof; for he says at the opening of this chapter, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made." We marvel even now at the gift of insidious cunning in the fox, and also at its astonishing ingenuity in escaping danger. For sometimes when closely pursued by the dogs and quite worn out and ready to drop with exhaustion, it will hold up its tail; and while the dogs stop their course with the intent of rushing with all their force to seize it, the fox with marvelous celerity secures a little advantage ground and thus escapes their capture. There are also other beasts whose remarkable sagacity and industry surprise us; but subtilty was the peculiar natural property of the serpent, and therefore it seemed to Satan to be the instrument best adapted for his deception of Eve.

V. 1b. *And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?*

Human reasoners dispute also concerning the nature of this temptation, as to what it really was; whether our first parents sinned by idolatry or by pride or by self-security or simply by eating the fruit. But if we consider these things a little more carefully, as we ought to do, we shall find that this temptation was the most awful and the most bitter of all temptations. Because the serpent attacked the good will of God itself, and endeavored to prove by this very prohibition from the tree of life that the will of God toward man was not good. The serpent therefore attacks the image of God itself. He assails those highest and most perfect powers, which in the newly-created nature of Adam and Eve were as yet uncorrupted. He aims at overturning that highest worship of God, which God himself had just ordained. In vain therefore do we dispute about this sin or that. For Eve is enticed unto all sins at once, when she is thus enticed to act contrary to the Word and the will of God.

Moses therefore speaks here most considerately, when he uses the expression, "And the serpent said." Here, *WORD* attacks *word*. The *WORD* which the Lord had spoken to Adam was, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." This *WORD* was to Adam the Gospel, and the law thus given was his worship. It was a service and an obedience which in this state of innocence Adam was able to render unto God. These are the Divine things Satan attacks. These are the things he aims at overturning. Nor does he merely intend, as those think who know nothing of the matter, to point out the tree to Eve and to invite her to pluck the fruit. He does indeed point to the tree, but he does something far worse than this. He adds another and a new word, as it is his practice to do at the present day in the Church.

For wherever the Gospel is purely preached, there men have a sure rule for their faith, and by that they are able to guard

against idolatry. But there Satan plies temptations of every kind, and he tries by what means he can the most effectually to draw men away from the Word, or how he can most completely corrupt the Word itself. Thus in the Greek Church also, in the time of the apostles, heresies of every kind were stirred up. One heretic denies that Christ is the Son of God. Another denies that he is the Son of Mary, just as the anabaptists of our day impiously deny that Christ assumed anything of the flesh of Mary. So again in the times of Basil more particularly, men attempted to deny that the Holy Ghost is God.

Our own age in like manner has witnessed the same examples of heresies. For no sooner had a purer doctrine of the Gospel shone upon us, than assailants of the works and Word of God of every kind rose up on every side. Not however that temptations of other kinds cease. For Satan still tempts to whoredom, to adultery and to other like great sins. But this temptation, when Satan attacks the Word and the works of God, is by far the heaviest and most dangerous; and that temptation the most intimately concerns the Church and the saints.

It was in this manner therefore that Satan attacked Adam and Eve on this solemn occasion. His aim was to tear away from them the Word, in order that giving up the Word and their confidence in God, they might believe a lie. When this takes place what wonder is it if a man afterwards becomes proud, a despiser of God, an adulterer or anything else? This temptation therefore is the head and chief of all temptations. It brings with it the breach and the violation of the whole ten commandments. For unbelief is the fountain-source of all sins. When Satan has brought a man under this temptation and has wrested from him or corrupted in his heart the Word, he may do anything with him.

Thus when Eve had suffered the Word to be beaten out of her heart by a lie, she found no difficulty whatever in approaching the tree and plucking from it the fruit. It is foolish therefore to think of this temptation, as the sophists and the monks think of it; that Eve, when she had looked upon the tree, began

to be inflamed by degrees with the desire of plucking the fruit; until at last, overcome with the longing for it, she plucked the fruit and put it to her mouth. The sum of the whole temptation and her fall by it was that she listened to another *word*, and departed from that word which God had spoken to her, which was that if she did eat of the tree she should surely die. But let us now contemplate the words of Moses in the order in which we find them.

In the first place Satan here imitates God. For as God had preached to Adam, so Satan now also preaches to Eve. For perfectly true is that saying of the proverb, "All evil begins in the name of God." Just therefore as salvation comes from the pure Word of God, so perdition comes from the corrupted Word of God. What I term the corrupted Word of God is not that only which is corrupted by the vocal ministry, but that which is corrupted by the internal persuasions of the heart or by opinions of the mind, disagreeing with the Word.

Moses implies all this in his expression, "He said." For the object of Satan was to draw away Eve by his word or saying, from that which God had said; and thus by taking the Word of God out of sight, he corrupted that perfection of will which man had before; so that man became a rebel. He corrupted also his understanding so that he doubted concerning the will of God. Upon this immediately followed a rebellious hand, stretched forth to pluck the fruit contrary to the command of God. Then followed a rebellious mouth and rebellious teeth; in a word all evils follow soon upon unbelief or doubt concerning the Word and God. For what can be worse than for a man to disobey God, and obey Satan!

This very same craft and malice all heretics imitate. Under the show of doing good, they wrest from men God and his Word. They take the Word away from before their eyes and set before them another, and a new word and a new god; a god which is nowhere, and no god at all. For if you examine the words of these men, nothing can be more holy, nothing more religious. They call God to witness that they seek with their

whole heart the salvation of the Church. They express their utter detestation of all who teach wicked things. They profess their great desire to spread the name and the glory of God. But why should I enlarge? They wish to appear to be anything but the devil's teachers or heretics. And yet, their one whole aim is to suppress the true doctrine and to obscure the knowledge of God. And when they have done this, the fall of their listeners is easily enough effected.

For unwary men suffer themselves to be drawn away from the Word to dangerous disputations, Rom. 14:1. Not content with the Word, they begin to inquire why and for what reason these and those things were done. And just as Eve, when she listened to the devil, calling the command of God into doubt fell; so it continually happens that we, by listening to him, are brought to doubt whether God is willing that we, when heavily oppressed with sin and death, should be saved by Christ; and thus, being misled and deceived, we suffer ourselves to be induced to put on cowls and cloaks in order that we may be crowned of God with salvation on account of our works of perfection.

Thus before men are aware, another and a new god is set before them by Satan; for he also sets a word before us; but not that Word which is set before us of God, who declareth that repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all men in the name of Christ, Luke 24:47. When the Word of God is in this manner altered and corrupted, then, as Moses says, in his song, "there are brought in among us new gods, newly come up whom our fathers knew not, and feared not," Deut. 32:17.

It is profitable to be well acquainted with these snares of Satan. For if he were to teach men that they might commit murder and fornication, and might resist their parents, etc., who is there who would not immediately see that he was persuading them to do things forbidden by the Lord? And thus it would be easy to guard against him. But in the case of which we are speaking, when he sets before us another word,

when he disputes with us concerning the will and willingness of God, when he brings before our eyes the name of God, and of the church, and of the people of God, then we cannot so easily be on our guard against him. On the contrary there is need of the firmest judgment of the spirit to enable us to distinguish between the true God and the new god.

It is such judgment as this that Christ exercises, when Satan attempts to persuade him to command that the stones be made bread, and to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. For Satan's aim was to persuade Christ to attempt something without the Word. But the Tempter could not deceive Christ as he had deceived Eve. For Christ holds fast the Word and does not suffer himself to be drawn away from the true God to the new and false god. Hence unbelief and doubting, which follow a departure from the Word, are the fountain and source of all sin. And it is because the world is full of these that it remains in idolatry, denies the truth of God and forms to itself new gods.

The monk is an idolator. For his imaginations are that if he lives according to the rule of Francis or Dominic, he shall be in the way to the kingdom of God. But this is making a new god, and becoming an idolator. Because the true God declares that the way to the kingdom of heaven is believing in Christ. When this faith is lost therefore unbelief and idolatry immediately enter in, which transfer the glory of God to works. Thus the Anabaptists, the Sacramentarians and the Papists are all idolators! Not because they worship stocks and stones, but because, leaving the Word of God, they worship their own thoughts.

The portion of the Scripture therefore now before us is designed to teach us that the beginning of original sin was this effectual temptation of the devil, when he had drawn Eve away from the Word to idolatry, contrary to the first and second and third commandments. Therefore the words stand here, "Yea, hath God said?" It is horrible audacity for the devil to represent a new god and deny the former true and eternal God

with the utmost self-confidence. It is as if the devil had said, "Ye must be fools indeed if ye believe that God really gave you such a commandment. For God is by no means such a God as to be so greatly concerned whether ye eat the fruit or eat it not. For as the tree is 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;' how, think ye, he can be so filled with envy as to be unwilling that ye should be wise!"

Moreover this inexpressible malice fully proves that, although Moses makes mention of the serpent only and not of Satan, Satan was the real contriver of the whole transaction. And although these things had been thus involved in obscurity in this sacred history of them, yet the holy fathers and prophets, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, at once saw that this temptation was not the work of the serpent, but that there was in the serpent that spirit, which was the enemy of Adam's innocent nature; even the spirit, concerning whom Christ plainly declares in the Gospel, "that he abode not in the truth; and that he was a murderer and a liar from the beginning," Luke 8:44. It was left however, as we have said, for the Gospel to explain these things more clearly and to make manifest this enemy of God and of men. But the fathers saw all this by the following mode of reasoning: It is certain that at the time of the temptation all creatures stood in perfect obedience, according to the sentence of Moses, "And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good." But here in the serpent, such a spirit manifests himself who proves to be the enemy of God and who corrupts the Word of God, that he might draw away man into sin and death.

It is manifest therefore that there was something, some spirit in the serpent, far worse than the serpent itself by nature; a spirit which might properly be called the enemy of God; a spirit that was a liar and a murderer; a spirit in whom there was the greatest and the most horrible and reckless unconcern; a spirit which trembled not to corrupt the commandment of God and to tempt man to idolatry; though he knew by that act of idolatry the whole human race must perish. These things

are truly horrible when they are viewed by us aright. And we see even now examples of the same security and unconcern in Papists and other sects; an unconcern by which they corrupt the Word of God and seduce men.

Eve at first nobly resisted the Tempter. For as yet she was guided by the illumination of that Holy Spirit, of whom we have spoken, and by whom she knew that man was created perfect and in the likeness of God. At length however she suffered herself to be persuaded and overcome.

With respect to the fall of the angels, it is uncertain on which day the fall took place; whether on the second or on the third day. This only can be proved, and that is known from the Gospel, namely, that Satan fell from Heaven, for Christ himself testifies of the manner of the fall, where he says, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," Luke 10:18. But whether the heavens were then "finished" or yet in their rude unformed state, we know not. The discussion of this point however belongs not to our present exposition of the passage before us. Our present duty is to contemplate the extreme malice here disclosed, joined with the most horrible unconcern. For this spirit trembles not to call the commandment of the divine majesty into doubt; though he fully knew all the time, what an awful calamity must thereby fall upon the whole human race.

In the second place the wonderful subtlety here exercised is especially to be considered, which is discovered first in this: that Satan attacks the highest powers of man and assails the very image of God in him; namely, his will, which as yet thought and judged aright concerning God. "Now the serpent was more subtle," says our text, "than any beast of the field, which Jehovah God had made." But the subtlety manifested in this instance far exceeded all the natural subtlety of the serpent. For Satan here disputes with man concerning the Word and the will of God. This the serpent in his natural state and condition could not do; for in that, he was subject to the "dominion" of man. But the spirit which spoke in the

serpent is so subtle that he overcomes man and persuades him to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree. It is not therefore a creature of God, in his created good state, that here speaks; but it is a spirit, who is the bitterest enemy of God and of men; a spirit, who is indeed a creature of God, but not created thus evil by God. It is a creature, who abode not in the truth; as Christ says, John 8:44. These facts are consequences, plainly resulting from the Gospel and from the text of Moses before us.

The subtlety which we are contemplating is seen also from the stratagem of Satan in attacking the weak part of human nature; namely Eve, the woman; and not Adam, the man. For although both of them were created equally righteous, yet Adam excelled Eve. For as in all the endowments of nature, the male strength exceeds that of the female sex, so in the state of the innocency and perfection of human nature, the male in some degree excelled the female. Hence Satan, seeing that Adam was the more excellent creature, dared not attack him; for he had fears lest his attempts should fail. And my belief is that if he had attempted Adam first, Adam would have had the victory. He would more likely have crushed the serpent with his foot, and would have said to him, "Hold your tongue. The Lord hath commanded otherwise." Satan therefore attacks Eve as the weaker part, and tries her strength. For he sees that she has so much trust in, and dependence on, her husband, that she will not think it possible that she should be persuaded to do wrong after what her husband had told her.

By this portion of the sacred record we are also instructed concerning the divine permission; that God sometimes permits the devil to enter into beasts, as he here entered into the serpent. For there can be no doubt that the serpent, in the assumption of whose form Satan talked with Eve was a real and natural serpent. But when men enter into discussions whether this serpent assumed on that occasion a human countenance, etc., all such discussions are absurd. The creature was doubtless a most beautiful serpent in its natural state; other-

wise Eve would not have conversed with it so securely. After the sin of the fall however that beauty of the serpent was changed. For God's rebuke to him declares that hereafter "he should go upon his belly on the ground." Whereas before, he walked upright, as the male fowl. God also declares "that he should eat dust," whereas before, he fed upon better food, even upon the productions of the earth. Nay, even the original security of man with the serpent is lost. We flee from serpents at the sight of them, as they also flee from us.

These are all wounds, which have been inflicted on nature on account of sin; just in the same way we have lost the glory of our nakedness, the rectitude of our will and the soundness of our intellect and understanding. I believe also, that the serpent lost much of his subtlety, which Moses here lauds, as a distinguishing gift of God. Moreover, I believe that in the same proportion as the serpent is now an evil creature amidst the beasts, so it was then a good creature; and a blessed and lovely creature; a creature with which not man only, but all the other beasts also, lived in perfect freedom and with great pleasure. The serpent therefore was a creature, the best adapted of all the other living creatures for the purpose of Satan. By it he could secure the most easy access to Eve, and could the most effectually converse with her so as to draw her into sin.

Such is my opinion concerning the natural serpent, the beautiful nature of which Satan planned thus to abuse. I believe it was originally a most beautiful creature, without any poison in its tail and without those filthy scales with which it is now covered. For these grew upon it after the sin of the fall. Hence we find it a precept given by Moses that any beast, which should kill any person, should itself immediately be killed, Exod. 21:28; and for no other reason than because Satan sinned by using a beast when he murdered man. Hence also a serpent is killed wherever found, as a lasting memorial of this diabolical malice and this fall of man, wrought by his means.

With reference to the grammatical expression here used, the Latin interpreter renders the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים by *cur*. Though this rendering is not very wide of the real sense of the passage, yet it does not convey the true and proper meaning. For it is the highest and greatest of all temptations, when a dispute is entered upon, concerning the counsel of God, why God did this or that. But my judgment is, that the weight of the matter does not rest on this particle of expression *why?* or *wherefore?* But rather on the name God, *ELOHIM*. It is this that constitutes the greatness and awfulness of the temptation.

It is as if Satan had said, "Ye must be foolish indeed if ye suppose that God could possibly be unwilling that ye should eat of this tree when he had himself given you 'dominion' over all the trees of paradise; nay, when he had positively created all the trees for your sakes. How can he, who bestowed as a free favor all things upon you, possible envy you these particular fruits, which are so sweet and so pleasant!" For Satan's whole aim is to devise a means of drawing them away from the Word and from the knowledge of God, and to bring them to conclude that what they had stated was not really the will of God, and that such was not really what God had commanded them. That this is the true sense of the whole divine passage, that which follows tends to prove; when Satan says, "Ye shall not surely die." For all the stratagems of Satan centre in this one:—to draw men away from the Word, and from faith unto a new and false god.

And this same plan of Satan all fanatical spirits follow. Hence, Arius reasons and inquires, Do you really think that Christ is God, when he himself says, "My Father is greater than I?" In the same manner also the Sacramentarians ask, Do you really think that the bread is the body and the wine the blood of Christ? Christ most certainly had no thoughts so absurd. When men begin thus to indulge their own cogitations, they by degrees depart from the Word and fall into error.

Since therefore, the whole force of the temptation was in

leading Eve to doubt whether God really did say so; it is a more correct rendering to leave the emphasis resting on the name of God. The leaving it to rest on the interrogative particle, *why?* takes away from the peculiar force of the meaning. *In my judgment therefore the passage will be best rendered by making the emphasis to rest on the not.* Hath God said that ye shall *not* eat of every tree of the garden? For Satan's real aim is, not to set up an inquiry why God said this. His object is to bring Eve to conclude that God had positively not so commanded, in order that by bringing her to this conclusion he might wrest from her the Word. Satan saw that the reasoning power of Eve might in this way be the most effectually deceived, if he drew away from her sight and judgment the Word of God, under the very name of God. And he thinks the same still.

This question of Satan is full of insidious deception. He does not speak particularly, but generally; he includes in his interrogation, all the trees of the garden together. As if he had said, "You have committed unto you an universal 'dominion' over all the beasts of the earth; and do you really suppose that God, who has thus given you 'dominion' over all the beasts of the earth, has not given you the same dominion over all the trees of the earth? Why, you ought rather to think that as God has put under you the whole earth and all the beasts of the earth; so he has also granted you the use of all things which grow upon the earth." This is indeed the very height and depth of temptation. Satan here endeavors to gain over the mind of Eve to his purpose, by artfully drawing her into the conclusion that God is never unlike himself; and that therefore if God had given them universal dominion over all the other creatures, he had given them universal dominion over all the trees also. From this therefore it would naturally follow that the commandment *not to eat of the tree of life*, was *not the commandment of God*; or that if it were his commandment, it was not so to be understood that he really wished them not to eat of that tree.

Wherefore this temptation was a double temptation, by which as a twofold means Satan aimed at the same end. The one part of the temptation is, "God hath not said this, therefore ye may eat of this tree." The second branch of this awful temptation is, "God hath given unto you all things; therefore all things are yours; and therefore this tree is not forbidden you, etc., etc." Now, both branches of this temptation are directed to the same object; to draw Eve away from the Word and from faith. For this commandment concerning not eating of this tree of knowledge, which God gave to Adam and to Eve, proves that Adam with his posterity, had they continued in their original innocency, would have lived in that perfection of nature by faith, until he and they had been translated from this corporeal life unto the life spiritual and eternal. For wherever the Word is, there of necessity is faith also. For the Word was this, "Of the tree of the knowledge, etc., thou shalt not eat, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve must therefore have believed that this tree involved in it something perilous to their salvation. Therefore in this very Word of commandment, faith also is included.

We, who are designed to be transferred from this state of sin to a state of eternal righteousness, also live by faith. But we have a Word, different from that which Adam had in his state of nature's innocence and perfection. For he was designed to be transferred simply from a state of animal life to that of a spiritual and eternal life. Wherefore this tree, as I have before observed, was intended of God to be a temple as it were in the midst of paradise, in which the Word God spoke to Adam might be preached. The substance of this Word was, that all the other trees of paradise were healthful and to be eaten; but that this tree of knowledge, involved in it the danger of destruction; and that therefore they should learn to obey God and his Word, and to render unto God his worship, by not eating of this tree, seeing that God had forbidden them to eat of this particular tree.

In this manner therefore nature, in its uncorrupt and perfect

state, even while it possessed the knowledge of God, had yet a Word or precept of God, above the comprehension of Adam, which he was called upon to believe. And this Word or precept was delivered to man in his state of innocency, that Adam might have a sign or form of worshipping God, of giving him thanks, and of instructing his children in this knowledge of God. Now the devil, beholding this and knowing that this Word or precept of God was above the understanding of man, plies Eve with his temptation and draws her into thinking, whether this really was the commandment and will of God. And this is the very origin of all temptation; when the reason of man attempts to judge concerning the Word and God without the Word.

Now the will of God was that this his precept should be unto man an occasion of his obedience and of his external worship of God; and that this tree should be a sign, by means of which man should testify that he did obey God. But Satan by setting on foot the doubtful disputation, whether God really did give such a commandment, endeavors to draw man away from this obedience into sin. Here the salvation of Eve consisted solely in her determinately urging the commandment of God, and not suffering herself to be drawn aside into other disputations, whether God really had given such a commandment. And whether as God had created all things for man's sake, it could be possible that this one tree only was created, containing something incomprehensible and dangerous to man's salvation. It seems indeed unto men, to be a show of wisdom, to inquire into these things more curiously than is lawful. But as soon as the mind begins to indulge in such disputations, man is lost. But now let us hear the answer Eve makes to Satan:

Vs. 2, 3. *And the woman said unto the serpent: Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest perchance ye die.*

Eve's beginnings are successful enough. She makes a dis-

inction between all the other trees of the garden and this tree. She rehearses the commandment of God. But when she comes to relate also the punishment, she fails. She does not relate the punishment, as it had been declared by the Lord. The Lord had said, absolutely, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. 2:18. Out of this absolute declaration, Eve makes an expression, not absolute, "Lest perchance ye should die."

This defect in the statement of Eve is very remarkable, and demands particular observation; for it proves that she had turned aside from faith to unbelief. For as the promise of God demands faith, so the threatening of God demands faith also. Eve ought to have made her statement as a fact, and a certainty. "If I eat, I shall surely die." This faith however Satan so assails, with his insidious speech, as to induce Eve to add the expression, "perchance." For the devil had effectually persuaded her to think that God surely was not so cruel as to kill her for merely tasting a fruit. Hence the heart of Eve was now filled with the poison of Satan.

This text therefore is also by no means properly translated in our version. The meaning of the original Hebrew is that Eve speaks her own words; whereas she is ostensibly reciting the Word of God; and that she adds to the Word of God her own expression, "perchance." Wherefore the artifice of the lying spirit has completely succeeded. For the object which he especially had in view; namely, to draw Eve away from the Word and from faith; he has now so far accomplished, as to cause Eve to corrupt the Word of God; or, to use the expression of Paul, "he has turned her aside from the will of God, and caused her to go after Satan", 1 Tim. 5:15. And the beginning of certain ruin is to be turned aside from God, and to be turned after Satan; that is, not to stand firmly in the Word and in faith. When Satan therefore sees this beginning in Eve, he plies against her his whole power as against a bowing wall, until she falls prostrate on the ground.

Vs. 4, 5. *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall*

not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

This is the satanic rhetoric adopted by the tempter to prostrate utterly a poor weak woman; when he sees her turning away from God and inclined to listen to another teacher. Before, when he said in his satanic insidiousness, "Hath God, indeed, thus commanded you?" he did not positively deny the Word. He only attempted by speaking in the form of a question to draw Eve aside into doubting. But now, having fully accomplished his first point, he begins with daring presumption to deny the Word of God altogether, and to charge God himself with falsehood and cruelty. He is not now content with having caused Eve to add her expression, "perchance." Out of the "perchance," he now makes a plain and positive denial: "Ye shall not surely die."

We here witness therefore what a horrible thing it is when Satan once begins to tempt a man. For then ruin causes ruin and that which was at first apparently a trifling offense against God, ends eventually in a mighty destruction. It was an awful step into sin for Eve to turn from God and his Word and to lend her ears to Satan. But this her next step is more awful; for she now agrees with Satan, while he charges God with falsehood, and as it were smites him in the face. Eve therefore now is no longer the woman merely turned away from God, as in the first stage of her temptation. She now begins to join Satan in his contempt of God and in his denial of the truth of his Word. She now believes the father of lies, directly contrary to the Word of God.

Let these things therefore be to us a solemn lesson and a terrible proof, to teach us what man is! For if these things occurred in nature, while it was yet in its state of perfection, what shall we think may become of us! We have proofs, even now, before our eyes. Many, who at the commencement of our course gave thanks with us unto God for his revealed Word, are not only fallen away from it, but are become our bitterest

adversaries!

Thus it was also with the Arians. No sooner had they begun to fall away from faith in the divinity of the Son, than they quickly grew into a violent enmity against him. So that they became the bitter enemies of the true Church and persecuted her with the greatest cruelty. Precisely the same examples of ultimate rage against the truth have we witnessed also in the Anabaptists. They were all led away from the Word, and tempted to use the doubtful expression, "perchance." Shortly after Satan drove them to turn the doubting "perchance" into a positive "not," "God hath not said," etc. Then from forsakers of God, they became the open persecutors of God, imitating in this their father, Satan; who after he had fallen from heaven by sin became the most bitter enemy of Christ and his church. Nor are examples of the very same description few in our day. For we have no enemies more bitter against us than those who have fallen away from the doctrine they once professed with us. And from this very sin that awful description which David has given us of the "fool" arose, Ps. 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." For those thus fallen are not satisfied with having turned away from God, unless they have become the assailants also of God himself and of his Word.

Wherefore there is absolutely need that we abide by this rule, and moor ourselves to this sacred anchor as it were through life. Since it is agreed for a certainty that the Word, which we possess and confess, is the Word of God, we should assent and cleave to it with all simplicity of faith and not dispute concerning it with curious inquiry. For all inquiring and curious disputation bring with them most certain ruin.

Thus for instance we have the plain and manifest Word of Christ concerning the Lord's Supper, when he says concerning the bread, "This is my body, which is given for you," Luke 22:19. And concerning the cup, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood", 1 Cor. 11:25. When therefore fanatics depart from faith in these plain words, and fall into disputing

how these things can be, they by degrees stray so far, as positively to deny that these are the words of Christ, and at length they fiercely fight against them. Just as it befell Eve, as recorded in the passage of Moses now before us.

Exactly after the same manner, when Arius began to think about God and to conclude by his own reason that God was a most positive and absolute unity, he at first fell upon this proposition, "Perhaps Christ is not God." Then he carried the accumulation of his absurdities so far, as plainly to conclude, and to defend his conclusion, that "Christ is not God." It moved him not at all, that John plainly declares, "The Word was God," John 1:1; that Christ commands men to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," Math. 28:19; and that we are called upon to believe in Christ, to worship him and to pray unto him, Acts 13:39; Ps. 97:7. And yet, what absurdity can be greater than that we should take upon ourselves to judge God, since our condition is to be judged by him and by him alone?

Wherefore our duty is to stand by and persevere in this principle: that, when we hear God say anything, we believe it, and not dispute about it; but that on the contrary we bring our intellect and every thought into captivity unto Christ.

We may therefore appropriately cite the words of the prophet Isaiah, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established," Is. 7:9. For if we should inquire and inquire until we burst with curiosity, yet we shall never understand how the eye sees, nor how the ear hears, nor what the soul is, etc. And yet, all these things are a part of us, and we use them every day and every moment in all our actions. How then shall we understand those things which exceed all our faculties and senses, and are found in the Word of God alone? Hence it is found in the Word alone, that the ordained bread is the body of Christ, and that the ordained wine is the blood of Christ. These things it is our duty to believe, not to understand; for understand them we cannot.

In like manner too the words of God in the present passage

of Moses were most simple and plain, "Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden ye shall not eat." But in those words reason did not understand the mind of God, why he willed these things so to be. When therefore Eve, not content with the command of the Lord which she had heard, began curiously to inquire into it, she perished. This temptation therefore is a true example of all those temptations, in which Satan assaults the Word and faith. Before the desire of eating the fruit came to Eve, she had let go the word which God spoke to Adam. Had she held fast this Word, she would have stood in the reverence of God and in faith. On the other hand, no sooner had she let go the Word, than contempt of God entered; and then followed obedience to the devil.

It is profitable for us to learn these things and to know them. Hence it is that Peter admonishes us to stand fast under temptation, and to resist the Tempter, keeping fast hold of the Word by a firm faith, and keeping our ears shut, so as not to listen to anything contrary to the Word, 1 Pet. 5:9. For such "sufferings" and temptations of Eve are most truly "lessons" to us; that we suffer not the same things, by being drawn aside from the Word and faith, as she was.

That which follows in our text, "For God doth know that your eyes shall be opened," may be taken in a twofold sense. We may either understand Satan to have thus spoken, for the purpose of exciting an ill-will against God, for having forbidden man to eat of a fruit so good and useful by which means Satan would create in Eve the beginning of a hatred towards God for not being sufficiently indulgent. Or again, I would rather understand the passage, Satan speaks this, as in praise of God; that he may thereby the more easily entrap Eve in his deception. As if he had said to her, "Be assured that God is not such an one as to wish you and Adam to live in darkness as it were without the knowledge of good and evil. He is good. He envies you nothing which can in any way conduce to your benefit or pleasure. He will be quite satisfied and content that you should be like himself, as to the knowledge of good and evil."

When Satan thus praises God he has the razor fairly in his hands, so that he can cut the throat of a man in a moment. For the fall of a man is thus rendered by Satan the most easy, when the pretext of the Word and the will of God is brought in upon the back of that which the lust of the heart desires. This is why I would rather understand the words now in question to be spoken by Satan, as intended to persuade Eve, rather than to excite in her any hatred toward God. I leave it however quite free to you, my hearers, to adopt the sense of the passage which pleases you best. The sum of the whole or the one aim of Satan, is this: to draw Eve away by all possible means from the Word, and to persuade her to do that, which had been forbidden by the Word. For Satan is the most bitter enemy of the Word of God; because he knows that our whole salvation lies in our obedience to that Word.

But here an inquiry by no means absurd is raised. How was it that Eve did not yet feel her sin? For, although she had not yet swallowed the fruit, yet she had sinned against the Word and against faith. She had turned away from the Word unto a lie and from faith to disbelief; from God to Satan and from the worship of God to idolatry. As this was the sum and substance of her sin, for plucking the apple was not the sum of her sin, how was it that death did not immediately follow? How was it that she did not feel so mighty a sin? Nay further how was it, that after she had eaten the fruit, she did not feel the death which was the decreed punishment of it, before she persuaded Adam to eat of it also?

The schools dispute much and variously about the superior power, and the inferior power of reason. They hold, that Adam possessed the superior power of reason, and Eve the inferior. We will cast aside all such half-learned and scholastic arguments and seek the true meaning of the passage, which is as follows:

In the first place the long-suffering of God is great. Therefore he does not punish sin immediately. If he did we should soon perish. This long-suffering of God Satan ever abuses.

And it just suits his purpose that man should not immediately feel his sin. For because punishment is thus deferred, Satan fills the mind with security and unconcern. So that a man is not only kept blind to the fact that he has sinned, but is caused to take delight and to glory in his sins.

All this we behold in the popes and the Papists. If they could see with their eyes and hearts the slaughter-house of conscience, yea, the perdition into which they bring men by their impious doctrine, they would without doubt change their doctrine. But now, Satan so dazzles their eyes as it were with his delusions, that they cannot perceive their own judgment and the wrath of God which hangs over them. Therefore in the very midst of these mighty sins, they live with the greatest security, even with gladness and rejoicing, displaying their magnificent triumphs as if they had performed the most noble achievements.

This was exactly the case with Eve. By her disbelief she rushed from the Word into a lie. Therefore in the eyes of God, she was now dead. But as Satan still held under his power her heart and eyes, she not only did not see her death, but was gradually more and more inflamed with a longing for the fruit; and was positively delighted with this her idolatry and with her sin.

Now if Eve had not departed from the Word, thus to look upon the fruit with a desire to taste it, it would have been to her an abhorrence. But having thus departed, she turns over the sin in her mind with gratification. Whereas had she before seen any other stretch forth the hand to touch this tree, she would have recoiled with horror. But now, she is impatient of delay. Sin has burst forth from her heart, and has descended to the lower members of her body, her mouth and tongue. This desire and delightful longing therefore to eat the fruit are as it were the diseases gendered by the sin of her heart from which death follows; though Eve, while sinning, feels it not. This is plain from the next portion of the context.

PART II. THE AWFUL FALL BY SINNING.

V. 6. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*

Mark here the manner in which sin diffuses itself through all the five senses. For what did Eve neglect that could be used in the service of sin when once she had believed Satan contrary to the Word of God, and had listened to his lies in telling her that she would not surely die, but that her eyes would be opened and that she would know both good and evil. Her eyes could not be satisfied with seeing. It was nothing to her now that she possessed the knowledge of God, and that she had a sound and perfect mind. She was not content without the addition of the knowledge of evil also. And this was the very essence of Satan's poison; her desire to be wise above that which God had spoken to her as his command. For such wisdom was death and the very enemy of that wisdom of God, which had been delivered to her in his Word. For this wisdom caused her to consider that to be righteousness, which was really sin, and to look upon that as most desirable wisdom which was utter madness.

The whole point therefore lies in this which the Latin version has omitted to express: that the tree was a tree to be desired, because it made the eaters thereof wise. And this is the very aim of the devil, to cause a man to think his knowledge and wisdom the greater, the further he departs from the Word.

Hence the Sacramentarians think it the sum of all wisdom to assert that bread is bread, and that wine is wine; but that bread is not the body, nor wine the blood of Christ. So Arius considers that he has carried off the palm of all wisdom, when he asserts, from certain Scriptures evilly distorted from their manifest sense, that the Logos was indeed before all creatures; but that still he was created. In like manner the Anabaptists

imagine that they trumpet forth the very height of wisdom, when they declare aloud with full-swollen cheeks that water cannot reach the soul or the spirit, but that it washes the naked skin only, and that therefore baptism avails nothing to the remission of sins. Hence we have known fanatical spirits to baptize here and there without any water at all, who nevertheless continued to boast that they never dissented from us or our doctrine. And truly, this is wisdom. But it is the wisdom of the devil; and directly contrary to the Word and wisdom of God. And it is the peculiar and proper temptation of the devil thus to render us wise in our own conceits contrary to and above the Word of God. Just as he himself was once in heaven, and then fell. And this high wisdom is a temptation of his, far exceeding in destructive efficacy all the grosser temptations of lust, avarice, pride, etc.

The verb *HISKIL* signifies "to be prudent" or "wise." Hence, *MASKIL* is "wise" or "prudent," as in Psalm 14:2, "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God." And again, Is. 53:11, "By the knowledge of himself, *JASKIL*, shall my righteous servant justify many." The word signifies properly that wisdom by which God is known and acknowledged. And Eve had this light or rather this sun of knowledge in her heart before she fell; because she had the Word. And she had moreover the knowledge of all the creatures. But not content with this wisdom, she wished to mount higher and to know God otherwise than he had revealed himself to her in his Word. This was her fall. She let go the true wisdom, and that being lost, she rushed into utter blindness.

Just as Satan acted in the garden of Eden, so he acts now. God commands us to believe the Gospel of his Son, that we may thus be saved. This is true wisdom, as Christ himself also affirms: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ," John 17:3. This wisdom the monk utterly disregards, and turns aside to other things. He puts on a cowl, girds him-

self with a rope and takes upon him the vow of celibacy; and he thinks that by such means he shall please God and be saved. And all this is that sublime wisdom which is exercised in the worship of God, and in a great religious observance toward him; all of which is the implantation of Satan, engrafted on the original sin of our fallen nature; causing men to turn away from the Word of God, which he has himself "set forth" as the way of salvation, and to turn aside to following their own cogitations. Just like Eve. She was created the wisest of all women that ever existed; but she longed for another wisdom contrary to and above the Word; and on account of this newly desired wisdom she fell and sinned, in a multiplicity of forms, with all her senses, with her thoughts, with her sight, with her desire, with her touch, with her taste, with her whole act.

They are not to be listened to, therefore, who argue it was cruelty that this nature of ours should be thus miserably corrupted, sunk under death, and involved in all the other calamities to which it is subject for the simple act of tasting a certain fruit. The Epicureans, indeed, when they hear these things, laugh at them as a mere fable. But to a careful reader, who duly ponders these recorded facts, it will at once be manifest that the simple bite of the fruit was not the cause of these awful consequences. Such an one will see that the sin committed was the cause of the whole calamity which followed, even the sin of Eve, which she committed against both tables of the law, against God himself and against his Word. For her sin was of that description that she cast aside the Word of God and gave herself up wholly to Satan, and to his teaching as his disciple.

The greatness and awfulness of the sin of Eve therefore can neither be lessened nor made too great. This greatness and awfulness of the sin of Eve are the pregnant causes of all the calamitous punishments which we endure. So awful was the sin, and so awful the turning away from God! And this horrible turning away from God is the great solemn fact which

our minds ought to contemplate. They ought not to dwell upon the mere plucking or swallowing the fruit; for those who look upon the act only, and not upon the sin of the heart, from which the act proceeded, must naturally be led to accuse God of cruelty for having inflicted upon the whole human race such terrible punishments for so small and insignificant a sin. Such reasoners on the matter, therefore, hate God and despair; or like the Epicureans they laugh at the whole matter as a fable.

What we have to consider therefore is the Word. For that, against which Eve sinned, was the Word of God. As great therefore as was the Word, so great was the sin which Eve committed against the Word. It was under this sin that all nature fell, and under which it still lies. For, how can nature overcome that sin! It is of a magnitude infinite and inexhaustible. Consequently, to overcome this sin there is need of him who brings with him an inexhaustible righteousness, even the Son of God.

That Satan knew all this, his subtlety proves. For he does not immediately entice Eve with the sweetness of the fruit; he attacks at once the chief strength of man, faith in the Word! The root and source of all sin therefore is disbelief, and turning aside from God. Even as, on the contrary, the root and source of all righteousness is faith. Satan therefore first of all draws Eve aside from faith to unbelief. When he had accomplished this and had brought Eve not to believe the Word of God's commandment spoken unto her, he had no trouble in accomplishing the rest, in causing her to rush up to the tree, to pluck the fruit and eat it. For when sin is ripened in the heart by unbelief, the external act of disobedience soon follows. This is the manner in which the nature of sin is to be considered, namely, according to its true magnitude, under which magnitude we are all ruined. Next follows the description of sin, with its punishments.

V. 7. *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together,*

and made themselves aprons (girdles).

I have remarked above that the form of all Satan's temptations is the same. He first plies his temptation upon a man's faith, and then draws him away from the Word. Upon this follow various sins against the second table. This procedure of Satan we may see plainly manifested in our own experience. That which follows therefore in the present chapter, is a particular description of sin, what it is in the act, and what it is afterwards, when the act is performed. For, while sin is in the act, it is not felt. If it were truly felt, we should return to the right way, warned by the sorrows which sin ever brings upon the sinner. But because these sorrows lie hidden, after we have departed from integrity of soul and from faith, we go on without concern into the act itself. Just as Eve sinned in eating the fruit, after she had been persuaded by Satan, contrary to the Word of God, "that she should not die" but that the only effects would be, "that her eyes would be opened," and that she would become wiser. After she had drunk in this poison of Satan through her ears, she stretched forth her hand to the forbidden fruit, plucked it and ate it with her mouth; and thus she sinned with all the senses of her mind and of her body. And yet she did not even then feel her sin. She ate the fruit with pleasure and entreated her husband also to do the same.

The essential principles are the same in all temptations and in all sins, whether of lust, of anger, or avarice, etc. While the sin is in the act, it is not felt; it terrifies not, it stings not, but it rather flatters the passions and delights. And no marvel that the case should be so with us when we are infected with this poison of original sin, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and especially when we reflect that the sins of paradise took place in nature while it was yet sound and perfect. Hence it is that we see in the cases of profane men, of fanatical spirits and of those who have no faith, or who have fallen from the faith, how secure and unconcerned they are, how vehement and pertinacious in defending their errors;

so much so that they will not hesitate even to die in the defence of them. Such is the nature of sin, while it remains unfelt. But afterwards when the sin is made manifest by the law, then it comes down upon the man with all its intolerable weight.

So before this discovery of her sin, while it was inwardly preparing for the act, the eyes of Eve were not opened. Had they been she must have died before she could have touched the fruit; but because her eyes were not yet opened, and because her unbelief yet remained, there remained also the longing for the fruit prohibited, and there remained also the purpose and the desire to obtain the Satan-promised knowledge, which was also forbidden. Poor miserable Eve, she is so wrapped up in disbelief, both in soul and in body, that she sees not the mighty evil she is committing! Similar examples of the insensible security and unconcern of sin are furnished by our ecclesiastical histories. Arius securely blesses himself, as long as he can find means of eluding the Scripture testimonies concerning the Divinity of the Son.

But this security lasts not very long. As soon as the eyes of Eve were opened, she remembered the law of her God spoken to her, which before she had forgotten, "that she and Adam should not eat of the forbidden tree." Before she had this knowledge of God's law she was "without sin," as Paul expresses it, Rom. 7:9, "And I was alive apart from the law once." Not because the law really did not exist, but because the apostle did not feel the threatenings and punishments of it; and hence he seemed to himself to be "without the law." "For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3:20. When therefore the law revived in his knowledge of it, his sin revived also with that knowledge, Rom. 7:9.

All this Moses would indicate in his history of our first parents, when he says, "And the eyes of them both were opened," as if he had said, Satan had closed, not the eyes only of Eve, but her heart also by unbelief and by the disobedience of all the members of her body and of her soul without and within.

But after her sin was committed and "finished," he willingly suffers the eyes of them both to be opened, that they might see what they had done. For this is Satan's manner of cutting short the ruin of those who sin under his temptations; when they have sinned, he leaves them to perish in despair.

This portion of sacred history therefore is like a complete exposition of the sentence of Paul's words, "For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3:20. For the law does nothing but make known and cause to revive that sin, which before the knowledge of the law lay asleep as it were and dead. Just as in the following chapter it is said to Cain, "If thou doest evil, thy sin sleepeth until it be made known to thee," Gen. 4:7. For it lieth asleep, while it is in the act. But when the law comes then the eyes are opened, so that the man then sees what God had commanded, and what punishment he had decreed for the transgressors of his command. When this takes place, so that the law fully rules in the conscience; then a man arrives at the true knowledge of his sin, which *knowledge no human hearts can endure unless consolation be given them from above.*

What Moses next adds, therefore, that after they had eaten the fruit, "they saw that they were naked," are words by no means superfluous nor without special import. For if duly considered, they contain a beautiful description of original righteousness.

The schoolmen indeed argue that original righteousness was not connatural; that is, not a part of human nature as originally created; but a certain ornament, only additionally bestowed on man as a separate gift. Just as if one should place a garland on the head of a beautiful maiden. A garland is certainly no part of the nature of a virgin, but something separate from her nature as such; something added from without, which might be taken away again without any violation of her nature. These schoolmen therefore argue, both concerning man and concerning devils, that, although they lost their original righteousness, yet their natural properties re-

mained pure as they were originally created. This doctrine however detracts from the magnitude of original sin and is to be shunned as a deadly poison.

We conclude therefore that original righteousness was not a superadded gift, which was bestowed from without, separate from the very nature of man; but a truly natural righteousness; so that it was the very nature of Adam to know God, to love God, to believe in God, to acknowledge God and to worship God, etc. These things were as natural in Adam, as it is natural to the eyes to see the light. When the eye is injured by the infliction of a wound, you may rightly affirm that nature is violated; so after man fell from his original righteousness, it is correctly maintained, that the properties of nature were no longer sound and whole, but defiled and corrupted by sin. For as it is the nature of the eye to see, so it was the original nature of the reason and of the will of Adam to know God, to trust in God, and to fear God.

Since therefore it is evident that all these natural powers are lost, who is so mad as to assert that the faculties and properties of nature are still sound and whole? And yet, there was nothing more common nor more fully received in the schools than this doctrine. How much greater then must be the absurdity and the madness, to affirm this doctrine concerning devils to be true, especially since Christ himself declares "that they abode not in the truth," and when we ourselves know them to be the most bitter enemies of Christ and of his Church!

The natural faculties in man therefore created originally sound and whole, were the knowledge of God, faith in God, the fear of God, etc. All these Satan corrupted by sin in the same manner as leprosy defiles the whole flesh. The will and reason of man therefore are so corrupted by sin, that he not only does no longer naturally love God, but flees from him and hates him and wishes to live without him, and to be without him altogether.

Therefore Moses has exactly described in this portion of his

sacred history that corruption which succeeded original righteousness and its glory. For it was the peculiar glory of Adam and Eve not to know that they were naked. What corruption then can be greater than that the nakedness, which was originally the glory of our first parents, should now be changed into the basest turpitude. Thus no one blushes on account of his eyes, when sound and perfect. But when the eyes are distorted or partially blind, they cover us with a certain cloud of defect and with a feeling of shame. In like manner in their state of original innocency, it was entirely a matter of glory for Adam and Eve to walk in nakedness. But when, after their sin, "they saw that they were naked," they were overwhelmed with shame and looked about them for "girdles" wherewith to hide their turpitude. How much greater turpitude then is disclosed by the fact, that the slaughtered will, the corrupted understanding and the wholly defiled reason have changed man into an utterly altered being. Are all these woeful things proofs, I pray you, that the qualities and faculties of man's original nature still remain sound and whole?

But consider for a moment what will necessarily follow from the doctrine of making original righteousness, not to have been an essential part of created nature, but only a certain superfluous and superadded gift or ornament. If you lay it down as a fact, that original righteousness was not an essential quality of the nature of man, it must inevitably follow that the sin, which followed original righteousness, was also not an essential quality of the nature of man. And if so, was it not an utterly vain thing that Christ should be sent into the world as the Redeemer of man, if it was man's original righteousness only, which was merely a foreign and separate addition to his nature, that was lost; and if that loss still left the faculties and qualities of his original nature sound and perfect? But what doctrine can be worse than this? What doctrine more unworthy a divine to utter?

Flee therefore from such mad dreams as from a real pestilence and from corruption of the Holy Scriptures; and let

us instead follow actual experience which teaches us that we are born of corrupt seed and that we derive from the very nature of that seed, ignorance of God, self-security, unbelief, hatred of God, disobedience, impatience and numberless other kindred evils; all which are so engendered and implanted in our very nature, and are a poison so wholly diffused throughout our flesh, body, soul, nerves and blood, yea, through all our bones and their very marrow; and so wholly poisoning our will, our understanding and our reason, that the poison not only can never be extracted, but that we cannot even acknowledge, or feel, or see that this is our state of sin!

It is a well known sentiment of the old Greek comedian, Aristophanes, "that to visit harlots is no disgrace to a youth." Pardon however may be extended to such a sentiment in a heathen poet. But it is most awful in such as call themselves Christian men, and men professing a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, to incline toward such a sentiment that whoredom is not positive sin. And yet, whole colleges of our canonicals actually approve the sentiment, with one consent by their lives and manners. When this is the case therefore with respect to actual outward sins, what must we conclude to be the state of men's minds, with respect to the uncleanness of the heart and the motions of sin in our very nature? These motions of nature, wicked men cannot of course understand to be sins.

Thus a wicked man cannot understand that the glory of nakedness was lost by sin. For the fact of Adam and Eve walking abroad naked was their highest adornment in the sight of God and before the whole creation. But now since the entrance of sin we not only recoil at the thought of walking naked before men for their sakes, but we are filled with shame for our own sakes; as Moses here testifies, concerning the feelings of Adam and Eve. And this very shame witnesses that our confidence in God as well as in man is lost, whereas this confidence in both existed before sin entered by the fall. But after the entrance of sin, Adam even though blinded would yet have been abashed to present himself naked before the eyes

of God or of men; because by his disobedience, his former confidence in God, his glorious Creator, was lost.

All these things therefore abundantly testify that original righteousness was an essential quality of the nature of man, when first created; and as that original righteousness was lost by sin, it is manifest that no qualities or properties or powers of nature remain perfect and sound, as the schoolmen madly dream. For, as it was the original nature of man to go forth naked, full of innocent confidence and security toward God and with the knowledge that such nakedness pleased both God and men, so now since the entrance of sin man feels that this same nakedness of nature, originally so glorious, is displeasing to God, to man himself and to all rational creatures. And accordingly man prepares himself girdles, and carefully covers his "uncomely parts," 1 Cor. 12:23. Is this not an awful change in nature? Nature does indeed remain, but corrupted in numerous forms. For all innocent confidence in God is lost, and the heart is full of distrust, fear and shame. So, also the members of nature all remain the same. But those members which were once beheld in all their nakedness with glory are now cautiously covered, as dishonorable and base, lest they should be seen, because of the great internal defects of nature; because nature has lost all confidence in God by sin. For if we possessed that confidence in innocency, as Adam enjoyed it, we should know no shame, no blush in our nakedness.

From this corruption, which immediately followed sin, arose another evil. Adam and Eve were not only ashamed on account of their nakedness, which before their sin was most honorable, and a most glorious adornment; but they even make for themselves coverings to hide from sight those parts of their body which, in their original nature, were thus so honorable and so glorious. For what in all nature is so wonderful, so noble and so glorious, as the fact of generation! And this fact, so noble, so glorious, is not assigned of God to the eyes or to the face, which we consider to be the more honorable and dignified parts of our body, but to those parts which thus, taught

by our awful state of sin, we cover from sight with all possible carefulness lest they should be seen. And thus as the fact of generation in the innocent state of nature, had it continued, would have been most pure and most holy; so since the entrance of sin, even this fact is filled with the leprosy of lust, as are also all the parts of the body connected with it. Those therefore who live without marriage, "burn" in lust, most impurely. And those also who live in marriage, unless they rightly moderate their feelings and affections, and carefully guard their "due benevolence," 1 Cor. 7:3, are variously tempted and afflicted.

Do we not then, from all these considerations, feel how foul and horrible a thing sin is? For lust is the only thing that cannot be cured by any remedy! Not even by marriage, which was expressly ordained from above to be a remedy for this infirmity of our nature. For the greater part of married persons still live in adultery, and thus sing practically the well-known song of the heathen poet of old:—

"Nec tecum possum vivere sine te." (OVID)

Neither with thee, nor yet without thee, wife, can I by nature, live. Such is the horrible turpitude which arises out of this most honorable and most excellent part of our natural body! I call it most excellent, on account of the noble and marvelous work of generation, which is indeed most excellent, and wonderful and glorious; because it preserves the continuation of the race of mankind! By reason of sin therefore the most excellent and effectual members of our body have become the most vile and base.

But this would not have been the case with Adam and Eve, had they continued in their innocency. They were full of innocent confidence in their God. Therefore whenever they wished to devote themselves to the procreation of children, they would have come together, not maddened with that lust which now reigns in our leprous flesh, but with an admiration of the ordinance of God, in obedience to God and in the worship of God; and also with the same holy quietness and solemnity of mind,

as that in which we go to hear the Word of God and to worship God. But all these things we have lost by sin, so that we can now only conceive of them and understand them negatively, not positively. For from the awful state of evil in which we now stand, we can only gather negatively an idea of the greatness of that good and that glory which we have lost. But we owe a deep debt of gratitude to God, even for the remnants of the original glory still left us, however corrupt the noble, wonderful and glorious work of generation now may be; of which both the Church and the State have need for the perpetuation of saints and of citizens.

And it is a marvelous fact that in all the writers, of all tongues not one iota is found which sets forth the glory of that original nakedness, which is now through sin so filled with turpitude and shame; but which before sin entered into the world was so honorable and glorious. Here we have Moses alone as our great teacher, who however sets forth the whole matter in but very few, and those very simple words, teaching us that man, having fallen from faith, was filled with confusion, and that the glory of his organs of generation was changed into utter turpitude and ignominy, so that he was compelled to make coverings to hide them from sight.

The Hebrew term *HEGORAH*, of which we here have the plural, properly signifies a girdle or apron-girt, so that we are to understand that these fig leaves covered the upper parts of the thighs all round in every part, in order that the part of the body which before sin was the most honorable, 1 Cor. 12:23, might now be covered as being the most uncomely and base, and utterly unworthy the sight of men. O how horrible was the fall by sin! For after it the eyes of man were so opened that what was before the most honorable and glorious, he now looks upon as most dishonorable and base.

And so it is to this day. As soon as the law has come, we then first discover what we have done. And sin thus made known seems to have in it such awful baseness that the enlightened minds of men cannot endure the sight, and therefore they

endeavor to cover their turpitude. For no one ever, though he be a thief, an adulterer or a murderer, etc., is willing to appear to be such. So also heretics are never found to acknowledge their error in any degree, but defend it most pertinaciously and wish to appear to hold the catholic truth. And that they may secure this appearance, they sew together fig leaves as broad as possible; that is, they try all things which seem likely to color over and cloak their heresy.

This same nature of sin is seen even in children, who frequently, though caught in the very fact of doing evil, yet busy themselves in discovering means whereby they can persuade their parents to the contrary; thus excusing themselves, speaking lies, Ps. 58:3. In precisely the same manner do men also act. Even when caught and held fast, they yet endeavor to slip away that they may not be confounded, but may still appear good and just. This portion of poison also has been infused into our very nature, as the present passage of Moses likewise testifies.

PART III. THE JUDGMENT GOD HELD WITH OUR FIRST PARENTS AFTER THEIR FALL AND THE ACCOUNT OF THEIR STEWARD- SHIP HE REQUIRED FROM THEM.

V. 8. *And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool (breeze) of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.*

This is now the third evil of original sin, bearing its additional proof, that original righteousness was lost. But here again Lyra is entangled in the opinions of Rabbins, some of whom interpret the expression in the breeze of the day, *ad auram diei*, as referring to place, or to the climate between the south and the west, while others explain the expression as referring to time, holding that this sacred circumstance occurred in the evening. When the heat begins to subside, the winds

commence their breathing.

My mind is however that we should receive breathing (*spiritum*) here, as simply signifying "the Word," and understand the passage as meaning that after the conscience of Adam and Eve were convinced by the divine law, they were terrified at the sound of a leaf. Just as we see to be the case with all fearstricken men, when they hear the creak of a beam, they dread the fall of the whole house. When they hear a mouse moving they are terrified lest Satan should be at hand with an intent to destroy them. For by nature we are so wholly filled with alarm, that we really fear even those things which are perfectly safe.

Adam and Eve therefore, as soon as their consciences are convinced by the law and they are brought to feel their turpitude in the sight of God, and of themselves having lost their faith and confidence in God, are so filled with fear and alarm that when they hear a breeze or breath of wind, immediately imagine that God is at hand as an avenger, and hide themselves from him. I believe therefore that by the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, Moses really means a breath or sound of wind which preceded the appearance of God before them. Hence Christ says in the gospel, when speaking of the wind, "Thou hearest the sound or voice thereof," John 3:8. For when Adam and Eve heard the rustling of the leaves as if shaken by the wind, they thought on a sudden within themselves, Hark! there is the Lord coming to take vengeance upon us!

When therefore Moses adds "in the breeze of the day" to the words "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden," he seems to me to do so by way of particular explanation of the meaning he intended to convey. As if he had said by way of comment, This voice was like a breezy blast of the day; and as if he wished the emphasis of his expression to rest on the word day. For he does not speak concerning a wind in the night, in order to exaggerate the greatness of the terror which follows upon sin; as if he had said in further explanation they were

so stricken with fear that they were alarmed at the sound of a leaf, even in the clear light of day. What therefore, he seems to intend to intimate, would have been the result if God had come to them in the night and in the solemn darkness? Then the terror must have been more dreadful still. For as the light gives animation, so the darkness increases dread. This terror therefore, with which Adam and Eve after their sin were struck in the very broad light of day, is indeed a manifest proof that they had fallen utterly from the confidence of faith.

This I believe to be the true sense of the present passage, and it fully agrees with that threatening of Moses, Lev. 26., where he is speaking of the punishments which should assuredly follow the commission of sin, that the sinners should be chased by the sound of a shaking leaf and that they should flee from it as from a sword, Lev. 26:36. For when the conscience is truly alarmed on account of sin, the man is so oppressed by it that he not only cannot do anything, but cannot even direct his thought to any purpose. And just as they say is sometimes the case in an army when the soldiers, overpowered by fear, cannot move a hand, but give themselves up in entire helplessness to be slaughtered by the enemy; in the same manner so horrible is the punishment which follows sin that the conscience of the sinner is struck with alarm at the sound of a leaf. Nay, that he cannot endure that all-beautiful creature, the light of day, by which all nature besides is enlivened and refreshed.

Here therefore you have another sight of the magnitude of that original sin which is born in us at our birth, and implanted in us by the sin of our first parents. And this sight, as I have said, enables us to understand negatively or by a comparison of contraries, what original righteousness was. It contained in it such a beautiful confidence in man toward his God, that he could not have feared even though he had seen the heavens falling in ruins upon his head!

With what complete confidence did Eve listen to the serpent? We do not talk to a little house-dog brought up in our family circle and to whom we have been accustomed for years, nor with

a favorite chicken, more familiarly than Eve did with that then beautiful creature. Before their sin therefore Adam and Eve sought no hiding-places; but stood upright in all their created wisdom and righteousness, praising God with uplifted eyes. But now they are terrified at the sound of a shaking leaf. O! how awful a fall! To fall from the safest security and delight in God into fear and dread so horrible, that man can no longer endure the sight of his God, but flees from his presence as from the presence of the devil! For it is not the devil from whom Adam and Eve are now fleeing. They are rushing from the sight of God their Creator, whose presence is now more dreadful and intolerable to them than that of Satan; Satan is now more congenial to their feelings than the adorable God; for from Satan they flee not, nor are filled with his dread. This dread therefore, is actually a flight from and a hatred of God himself.

It is instructive here to mark the gradual increase and progressive steps of sin, which goes on until it becomes, as Paul is wont to express it, "exceeding sinful," Rom. 7:13. For man first falls from his faith into unbelief and disobedience. Upon unbelief follow the dread and hatred of God and fleeing from him; and these are soon succeeded by despair and impenitence. For whither shall the heart flee when thus dreading the presence of God? Shall it flee unto the devil? That of course is vain, and is never expected to be the case; and yet to this it all comes. For this history shows that God created man and made him lord over all created things. And yet that same man now flees from him and considers nothing more hateful or intolerable than the presence of this same Creator. Were it not so he would not now thus turn away from his God nor flee from him in instant dread of the voice of his approach. For all this is not during the night, not under thunderings and lightnings as at the mount of Sinai, but in the bright light of "day" while a gentle breeze is breathing and the leaves of the trees softly rustling by its touch! There is nothing therefore more intolerable to endure, nothing filled with greater misery than

a conscience alarmed by the law of God and by the sight of sins committed.

This it was that made Adam and Eve do the worst of all things they could do, namely, to shun their Creator and their God, and to flee to the truly vain refuge of fig leaves, in order to cover themselves from his sight and to hide themselves among the trees! And what could be more indescribably horrible, than thus to flee from God and to hide themselves from his sight?

Wherefore this affords a further view of alterations of the rectitude of the will and of the understanding after the sin of the fall. The very facts show that the will was corrupted and depraved. For Adam and Eve long for those very things which God had prohibited, and they so long for them as to become disobedient to God and obedient to Satan. Nor can we entertain any doubt of the corruption of the understanding also, when we see the counsel of covering themselves which Adam and Eve adopted, and by which they thought they were safe. Was it not, I pray you, the very extreme of folly, first to attempt impossibilities in trying to flee from God, whom no one can escape or avoid? And was it not in the next place greater folly still, to attempt that escape from the presence of God in so absurd a manner, as to believe themselves safe when hidden among the trees of the garden, when they must otherwise have known that no walls of iron nor mighty mountains of brass can save from the presence or the grasp of God?

All confidence in God being thus lost by sin, there now follows a horrible dread upon the will. And all wisdom and understanding being lost, those most beautiful gifts of God, there follows in their place the extremity of folly; such folly that men attempt impossibilities by means the most absurd. So inexhaustibly deep is the evil of original sin! And even all these calamities are but the prelude to that which is yet to come. For we are not yet brought to the judgment of God. Then follows:

V. 9. *And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

Here we have a description of the judgment of God. When Adam, terrified by the consciousness of his sin, fled from the presence and sight of God he found not only paradise, but the whole world too narrow in which to find a corner where to hide himself from God in safety. But all his anxiety makes manifest the folly of his mind in seeking a remedy for his sin by fleeing from his God. But he had fled from him much too far already. For his very sin was, that he, departing from God at the first, needed not therefore to flee farther from him still. But so it is. That is the very nature of sin, the farther a man departs from God, the farther he wants to depart. And thus the man who has once departed and apostatized from God, goes on departing and departing to all eternity. Hence it is truly said concerning the punishments of hell, that its greatest punishment is that the wicked there are always wishing to flee from God, but feel that flee they cannot. Just in the same manner Adam, though found out and apprehended of God, yet ceases not to attempt to flee out of his hands.

When therefore Moses here says, "Jehovah God called unto Adam," we are to understand that the Lord called him to judgment. But a question is raised here concerning the person by means of whom Adam was called of God, and it is by no means out of the way to suppose that all these things were carried on by the ministration of angels, and that an angel here acted in the place of God, as God spoke all these things to Adam. Just as magistrates when they say or do anything, say and do it not in their own person, but in the person of God, as his representatives. Hence it is that the Scriptures call those judgments, which are exercised and administered by appointed men, the judgment of God. It by no means displeases me therefore that it should be considered that Adam was here called by an angel, and that it was shown him by that same angel that all flight was impossible.

It is here especially to be noticed moreover that Moses expressly tells us that it was Adam who was called; seeing that it was to Adam alone that the Word of God was spoken on

the sixth day, concerning that tree of which they were both forbidden to eat. As therefore Adam alone heard the command, so he alone is first called to judgment. But as Eve herself also had sinned and departed from God, she also hears the judgment at the same time and becomes a partaker of the punishment.

The words, "Where art thou?" are the words of the law, spoken by God and reaching unto the conscience of Adam. For although all things are naked and open unto the eyes of God, as it is written, Heb. 4:13, yet he speaks unto our sense, feeling and understanding; for he sees us aiming at the one thing of fleeing away from him and attempting our escape from his sight and presence. When therefore God says, "Where art thou?" it is as if he had said, "Thinkest thou that I see thee not?" For he will have Adam to see and feel that though hidden he is not hidden from God! And that though he flees from God, from God he cannot flee. For this is the very nature of all sin; it causes us to attempt to flee from the wrath of God, from which wrath we find it impossible to flee. It is indeed the utmost folly to think that we shall find a remedy in fleeing from God, rather than in returning to him; yet it is the very nature of sin that the sinner cannot return to God. What then can we possibly conceive to have been the exceeding folly and state of mind in Adam? He had heard the voice of Jehovah, and yet he hoped that he could conceal himself from his presence; when lo! he was now standing before the tribunal of God and was demanded of God for punishment!

V. 10. *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

As it was the utmost folly that Adam fled from God, so in the utmost folly he answers him, so utterly deprived by sin is he of all wisdom and counsel. He now really wishes to teach God that he is naked, who had himself created him naked. Thus does he wholly confound himself, and betray and condemn himself out of his mouth. He confesses that he heard

the voice of Jehovah and was afraid. And had he not also heard the voice of Jehovah before, when Jehovah forbade him to eat the fruit of that tree? Why did he not then fear also? Why did he not then also hide himself? How was it that then he stood with uplifted countenance and with joy before him, rejoicing in his presence and delighting to hear him speak? Now he trembles at the sound of a shaking leaf! It is at least evident that he is no longer the same Adam he then was; he is totally changed, and become quite another man; he now looks about for a lie and a false cause for his defense. For how can it be true, that "the voice of Jehovah is the real cause of his fear," when before he feared not that divine voice, but heard it as the voice of his God with happiness and joy?

Learn then from this solemn history that perverseness and folly ever accompany sin, that transgressors by all their excuses only accuse themselves, and that the more they defend the more they betray themselves, especially before God! Thus Adam here attempts to conceal his sin and to adorn himself as innocent, in that he alleges, as the cause of his fleeing, not his having sinned, but his having heard the voice of the Lord; and he makes that to be the cause of his alarm and of his being ashamed because he was naked. Poor wretched man! He never thinks that he had no such fear as this when he heard the same voice of God at first. He never recollects that he was not then ashamed because he was naked. For as that nakedness was the creation of God, why should he the creature be ashamed of that which God had made! He then walked in all his nakedness in the sight of God and of the whole creation in paradise, perfectly secure and happy that such was the will of God and delighting in God on that very account. But now he is covered with shame, because he is naked and flees from God and hides from him on that account. Every one of these things is an argument by which Adam condemns himself, and betrays his present state of sin. And just in the same manner will the wicked condemn themselves in the final judgment, when all the darkness shall be driven away from all the hearts of men

and the sins of all men shall be read in the "book" when "opened"!

God knew perfectly well that Adam had sinned and was demned by the testimony of his own mouth, as having sinned guilty of death. Yet he calls him that he might be con- For he flees from God when he calls him, which fact was itself the very essence of sin, even as it is the very essence of righteousness to flee unto God as a refuge. This fleeing from God therefore is the strongest possible testimony of Adam against himself. Yet even still he vainly hopes that his sin can be covered by a lie, for he alleges as the real causes of his flight the voice of God and his own nakedness.

From this we learn therefore that such is the nature of sin, that unless God bring the medicine immediately after it is committed and call back the sinner to himself, he will flee from his God farther and farther, and by mendaciously excusing his sin he will add sin to sin until he runs at length into blasphemy and despair. Thus sin draws after it by its own weight as it were sin upon sin, and causes eternal ruin, until the sinner finally will rather accuse God himself than acknowledge his own sin.

Adam ought to have said, Lord, I have sinned! But this Adam does not. He rather actually accuses God of sin; and in reality he says, thou, Lord, hast sinned. For I should have remained wholly in paradise after my eating the fruit, if thou hadst remained perfectly quiet. For the words of Adam bear all this import in truth, when he says in substance, I should not have fled if thy voice had not terrified me from thy presence. Thus man, when accused of sin by his God, instead of acknowledging his sin, rather accuses God as being the cause of it and transfers his sin from himself and lays the blame of it on his Creator. Hence sin increases to infinity, unless God by his mercy come to succor the sinner. And yet Adam all the while considers this excusing himself and blaming his Creator, the highest wisdom. For he is so confounded by the terror of his conscience, that he knows not what he says nor

what he does. Although by thus excusing himself, he only accuses himself the more grievously and increases his sin to the utmost extent.

Let us however by no means think that all this happened to Adam only. Every one of us does the very same thing; nor will nature of herself ever permit us to do otherwise. For after having sinned we all rather accuse God than acknowledge our sin before him; just as Adam here did, who asserted that the voice of God was the cause of his fleeing from him; thus actually making God himself to be the cause of his flight. And next, upon the back of this sin quickly follows another and further sin. For he that spares not his Creator himself, how shall he be likely to spare the creature? Therefore Adam next charges God with his nakedness, thus making him the Creator of a thing that was vile and base. For by his sin Adam is so deprived of his senses that he turns the glory of his nakedness into a reproach to his Creator.

V. II. *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?*

Here the conscience of Adam is pierced with the true sting of the law. It is as if God had said, Thou knowest that thou art naked, then and therefore thou hidest thyself from me. But nakedness is my creature. Dost thou condemn that creature then as vile and base. It is not thy nakedness therefore that hath confounded thee, nor is it my voice that hath terrified thee. It is thy conscience that accuseth thee of sin, because thou hast eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree. This is the cause of thy flight from my presence. Here Adam being thus pressed by the law and by his conscience is in the midst of death; yea, in the midst of hell. For he is compelled to confess that there was no evil in his nakedness, because it was so created of God. But he was forced to acknowledge that the mighty evil was that he now had a guilty conscience concerning his nakedness, in which before he had gloried as in a beautiful adornment; and that he now dreaded that same voice of

God, which before he had heard with supreme delight.

It is to this state of mind, which the Lord now perceives in Adam, that the words of this passage expressly speak. As if Jehovah had said, Since thou hast an evil conscience and art filled with dread, most assuredly thou hast eaten of the forbidden tree. For thou receivedst no command from me that thou shouldst not commit murder nor that thou shouldst not commit adultery, but that thou shouldst not eat of the fruit of this tree. As therefore thou art filled with terror, thou thereby makest it manifest that thou hast sinned against that commandment.

Thus those very things which were Adam's thoughts, those same things he now hears from the mouth of the Lord. Adam was thinking thus: I have eaten the fruit, but I will not say that I have fled from God on that account. I will say nothing about my sin. I will say that I was afraid, because I was naked, and that I was terrified into flight by his voice. But while he is saying these things to himself he is compelled to condemn himself, and he hears his conscience within convicting him of a lie and condemning his sin. In addition to this accusation of his own conscience, the Lord himself now accuses him of his sin openly, and in the plainest words. But not even now can Adam be brought to the honest acknowledgment of his sin. For now follows,

V. 12. *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Only mark the true colors, the essential evil and real nature of sin. It is depicted in this excuse of Adam. It shows that a man can in no way be brought to an open confession of his sin, but that he will deny his sin or excuse it as long as he can find that there is any hope or any probable ground of excuse left him. For it was not so wonderful that Adam should at first hope that his sin could be covered, and that he should rather accuse God than acknowledge the sin he had committed. The great wonder was that after he was convicted in his own conscience, and after he had heard his sin declared from the mouth of God himself, he should still persist in excusing

that sin. For he does not say, "Lord, I have sinned; forgive me the debt of my sin; be merciful unto me;" for the very nature of sin is, that it will not suffer the mind to flee unto God, but instead compels it to flee from God. But he transfers all the fault from himself to the woman.

It is a well known rule, taught in the schools of legal and civil orators, that when a charge of crime is brought against the defendant, the act should either be denied totally or defended as having been done rightly. Adam here does both. He first of all denies his sin altogether and asserts that his terror arose, not from his sin, but from the voice of the Lord. And then when so far convinced of his sin in what he has done he attempts to defend the act, as having been done rightly and unavoidably. "If," says he to the Lord, "thou hadst not given me this woman, I should not have eaten the fruit." Thus he further lays all the blame of what he had done on God himself, and positively accuses him as being after all the real cause of his sin.

Wherefore there is no end to a man's sinning, when he has once turned aside from the Word. Adam at first sinned by unbelief and disobedience, and now he heaps upon that sin reproaches of God and positive blasphemy, saying in effect, It was not I who listened to the serpent; it was not I who was captivated by looking on the fruit of that tree; it was not I who stretched forth my hand to pluck the forbidden fruit. The woman whom *thou* gavest me did all this. In a word Adam has no desire to acknowledge his sin. On the contrary he wishes to be considered pure and clean.

This portion of the divine record contains a further description of sin and of the real nature of sin. For whenever the promise of the remission of sins or faith in that promise is not immediately at hand, the sinner cannot do otherwise than Adam did. If God had said, Adam, thou hast sinned. but I will pardon thy sin, then Adam would have acknowledged his sin with all humility and candor and with the utmost detestation of what he had done. But because the hope of the re-

mission of sin was not present to his mind on account of his having transgressed the commandment of God, he can see nothing, he can feel nothing but death, the certain punishment of such transgression. And because human nature cannot but be shocked at the sight of that certain death, therefore Adam cannot be brought to the confession of his sin, but he tries all possible means by which he has the least hope of warding off the blame of his sin. And thus does every sinner hate the punishment of his transgressions; and because he hates that punishment, he also hates the justice of God, and God himself, and endeavors by all means in his power to persuade both God and men that he suffers innocently.

Just in this manner does Adam here endeavor to lessen his sin by saying that it was not he who listened to the serpent, nor he who plucked the fruit. "The woman whom thou gavest me," says he, "offered me the fruit of this tree." In the same state of mind as Adam are those who, when they have come to a knowledge of the sins they have committed, filled with despair, either cut short their life with a halter or curse God as the cause of their transgressions. The words of Job are familiarly known: "Let the day perish wherein I was born; why died I not from the womb?" Job 3:3, 11. For such lay all the fault of their sin on God, and complain against God that they were ever created to destruction and damnation. Nor can any sinner do otherwise, when the hope of pardon and the promise of grace are not present to his soul. Because death is intolerable to human nature, therefore it produces desperation and blasphemies.

It is an utterance full of pain and of wrath against God, when Adam says, "The woman whom thou gavest me." It is as if he had said, thou thyself has laid upon me the burden of this evil; if thou hadst given to the woman some separate garden to herself and hadst not burdened me with thy command that I should live with her, I might have continued without sin. As therefore I have sinned, the fault is thine in adding to me a wife. In the case of Adam therefore is set before

us an exact example of all those who sin and who despair under their sin. They cannot do otherwise than accuse God and excuse themselves, for seeing as they do that God is omnipotent they consider that he could have prevented these their sins. So horrible is sin, whenever the minds of sinners are not soon relieved and lifted up with the promise of the forgiveness of sins. And this is the true effect of the law, whenever the law is alone, without the gospel and the knowledge of its grace, it always leads to despair and to final impenitence.

V. 13. *And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? (Why hast thou done this?) And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.*

Here the example of Eve is also set before us, who being corrupted by sin is seen to be in no degree better than Adam.

Adam wished to appear innocent, and laid the blame on God, because he had given him a wife. Eve also attempts to excuse herself and accuses the serpent, which also was a creature of God. She confesses indeed that she had eaten the fruit, but she says, The serpent, which thou createdst and which thou permittedst to go about in paradise, imposed upon me. Now is not this actually accusing her Creator and removing the fault from herself? Hence we see that sin is always and everywhere the same and works in the same way. It is never willing to be punished as sin, but ever wishes to appear to be righteousness. And as it cannot accomplish this it turns the blame from itself upon God; so that when God accuses a man of sin the man actually charges God with falsehood in that accusation. So that sin, from being a human sin, becomes positively a devilish sin; and the unbelief of the man is turned into blasphemy, and his disobedience into reproach against his Creator!

I term this a devilish and not a human sin; because the devil hates and accuses and condemns God, and justifies himself to all eternity; nor can he possibly from his heart say, "Lord, I have sinned; pardon my sin." Were it not so the devil would not eternally despair of pardon. But that pardon is impossible, as long as he acknowledges not his sin, but blas-

phemes God as exercising unjust cruelty against him as a creature without just cause.

Hence we see Adam and Eve so deeply fallen and sunk under sin, that they could not sink any lower. For upon their unbelief followed the disobedience of all the powers and all the members in man. Upon this disobedience, immediately afterwards, followed the excuse and defense of their sin. This defense was next followed by an accusation and condemnation of their God. This is sin's last step, to reproach God himself and to make him the author of sin. This nature of ours can ascend no higher than this in its sin against God. And these are the onward steps of sin, unless the minds of fallen sinners are lifted up by a confidence in God's mercy.

Wherefore the state of the Church under the pope, was most horrible; for in it was neither seen nor heard anything whatever which could lift up the mind of a sinner, laboring under his sin and guilt; except that once a year the history of the passion of our Lord was slightly taught. And the statement of that history showed forth in some slight manner the source from which pardon was to be sought. But everything else on every side led men away from the promise of the remission of sins to their own righteousness. Hence it was that we saw in many monasteries men alarmed by their sins through their whole life time, who were filled with despair as they walked about, and at length died in agony, worn out with sorrow and pains of spirit. And as to the rest of their brethren, this doctrine of pardon being wholly unknown, they did nothing but stand in their places and procure the protection of their saint by idolatrous prayers. Thus were these miserable creatures worn out and consumed with the most terrible pains of soul, without hope, without counsel and without any help whatever. Was not this then, I pray you, a horrible state of things?

Wherefore if the papacy and all the monasteries together could be overturned by the touch of one finger, it ought at once to be done on account of the whole papal church being this most wretched slaughter-house of consciences! For there is

nothing more horrible than for a man to be under the weight of his sins, and yet never to hear or have the remission of sins and the promise of grace. Now the pope was the very cause of the remission of sins being utterly kept out of men's sight. For no sound doctrine nor any true worship whatever was retained in the church. And if any were saved in these times they were saved by the bare annual recital of the sufferings of Christ, apprehended by faith, contrary to the will of the pope and in defiance of his opposition. For through him men in the extreme perils of their souls were brought down to the necessity of imploring the intercession of Mary and of the saints. For these sayings filled every place: that the mother Mary showed her breasts to her Son, and that the Son showed his wounds to his Father, and that the man was thus saved; not by the intercession of the Son, but by the intercession of his mother.

I earnestly entreat you therefore with all the persuasion in my power, to set the highest value possible upon the doctrine of the Gospel. For what do we see in this history of Moses that Adam and Eve suffered when their sin was before them, and this knowledge of the promise of grace and of pardon was out of their sight? The very same do we also see in the damnation of Satan; for as he is destitute of the promise of grace he is not able to cease from his sins, nor from his hatred of God, nor from his blasphemies against him. Hence it is that the condition of Adam was so different from that of Satan, and so much better and more blessed. For Adam was called to judgment that he might acknowledge his sin, that being terrified by his sins he might afterwards be lifted up again and comforted by the promise of the remission of his sins; as we shall now further see in this most beautiful part of the sacred history of Moses, in which we shall also find the preaching of Christ.

For as the issue of this whole transaction sets forth the very great goodness and mercy of God toward man, seeing that God calls him back to the remission of sins and to eternal life

through the *Seed* that was to come; so also these very beginnings of this divine mercy, if we view them aright, are much better and greater than Adam deserved at God's hand. For we have not here a display of that terrible majesty of God, which was witnessed on Mount Sinai, where there were thunderings and lightnings mingled with the loud soundings of trumpets. Here God approaches with the soft sound of the gentle breeze, signifying that he came in this case to seize with the tender hand of an affectionate Father. He does not drive Adam from him on account of his sin, but calls him away from his sin to himself. This fatherly care however Adam, overwhelmed with his sin and its terrors, does not at first understand or perceive; he does not consider how differently God deals with him than with the serpent. For he did not call the serpent to him. He did not ask the serpent why he had sinned, in order that he might call him from his sin unto repentance. He charges the serpent with his sin, and pronounces his doom. These things show us that Christ our deliverer interposed himself even then, between God and man as a mediator. For it was the greatest display of grace, that even after the sin of Adam God was not silent, but spoke; and that too in many and plain words, with the intent of showing forth evidences of his fatherly mind toward sinners. His carriage towards the serpent was altogether different. Wherefore although the promise concerning Christ was not yet given, it may be plainly discerned in the thoughts and counsel of God on this occasion.

Thus far therefore Moses has set before us the judgment which God exercised after the sin of the fall of our first parents. He calls them to his tribunal, and convicts them, and interrogates them, and hears them. They, poor creatures, desire indeed to escape that judgment, but they cannot; nay, while they attempt to excuse themselves they doubly accuse and betray themselves. The woman acknowledges what she had done. Adam attempts to conceal the fact, although according to the very nature of sin he does not wish it to appear to be really sin at all. For as long as grace is withheld from

the sinner it is impossible for him to do otherwise than excuse himself, and try to make his sin appear to be righteousness. God therefore is always compelled thus to contend with us by his laws, until he extorts from us the confession of our sins and brings us to justify him; as it is written in Ps. 51:4, where this confession is fully described. But as long as the law rules alone and galls the conscience, the conscience thus terrified cannot bring out this confession, as the examples of Adam and Eve here fully show.

From this portion of the sacred record of Moses the holy prophets drew many divine truths; for they studied this book of Moses with far greater diligence and stronger faith than we do. From this source they derived the following holy sentences: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," Prov. 28:1. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, for it cannot rest; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Is. 57:20, 21. "He that believeth shall not be ashamed," Is. 28:16. "The righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. 28:1. "The just shall live by his faith," Hab. 2:4. From this same place of Moses Christ also drew that memorable saying of his, which we find in the Evangelist John, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light," John 3:20. For it is the very nature of sin that whoso committeth sin desires to remain hidden in darkness, and not to be brought into the light, just as Adam covered himself with fig-leaves and fled to conceal himself among the trees.

And we must also here touch upon that passage of the Apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 2:13, 14, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." This passage nearly all interpreters understand to mean that Adam was not deceived, but that he sinned knowingly; not from yielding to the persuasion of the devil as Eve had done, but from being unwilling to distress the delight of his life, that is, his wife; and thus preferring the love of his wife to the command of God. And they attempt to render this interpretation likely and probable by saying, that the serpent revered the male

as his lord, but that he attacked the female, whom, although she was holy as the man, yet as being the weaker creature, he considered to be the better adapted to yield to his persuasion, and that therefore Eve was deceived by the serpent, and not Adam. Adam, they maintain, was deceived both by himself and by the woman, but not by the serpent; by the woman when she presented to him the fruit to eat; by himself when, because he did not see Eve die immediately when she had eaten the fruit, he was induced to believe that the punishment which God had threatened would not "surely" follow. Just as a thief, when he has found his theft to have succeeded once or twice, goes on stealing in security. Whereas had the law-officer or the gallows been kept before his eyes, he would have ceased to steal.

Wherefore I do not altogether condemn the above interpretation, for it makes both views to stand true, that Adam was deceived and that he was not deceived. He was not indeed deceived by the serpent as Eve was, but he was deceived both by his wife and by himself, when he persuaded himself that the punishment which God had said should follow would not really come. Then follows the execution of judgment upon all the parties concerned.

PART IV. THE SERPENT AND SATAN CURSED.

THE FIRST PROMISE.

I. V. 14. *And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

After judgment has been pronounced and the whole case completely gone through, follows the execution of judgment, in which, as we shall now hear, there is rendered to each party according to their work, but not one like the other. Now this passage claims our thoughtful attention in the first place, because there is not found throughout the five books of Moses so long a speech in the person of God. And in the next place,

because this divine speech contains no law whatever as to what the serpent or man was required to do. The whole speech is occupied in promising that good or threatening that evil, which should come upon each party concerned.

And it is worthy our particular observation here that, after the sin of the fall, no further law whatever was imposed on Adam, though nature in its state of perfection had a divine law set before it. The reason of this was, because God saw that nature, being now fallen and corrupt, could not only derive no help or relief from any law given to it, but that, being thus corrupted and also disorganized and confused altogether, it could not bear any syllable of law whatsoever. Wherefore God did not increasedly oppress nature, already thus oppressed by sin, with any further law of any kind. But on the contrary God mercifully applied unto sin as a terrible wound, a healing plaster, that is, the promise concerning Christ, still using that caustic, the curse on sin, which the devil had caused to be inflicted. For as wholesome plasters, even while they heal, yet corrode and pain the flesh; so the healing promise is so set before Adam that the threatened curse on sin should be added, to operate with it in curing the lust of the flesh. By the lust of the flesh I mean, not only that foul motion and itching of lust, but also "all manner of concupiscence" and uncleanness of soul, as Paul terms them, Rom. 7:8; Eph. 4:19, through which we are by nature inclined to idolatry, unbelief, self-security and all other horrible sins against the first and second Table. To curb and cure all this depravity of nature, we have need of the operation of this burning caustic, the curse of God on sin.

I would that I could handle the text now before us in a manner becoming its depth and dignity, for it embraces all that is glorious in the whole Scripture, containing in it the curse of God on Satan and the destruction of the seed of the serpent by the seed of the woman. The former part of the text is wholly figurative. God speaks to the serpent, but it is manifest that the serpent alone is not here to be understood as addressed by

God. For these are not the words of God as a Creator, as were those words above, when he said unto the beasts of the earth, "Be fruitful and multiply;" nor when he said to the earth itself, "Let the earth bring forth grass, and herbs, and trees, yielding seed after their kind." They are words of divine threatening and a declaration of mind and will, such words as God never speaks to an irrational creature, but to an intelligent creature only.

God does indeed address the "serpent" by name, but he is all the while especially speaking to Satan, who ruled in the serpent, and by the serpent deceived the first parents of mankind. Nevertheless as, on account of the sin of man, the lord of the whole creation, all animals and all trees perished in the flood, just as the subjects of a nation are often punished on account of the misdeeds of their prince, so it befell the serpent. That animal also was punished because of the sin of the devil, who had abused the serpent in making use of it to work so mighty an evil as the sin of the fall. God however intends, figuratively, to be represented under this punishment of the serpent, the deluging punishment of Satan.

The obscurity which lies in this figurative representation has been the reason why this text, which ought to be most clearly known and understood by all, has never to my knowledge been explained by any one with sufficient diligence and clearness. And I have often wondered what the fathers and the bishops could have been about, who, when occupied in the government of churches and in the condemnation of heretics, did not feel that they had a still more important duty to perform in devoting themselves with greater diligence to the explanation of such passages of the Scriptures as these. Such bishops and fathers possess nothing more than the name, for they may with more truth be called destroyers than watchmen or guardians of the churches. I am now speaking of those of our fathers and bishops who really excelled in holiness of life and doctrine. Even among these not one is found to have explained the text before us in any manner becoming its great dignity.

Perhaps those various engagements which generally beset the rulers of churches too deeply involve them to leave them time for the purpose.

The *disgrace of our more recent divines* is notorious. They have even shamefully corrupted this whole passage, and out of the neuter pronoun *ipsum* they have made the feminine, *ipsa*, which, with the most open wickedness, they have thus wrested, and have applied it to the Virgin Mary, "*She* shall bruise thy head," verse 15. I can pardon Lyra, who was as it appears a good man, but he conceded too much to the authority of the fathers, and hence he suffered himself to be drawn aside by Augustine, to the most weak and foolish allegorizings, which system Gregory also follows in his "*Morals*," maintaining that by the woman in this part of the sacred record ought to be understood the inferior power of reason, as by the man, the superior power of reason; and by her seed, the operation of good; but by the seed of the devil, his evil suggestions.

But what need, I pray you, friendly reader, is there of all such darkness of the most absurd allegories in all this clear light of the truth? But grant that we might with any propriety divide reason into two qualities or powers, the superior and the inferior. With how much greater propriety may we term that the inferior power of reason which is adapted to the government of domestic and political affairs, and not that which is concerned in swine-like pleasure and gratification? calling that the superior power of reason by which we contemplate those things which are separate from economy or polity, and which pertain unto religion, the solemn things of the Word, in which we do nothing operatively, but only contemplate and learn? Although we thus speak upon these things what have they to do after all with the sacred text before us? Do they not altogether encumber and keep out of sight its real sense, and substitute a spurious sense in its stead, a sense which is not only useless but pernicious? For what can reason do or what light can it give in the divine matter of religion?

There is also a further absurdity in this mode of interpreta-

tion, by which Eve is made to be the inferior power of reason. For it is perfectly evident that Eve was not inferior to her husband Adam in any sense whatever; that is, neither in body nor in soul. It is from this ridiculous mode of interpretation that all those profane disputations concerning free-will have arisen, and concerning the doctrine "that reason always prays for the best," etc., until all theology is lost in philosophy and *sophistical absurdities*.

Wherefore let us, casting away all such pernicious and absurd follies, enter upon a new road of interpretation, caring naught for having disregarded the footsteps of those who have gone before us. For we have the Holy Spirit as our guide, not setting before us in Moses a heap of absurd allegories, but teaching us through him the mightiest truths and the mightiest things which took place between God the Creator and man the sinner, and Satan the author of sin.

First of all then let us settle it as a fact that *the serpent here* spoken of by God was a natural and real serpent, but a serpent besieged and occupied by Satan, who spoke through and by that serpent. Let us next consider it to be a truth, that those things which God spoke to the serpent are not to be understood as having been spoken to the serpent abstractedly as a brute animal, but that the person immediately spoken to was Satan, to whom God was all the while more expressly speaking. By this manner of interpretation, I am sure that I retain the plain and simple historical and literal meaning, and a meaning in accordance with the whole passage; by which meaning, as divinely intended, the serpent remains a serpent though occupied and possessed by Satan, the woman remains a woman, and Adam remains Adam, all which is proved by what follows in the sacred narrative. For it is *not an inferior power of reason* and a superior power of reason, who begat Cain and Abel, as recorded in the following chapter, but Adam and Eve, that is, the first parents of mankind, who fell by sin into death and became subject to the dominion of Satan.

When therefore God says to the serpent, "Thou art cursed

above all cattle and above every beast of the field, upon thy belly shalt thou go," the divine meaning is not that which Augustine gives, and which his disciples follow. They understand that by "belly" is to be allegorically understood pride. But the divine mind in the passage is, that as Satan abused the serpent in effecting the sin of the fall, so the serpent is compelled of God to bear a part of the punishment of that sin and therefore is thus cursed above all cattle, that it might be the most hateful of all the beasts of the field. At the beginning of the creation it was not so; but now through the divine curse, such a nature has been imparted to the serpent, that the creature which before the curse was the most delightful and the sweetest of all creatures, is now hated and dreaded above every other animal of the creation. Hence we find by experience that we have a natural abhorrence of serpents, and that serpents as naturally dread and flee from us. Thus the serpent is indeed made to bear this curse as part of the punishment of sin.

These words however are not spoken unto the serpent only, God is dealing all the time with Satan in the serpent. It is on Satan that this sentence is pronounced, as his final judgment. It is Satan that is here placed before God's tribunal.

For God here speaks to the serpent in far different language from that which he used toward Adam and Eve, when he called them back in love from their sin. His language then was, "Where art thou?" "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" All these particulars indicate the love of God towards the whole human race; showing forth that God will seek after man and will call him back after he has sinned, that he may reason with him and hear what he has to say. All this was a sure announcement of grace. For although these words of God, spoken to Adam and Eve, were legal and judicial words; yet they set before them a hope by no means obscure, that they should not be condemned for ever.

But with the serpent and Satan God by no means dealt so mercifully. He did not call Satan to him and say, "Why hast

thou done this?" He pronounced upon him at once the sentence of judgment; and that too, in the most awful words, "Because thou hast done this." As if he had said, Thou, Satan, hadst sinned before this and hadst been condemned, when thou didst fall from heaven; and now to that sin thou hast added this one. Thou hast by the abuse of the serpent hurled man into sin also. Therefore in the first place the serpent shall bear this punishment; that whereas before it partook of that blessing which all other beasts also enjoyed; now it alone shall remain under my curse.

From all these circumstances it must follow as a manifest consequence, that the serpent before the sin of the fall was the *most beautiful creature among the beasts which God had made*, and most delightful to man; as are at this day kids, and lambs, and kittens to us, and also that it moved with its head erect; and moreover that it now creeps upon the ground is not a property of its original nature, but the consequence of the divine curse. Just in the same manner as they are the consequences of the curse, that the woman conceives in uncleanness, brings forth in sorrow, and nurses and trains her offspring with toils and griefs. Were there no curse the whole process of creation would be most pure and holy; the giving birth to children most easy and delightful, and the training up of children the highest pleasure. Sin therefore has not only utterly corrupted nature itself, but most basely defiled it.

And yet the human reasoners even of our day dare to affirm that the original properties of nature have remained essentially sound and whole, even in devils. But if the serpent, which Satan had abused to effect the sin of the fall, bore such a punishment on account of that sin; that whereas before it was the most beautiful of all creatures, it now on a sudden crawled on the ground upon its belly and drew after it its viperous tail before the eyes of Adam, and thus all on a sudden became an object of hatred and of dread; how can we doubt that the same was the utterly changed case with the man, who was the very one who had committed the sin and had imbibed into his

very nature the poison of Satan? As therefore the Egyptians beheld not without the greatest amazement the rod thrown down by Moses suddenly changed into a serpent, just so in paradise, immediately upon God's uttering this word of the curse, the serpent was changed from a form the most beautiful into an object the most disgusting and revolting.

And to this same curse pertains that which God moreover said, "And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The allegorists explain this, as meaning that Satan would render men given up to the love of earthly things one with himself by deceiving them. But as I have said, God is here speaking to the serpent as such and cursing the serpent, causing it to bear its punishment of the sin of the fall. For there are other beasts which also feed upon the earth, but the serpent eats the earth as its curse; that whereas before it had a certain peculiar gift of subtlety and of beauty, and of food also, which it enjoyed in common with man, it now bore as its punishment that the nature of its food was changed.

It is the glory of sheep, of oxen and of other beasts, that they feed on herbs and even on the fruits of trees, and also that they produce various things useful for the food of man, such as *butter, milk, their own flesh, etc.* The serpent also possessed this glory of his feeding in common with the other beasts. But now he is cast out from this society, and as it were from this common table and common feasting on account of the sin of the fall, so that he is not permitted to feed upon even the most useless herb; nor on apples, or pears, or nuts, on which even the mice feed. These he dare not taste. He eats the crude earth only. These are not my words, but the words of Moses; and they teach us that the nature of the serpent is entirely changed and wholly different from what it originally was.

And though I have said, and it is true, that it is to the serpent that God here speaks, and yet so speaks, that his words are directed all the time more expressly against Satan, as the following part of the narrative will still more plainly show;

yet I am by no means satisfied that those things spoken, which rightly apply to the nature of the serpent, should be transferred allegorically, as intended to be spoken to Satan, like Augustine transfers them and is followed by Lyra. For the serpent and Satan were intimately connected in the sin of the fall, though Satan was the principal actor and the serpent only the instrument. And therefore it is that they are made alike partakers of the punishment. The serpent however bears a corporal punishment only. But for Satan, the author and agent of the whole, a different judgment is prepared, even that judgment concerning which Christ speaks, John 16:11, when he says, "Because the prince of this world is judged." The description of this judgment will now shortly follow, as recorded by Moses in the succeeding verses.

Wherefore when many say that the devil, like the serpent, no longer walks erect and that he has lost his original form and stature, the things they say are true; but they are quite inappropriate here and have nothing to do with the right interpretation of the passage now in question. And when I said above, that the serpent before the curse of God upon it moved in an erect posture, I do not wish to be understood to mean that it moved in an upright position as man, but with its neck and head erect, as a stag or a peacock. To crawl on its belly therefore after the curse, was the divine judgment on the serpent.

That which now follows belongs expressly to Satan only. And the things here recorded of him by Moses paint forth his judgment in far more true colors than any of those foolish and out-of-place descriptions of the allegorists. They moreover set before us this strong consolation, that the devil is now so situated that he cannot attack and harm us at his liberty, as he wishes to do and would do, if the Seed of the woman stood not directly in his way.

II. V. 15a. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.*

These are the things which are spoken expressly and properly to Satan. And they contain his judgment. While in these

same words of his judgment, there is set before the godly their strong consolation. The things above spoken are historical, as I have said, and apply to the serpent, which because through the abuse of Satan it aided in effecting the sin of Adam and Eve, bears as his part of the punishment his ejection from the common life, as it were, and from the society of the other animals of the creation; being made so different from them that he dares not eat the same food nor live in any way like them.

The present passage might also be allegorically interpreted. But the allegories used would be far less appropriate, and they would not stand firm in the defense of the truth. For the facts of the case are these: Satan on account of his sin was cast out of heaven and condemned; and no longer goes about in his original form as an ox or a hind does, but creeps on the ground; which may signify that he does not attack the godly by open force, but uses wiles and devices for their harm and destruction; which devices nevertheless the godly when they look into the Word see and understand; and by them they perceive how vast his deformity is, and hence dread and abhor him. And certainly his creeping on the ground, and not walking upright, may well indicate that his tyrannical power is broken and destroyed, so that he cannot do so much harm to the Church as he otherwise would do. These allegories, we repeat, may be used in the interpretation of the present text; but they do not explain the meaning of Moses, and therefore they are improper.

Wherefore, when we speak of Satan, let us ever follow the other testimonies of Scripture upon the subject; for they are proper, certain and sure; such for instance as the following: "The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him;" and also, "When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own," John 8:44; and again, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. 5:8; and also, where Christ says, "The prince of this world is judged," John 16:11.

In a word, who does not plainly see that the testimony of the

present passage applies properly to Satan; and that it is to him that the Son of God is here opposed, expressly to prevent him from making any attack upon us with open violence, as if he had no certain Antagonist! The Church therefore, under this protection, is perfectly safe. And *not only is Satan deprived of the power of attacking the Church with any open violence, but his power and desire of harming anything or person else are also destroyed.* Were it not so, he would not suffer a single tree to grow to maturity. He would impede and crush all things that spring forth in the earth; and would prevent, not the birth of men only, but the bringing forth of beasts; and would destroy the safety of *everything.* This insatiable desire to harm and to destroy is fully manifest from his *inability to attack by open violence,* and from his doing whatever he does by the means of craft, guile and snare.

We should here moreover carefully observe that these things are not spoken by God for the devil's sake. For God does not deign to condemn Satan on his own account, by these his words; but he deems it sufficient to leave Satan to be *condemned by his own conscience.* All that God speaks to Satan, *he speaks for the sake of Adam and Eve;* that they may hear this judgment of God upon him and may comfort themselves, by thus hearing and seeing that God is the adversary to the nature of him, who had inflicted such a wound on man. For out of these very words of God to Satan, there begin to shine forth grace and mercy; yea, out of the very midst of that anger, which sin and disobedience had so righteously kindled. It is here in the very *midst of the heaviest threatenings,* that the mind of the Father discloses itself; of a Father, not so angry as to cast away his Son, but holding out salvation, yea, promising victory over that enemy, who had thus deceived and conquered human nature.

For though both had sinned in the fall, Satan especially, and man through Satan, yet the judgments now pronounced upon Satan and upon man are widely *different.* God does not join them together in one and the same punishment, as he might

righteously have done. He makes the widest distinction between them. For although he is angry with man also, who obeyed the *enemy of God, disregarding God himself,* yet the divine indignation against Satan is by far the greater. Satan God plainly convicts and condemns in the sight of Adam and Eve, so that Adam and Eve, from this very condemnation of their enemy, might have a little time to recover their breath; and might feel how much more blessed their condition was than that of Satan. The first part of the great consolation here graciously given lies in this: that the serpent was accused and cursed and together with the serpent Satan also, for Adam and Eve's sake. Not so much for Satan's judgment and damnation, as for Adam and Eve's comfort and salvation.

Wherefore, by this judgment of Satan that sun of consolation, which had been just before hidden as it were behind the darkness of certain heavy clouds, now rises above those clouds and shines with its most heavenly light on the *affrighted hearts* of Adam and Eve. For they not only do not hear themselves *cursed,* as the serpent was, but they hear God declare, that he has put them into the ranks of a constituted army against their condemned foe; and that too with the hope of an almighty help, which the Son of God the Seed of the woman should bring unto them. By this therefore the remission of their sins and their full reception into grace were plainly revealed to Adam and Eve; who were thus perfectly freed from their *sin and guilt, redeemed from death,* and delivered from hell and from all those terrors under which they were utterly sinking in the sight of God.

Such is the great consolation which arises from the fact so carefully to be observed by the godly, that God did not curse Adam and Eve as he did the serpent. All that God did to Adam and Eve was to put them into an army of continual battle with this enemy, that they might not live a life of ease and indolence. This very thing therefore turned out for the good of man.

But the chief part of the great consolation here vouchsafed

was, that although this enemy should ever war by subtlety and snares, yet that a Seed should be born, which should bruise the serpent's head. For hereby is set forth the final destruction of the tyranny of Satan; although that tyranny will never come to its end without a most terrible conflict; a conflict which must be fought out by man. But only reflect how unequal the conflict is; it is the "heel" only of the man that is in danger; his head is safe and invincible. On the other hand, it is not the tail nor the belly, but the "head" itself of the serpent that is to be bruised and crushed under foot by the Seed of the woman. And this victory is given also to us all; as Christ plainly declares when he says, that after the strong man armed shall have been overcome the spoils shall be divided. For the Christian is by faith at once made conqueror over sin, the law and death; so that the very gates of hell cannot prevail against him.

This first great consolation therefore our first parents and their posterity searched into and learned with all diligence, as being the original fountain and the fountain head as it were of all the promises. For they saw, that had they been left without this promise the blessing of generation would have indeed remained with men, as with all other animals of the creation, but it would have been only a begetting and a being born unto death. That great blessing bestowed of God upon human nature is here highly increased, yea, consecrated; seeing that the hope hereby added to the blessing of generation, is such that through it the head of Satan shall be utterly crushed; and that not only his tyranny shall be destroyed but that human nature itself, thus made subject to death through sin, shall attain unto eternal life. For Moses is now no longer dealing in his narrative with the natural serpent; he is now speaking of the devil, whose "head" is formed of death and sin; as Christ describes him when he says, John 8:44, that he was "a murderer from the beginning, and a liar, and the father of it." Therefore, whenever and wherever his power is destroyed; that is, when sin and death are taken away by Christ, what

remains but that the children of God shall be saved!

It was in this manner therefore that Adam and Eve understood this text and comforted themselves against sin and despair by the revealed hope of this future crushing of the serpent's head, by Christ, the Seed of the woman. And through this, their hope in the promise thus given unto them, they shall also rise again at the last day unto life eternal.

V. 15b. *He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Who is not filled with wonder, yea, rather with execration, at the malicious design of Satan in having attempted to transfer this divine text, so full and running over with consolation concerning the Son of God, to the Virgin Mary! For in all the Latin Bibles, the pronoun *ipse* is put in the feminine gender *ipsa*, "*She shall bruise.*" And Lyra, who was by no means unacquainted with the Hebrew language, was carried away by this error as by the violence of an overflowing and resistless stream into the same impious interpretation; so that in the face of its plain meaning, he interpreted the passage as applying to the blessed Virgin; making her the person, by whom the power of Satan should be broken through the mediation of her Son. And he applies to the Virgin also that passage in the Song, "Thou art terrible as an army with banners." And, although Lyra professes to hold this interpretation of the present passage as received from others, yet his sin is great in not refuting it. Many afterwards followed him. And all the more recent interpreters have perverted this most holy passage to serve idolatry, finding no one to stop or resist them.

All this however has arisen either from the ignorance or negligence of the rulers in the Church. Because these did not set themselves against idolatry, sound doctrine was by degrees suppressed and became extinct. And since we have now by the blessing of God restored the sound doctrine, these disgraceful beasts, given to serve the belly, plainly show that they care not for religion, but for their own benefices only. And because such idolatry promotes the interests of these men, they even

show their indignation at people being taught the truth. But these blind beings do not see that the Gospel is a doctrine of the divine nature, that those who receive it lose nothing by it but their sins and eternal death; and that they gain in their stead deliverance from all idolatry and from the dominion of Satan.

Wherefore let us render thanks to God that we have this passage also restored to its full integrity. Not that thereby any honor due to Mary might be taken from her, but that all idolatry might be shut out. For as to men saying that Mary crushed all the power of Satan by giving birth to Christ; if that be the true state of the case does not that same honor belong equally to all the other women who preceded Mary in the same line of geneology? Nay, a part of this same honor pertains to all the husbands also in Mary's line and to all her ancestors. For had she not descended from all these as her forefathers, she herself could not have had existence. For she was born by marriage according to the common order of nature. If Mary, by the act of giving birth to her Son, bruised the head of Satan, all the ancestors of Mary must of necessity be ranked in the same degree of dignity and honor.

The Scripture however teaches us very differently, when it says that Christ "died for our sins and rose again for our justification," Rom. 4:25; and when it said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. Wherefore let the blessed Virgin hold her place of due honor, as the woman whom God adorned with that high privilege above all other women, that she as a virgin should bring forth the Son of God. This honor however ought by no means so to be bestowed upon her, as in any way to take from her Son, our Lord, the glory of our redemption and of our deliverance from sin and death.

Moreover, the peculiar expression of the holy Scripture in this passage is most carefully to be held and guarded by us, as affording a truly wonderful light which opens unto us the depth of the divine goodness, revealed to us in the present sacred text; where we are taught concerning that enmity which

God put between the serpent and the woman; such an enmity that the Seed of the woman should crush the serpent with all his powers. This crushing, Satan perfectly understood at the time, and therefore it is that to this day he rages with so much hatred against our human nature. Adam and Eve on the contrary, raised up by the promise of this crushing, conceived the hope of their restoration in all its fulness. And being thus filled with faith they saw that their salvation would assuredly be God's peculiar care; seeing that God had expressly testified, that the male Seed of the woman should utterly defeat and crush this their enemy. For the words are divinely put together with a wonderful emphasis.

III. The divine expression here is, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." As if God had said, Thou, Satan, by means of the woman didst attack and seduce the man that thou mightest by means of sin be the head and lord over them. I therefore in like manner will execute my secret purposes against thee by means of the very same instrument. I will take hold of the woman, and by her I will produce a Seed; and that Seed shall bruise thy head. Thou by means of sin didst corrupt and make subject to death the flesh of the human nature. I will produce from that same flesh such a man, who shall crush and utterly defeat both thee and all thy powers.

By these divine words therefore both the promise and the threat were expressed with the most perfect plainness. And yet they were most obscure. For they left the devil in such a state of doubt and suspense that he held under suspicion all the women which brought forth from that time, fearing lest they should give birth to this Seed; though one woman only was designed to be the mother of this blessed offspring. Therefore as the divine threatening was expressed in a general term, "her Seed," Satan was so mocked thereby that he feared this Seed from every woman who brought forth.

In the same proportion, on the other hand, the faith of all mankind was confirmed. For, from the hour in which the divine promise was made, all men expected that promised Seed,

and comforted themselves against Satan. Hence it was that Eve, when she brought forth her first-born, Cain, hoped that she had now "gotten" that bruiser of the head of Satan. And though she was deceived in that hope, yet she saw that the promised Seed would assuredly at length be born at some time or other from her posterity. And thus, with respect to all mankind also, this promise was most clear and at the same time most obscure.

Isaiah threw some additional light upon this glorious promise when he said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," Is. 7:14. For it was then made certain that this Seed would not be born from the union of a man and a woman. But the prophet added certain other particulars, by which he still involved his prophecy in obscurity. In such obscurity therefore this most clear promise still remained until Mary had brought forth her Son. Of this birth then angels themselves were witnesses; and after the angels the shepherds and the wise men; until this birth was proclaimed abroad by the apostles, throughout the whole world.

This obscurity therefore tended to increase the concern and suspense of Satan to the highest degree. As it had been said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman;" so Satan suspected and held as his enemy every woman alike, who gave birth to a child from the time that word was spoken until Christ was revealed. On the other hand, with respect to man, this same obscurity increased and strengthened his faith. Though each woman saw that she was not the mother who gave birth to this Seed, yet they all believed and were fully assured that this Seed would be born from some other woman.

God having thus spoken individually or personally, if I may so express it, that very manner of expression tended most effectually to mock and rack Satan, and to console the godly and to raise them to faith and hope. Thus women continued to bring forth until the Flood; and afterwards also, until the time of Mary. But the seed of none of those women could truly be said to be the Seed of the woman, but might rather be

said to have been the seed of the man. But that which was born from Mary was conceived of the Holy Ghost and was the true Seed of Mary, the appointed woman. This the other promises also testify, which were made to Abraham and to David; according to which promises Christ was called "the Son of Abraham" and "the Son of David."

The meaning of the original promise here given Isaiah first revealed, when he prophesied "that a virgin should conceive and bear a son," Is. 7:14. Afterwards, a clearer explanation and confirmation of it was made by the angel in the New Testament. Wherefore I doubt not that there were many saints under the Old Testament, who did not understand this mystery, but who nevertheless fully expected that Christ would be born into this world of a woman, and that he would be the deliverer of the human race; though they knew not what would be the particular manner and circumstances of his birth. With this general knowledge they were content and by this knowledge they were saved; even though they knew not the manner in which Christ would be conceived and born. For this knowledge was reserved for the New Testament to reveal, as by the clearer and brighter light. And it was set forth in the first age of the Church with a greater obscurity, purposely on account of Satan, whom God willed to be mocked and racked in this manner that he might thereby have less rest and be more filled with fear on every side.

Wherefore after this great original promise had been thus set forth generally in the beginning and had by degrees been more circumstantially particularized, and then confined to the seed of Abraham; and further restricted by means of the patriarch Jacob to a certain tribe, the tribe of Judah; after this the devil became unconcerned about other peoples and tribes, and persecuted this one line of generation with marvelous cruelties and stratagems; until about the time of Christ it had been reduced to the extremest poverty and had become a hopeless trunk-root, from which no one could hope for either fruit or leaves. And hence it is that the Scriptures term that line of

succession a "stem" or bare root as it were of Jesse, Is. 11:1, signifying thereby a decaying trunk from which nothing whatever could be expected.

This hatred and this fury of Satan are the effects produced on him, which the Lord here predicts, when he warns the serpent of the enmity which he had put between his seed and the Seed of the woman. For Satan primarily sought this Seed of the woman with hostile hatred, through all the peoples, families and lines throughout the whole world. When the promise was transferred to Abraham and restricted to his posterity, we see from history by what various means Satan attempted to hinder its fulfilment. And when this glorious promise was further transferred to the line of Judah and restricted to that tribe, we behold with what horrible calamities it was oppressed and agitated, until at length it seemed to be wholly subverted and eradicated. So that at the time of the birth of Christ poor Mary was living at a long distance from Jerusalem in the little and insignificant town of Nazareth, and Jerusalem itself was possessed and governed by wicked heathen. *Wherefore most correctly and beautifully was this tribe of Judah compared to a dead and hopeless "stem" of Jesse.* But as God cannot lie, this "root," so much decayed and despaired of, at length blossomed forth.

Satan however did not even then cease from his cruelty, hatred and enmity against the Seed of the woman. While he lay in the cradle Satan sought him out by the instrumentality of Herod. So that the new-born Christ was compelled to live among the Gentiles in Egypt. After this also, Satan adopted and tried all possible means to destroy him, until finding him and seizing him, he threw him into the hands of the Jews and nailed him to the cross. No! nor could his inexhaustible hatred be satisfied even then. He feared him even as he lay in the tomb, so desperate was the enmity which was "put" between him and the Son of God! Nay, even now, when Satan sees the Seed of the woman sitting at the right hand of God, and, according to the old proverb, "out of gun-shot," he vents his

fury in every possible way against his Church and the poor helpless members of his body. Of all these sufferings and perils the clauses of the divine passage now before us were prophecies. From these same words nevertheless, in meditating upon which we ought to employ our whole souls, we derive a confidence in the Son of God, that he will bruise Satan utterly.

But to return to the text. This promise, as I have already said, is at the same time most clear and yet most obscure. For since God, as I have also observed, here uses the expression, "The seed of the woman" generally, he does it that he might cause all women alike to be suspected by Satan, and that he might thus rack the serpent with perpetual suspense and dread. The expression therefore is a wonderful *synecdoche*, "condensation of instruction." It bears a general reference to all individual women, and yet contains a direct reference to one individual woman only, to Mary and to her Seed, who was to become a mother without any intercourse with the male sex. For God, I repeat, thus willed all women to be suspected by Satan, while on the other hand he willed that a most sure hope should be left to the godly, which should lead them to expect this salvation from all parents until in the fullness of time the true mother should be revealed. As therefore the first clause of the passage, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," refers to all women in general; so this second clause, "her Seed" refers, with a special individuality, if I may so express myself, to that seed which should be born of Mary, of the tribe of Judah, who was espoused unto Joseph.

This text therefore contains that glorious promise which revived Adam and Eve and raised them again from death unto that life, which they had lost by their sin; though the life to which they were thus raised again was rather a life hoped for than a life possessed; as Paul also frequently speaks when he uses the language, "We die daily." For although we do not wish to call the life which we live here death, yet it is in truth nothing more or less than a continual living on to death. For

as he who is infected with a pestilential and fatal disease begins to die from the moment of his infection; so from the moment this life of ours is infected by sin, it can no longer properly be called life on account of that sin and death, its sure punishment. For we begin to die even from our mother's womb.

But by baptism we are restored to the life of hope, or rather to the hope of life. For this is the true life, which we live, before God, in our renewed state. Before we come unto that life, we are in the midst of death. We are ever dying and rotting on the earth like other carcasses are; as if there were no life at all in us. But we who believe in Christ possess a hope that we shall be raised again at the last day unto the life eternal. It was in this manner also that Adam was raised again from his state of death by sin through this promise, thus spoken by the Lord. Not that he was raised to a perfect life; for he did not as yet regain that life which he had lost. But he conceived in his soul a hope of that perfect life, when he heard that the tyranny of Satan was thus to be bruised and destroyed.

Under the divine mind and promise, declared in this text therefore, is included redemption from the law, from sin and from death. And by the same text is set forth the plain and certain hope of resurrection from the dead, and of being called into another life after the present. For if the "head" of the serpent is to be destroyed, most certainly death is to be destroyed also; and if death is to be destroyed, with equal certainty that which deserveth death, namely, sin, is also to be abolished. And if sin is to be abolished, so also is the law; and not only so, but that obedience which was lost is to be restored. And as all these things are promised through this Seed of the woman, it is perfectly manifest, as a natural consequence, that human nature since the fall can neither take away sin by any powers of its own nor escape death, the just punishment of sin, nor regain the obedience to God, which it has lost by the sin of the fall. For all these things require a greater power, a mightier strength than is possessed by man.

Hence it was absolutely necessary that the Son of God should become a victim or sacrifice for us, that by the offering of himself he might accomplish all these things for us; that he might take away sin, swallow up death and restore unto us the obedience which we had lost. All these treasures therefore we do possess in Christ, but in hope. Thus Adam, and thus Eve, lived and conquered by this hope. And in the same manner all believers live and conquer, by the same hope, and will so live and conquer until the last day. Death is indeed a horrible and invincible tyrant; but the divine power thus makes that, which is in all things horrible, nothing; just as the same power of God made out of that which was nothing all things. For only behold Adam and Eve. They were filled with sins and with death. But as soon as they heard the divine promise concerning the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's "head," they were comforted by the same hope which comforts us, that death shall be destroyed, and sin shall be abolished, and that righteousness and life and peace shall be restored. In this hope did our first parents live and die, and on account of that hope they were truly holy and righteous.

In the same hope do we also live. And when we come to die, we hold fast this hope of eternal life for Christ's sake, which hope the Word always sets before us, while it commands us to trust in the merits of Christ. But in vain do we expect to attain unto that perfection in this life, that we should be altogether righteous, that we should love God perfectly and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. We do indeed begin and make progress, but sin which is in our members ever wars against us and is ever present; so that it ever mars or altogether prevents this our obedience.

As therefore this life of ours, on account of the death within us and before us, may truly be called a death; so righteousness is altogether buried under our sins. It is in hope therefore alone that we hold fast life and righteousness, as things altogether hidden from our sight, but which will be revealed in their time. Meanwhile our life is a life in the midst of

death; and yet, in the midst of this death, we hold fast the hope of life by the teaching, commanding and promising Spirit of God. This consolation is blessedly set forth in, Ps. 68:2, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." For we ascribe to our God the great glory that he not only helps us in this temporal life, as the devil sometimes stands by his worshippers, as is manifest from numberless examples among the heathen; but the glory which belongs to our God, is that "to the Lord our God belong the issues from death;" that he delivers from death those who are oppressed thereby on account of their sins and translates them into eternal life, Col. 1:13. And our God does this as Moses here teaches us by crushing the "head" of the serpent.

In this part of the divine history of Moses therefore we have Adam and Eve restored, not indeed perfectly into that life which they had lost, but into the hope of that life, by which hope they have escaped, not indeed the first taste of that death, but the whole eternal substance of it. That is, although their flesh was sentenced to suffer and was compelled to suffer a temporal or momentary taste of death, yet, on account of the promised Son of God, who should crush the head of the devil, they hoped for a resurrection of the flesh and a life eternal after the temporal death of the flesh, which hope we also have.

Next follows the other part of this divine speech, in which God first threatens her temporal punishment to the woman and then to the man his temporal punishment also.

PART V. THE PUNISHMENT INFLICTED ON OUR FIRST PARENTS.

V. 16. *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

This is the punishment which was inflicted on the woman; but a punishment full indeed of joy and gladness, because it

varied not in the least from the sentence just before pronounced on Satan. For seeing that the glorious promise still remained that the head of the serpent should be crushed, there was a sure hope of a resurrection from death. And whatever is imposed on man as the punishment of his sin is possible to be borne, because this hope remains to him firm and sure. And this is the reason the Holy Scriptures are so very careful not to say anything in the punishment of the woman, which should be contrary to or at all militate against the sentence just before pronounced against the serpent. God did indeed impose a punishment on the woman, but he still left her the hope of a resurrection and of a life eternal. The death which she had deserved by her sin God transferred on the other and less honorable part of man, namely, on the flesh; that the spirit might live, because of righteousness through faith as the apostle says, Rom. 8:10, "The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

The woman therefore is subject to death as to the flesh, but as to the hope set before her she is free from death. For that divine word, by which God threatens the devil with the "Bruising of his head," remains ever sure to her. The animal life therefore hath, as here declared, its cross and its death; as Paul also said, "The natural body dies, but is raised a spiritual body," 1 Cor. 15:44. So also in this natural or animal life there remains marriage, and the woman experiences those punishments on account of her sin, which the Lord here inflicts upon her; that from the time of her conception and at the time of giving birth and rearing children, she endures various pains and perils all that part of her life which she lives in a child-bearing state. All these evils and sorrows however pertain to the animal life or to the flesh itself only. But there remains to her all the while the hope here given her of a spiritual and eternal life after this present life.

This punishment of the woman therefore, if we truly and rightly consider the whole matter, is in its holy reality a glad and joyful punishment. For although the righteous burdens

imposed are painful to the flesh to bear, yet by means of these very burdens and punishment, her hope of a better and eternal life is actually strengthened. For Eve on the present critical occasion hears in the first place that she was not cast off of God for her sin. And in the next place she is not by her punishment deprived of that blessing of generation and fruitfulness which was promised to her and freely given to her of God before her sin. She sees that she still retains her sex; that she is still a woman! She sees that she is not separated from her Adam, to remain and live alone, separated from her husband. She sees that the glory of maternity is still left her; she may still be a mother! And all these blessings of this present natural life are left to her, in addition to that promised hope of life eternal. This multitude of mercies, which was still reserved for her, no doubt wonderfully revived and gladdened the mind of Eve. Nay, a greater and more real glory still awaited her; she not only retained the blessing of fruitfulness and of continuing in marriage union with her husband, but she possessed also the sure promise that from her should come that Seed which should "bruise the head" of Satan.

Eve therefore, without doubt, in this her most sad experience, for sad it must have appeared to her, had yet her bosom filled with joy. And it is very likely that she consoled her Adam with words like these; "I have sinned. But only see how merciful a God we have! What large blessings, both temporal and spiritual, has he still left to us sinners. Wherefore, we women will cheerfully bear this labor and this sorrow of conceiving and bringing forth children, and of obeying you, our husbands. This is indeed fatherly anger! for we have still remaining also the promise that the 'head' of our enemy shall be 'crushed:' and promise that we shall be raised again unto another life after the death of our flesh through our Redeemer. The greatness of all these blessings and this infinite multitude of benefits far surpass whatever of curse or punishment our Father has been pleased to lay upon us." These and like conversations Adam and Eve, no doubt, often held together to

alleviate their temporal sorrows.

In this same manner also, ought we to contemplate the unspeakable treasures we possess in our hope of the life to come and by such meditations ought we to lessen the troubles of the flesh. This is what we find the Apostle Paul doing, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18, "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Now tell me if all the temporal afflictions which may be laid on them, will not be borne resignedly and patiently by those persons who are enabled to lay hold of the hope of future glory and to believe in God, here promising the "crushing of the serpent's head," and who can moreover look upon those temporal blessings which remain to us; that our Lord hath given us this whole world to enjoy, and that he has given us wives, homes and children, and has preserved all things to us and increases them by his blessing? And will they not say, "That is not the anger of a judge nor a tyrant, but of a father!" On the other hand however, they will behold the anger of the judge falling upon the serpent. In his case there is not only no deliverance promised, but a certain "crushing of his head" foretold. And this anger of the judge Satan felt at the time, and he feels it still. And it is on this very account that he rages with such great and unceasing fury against the Church and the Son of God, until the last day shall come.

The divine threatening therefore in this passage where the Lord threatens Eve with the sure punishments of her sin, was indeed a heavy threatening. But out of the midst of those very punishments there beamed forth unspeakable mercy. And this mercy so revived and strengthened Eve that she rejoiced with a heart full of gladness, even in the midst of her sorrows. And as to ourselves we feel how necessary these punishments are to crucify and keep under the flesh. For how could we be humbled if our nature were not pressed down to the earth

with burdens like these? Eve therefore experienced and every woman of her station and duty must experience these sure calamities. These sorrows must be multiplied unto all women. They must both conceive in sorrow and bring forth in sorrow.

It is moreover worthy of observation, that the Hebrew expression here used is *RAB*, which signifies both a continuous and distinct quantity; conveying to us the thought that these great and many and various sorrows, thus righteously inflicted on Eve, were such as she would not have had to endure, if she had not fallen by sin; and the expression also implies the sorrows and punishments inflicted particularly on conception and childbirth. This same expression signifies by its implied meaning the whole of that time, "conception," during which the child is borne in the womb, which time is afflicted with great and various weaknesses, pains and diseases. The head, the stomach, the general health and the appetites are variously and greatly affected. And after the child is matured and the birth is at hand, the greatest sorrow of all is endured; and the child is not born without great peril even of life.

When the heathen and those who have no knowledge of God or of his works see these things, they take such offence at them that they form the conclusion that, on account of these various troubles, it is not becoming a wise man to marry at all. And true it is that the female sex is far more deeply humbled and afflicted, and bears a punishment far more heavy and severe than men. For what sufferings of the body, equal to those we just described, does man endure? But by marriage the husband does take upon himself as it were a part of these punishments of original sin; for the husband cannot see his wife endure all this pain and sorrow without much distress in himself. So that many wicked men prefer living a life of profligacy to a life of marriage.

Against such wicked sentiments as these the godly will arm and console themselves; and by true wisdom will set against these evils the certain and far greater blessings which attend the married life. Hence the ancient heathen poet Pindar, in his

Ode to Hiero, King of Syracuse, condemns this perverseness in ignorant men. Though God, says he, is ever wont so to dispense his benefits as to leave some evil intermingled with them, yet none but the wise and good can carry themselves aright under them. For they adorn their prosperity; and under its bright colors they hide the adversity which they endure, setting their prosperity ever foremost to be seen of men:

"To one good thing, two evil things,
The gods appoint. Fools
Know not how to adorn their ills.
But wise men do: making the
Worst, to wear the best appearance."

PIND. *Pyth. Ode* iii. 145-150.

And this is what the godly ought ever to do in this their solemn case. The punishments, to which women are subject on account of the sin of the fall, are indeed great. But is there not in marriage a blessing which infinitely surpasses all the punishments of original sin with which it is afflicted? Have not those who are married in the midst of their great troubles that sure hope of immortality and eternal life which comes to them through the Seed of the woman!

Nay, the troubles and trials themselves of marriage are not without their benefit. They all tend to break down and humble our nature, which cannot be humbled without the cross.

And in the third place there is left to be enjoyed in these great bodily afflictions the peculiar glory of motherhood: that high blessing of the womb! This was a blessing which even the wise among the heathen so greatly admired and so loudly lauded. And other good gifts of marriage also remain to us and are enjoyed by us. We are borne in the womb of our mothers, we suck their breasts, we are nursed, we are nourished, and by the devoted attention and care of our mothers we are preserved in infancy and childhood. To view the great and solemn matter of marriage thus, is "to set our blessings in their fairest light." This is not to look at our evils only, but to delight ourselves in the benefits and the great blessing

of God in his holy ordinance of marriage; and under those benefits and that blessing, to sink out of sight the various punishments, corruptions, pains and afflictions by which it is compassed.

But the godly alone understand these things and do them. They alone view marriage aright. They alone give honor unto women, as unto the weaker vessel; because they see them to be their companions of immortality as well as of mortality, and as being heirs together with them of the inheritance in heaven. The godly moreover behold them highly honored of the Lord by the blessing and the glory of motherhood. By them we are conceived, from them we are born, by them we are nursed in infancy.

And for myself I have often contemplated with wonder and delight the peculiar adaptation of the female body for nursing infants. How aptly, becomingly and gracefully, do even little girls carry infants in their bosom? And with what appropriate gestures do mothers dandle their infants, especially when the crying babe is to be pacified or quieted so as to be laid in the cradle? Only tell a man to do these same things and he will set about it as an elephant would attempt to dance; so awkward are his motions, if he has only to touch a babe with his finger, to say nothing about all those other offices and attentions which a mother only can perform. Whoever therefore rightly views and estimates the sacred matter of marriage will receive all these offices and services of the woman as signs and proofs of the blessing of the Lord, by which God testifies that the female sex, though thus severely punished on account of their original sin, are very dear to him and his peculiar care. Wherefore let these meditations suffice concerning the first part of the divine curse on the original sin of Eve.

The other part of the curse lies in the particulars of the marriage union. If Eve had not sinned, her childbirth would not only have been without any pain, but even her union with her husband would have been most pure and utterly free from all shame. There would have been no more shame attached

to those connubial circumstances than there is in a man's taking his meal with his wife and conversing with her at the dinner-table. The bringing up of children also would have been most easy and full of pleasure. But all these blessings were lost by the sin of the fall, and in their place are endured by the woman all those too well-known evils of pain and labor in carrying the child, bringing it forth and bringing it up. Wherefore just as a graceful maiden weaves a beautiful chaplet from the flowers of the garden and bears it on her head, not only without any molestation but with the greatest pleasure and the greatest pride; so, if Eve had not sinned, she would have borne her child in her womb not only free from distress or inconvenience, but with the utmost pleasure and pride. Whereas now, in addition to all those pains of bearing the child and giving it birth, she has rendered herself subject to the power of her husband; while before she was wholly free and in no sense inferior to the man, and was an equal partaker of all the endowments bestowed by God on him.

This then is the punishment of the woman, which righteously fell upon her as the consequence of original sin, which she bears quite as unwillingly as she does those pains and troubles, righteously imposed on her flesh in child-bearing. Wherefore the rule and government of all things remain in the power of the husband whom the wife according to the command of God is bound to obey. The husband rules the house, governs the state politic, conducts wars, defends his own property, cultivates the earth, builds, plants, etc. The woman on the other hand as a nail driven into the wall sits at home. Hence it is that the Apostle Paul calls women *OIKOUBOUS*, "keepers at home," Titus 2:5. For this same reason the ancients represented Venus sitting on a shell; because as the shell-fish always carries its shell with it, so the woman ought always to be constantly at home attending to her domestic affairs; as one deprived of the right of governing outside of her house and in public, and as one whose duty is never to go beyond her own most private and domestic concerns in the matter of government.

Had Eve therefore stood in the truth she would not only have been free from all subjection to the rule of the man, but she herself also would have been an equal partaker of government, which now belongs to men alone. Women however are generally impatient of this burden and by nature aim at the assumption of that, which by their sin they have lost; and when they can do nothing more they at least show their unwillingness to bear the yoke by a murmur of discontent. Whereas they are not competent to undertake the management of men's affairs, of teaching, ruling, etc. Of bearing children, and of feeding, nursing and bringing up their offspring they are capable. In this manner therefore was Eve punished; and all womankind endure the same curse. But, as I have before said, this very punishment is a joyful one, if you look at the hope of eternal life which springs from her Seed, out of the midst of her child-bearing pains; and if you consider also the glory of maternity or motherhood left to her.

II. V. 17. *And unto Adam he said, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."*

The husband was last in the transgression, 1 Tim. 2:14, and therefore the punishment is inflicted on him last. But the Lord threatens no punishment to the man here in generation. God makes no mention of the pains of generation in his case. Therefore the punishment of the husband lies in the fury of lust, inflamed by the poison of Satan throughout his whole body, but without the pains of the woman. His duties as husband however are laden with punishment. For, as it belongs to the man to feed, to rule, to guide and to educate his family, those duties cannot be performed by him without great trouble and distress nor without the hardest labors. The duty laid of God upon the woman is to obey her husband; but with what difficulty is this very performance of her duty obtained! I say nothing about the rule of the man over others, who are not

of his immediate family and household.

Hence it was that the philosophers of old were led to wonder from what cause in nature it could possibly arise that men could govern any wild beast more easily than rule their fellow-men. This is the ground of Xenophon's complaint, when he says, "It is easier to manage any other animal than to rule man." The duties of a husband indeed are great and noble, which are to cultivate the earth and to perform any other work by which his wife and children may be supported to rule his house and family; to govern states and kingdoms; and to teach and instruct those of his own house and others also unto godliness and moral duties. All these noble duties however are always attended with their punishment of original sin. They cannot be performed without the greatest distress, of which we have examples before our eyes daily.

First of all on account of the sin of Adam himself the earth is cursed. For the expression the Latin translation renders "in thy work," *in opere tuo*, is in the original Hebrew BAABURECHA, "for thy sake," *propter te*. The Latin interpreter was deceived by the similarity of the letters. He read the Hebrew as being BAABUDECHA. For ABAD signifies "to cultivate the earth" or "to till the ground."

From this it appears how awful the calamity of sin is, seeing that even the earth, which is innocent in itself and committed no sin, is nevertheless compelled to bear sin's curse; and as the Apostle Paul expresses it, Rom. 8:20, 21, is "made subject to vanity," from which however it shall be delivered in the last day and for which also it waits in earnest expectation, verse 19. For Pliny calls the earth "a kind, gentle and indulgent mother and also a perpetual handmaid of service to mankind." And yet as the Apostle Paul here shows, this kind earth herself is compelled to bear her curse also. In the first place, because she does not bear those good things for man and beast which she would have borne had man not fallen; and in the next place, because she does bear many hurtful things, which but for man's sin she would not

have borne, such as the destructive weeds, darnel, tares, nettles, thorns, thistles, etc., to which may be added, poison, noxious reptiles and other like hurtful things, brought into the creation by sin.

For my own part I entertain no doubt that before the sin of the fall the air was more pure and healthful, the water more wholesome and fructifying, and the light of the sun more bright and beautiful. So that the whole creation as it now is reminds us in every part of the curse inflicted on it, on account of the sin of the fall. Yet some remnants of the original blessing of God still rest upon it; in that being compelled as it were to do so by the hard labor of man, it still continues to produce things necessary for our use, although those very things are impeded and deformed by briars and thorns; that is, by useless and noxious trees, bushes and weeds, which the divine anger ceases not to sow among them.

This original curse moreover was afterwards greatly increased by the Deluge, when all the good trees were rooted up and destroyed, barren sands accumulated and both noxious herbs and beasts multiplied. In those very places where Adam before his sin used to walk among the most fruitful trees, over most fertile meadows and in the midst of roses and flowers of every kind, there nettles and briars, and other annoying plants abound; and in such quantities that the good and useful plants are well nigh choked by them. Only look at the field now just prepared by the plow for receiving the seed; no sooner is that seed sown than immediately there spring up the destructive darnel and the tares, which grow even faster than the fruits which are for the use and nourishment of life. And if the former were not plucked up by the constant care and toil of the husbandman, they would daily grow to such an extent that these very destructive weeds of the curse would choke the good seed altogether. The earth herself indeed is innocent and would of its own free nature bring forth all things which

are the best and most excellent. But she is prevented from doing so by the curse inflicted on man for his sin.

As therefore woman endures the punishment of sin in her body, a punishment she is mercifully enabled to bear, with which she is afflicted in the bringing forth of children; so the husband has to endure his punishment in the government of his household; while, with all kinds of difficulty, labor and distress, he rules his house and provides for his family. And justly so; for it was on his own account that the field was cursed. Whereas before he sinned no part of the earth was either barren or corrupt, but all places in it were marvelously fertile and productive; but now, on the contrary, not only is it in many parts entirely barren, but even those parts, which are otherwise fruitful, are deformed and defiled with tares, weeds, briars and thorns. And this calamity is indeed great, and might well drive Adam himself and us all to choose strangling rather than life. But the whole mighty evil is rendered endurable by the promise of the woman's "Seed," by which the punishment of eternal death, which is infinitely greater than all this punishment of life, is wholly taken out of the way.

That which next follows, "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life," are words quite easy to understand. For who knows not how laborious the life of an husbandman is. It is not enough that he prepare the ground for receiving the seed, which is attended with great and various labor; but even when the corn is yet in the blade, each single day almost demands of him its necessary labor and toil; not to mention those almost infinite hindrances of weather, noxious vermin, etc., all which greatly augment his pain, labor and suffering. Whereas before the sin of the fall, not only were there no such evils and hindrances in existence, but the earth, had Adam not sinned, would have brought forth all things quicker than the hope or expectation of man, as it were, "unsown and unplowed."

Moreover this calamity, which sin brought into the crea-

tion, was in many respects lighter and more tolerable in their state before the Flood than in the condition of the world which followed. In the antediluvian state of the curse no other mention is made than of thorns, and thistles, and labor, and sweat; but now we experience numberless other additional evils. How many diseases and pestilential injuries are inflicted on the standing corn, on the plants of pulse, on trees, and finally on all the productions of the earth? How many evils are wrought by destructive birds and noxious caterpillars? Add to these evils, extremes of cold and frost, thunderings, lightnings, excessive wet, winds, rivers bursting their banks, fissures of the earth, earthquakes, etc. Of none of these is any mention made in the state of things under the curse before the Deluge. My firm belief is therefore that as the sins of men increased the punishments of those sins increased also; and that all such punishments and evils were added to the original curse of the earth.

If however any one should think that Moses embraced all these latter evils, in his expression of the divine curse, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," I certainly will not contend with him. But no one surely can deny that all these evils and punishments increased as the sins of men increased. In the same manner, as in the present day, we experience more frequent calamities befalling the fruits of the earth than in former times. For the world degenerates and grows worse and worse every day. Most plainly therefore may we here trace the evidences that all these increased calamities were inflicted on Adam as an instruction to him in the first age of the world that an increased severe discipline was necessary. But by degrees this discipline, down to the times of Noah, gradually became loosened and men began to live more dissolutely and wickedly, until at length the earth was filled with violence, injustice and tyranny. And then it was necessary that either heavier or more frequent punishments should be inflicted; just as severer diseases require severer remedies.

When therefore in the time of Noah the whole earth had been deluged by the Flood and every living creature except a few souls, had been utterly destroyed, the age which immediately succeeded that of Noah lived without doubt in the fear of God. But as years rolled on even these men became depraved, being corrupted by Satan. So that an example more terrible in its nature still was necessary to be made; as is shown in the awful destruction of Sodom and its neighboring cities, Gen. 19:24. Hence it is that the Scripture says that it was necessary that the Amorites should "fill up the measure of their iniquities," Gen. 15:16.

So also the whole synagogue of the Jews, when it had fallen away into heathenism and open ungodliness, was utterly destroyed. In like manner also Rome herself, as long as her ancient discipline stood sound and unrelaxed, mightily increased her power on every side; but when the storms of vice pressed hard upon her it became necessary that her punishments also should draw upon her more closely.

About the time when the Gospel began to be known among us in Germany the age became somewhat moral and tolerable. But now, when the fear of God can scarcely be found, and when vices of every description increase daily, false prophets rising among us, what else can be expected than that, when we have filled up the measure of our iniquities, either the consummation of all things will overtake us or that Germany will suffer the due punishment of her sins; so universally true is it that when sins increase, the punishments of them increase also.

According to that which I have said concerning the calamities which rest upon all the productions of the earth; so my full belief also is that even the bodies of men, in the primæval ages of the world, were far more healthful than they are now. This is proved by that longevity, so incredible to us, which was enjoyed by the men of the primitive ages of the world before the Flood. Accordingly we do not find the Lord pronounced in the present passage any threats on Adam concerning apo-

plexy, or leprosy, or the scrofula, or any other of the destructive diseases.

When I was a child the small-pox was unknown in Germany. It was first known among us when I was about fifteen years of age. Now however even infants in the cradle are attacked by it. When this disease first made its appearance it filled every one with dread. But now there is so little concern about it that friends often say to each other in a pleasant joke, "The smallpox take you!" So also, even unto this present age, the sweating disease has been a prevalent malady, or as medical men term it, an epidemic. For it is universally seen that as each country of the earth has its peculiar blessings, the countries are visited and afflicted with sure and corresponding calamities. But the disease to which I have referred made its first general appearance in those midland parts of Germany, which were the farthest distant from the sea. And what is abhorrent to relate, some persons have serpent-like worms in their bowels, and worms even in their brain. These last diseases were utterly unknown, I think, to the physicians of old, who nevertheless enumerate nearly four hundred different kinds of disease. Now if all these various diseases had existed in the first age of the world, how could Adam and his descendants, down to the times of Noah, have lived to such extremely old ages? Wherefore Moses, as I have said, here makes mention only of the barrenness of the earth and of the difficulty of man's procuring his bread.

Indeed if any one wishes to assume the orator and to display the copiousness and eloquence of his language, let him in opening the contents of the passages before us, enumerate all the diseases and evils of the human race, which are the consequences of sin. Were he to commence that task, he would find a sea of calamities of every kind so boundless, that filled with awe and dread, he would be inclined to beg of God this one thing, that he might not be permitted to live even one hour in the midst of so many and mighty perils!

But why do we dwell so long on these diseases only? All

the creatures of God together as one mighty army are against us, and all but armed for our destruction. How many are there, whom the fire and the water destroy? How much peril threatens men from ferocious and venomous beasts and other noxious creatures? Nor do they infest our bodies only, but our food of every kind, intended for our nourishment. Not to mention that we ourselves also rush upon each other in hostile slaughter and murder. Just as if there were not pestilences and destructions enough besides, which threatened us on every hand.

And if you look at the general pursuits and objects of men, what is this life of ours but a daily scene of contention, deception, snare, rapine and murder? And all this in addition to those evils and calamities which hang over our heads from the external things we have mentioned. My belief is that all these things did not exist before the Deluge; or, if they did exist, were not so numerous or so heavy and severe as they now are found to be. But as the sins of men increased, so as we have said their punishments have increased also. The calamities inflicted on Adam therefore were light in comparison to those inflicted on us. For the nearer the world approaches its end, with the heavier punishments and calamities is it visited. To all this evil is added that greater evil still, that the more the world is stricken, the more it hardens its forehead and becomes stupefied as it were and insensible of its punishment altogether, as it is written in the Proverbs, "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not hurt; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again," Prov. 23:35. This blindness and obduracy exceed all the above calamities of the body.

Is not our state then, I ask, marvelous and miserable? The traces of the wrath of God, which our sin has deserved, are first of all bound up as it were in our bodies; and next the same wrath of God is beheld resting on the earth and on all creatures, and yet all these awful evils are disregarded by us, and our minds are filled with security and indolent unconcern. For

what are the thorns, what the thistles, what the water, what the fire, what the caterpillars, what the flies, what the fleas, what the bugs, what the lice; what, I say, are all these together and separately, but so many messengers which continually preach to us of sin and of the wrath of God on its account? For before sin entered into the world those living evils had no existence; or if they were in existence, they harmed not nor annoyed.

Wherefore to our full knowledge and sight we are in, and live in, more than Egyptian darkness. For though all things around us remind us of the wrath of God continually, and are all but so many pricks in our eyes of admonition, we not only do not regard that wrath, but embrace this life and enjoy it as our only delight. In the same proportion therefore as sins are multiplied, and self-security increases, and men grow callous and insensible under their punishments, so those punishments themselves are multiplied, not only in this life but in that which is to come. I am here speaking of the wicked in this world. For if it were possible that men, when in hell, could possibly endure their punishments and torments in sensation only, without the consciousness at the same time that the punishments which they endured were just, such ignorance would render their torments more easy to be endured. Just in the same way as we on earth will not acknowledge our punishments, and thus we harden ourselves as it were against grief. But in hell that insensibility which now prevents us from seeing our real misery will be wholly taken away, and all the doors of our senses will be unlocked, so that we shall not only feel the pains of our punishment in our body, but our mind itself will be filled with a sense of the wrath of God and with the confession that we have deserved the whole of that wrath by our wickedness. These are the feelings that will sharpen, and in an inconceivable degree augment the future torments of the wicked.

V. 18a. *"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."*

Here we are again reminded that the earth of itself brought

forth no such thing; but only on account of the sin of Adam, as Moses had before expressly said, "For thy sake." Wherefore as often as we see thorns and thistles; as often as we behold tares and other noxious weeds growing in our fields and in our garden, so often are we reminded as by certain signs of sin and the wrath of God. Wherefore it is not only in churches that we hear ourselves accused of sin; every garden, every field and almost the whole creation is filled with such preachers and such monitors of our sin and of the wrath of God, which is brought down upon us on account of that sin.

Wherefore all prayer to the Lord is necessary that he would take away from our eyes and from our hearts this marvelous insensibility; that being thus perpetually reminded of our sin, we may at length put off our self-security and walk in the fear of God. For by these various evidences of the curse of God, we are continually met, cast down and overwhelmed. This Moses will now still more extensively set before us. He next says:

V. 18b. *And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.*

This is a new calamity. For above God had given unto man the sweetest and most delightful gifts; even that he should eat of all the trees of paradise except two only. The Lord had also given him dominion over all fishes and over all that the whole earth produced, whether of fruits or of animals. But now all these blessings are taken from him, on account of the eaten fruit and nothing is left him but the herb of the field. And from this passage I believe it can be fully proved, that Adam did not feed upon butter, or milk, or eggs, or cheese, or flesh, or even on apples or pears, etc., but on pot herbs and the seeds of certain herbs and plants only; such as peas, beans, millet, rice, wheat, flour, etc. Where then were the splendor and luxury of the banquet at which Adam feasted his friends, when he gave a daughter in marriage, or when he himself was present at the marriage of any of his sons; seeing that nothing was granted them of God, on which to feed but "the herb of the field?"

Such then was the frugal fare of the primitive age of the world. It consisted of the most common and simple food with water. Now however a horrible luxury has overrun the whole present generation of men. They are not satisfied with collecting together flesh of every kind for the gratification of their appetites; but flesh of every kind is mixed with fish of every kind; spices also of every kind are used in addition. Nay, the dissatisfied perverseness of nature is indulged to such an extent, that those things by nature sweet are rendered by various condiments bitter; and those by nature bitter are by the same means rendered sweet.

What varieties prevail in our drink also! Who would not consider himself made a laughing-stock, if he should see his host set before him water as his drink? Nor are we content with beer, which is brewed at our own homes, nor with wines, made on our paternal estates. We even fetch them from beyond the sea. If our first father Adam could return on earth, think you not that he would laugh at, or rather wonder at, this madness of appetite in his sons? Why, he would avoid as poison those very things which we eat and drink with avidity and delight; and he would prefer to all these our dainties even rapes or turnips in their natural undressed state.

In this passage frugality of living is commended to us. For we are here taught that our first parents, being thus righteously deprived of all other kinds of food, had nothing left for food but the herb of the field. These facts therefore ought to lead us not only to frugality, but also to patience; whenever we see others abounding in delicacies and dainties of every kind, while we ourselves have nothing but bread, salt and water. For our thoughts ought to be these: this is the punishment justly inflicted on Adam. When he might have enjoyed, by the will, and command, and gift of God, the delicious fruits of every kind which grew in paradise; he was compelled with all his posterity to live on the common pot herbs, because of his disobedience.

V. 19a. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*

With what variety of expression and repetition does Moses dwell on this labor and trouble, when he is declaring the manner in which the husband must labor and toil in feeding his family, defending his property and governing his house! And all these toils and troubles are far more difficult in our age on account of the perverseness of men, than they were "in the beginning." For we universally witness, even where the expectation of food is certain, with what difficulty a family are kept to their duty. Nor was Adam himself without his experience of this great evil. For even while he was ruling his family with all possible holiness, he witnessed murder committed by his son Cain. I say nothing now about all other sorrows which a long life compels a man to see and bear in his posterity. This anxiety and toil therefore await the husband. He must endure this labor, which is neither pleasant nor successful. Nor ought any one to be found who does not endure this sweat. Hence, much more perilous is the life of the Papists; all of whom abuse their wealth, obtained by the labor of others, to their own gratifications and indolence.

But here a question has been raised, whether all men ought not to be husbandmen, or at least whether they ought not to devote themselves to manual labor? Some did indeed thus foolishly contend at the beginning of the Gospel among us. For they so abused this and other like passages of Scripture, which command the labor of the hands, that the youth throwing aside their literary studies gave themselves up to manual employments; and Carlstadt, the leader of these misguided ones, leaving his proper station in life, purchased a farm, and dug and cultivated his own land. For myself indeed if I could with a good conscience forsake my calling as a minister of the Word, it would be far more easy and pleasant employment for me to be employed in cultivating my garden, digging with my spade and breaking the clods with my shovel, than to endure this hard labor, which I now undergo. For the toil of country laborers bears no proportion whatever to this our ministerial "sweat."

Wherefore their interpretation of this passage, who contend that manual labor only is the sweat here spoken of, is to be altogether rejected. The declaration of Christ is perfectly plain upon this point who commands that those who teach in the Word should enjoy the labors of others "And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give for the laborer is worthy of his hire," Luke 10:5, 7. Here the Lord takes bread from the table of those who hear the Word of God, and gives it to the teachers of the Word. In the same way also Paul speaks, when he says, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," 1 Cor. 9:14. And it is in confirmation of this same mind of God, that the apostle cites that word of the law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," verse 9. And indeed why is the commandment concerning the payment of tithes given to the husbandmen, who labors and cultivates his farm, if the ministers of the Word are to procure their food by the labor of their own hands?

These and like passages of Scripture show that the "sweat of the face" is the common curse on all men. The first "sweat" is, that of husbandmen and householders; the second, the "sweat" of magistrates; the third, of teachers in the Church. Of all these orders of men the condition of husbandmen is the happiest. This the poet of old affirms:

Felices nimium sua si bona norint, Agricolae.

Happy their lot; did they but know their good,

Who cultivate the earth for all.—Virg. Georg. 2, 458.

For though they do "sweat" under great labor, yet that labor is seasoned with a peculiar pleasure, while the new and marvelous faces of all creatures directly meet their eyes daily. Whereas in the political world and in the Church infinite troubles and molestations present themselves, in addition to the daily perils which are incurred, if a minister of Christ perform his duty faithfully. For we speak not now concern-

ing those indolent mortals, who know not nor acknowledge these punishments of sin, but who are devoted only to the consideration of the manner in which they can best satisfy their lusts. Let such Epicureans be left to the indulgence of their own evil appetites and inclinations. We are here speaking of those who do perform seriously what they undertake to do, whether in the State or in the Church. Such men labor and sweat more in one day than a husbandman does in a whole month, if the magnitude and the various perils of their works be considered. It is for this very reason also that tributes and revenues, and other dues of the same description, are paid unto kings and princes. And who does not see that this is but a small return or reward after all to our rulers for the immense labor they undergo, where they really do their duty faithfully. And even if there be some who neglect their duty, this legitimate ordinance of God is not on their account to be disregarded.

I have somewhere heard it said of the Roman Emperor, Maximilian Augustus, that he was so overwhelmed with his public duties that he never gave himself sufficient time for eating his meals. He was therefore sometimes compelled to withdraw from his State labors, and seclude himself in the woods to indulge in hunting. Sometimes also he would change his raiment and mingle with private society so that he might enjoy greater freedom in conversation. And though this occupation of hunting was sometimes considered a vice in that Emperor, yet those who really knew the extent of his labors and the reality of his daily life considered that this amusement was adopted by him of necessity and not for pleasure. What labors of the plow then, what labors of the spade, what other toils of a rustic life, will you bring into comparison with that "sweat" which the government of such a mighty empire as that of Rome demanded? Wherefore the palaces of kings and princes do indeed bear their names as such, while the kings and princes themselves are the hardest worked of all servants. Hence monks and the whole confederacy of the

Pope are the only beings that really live a royal life, because they leave all labors, all business affairs and all the perils of them to others, while they themselves enjoy all the comforts of life in perfect indolence.

These same observations apply equally to the pastoral charge in the Church which charge is to be considered the heavier since the duties are more important which a pastor has to perform. For are we to suppose that Augustine lived at ease and gave himself up to his pleasures only, surrounded as he was by so great a multitude of adversaries, against whom he had daily to contend to prevent them from wholly subverting as they would have done the doctrine of Christ? For such were the Pelagians, the Donatists, the Manicheans and other like disturbers of the churches. Likewise I in this day by the grace of God so perform my duties as to leave no one, I believe, to envy such a laborious life of ease as I daily pass. It is the height of folly that fanatics urge on all persons the necessity of manual labors, which nevertheless are useful for the health of the body. Whereas on the contrary, those great labors of the State and Church, which we have just described, wear out the body and exhaust as it were all the moisture of the very bones and their inmost marrow.

Let us therefore duly and rightly distinguish this "sweat" as it ought to be distinguished. The household "sweat" is great, the civil or political "sweat" greater still, but the Church "sweat" is the greatest of all. Only look at the Apostle Paul and you will at once see the greatness of his sweat. For seeing that the Church is in all ages infested with devils and harassed by heresies, scandals and great sins, by the unrighteous violence of tyrants and by evils of every description; will any man say that there are no labors and no sweats in the Church? Will any one affirm that those who rule in the Church are not well deserving the provision which they receive?

We may say this of the Pope and the Cardinals, and of all that congregation of the wicked who do no work at all, con-

sult only their belly and their ease, spending the greatest wealth. These are they of whom we may rightly say with Paul, "If any one will not work, neither shall he eat," 2 Thess. 3:10. Now the work of the Church is to teach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to war with fanatics, to remove scandals out of the way, to build up the godly in the faith, etc. Of those who really do this Christ says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," Luke 10:7.

Now the condition of Adam, the first sinner, was if rightly considered worse than ours. For while we all sweat separately, each one in his own order and station, Adam was compelled to endure at one and the same time the sweat of the household rule, the sweat of the political rule and the sweat of the Church rule. He alone performed all these duties to his family and posterity as long as he lived. He provided for his family and ruled it. He trained them in piety and was at the same time their father, their king and their priest. And how full of pain and peril each one of these duties is, universal experience teaches.

Wherefore we need great consolation to support us against all these evils, and we should exercise our minds in much patience, seeing that we find these calamities to be laid even on the elect also, who possess the hope of a resurrection and of eternal life. As therefore this hope is thus left to us afflicted men, it becomes us to be of a courageous mind and to overcome our evils by means of this hope, because we are not destined to live here forever. Just as men, who when traveling happen to find a miserable lodging and a covetous host, console themselves with the thought that though their food be bad and their bed hard, their misery will last for one night only. Such ought our thoughts to be in the midst of our calamities on account of the sin of the fall. For what are our two or three years of life, almost the half of which we pass in insensible sleep, when compared with eternity!

Let afflictions and adversities come therefore as the Lord shall be pleased to appoint them to each of us, whether they,

be the sweat of the home rule, of the state rule, or of the Church rule; we will not suffer ourselves to be moved by them to impatience. We will not cast aside our home duty, or our state duty, or our Church duty. Such woman-like weakness as this becometh not brave soldiers. It is unworthy them to throw away their arms, and to flee at the first onset. And what of pleasures and of ease? We are not appointed unto them, but unto labor and active life. Hence the poet of old says:

Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito.

Yield not to ills; but bolder grow, as these

Are seen t' increase.—Virg. Aen. 6, 96.

And this shall we be able to do, if we set against these temporal afflictions the hope of a resurrection and of eternal life. As therefore no one would willingly lose this hope, so let all men consider that they are bound not to forsake that calling and station of life where they have been placed by God. Let him who is called to teach the churches, do it with a magnanimous spirit, moved neither by his own perils nor by the lazy life of popes, who, when they ought to be preaching the Gospel, ruling the churches, hearing sacred causes and judging controversies concerning doctrine and helping the churches that have need of help, cast off all these highest duties and leave them to the useless monks, while they themselves are occupied in accumulating monies and making provision for fulfilling their lusts, Rom. 13:14. As these therefore escape the sweat, they shall not have the cooling refreshment. As they will not suffer with Christ, they shall not reign with him, Rom. 8:17.

On the other hand let all of us who endure this sweat, each one in his station, always think that, although we may have a bitter burden to bear, these afflictions will have their certain end. Hence Moses now adds the following consolation under any affliction however hard:

V. 19b. *Till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

With respect to wicked men they endure an infinite number

of calamities with the hope of enjoying a little morsel of pleasure. What perils by land and by sea does the merchant experience with the hope of gain? For what a small hire does the soldier sell his life. The harlot in the brothel is compelled to endure a thousand-fold greater evils than any wife in the honest home. Hence the Germans call them by a striking proverb, "the devil's martyrs;" because they of their own accord cast themselves into the greatest calamities, which they might never have experienced, if they had been willing to live a godly life. And again, what a host of evils do men, given to wine and to gluttony, bring upon themselves by their excesses, from all of which they might have lived free had they eaten and drunk more moderately.

Wherefore, well may men be lost in considering what remedy can possibly be found for the human race. Since they are so hardened by Satan that they not only do not feel their evils, but studiously follow after them and pursue them with all eagerness. For if they really did feel the evils of their ways would they not forsake them? But the fact is that such insensibility benumbs the minds of men, so that you may see them glorying in their very evils themselves. As, therefore, such wicked perverseness is found in the greatest part of mankind, that for the sake of a light and foolish pleasure they will involve themselves in sure calamities, it is wonderful that the godly do not consider these things for their good, and say within themselves, Although I must live in the midst of all these various evils, yet they must all soon end and be recompensed by another and a better life.

And this is the consolation which this sacred sentence is intended to afford. For it gives a promise that all these calamities shall have an end, and that, too, by the bruising and crushing of the "serpent's head," *Till*, says Moses, *thou return unto the ground, ELHAADAMA.*" For this original word signifies the ground or earth in general. But the Hebrew word *APHAR* signifies, properly, recently dug or ploughed earth, or a lump of newly turned up earth. Our translation renders

this original word by "dust;" that it may signify loosened or crumbled earth. For Adam was made a living man out of a clod or lump of the earth. When therefore the bonds of this clod shall be loosened, it shall return, the Lord says, to its former mould or dust.

And here again we are reminded of the manner in which, as the sins of the world increased, their punishments increased also. The original usage of committing the bodies of the dead to the earth to be dissolved again to dust was certainly a milder and human-like custom; but afterwards it became the practice of almost all nations to burn the bodies of their dead. How often also does it happen that human beings are devoured alive by wild beasts, and have the bellies of those beasts for their tombs? Hence we find enumerated among the four punishments declared by the prophet, "the teeth of wild beasts," Jer. 15:3, and also by Moses himself the poison of serpents and other venomous animals, Deut. 32:24. For so it is ever that the more insensible we are to the divine punishment of our sins, the heavier the punishments God lays upon us, to break us down and to beat in pieces our obduracy; as it is written in the Book of Leviticus, "And if ye will not yet for these things hearken unto me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power," Levit. 26:18, 19.

Thus the fall of Adam was a fall from life into death, and from soundness of body into diseases of every kind. Still the age of Adam was truly a golden age, if compared with ours. But all things degenerated by degrees, and that the great image of Daniel also plainly shows, Dan. 2:31, 35. For the nearer the world approaches its end the worse men become, and this is the reason heavier punishments are inflicted on us than on those who have lived before us. What a pertinacious war against the truth is carried on at this day by the Papists! What cruelty do they exercise against those who confess the truth! I mention not now their well nigh Satanic covetousness, perfidy and acts of violence without end. Can the punishments of such then be very far off?

Thus far Moses has been recording the punishments inflicted on Adam and his posterity on account of the sin of the fall. And though these punishments are great, yet they were milder "in the beginning" than they are now. Because those sins which were then of the positive, if I may so speak, are now increased to the superlative degree.

But before we proceed with the remaining contents of this chapter, let us pursue a little further our discussion of that passage, on which we have briefly dwelt in its place before, where it is said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception or thy impregnation," verse 16, above. For the original word there found is *HERONECHAD*, which interpreters generally explain as descriptive of all those troubles and straits of mind and body which women endure from the time of conception to childbirth.

A question is here raised by some whether, as the wife is impregnated and gives birth to a child only once in a year, that one impregnation and parturition is itself a punishment? And it is also inquired, why if such be a punishment God here says, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception?" With respect to the latter, I believe the original word to be rightly translated, "I will greatly multiply thy conception," that is, thy pains and sorrows consequent upon that conception. So that it is a punishment that a woman should conceive only once in the year, and yet that one conception in the year should be laden with such numberless pains and sorrows. For if man had continued in his innocence, no doubt the fruitfulness of women would have been altogether greater. We do now find certain instances where often two, sometimes three, and occasionally four, children are brought forth at a birth.

There are universal laws of this fecundity in the brute creation. The fruitfulness of birds and of fishes is very great. Dogs, cats and sows produce a great number at a parturition. The larger beasts however produce their offspring only once in a year generally. My full belief is however that women, had there been no sin, would have been productive of a far

more numerous offspring. Whereas now for the most part the most fruitful of them give birth to no more than one child in the year, to which diminished fruitfulness there is also added that unclean lust of fallen nature. All these things alike impress our minds with the magnitude of sin.

But here again we find brought forward the Jewish cavil concerning the serpent. They say if by the seed of the woman is to be understood here her natural seed, which is born from her womb, as we have interpreted the important passage, it would seem to be a natural consequence that the seed of the serpent mentioned in this same passage should also be that seed which proceeds from the belly of the serpent. Otherwise, they say that opposition which Moses sets forth cannot consist when he says, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed," verse 15.

Out of this cavil many consequences will follow. In the first place it will follow that God is here speaking with the natural serpent only and determining his punishment; and in the next place it will inevitably follow that Christ has nothing at all to do with this passage, nor this passage with him; and it will equally follow that this text furnishes no proof whatever concerning Christ! Wherefore this cavilling objection of the Jews has the appearance of containing something in it; but in fact it contains nothing at all.

First, then, my reply to this cavil is "He that is ignorant, let him be ignorant still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. 22:11. For he that will not believe the openly revealed and manifest Gospel is worthy of being left in ignorance of these more hidden passages of the Scripture and in disbelief of them altogether. Neither is our present object to confirm or illustrate the Gospel by the passage now in question, but to hold up the brighter light of the Gospel before it in order to illuminate its obscurities. And if any will not believe the shining light of the Gospel, what marvel is it if they are left to disbelieve these more obscure words of the prophets and to produce their new and absurd opinions in opposition to

them? The promise of the Gospel is revealed from heaven; and moreover it is preserved in safety amidst the greatest tyrants and the most horrible punishments of our sins from God. If the Jews pertinaciously fight against this promise and will not believe it, they must be left alone. We meanwhile will deal with those who believe, and who submit to the Gospel.

Christ says, John 8:44, that Satan is the "father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." This is that light of the Gospel by which the dark places of the Old Testament are illumined. Now if Satan was "a murderer from the beginning" tell me, whom or what persons did he murder? Were they not Adam and Eve, whom he murdered by sin? Where did he murder them? Was it not in paradise? When did he murder them? Was it not when he made nothing of the commandment of God and promised Adam and Eve that they would be like gods if they would eat of the forbidden tree? Both propositions therefore are true. The natural serpent was in paradise; and by the natural serpent, the old serpent, the devil, deceived man and murdered him.

The principal meaning of this passage therefore is to cause us to understand that the devil was the author of all this calamity; just as when any one commits murder, it may rightly be said of the sword of the murdered, "This sword killed the man." Whereas in truth, it was not the sword alone nor of itself that killed the man, but the murderer who used the sword. Indeed it is quite a common use of the figure synecdoche, the conveyance of two ideas by one expression, to understand the author of the act under the mention of the instrument made use of. Wherefore we explode this Jewish cavil utterly.

Secondly, it is also true that contraries are not necessarily consistent contrarieties in every respect. For the form of contrarieties is multiplex, as logicians teach. Some things are opposed to others relatively, others privatively, and others by contradiction. Thus the natural father by whom we are be-

gotten and the father of lies are opposed to each other. Although we should grant the Jews their interpretation of this passage that Moses is here speaking of the natural serpent, yet the text itself evidently contains a synecdoche when we compare it with the words of Christ. The words of Moses are, "And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle." What then did the serpent do? He deceived Eve and thus murdered her.

So the words of Moses therefore only hold up the light of the Gospel, "The devil was a murderer from the beginning," John 8:44. Is it not by this light at once manifest that God so speaks with the natural serpent as recorded by Moses, that his words are intended to apply to the devil, concealed under the form of the natural serpent, who having assumed that form under it hurled man into sin and death, and laid him under the wrath of God? Wherefore by the seed of the serpent in this passage is not to be understood the natural seed of the natural serpent, but the seed of the devil; as Christ also represents the same in the Gospel, using the same appellation of "seed," where he says, "An enemy came and sowed among the wheat evil seed," Math. 13:25. This evil seed is contrary to the spiritual seed, even as flesh and spirit are wholly contrary to each other.

But it is not necessary as we have said, that contraries should contain that contrariety to each other throughout in all respects; just in the same manner as similarities do not respond to each other in every particular. Thus for instance, Adam is a figure of Christ; which similarity consists in the great truth that as sin hath abounded towards all men by Adam, so the righteousness of Christ also abounds towards all those who believe in him. These particulars of Adam and of Christ agree with each other. In all other respects Adam and Christ do not agree. Wherefore let this their error be left to the Jews, to content themselves with it. We believers in Christ know that the serpent, to whom God speaks in this text, is the devil. And this we know from the interpretation of Christ himself.

PART VI. NAME ADAM GAVE HIS WIFE. GOD REMINDS MAN OF THE FALL. THE CHERUBIM.

I. V. 20. *And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she is the mother of all living.*

We have heard above that it was inflicted as a punishment upon the woman, that she should be under the power of the man. That power to which she is thus made subject is here described anew. It is not God who here gives to Eve her name, but Adam, her lord; just in the same manner as before he gave to all the animals their names, as creatures put under his dominion. No animal devised its name for itself. Every one received its appellation, and the dignity and glory of its name, from its lord, Adam. So to this day, when a woman marries a man, she loses the name of her own family and is called after the name of her husband. On the other hand it would be a thing quite monstrous, if the husband should wish to be called by the name of his wife. This therefore is a sign and further confirmation of that punishment of subjection which the woman procured by her sin. In the same manner also, if the husband changes his place of residence the woman is compelled to follow him as her lord. So various are the traces in nature which put us in mind of original sin and of our numerous calamities on its account.

And the name which Adam gave to his wife is a name full of joy and delight. For what is better, or more precious, or more delightful, than life? There is a well-known poetic line—

Num tu bona cuncta

Ut redimas vitam recuses?

To save thy life, what wouldst thou not resign?

The world, with all its wealth, if they were thine!

For neither gold, nor gems nor the glory of the whole world can be compared with the preciousness of life. This Christ intimates, Math. 6:25; 16:26. Hence the Jews generally give their children names taken from roses, flowers, jewels, etc. The name of Eve however was not taken from the

preciousness of anything worldly, but from life itself, which in value exceeds all things. But Adam adds also his reason for giving this name to his wife. "Because she is the mother of all living." It is evident therefore from this passage that Adam, by receiving the Holy Spirit, was wonderfully enlightened; and that he believed and understood the word spoken by God concerning the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the head of the serpent; and that he therefore wished to signalize his faith, and to adorn it by the name which he gave his wife, the name the like of which he had not given to any other creature. It is equally evident also that he moreover wished, by this name given to his wife, to cherish his own hope of a future Seed, to confirm his own faith and to comfort himself by the belief of a future and eternal life, even at the very time when all nature had been rendered subject to death.

For if Adam had not apprehended all this by the faith of the life to come, his mind could not have been raised to such an assurance of it, as to give his wife a name so full of joy. As therefore he did give such a name to his wife, it is perfectly evident that his mind was lifted up by the Holy Ghost to this confidence in the remission of sins by the Seed of Eve, whom he therefore named Eve, in order that the name might be a memorial of that divine promise by which he himself was raised anew unto life and by which he left the hope of an eternal life to his posterity. This hope and this faith he imprinted as it were on the forehead of his wife in the brightest colors by the name Eve which he gave her; just in the same manner as those who are delivered from their enemies erect trophies and other glad memorials to commemorate the victory which they have gained.

But perhaps you will inquire, how Adam called Eve the mother of all living, when she was as yet a virgin and had never borne a child. Adam, we here again see, did this to testify his faith in the divine promise; because he believed that the human race would not be cast away nor destroyed,

but would be saved. This same name Eve therefore embraces also a prophecy of the grace that should come; and it indicates that consolation, which is necessary under the perpetual trials of this human life and against all the temptations of Satan. It is very possible also that the joyful giving of this name to Eve, which as we have said is a most beautiful proof of the faith of Adam and of the recreation of his spirit unto a new life, formed a reason why the holy fathers in after ages held that day, on which their children were circumcised and received their names as a more glad and joyful festival than the day they were born; to the intent that such festival might forever commemorate this giving of the first name by Adam, when he called his wife Eve. But now follows another kind of memorial quite the contrary to this; a memorial of sorrow, not of joy.

V. 21. *And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.*

This is by no means so joyful and delightful information as was that of Adam giving to his wife the name of Eve. For, although the Lord had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" yet Adam consoled himself by this name which he gave to his wife that the life which he had lost should be restored by the promised Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head and destroy the destroyer.

II. Here Adam and Eve are clothed with garments by the Lord God himself, in order that, being perpetually reminded by this clothing as a lasting memorial, they might reflect, as often as they looked at their garments, upon their awful and miserable fall from the highest felicity into the extremest calamity and wretchedness; to the intent that they might ever afterwards fear to sin and exercise continual repentance; yet looking for the remission of sins by the promised Seed. And this is the reason no doubt the Lord God did not cover them with leaves nor with that wool which grows on trees, but clothed them with the skins of slaughtered ani-

mals to remind them that they were now mortal and subject to certain death.

As therefore the name Eve contained in it the joyful hope of life, even of eternal life; so these skins were a memorial of sin passed and sin to come; but a memorial also of all those calamities present and future, which that sin deserved. And indeed our nature has need of such memorials and perpetual admonitions. For we easily forget both past evils and past blessings. Hence it is that Peter says, "For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you," 2 Pet. 1:9, 12. For it is truly an awful expression of the apostle when he here intimates that some forget the remission of their sins, and after they have well believed draw back from their faith, and adorn not themselves with the most beautiful chain of Christian virtues which he enumerates, but indulge in covetousness, pride, envy, lust, etc. We in our day also have great need of this admonition, who experience all these burdens of these calamities under the papacy, lest we become ungrateful to our merciful God, as, alas! the greater part of the world do.

As a remedy therefore against this forgetfulness these skins were added as clothings for Adam and Eve, that they might be forever a sure sign, or memorial or admonition, whereby both they and all their posterity might be reminded of their most wretched condition. But in after ages, marvelous to say, the world began to grow mad in the matter of this very memorial of their calamity! For who can possibly describe the amount of study and expense men and women give to dress! Indeed it is so great that it can no longer be properly termed pleasure nor luxury, but madness; because, like asses created for bearing burdens of gold they seem rather to consider with how much gold they can load themselves, than with how much they can best adorn themselves. A superior kind of dress may be

justly commended in certain cases; especially in more illustrious persons. But that rage for dress in all classes, which now prevails, cannot but offend the eyes of all good men. And if Adam himself could rise from his grave and behold this madness for raiment in all circles of society, I believe he would stand petrified with astonishment at the sight. For the clothing of skins, which Adam daily wore, daily reminded him of his sin and his lost felicity. Whereas we, on the contrary, clothe ourselves with splendid garments and indulge in luxury of dress, that we may testify to all men that we have not only forgotten the evils of the fall, from which we have been saved by the Seed of the woman, but the blessings also which we have received through him. We next find that the admonition which the Lord had given by the sign of the garments, he gave also in word.

V. 22. *And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:*

These words contain sarcasm and most bitter derision. Some inquire therefore why it is that God here deals so harshly with miserable Adam? How it is that, after he had been robbed of all his glory and had fallen into sin and death, he is goaded in addition to all this by his Maker with this most bitter reflection passed upon him. Was it not enough, they ask, that he should wear this visible sign which should perpetually remind him of his lost glory and his present calamity, but he must hear also in addition this audible word of the Lord God?

To this I reply, Adam had the promise of mercy given him, and with that he ought to have lived content. But in order that he might more deeply fear, and more carefully guard against all future sin, there is spoken to him this bitter memorial word also. For God foresaw what kind of men Adam's posterity would be; and therefore he puts this word into his mouth that he might preach it to his posterity, and might teach them as a warning that by wishing to become like God,

he became like unto the devil; in order that they also, being thus warned, might not add to that sin of their first parents their own sins, and so depart still farther from God.

As before, by the clothing of skins, so now, by his word itself, God reminds our first parents both concerning their past and their future calamities. Not that God is delighted with Adam's sad case, for had it been so he would have given him no such admonition at all; but would have remained silent. But God willed that man should sigh after the restoration of that "image of God" which he had lost; and should therefore the more hate sin, which had been the cause of this awful calamity; and that Adam should admonish his posterity of what had been the consequence of his sin; that when, having been plundered of his reason by Satan, he thought he should become like God, he became like Satan himself.

On this passage also that great question is raised, why God, who is one, here speaks in the plural number? And whether there are more gods than one? And Nicholas of Lyra, with others, considers that these words are either spoken in the person of an angel or addressed to angels, "Is become as one of us;" that is, "Is become an angel." But this comment is too cold. For God does not here call himself an angel. Nor does the force of the expression lie in the word "one;" but rather in the pronoun "us." Wherefore we repudiate altogether this cold comment. For if these words are spoken in the person of an angel, it is certain that God did not speak them; but God did speak them. For the assertion of the text is, "And Jehovah God said."

Wherefore here again let us have recourse to the light of the Gospel. For this light as I have above observed illumines all these obscure passages of the Old Testament. And indeed if you will explain these words as having reference to the angels, such interpretations will not accord with that portion of the sacred narrative which precedes. For Satan above said, verse 5, "And ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." From this it is manifest that Adam and Eve really

endeavored to become like God, not like an angel. Wherefore this passage cannot rightly be understood in any other way than as meaning equality with God!

This error of the Jews therefore concerning the reference of the present passage to angels, which Lyra also follows in his interpretation, is exploded; and from this text, according to the letter, the doctrine is established that there is a *plurality* in the *Godhead*, which doctrine was also determined above, Gen. 1:26, where God said, "Let *us* make man in our image." All these passages argue, in the first place, for the unity of the divine essence. For the uniform expression in them all is, "And God said." And in the next place, they argue also for the plurality, or according to the general term used, a *Trinity* of persons in the Godhead. All these mysteries however are more fully revealed in the New Testament. As for instance, when Christ commands believers to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Three Divine Persons in the Godhead therefore were thus at once shadowed forth at the very beginning of the world, and were afterwards clearly understood by the prophets, and at length fully revealed in the Gospel.

The meaning of this passage therefore stands perfectly plain, that the intent of Adam and Eve was to become like God or to secure his image. Now the image of the invisible God is the Son, "by whom all things consist," Col. 1:17. Wherefore Adam by his sin dashed against the very person of Christ, who is the true image of God. These great things are but briefly and obscurely set before us in this divine narrative. There is no doubt however that Adam himself drew from them numberless sermons for his family and posterity; in the same way as the prophets after him evidently contain various allusions to these mysteries and wrap them up in marvelous indications, which the Gospel finally reveals in open and bright manifestation.

It makes also for our interpretation of the present passage that the name of God used is *Jehovah*, which cannot signify

any creature, being a name which is applied absolutely and only to the Creator himself. And what does the Creator here say? "Adam is become as one of *us*." Now here most assuredly neither our profession nor our faith will tolerate receiving these words as being spoken or as having reference to angels. For who will dare to say that God is one of the angels, or that an angel is one of the *us*, the ELOHIM? The glorious God is above all angels and over all creatures! How therefore can God make himself only equal to the angels!

We receive this passage therefore as a sure testimony of that article of our faith concerning the holy Trinity; that there is One God, and Three Divine Persons in the Godhead. Moses indeed seems here obscurely, but plainly and purposely, to intimate concerning the sin of Adam that his aim was to become like, not unto angels, but unto God. For if he had sinned against angels only, he would not have been condemned to death for such a sin. But because his sin was directly against the majesty of the Creator, by aiming to become like unto him and to do as that divine majesty did, therefore it was that so awful a punishment followed so awful a sin.

And as when a man is delivered from crucifixion every one will naturally remind him of the danger in which he was placed and will exhort him to guard against a like danger ever afterward; so, after Adam is restored to the hope of life through the divine promise, God admonishes him by the bitter irony contained in the text, not to forget his horrible fall nor ever again to attempt to equal God, in which he so awfully failed; but to humble himself before the divine Majesty and ever afterwards to guard with all his posterity against such a sin. For these things were not spoken to Adam only; they apply to us also, who, after being baptized and renewed by grace, ought to take heed with all watchfulness that we fall not back into our former ungodliness.

In like manner there is equally bitter sarcasm in the words, when God says, "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." As if God

could not by one mere nod prohibit Adam from touching the tree and also prevent him ever doing so! Moses next adds those terrible and terrifying words,

Vs. 23, 24. *Therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

The contents of this text are intended also for our rebuke and admonition; as Paul says, Rom. 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our sakes also." For there is great peril, lest forgetting our former sins we should be plunged into them again; as Christ also gives us warning, when he says, "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee," John 5:14. Peter also speaks in the spirit of warning, when he says, "It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire," 2 Pet. 2:22. The same admonition and warning are given by the same apostle elsewhere, when he says, "Having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins," 2 Pet. 1:9.

These and other passages of Scripture are all admonitions concerning guarding against future sin; because, as in diseases so in sins, the relapse is more difficult of cure than the original. Hence therefore Adam and his whole posterity are warned in so many various forms by the present portion of the sacred record of Moses! All is written in order that, after they have received the hope of eternal life by means of the promise given through the Seed of the woman, they might beware that they lose not that hope by sinning again; according to that remarkable parable of the house which was swept and garnished after Satan was cast out, which Satan again occupied, taking with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself.

It is to this end that the Lord uses so much bitterness in his address to our first parents. It is as if, in explaining him-

self, he should say, "I before forbade Adam and Eve to touch the tree of death;" but such was their impudent self-will, that they would not abstain from doing so even to their own destruction. Now, therefore, I must take all care that they approach not the "tree of life" also; for it may be they will not refrain from putting forth their hand on that also. Therefore I will so effectually prevent them from eating of this tree, that I will prohibit them from the use of any of the trees of paradise whatsoever. Wherefore I say unto them, "Go ye forth from the garden altogether, and eat the herb of the field, and whatsoever else of the kind the earth produceth. Ye shall hereafter not only eat no more of the tree of life, but ye shall not taste any other tree of paradise," etc.

This passage further shows that the trees of paradise were in no manner like those which the other part of the earth brought forth. Wherefore, even the food which Adam and Eve ate, after their ejection from paradise, reminded them, and still reminds their posterity, of their sin and of their most miserable condition, into which they have been hurled by their sin. In so many and various ways are our calamities depicted before our very eyes that even our clothing, independently of our destitution by nature of those spiritual gifts, the knowledge and worship of God, etc., perpetually remind us of those great calamities.

Here a question presents itself, whether, if God had permitted Adam to eat of the tree of life, Adam would by this food have overcome death in the same manner as by eating of the tree of death, he became subject to death; for the reasoning in each case seems to be parallel. The tree of death killed; and that by the Word, which said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The tree of life, therefore, by the power also of the same Word, gave life and preserved from death.

Lyra and others in their reply to this question say that this tree of life had indeed the power of preserving life for a length of time, but not forever; and therefore it could not

have restored that life which was lost by sin. For Adam was not created with the design of his remaining in this corporal life forever; but he was designed to be translated from this corporal life and from this corporal nourishing of it into that spiritual life, for which he was ultimately designed and into which he would have been translated, if he had not sinned. Just in the same way as when a man is created a consul from his former private life, no death is taken into consideration in his being created to that office, but his glory and dignity alone are increased; so Adam, had not death intervened by his sin, would have changed his mortality for an immortality without any death at all; being translated from the life corporal to the life spiritual and eternal. This "tree of life" however, according to the view of Lyra, served only for the preservation of the corporal life. And therefore he interprets the present text, "Lest he should live an age;" that is, a life of long duration. Such is Lyra's opinion.

My understanding of the text however is different. My belief is, that if Adam had been admitted to eat of the tree of life he would have been restored to that life which he lost; so that he would not have afterwards died, but would have been simply translated from the life corporal to the life spiritual and eternal; for the text contains both these statements most clearly; that Adam was prohibited from eating of "the tree of life," that he might not be restored to the life which he had lost; and also, that if he had eaten of that tree he would have lived *LEOLAM*; that is, for an age or a length of time.

My rejection of the opinion of Lyra, however, is especially on the ground that he attributes the power of giving life to the nature of the tree itself simply; whereas it is quite certain that the tree possessed not this property of its own nature, but from the power of the Word absolutely. Just in the same manner as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had its peculiar property from the same Word. It did not kill, because its fruits themselves were deadly, poisonous or pestiferous; but because the Word, as a certain paper, was added to it; on

which paper God had written, "In the day that thou eatest of this tree, thou shalt surely die," Gen. 2:17.

Wherefore, in the first place, to this tree of death there was attached spiritual death or the death of the soul; that is, disobedience. For after Adam and Eve had violated this commandment of God by sin, which commandment had continued effectual in them up to that time, they began to think thus, "Behold, God has forbidden us to eat of this tree; but what is that to us?" This contempt of the commandment was that poisoned hook, by which being firmly fixed in their throats Adam and Eve were utterly destroyed. For since the divine threatening was added to the commandment, therefore after eating it the fruit wrought in them death on account of their disobedience. The tree of death itself was not poisoned; but, as I have copiously explained before under the second chapter, it was the tree of divine worship, where man might testify, by his obedience in that worship, that he acknowledged, revered and feared his God. For God saw everything which he had made, and behold it was very good, Gen. 1:31. Wherefore, I have no doubt that this tree of life in the present passage derived its efficacy, as did the tree of death, from the Word. Therefore, since the Word rested in its power on that tree, if Adam had eaten of it, he would have been restored to the life which he possessed before his fall.

It was just thus also with the serpent, which Moses raised in the desert. It did not give or cause life by its own nature; for it was made of brass, as any other serpent might be made of the same metal to this day. But it was the Word, added to that serpent, which made it effectual to give life; because God commanded that serpent to be lifted up, and because he added this Word to it when lifted up, "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live," Num. 21:8. Now, if thou shouldst make a serpent of brass at his day, thou couldst not have this Word to add to it. Moreover, the cause of the healing did not lie in the act of the looking, but that cause was contained in the Word, by which God had commanded that those

who were bitten should look to the serpent, to which commandment was also added the promise of healing to those who should look. But because the Rabbins understand not the nature of the Word, therefore they shamefully err and fail in their interpretation and declare the meaning to be, that the nature itself of these trees was death-giving or life-giving. For they understand not that all things therefore take place, *because* God by his Word either *promises* or *threatens* that they shall so take place.

Our sophistic human reasoners trifle in the same way, when they argue upon the manner in which baptism justifies. For Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura consider that there is a certain power of effecting justification infused by God into the water when the infant is baptized; so that the water of the baptism, by its own virtue thus communicated, creates justification. We, on the contrary, affirm that the water of baptism is water, nothing else or better than that water which the cow drinks. But we affirm, that to this water, natural and simple in itself, is added the Word, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved," Mark 16:16. And again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John 3:5. Now, if any one is inclined to call this Word, or this Promise, the power communicated to the water of baptism, I will not resist such a view of the sacred matter. But the mind of our sophists is quite different from this; for they will not assign this power to the Word; they argue concerning the element only; and they affirm that the water itself contains a peculiar power communicated to it of God. Scotus has expressed the matter more correctly in his definition of it, when he says that baptism is "a divine compact or covenant, resting on the element."

The Word therefore is in every case to be regarded and honored, that Word by which God holds and endues his creatures with efficacy; and a difference is ever to be made between the creature and the Word. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there are bread and wine; in baptism there is water.

These are the mere creatures. But they are held in God's hand by the Word, and as long as the creature is thus apprehended by the Word, so long also doth it effect that which the Word promises.

And yet we would by no means be understood as favoring by these views the Sacramentarians, when we thus join together baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Baptism hath annexed to it the promise, that with the Holy Spirit it regenerates. In the Supper of the Lord, in addition to the promise of the remission of sins annexed to it, it has also this excellency: that with the bread and the wine there is also truly set forth the body and blood of Christ, as Christ himself says, "This is my body which is given for you;" and also, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," Luke 22:19, 20. In the same manner it might also be said that the human nature itself in Christ does not redeem us. But because the human nature was corporally held fast by the divine nature, and Christ is both God and man in one person, therefore his redemption is all-availing; and therefore Christ is called the "Son of Man" and the Saviour.

The Pope has invented the "blessed water," "extreme unction" and numberless other like things, to which he has attributed the remission of sins. In all these cases ever think thus with thyself: Has God ever added to these things his Word of Command and his Word of Promise? And if the promise and the precept of God are not attached to them, immediately judge that they are idolatry and profaning of the name of God. But they will tell you that the prayers of the pious are added to them and that there exist holy examples, in imitation of which these things were constituted. But do thou regard neither the pious prayers, nor the holy examples, nor the intentions of those who invented or established these things. Look only at whether the precept and promise of God are attached to them; for the divine command and promise alone can endue creatures with a new power beyond that power which they of their own mere nature possess.

Thus "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was of its

own nature good as a creature; but by means of the Word of God, added and attached to it, it became to man through his sin the poison not of his body only but of his soul. And in like manner, on the contrary, "the tree of life" had by means of the Word of God attached to it the power of preserving life, and it would have restored and preserved the life of Adam had God so permitted. But God being angry with Adam did not permit him to return to eat of that tree after his fall. And this repulsion from "the tree of life" and from paradise was not only intended to keep Adam under the continual memory of the sin which he had committed, but also because Adam had now a better promise given him, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the seed of the serpent; so that, although Adam was subjected to corporeal death, he yet retained the hope of an immortality through the Son of God. Just as an angry father, though he does not deprive his son of the right of his inheritance, yet chastises him and turns him out of doors.

It is thus the will of the Lord God therefore that man should be content with the hope of a better life than that in which Adam was first created. For even though Adam had eaten of the tree of life and had been restored thereby to his former life, he would not even then have been safe from Satan nor from the danger of falling again from that life by his temptation. God therefore hath prepared for man that state of hope in which we may live assured that through the blessed Seed of the woman we never can die an eternal death, although this corporeal life thus appointed for us may be filled with various afflictions. The words of the passage are the words of God, spoken ironically and in anger to Adam now justified, warning him to be more cautious of sin in the future and not to forget his past sins and calamities.

Moses moreover beautifully inverts the order of his words to the intent that he might more effectually admonish man of the things he had related before, where he said, "Jehovah God placed man in the garden of Eden that he might till it and guard it," Gen. 2:15. Here on the contrary, he says, "The Lord

God sent man forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken." For God by Moses would have man to reflect that he was formed of the ground and was stationed in a most delightful place; but that by means of his sin he was cast out of that most delightful place and carried back to the ground from which he was first created. By this striking inversion of the facts of his record, Moses indicates the manner in which God not only warned Adam and all his posterity against all future sin, but reminded them also of their great sins past. Now therefore Adam, whose appointed station before was in paradise, a place separate from all the beasts of the earth and in which peculiar food was prepared for him, is cast out into a place in common with the beasts and also has his general food in common with them.

Nor is Adam cast out of paradise only, but a guard also is set at the entrance of the place that he might not by any means be able to enter it again. Just as watches are set to guard citadels and armies. Moses therefore by the copiousness and variety of speech he here uses would show, that this expulsion of Adam from paradise was in the highest degree necessary unto our salvation; that, being warned thereby against sin, we might live in the fear of God, ever watching against temptations from Satan, who worked so much evil to our nature by the sin of our first parents.

Concerning the original word, MIKKEDEM, we have spoken above and have shown that it signifies "from the east" or "in the eastern quarter." The meaning of Moses is, that paradise had a way or gate on the eastern side, by which there was an entrance into this garden. Thus also, in the building of the temple described by Ezekiel, mention is made of a gate of the sanctuary, which looked toward the east, so that we may conclude that this temple was a certain form of paradise; for paradise, had nature remained innocent, would have been as it were the temple of the whole world. At this entrance therefore toward the east, which alone led to paradise, Cherubim were placed or angels which might guard this way, that neither

Adam nor any of his posterity might ever enter paradise again. The Lord did these things after the manner of men as a terror, in order that there might thus exist a lasting memorial of so awful a fall.

Moreover these Cherubim had not iron wherewith to drive back those who should approach, but LAHAT, that is, "the blaze," or "the flame" of a turning or brandished sword; a flame like the flash of lightning which is uncertain in its motion and dazzles the eyes. This flame or flash of fire has the form of a sword, continually waved or brandished. Just, for instance, as we have it represented that cloven tongues like as of fire appeared resting upon each of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:3. The same appearance do flying dragons also exhibit. In this manner it was also that the angels here spoken of unceasingly emitted flames, which flashed in all directions so that no one might by any possibility approach.

The absurdities of Origen on this passage we utterly reject, nor are we at all more pleased with the triflings of Lyra, who will have it, that by the "flaming sword" we are to understand the sinner, who for a sin unto death has ceased to be meritoriously, though not numerically one of the church militant. And he says, that the "flaming sword" being represented as "turning every way" signifies that if true repentance follow such sins a man is deservedly recalled into the church. For ourselves however, as we have all along maintained that paradise was a real and visible garden in a certain spot of the earth, so we explain the present text in a simple and historical sense; that this "sword" was a real and visible "flame" or "a flash of fire" in the form of a sword, by the turnings or brandishings of which every way the Cherubim or angels terrified and drove away Adam and his posterity, so that they dared not approach this garden.

And paradise was kept closed by this guard of angels until the Deluge, to the end that there might exist a sure memorial of this miserable and calamitous fall of Adam to all his posterity; in the same manner as in after ages the Lake of

Sodom and the pillar of salt remained as memorials throughout the posterity of those generations. And indeed our insensibility and unconcern need such monuments of the wrath of God. After the Deluge however paradise, together with its angels and these brandishings of their sword, disappeared. For each rising generation had its monuments of the divine wrath, which were nearer to them and the better calculated to alarm the self-secure, although even this avails nothing with the wicked.

III. Thus have we in our Commentary on these first three chapters of the book of Genesis gone through the history of the whole creation. In what manner the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, were created; in what manner paradise was created of God, that it might be the palace of man, the lord of the whole world, who had dominion over all things therein; in what manner God instituted a temple for man in paradise, which was appointed for acts of divine worship; namely, the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," by his conduct concerning which Adam might testify his obedience to his God. We have also heard in these three chapters the history of those things which were done by man in paradise; how woefully he fell and sinned against God and lost all this glory of his innocence and natural immortality.

All these subjects I have treated with plainness and simplicity, according to the measure of my gift; giving them their plain historical sense, which is the true and genuine meaning. For the principal thing we have to do in interpreting the holy Scriptures is to gather from them, to some degree of certainty, their plain and simple sense; especially, surrounded as we are with such a variety of interpreters, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. For nearly all these not only pay no regard to the plain historical sense of the Scripture, but even confound it by foolish allegories and bury it under the confusion they themselves cause.

The absurd system of Origen and Jerome, which these com-

mentators have followed in these chapters of the book of Genesis, is well known. They have throughout departed from the plain history, which they call "the mere letter that killeth," and "the flesh;" and have magnificently displayed the spiritual sense, as they term it, of which they know nothing. And Jerome has followed Origen as his great teacher. Precisely the same thing also has taken place in our time. For as men gifted and eloquent, have bent their powers to persuade their hearers and readers that histories are mere dead facts, which profit nothing to the edification of the churches, it has thereby come to pass that we have all run headlong in our common study into allegories. And I myself also, when a youth, found wonderful success in this my attempt at allegorizing. For I found a license here to invent the greatest absurdities; seeing as I did that such great doctors of the churches as Jerome and Origen sometimes gave open field to their ingenuities. Indeed, to such an extent was this indulgence in allegories carried, that he who was the greatest adept at inventing them was accounted the greatest theologian. Augustine also, carried away by this false opinion, often disregards the historical sense of the Scriptures, especially in the Psalms, and has recourse to allegory. In fact, all were filled with the false persuasion that the allegorical meaning was the spiritual and true sense; especially with reference to the histories of the Old Testament; but that the historical or literal sense was the mere carnal interpretation.

But is not this, I pray you, the positive profaning of sacred things? Thus Origen, out of paradise, makes heaven, and out of the trees, angels. If this be so, where is the article of the creed concerning creation? It is highly necessary therefore, especially in young students of the holy Scriptures, that when they come to read the old divines they condemn, with good judgment or rather with fixed determination, all those things in their writings which they find at all improbable or unsound, lest they be led astray by the authority that lies in the name of the fathers and doctors of the Church; for in this way was I

deceived, as were all the schools of the professors of divinity. For myself, ever since I thus began to abide by the historical sense of the Scriptures, I have cautiously shunned all allegorizing; nor have I ever adopted allegories unless the text itself evidently furnished them or the interpretations derivable from the New Testament justified them.

I found it very difficult however to give up entirely my long indulgence in allegorizing, although I saw that these allegories were vain speculations and the mere froth, as it were, of the holy Scriptures. For it is the plain historical sense of Scripture that truly and solidly teaches. After the plain sense of the Word has been rightly understood and mastered, then allegories may be used as certain ornaments by which the plain historical sense may be illustrated and strikingly depicted. But naked allegories which respond not at all to the historical realities nor tend to paint them forth more impressively, are at once to be rejected as idle dreams; for instance, from what part of the Scriptures can it be proved that paradise signifies heaven, and the trees of paradise the angels? Are not these pure follies, and mere creatures of the brain without fruit or profit?

Let those therefore who would adopt allegories, seek the justification of them from the history itself in question; for it is history which, like sound logic, teaches true and indubitable realities. On the other hand allegory, like oratory, ought to adorn history only; but to prove facts, it avails nothing. Allegory is useful in this way, as when we say that the heavens represent the Church, and the earth the empires and the political government. Thus Christ himself calls the Church "the kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God." And the earth is called in the Scriptures the "land of the living," where men live and kings and princes rule, Job. 28:13. The Apostle Paul uses the same kind of allegory, when he represents Adam and Eve, or marriage itself, to be a type of Christ and his Church. This is an allegory full of divine instruction and consolation indeed. For, what could be uttered more deep or sweet than that the Church is the spouse and Christ the bridegroom? For, by this

figure is signified both that conjugal fellowship and that most joyful communication of all those gifts which the bridegroom has to bestow, and by which gifts are buried in oblivion both all the sins and all the calamities with which the spouse is loaded. Wherefore that is a most delightful word where Paul says, "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. 11:2.

In like manner the same apostle says, Rom. 5:14, that Adam was "the figure of him that was to come." And how? The apostle himself gives the explanation: "For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many," V. 15. Does not this allegory, used by the apostle, beautifully refer to the historical facts recorded by Moses as its foundation? Exactly after the same manner does the apostle make out the history of Sarah and Hagar, an allegory whereby to represent the two Testaments, Gal. 4:24. Let all therefore, who are inclined to introduce allegories, seek their foundation of them and justifications for them from the divine history itself.

Moreover we have heard above the sacred record of "the seed of the woman" and "the seed of the serpent." And to this history Christ refers in his parable or allegory concerning the enemy who sowed in the night the evil seed, that is, wicked doctrine and evil inventions, Math. 13:28. Who does not at once see that such allegories as these are more appropriate, more illustrative, more useful and far superior to those allegories which Augustine, Lyra and others have introduced concerning the inferior power and the superior power of reason, on which we have dwelt in their place?

In like manner the closing of paradise and the stationing of a guard of Cherubim, with brandished swords of fire to prevent any one from re-entering, evidently signify nothing more or less than that man while living in the world "without," and destitute of faith in Christ, can endure neither the light of the law nor the light of the Gospel. And hence it is that Paul says

concerning the Jews, "that they could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, and that Moses was obliged to put a veil over his face on that account," 2 Cor. 3:7, 13.

"The tree of death" in paradise represents the law, and "the tree of life" the Gospel or Christ. And to neither of these trees can any approach who have not faith in Christ. For they are prevented by the sword of the angels on guard, who cannot endure hypocrisy or poisonous self-righteousness. But who so acknowledges his sin and believes in Christ, to him the gate of paradise stands open, because he brings with him, not his own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ, which righteousness the Gospel therefore preaches unto all men, in order that all might rest upon it and be saved.

But there is no need that we should pursue this subject of allegories further. Let it suffice that we have offered these admonitions, that we might thereby direct those who use allegories to adopt those allegories alone, which the apostles have indicated and justified, and which have their sure foundation in the very letter and in the historical facts of the Scriptures.

But we must offer a word concerning the cherubim. Frequent mention is made of them throughout the holy Scriptures. In the Latin authors we find nothing stated concerning them. They merely observe that the term *CHERUB* signifies a plenitude of knowledge. Among the Greek authors Dionysius speaks of the cherubim. There is a boasting report that Dionysius was a disciple of the Apostle Paul, but that is not true. Dionysius was a man full of the most vain absurdities, in which he abounds in his disputations concerning the heavenly and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. His imaginations make nine choirs, as so many ranks or spheres of heavenly beings. In the supreme hierarchy he places first the seraphim; next, the cherubim; next, thrones; next, dominions; next, powers; and lastly, principalities. And then in the lower or inferior hierarchy, he places first potentates; next, archangels; and last of all, angels. Now, who does not see that all these representations are nothing more nor less than idle and futile human inventions?

After all this he says there are in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, first bishops, then deacons, then sub-deacons, then readers, then exorcists. In such absurdities as these that great man, the disciple of the chief of the apostles, the great teacher of the Gentiles, was exercised! And yet, such is the boasted authority of this supposed great man, that inflated hypocrites set down all these, his foolish inventions, as if handed down to them by oracles from heaven. Whereas in all these follies there is not one word to be found concerning faith, nor one word of useful instruction in the holy Scriptures. And who after all told him that there were nine choirs of heavenly beings and potentates? And why moreover did the Franciscans afterward add a tenth sphere, as a sort of palace, in which the holy mother Mary might dwell? In a word, these are follies and absurdities adapted only for Papists to learn and admire, as a just punishment for their pertinacious war against all sound doctrine.

With respect therefore to the *Cherub* I will offer my opinion as far as I have been enabled to form it from reading. The name *Cherub* appears to me to signify that florid countenance which we see in girls and young men in the blossom of their age. For this reason angels are represented in pictures as infants. So that by cherubim you may understand angels, as heavenly beings, appearing with a blooming countenance, and with brow free from wrinkle or sign of sorrow, and smoothly extended with joy, wearing a face plump and full with gladness, whether it be a human face or any other. The name *Cherub* therefore is a general appellation, a term which does not apply to any order of angels in particular, as Dionysius dreams, but has reference only to their general appearance, because they present themselves to men with a juvenile and florid aspect.

And this indeed is the opinion of the Jews themselves, who assert that *KERUB* is a Chaldaic term and that the letter *Kappa* is a servile letter, and that *RUB* signifies a beautiful youth, who has a full and florid face; and they affirm that the angels are called *KERUBIM*, as representing their florid and joyful and

delightful countenance or appearance; and thus they are generally represented in paintings.

In like manner the name Seraphim is a general appellation of angels; a name derived from fire or burning on account of the quality of their form, as is shown in Numbers 21:6, where Moses says, "And the Lord sent HANNECHASCHIM HASSERAPHIM, "fiery serpents" among the people;" or, "serpent Seraphim" (*serpentes Seraphim*); that is, "serpents burning or on fire." So that we may here understand *Seraphim* or fiery angels; that is, angels not only beautiful in their full and florid face, as are *Cherubim*, but also fiery or shining as the angel is represented in the Gospel to have been, which sat on the stone at the tomb of our Lord, of whom Matthew says, "His countenance was like lightning," Math. 28:3; and as angels are also described by the Psalmist, when he says, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," Ps. 104:4. And again, it is said, Luke 2:9, "That when the angel of the Lord came to the shepherds, the glory of the Lord shone round about them." Of the same description also was the countenance of Christ at his transfiguration on Mount Tabor, of whom it is said, "And his face did shine as the sun," Math. 17:2. The same also shall be our countenances, when we shall be raised again at the last day to enter into the glory Christ hath prepared for us.

With respect to what is written in the Books of Kings concerning "the Cherubims overlaid with gold," *Cherubici certini*, we are there to understand these full and blooming countenances of angels, together with their wings, 1 Kings 6:28. Not that angels really have wings, but because they cannot otherwise be described. Hence it is that we find, Is. 6:6, that the angel, who comes flying with a joyous and beautiful countenance, such as angels are described on pictures of tapestry, is called CHERUB. And if to this full and florid countenance there be added also brightness, such as was the shining countenance of Stephen, full of joy and delight, so that nothing but rays of joy dart from the eyes, such angels are called *Seraphim*.

Such as these shall we also be. Our countenances shall shine as bright as the mid-day sun. There shall be no wrinkle, no contracted brow, no watery eyes; but as it is written, Rev. 21:4, "and God shall wipe all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Let us therefore hold fast this hope and live in the fear of God, until, being delivered from this life of affliction, we shall live that angelic and eternal life which is to come. Amen! Amen!

CHAPTER IV.

PART I. GENERATION, MARRIAGE, BIRTH AND
EDUCATION OF CAIN AND ABEL.

I. Thus have we at length waded through that mighty sea of matter, in doing which, all who have made the attempt have so greatly sweated and toiled, and this sweat we also have fully experienced. To us however the whole way was much more direct and plain, because, throwing aside all allegories, we have followed throughout the historical and proper sense of every passage. Whereas, the most commentators have not regarded that proper sense, but have made Origen, Dionysius and others their teachers, rather than Moses himself; and so have deservedly wandered out of the way. The things which now follow in the divine record are plainer than the preceding and admit of less dispute; and therefore they tend more to support my view of the sacred narrative; because every one must plainly say that the intent of Moses was not to put forth a host of allegories, but simply to write a history of the primitive world.

V. 1a. *And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain.*

When Adam had fallen into death by sin, he had the promise given him, as we have heard, that from his flesh, thus made subject to death, there would surely arise unto him a *Branch* of life. He fully understood therefore that he must propagate his seed; and especially so, since the blessing pronounced on him and his wife, "Be fruitful and multiply," was not only not taken away, but afterwards confirmed by the divine *promise* concerning the *Seed* of the woman, which should bruise

the serpent's head. Therefore Adam did not know his wife Eve from the mere inclination of the flesh, as we generally judge; but it was the necessity of that salvation, which was to come unto him through the blessed Seed of the woman that constrained him to do so.

No one therefore ought to be offended with the relation of this circumstance by Moses that Adam "knew his wife." For although, on account of original sin, this divine act of generation is considered to be one of turpitude, by which we find pure ears to be generally offended; yet spiritual men ought always to distinguish between original sin and the creature or the appointment of God. The act of generation, as a creation-appointment of God, is good and holy, for it is the very blessing pronounced of God upon male and female when they were created. And if man had not fallen this act of generation would have been most pure, most holy and most honorable. For as no one blushes to converse, eat and drink with his wife, because all these things are honorable among all men, so, had it not been for the fall of Adam, the act of generation would also have been most honorable and void of all "shame!"

Generation has indeed been left to us, even in this state of fallen and corrupted nature. But there has adhered to it that poison of the devil, an impure lust and prurient concupiscence, which is the cause of numberless sins and evils; from all of which, nature in its unfallen state was perfectly free. Now however we find by experience that the flesh is filled with inordinate and unsatisfied desires; so much so that even marriage is not for many a sufficient remedy. If it were, there would be no adulteries nor fornications. Whereas these, to our shame and pain, everywhere abound. Nay, in how many and various ways does this infirmity of the flesh discover itself, even in married persons? These infinite evils are not the consequences of the creation nor of the blessing pronounced on male and female. These latter proceeded from God. But they are the consequences of sin and of the curse, which proceeded from the sin of Adam. Therefore, the creation-ap-

pointment of God ought to be separated from all these evils; for that is a good creature of God, concerning which even the holy spirit himself we see is not ashamed to speak.

But further. Not only is there no idea of impurity to be attached to this mention of the creation-command and "blessing" of God made by Moses, when he says, "and Adam knew Eve his wife;" it was even necessary that Moses should write and teach these things on account of the heresies which were in later times to arise; such as those of Nicolaus, Tatian, etc.; and, above all, on account of the papacy. For we see the Papists were not the least moved by that which is written above, that the Lord created man "male and female." They so live and so bind and fetter themselves by vows, that they seem to be utterly ignorant that there are any such beings as the male and female sexes. They are not at all moved by what is also above written, that Jehovah God "Brought Eve unto Adam." and that Adam said "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." They are not moved by the promise and blessing of God, "Be fruitful and multiply." The Decalogue touches them not, when it commandeth, "Honor thy father and thy mother!" Yea, they disregard their very origin; born as they are from the union of male and female, commanded and blessed of God. Passing by, despising and casting away all these things, they compel their contemptible priests, monks and nuns to devote themselves to perpetual celibacy; as if the married life, of which Moses here speaks, were a life reprobate and damnable!

The Holy Ghost however hath a purer mouth and purer eyes than the Pope! The Holy Spirit himself therefore blushes not to mention the act of generation, or the union of husband and wife; though these great saints condemn it as impure and base. Nor does that Holy Spirit mention this marriage union in one place only of the sacred record. The whole Scriptures are filled with such histories; so much so, that on that very account some popes have prohibited young monks and nuns from reading the holy Bible. But I need not enlarge,

Suffice to say, that such has been the rage of the devil against this institution of God, holy matrimony, that the Papists have compelled men to abjure marriage, to the very end that they might institute their orders of a celibate life; and they have condemned the commandment of God, married life, as polluted in comparison with the life of celibacy, which they themselves have set up!

This wickedness however has not been left without its own just punishments. For there are continually before our own eyes examples of the fruits which impure celibacy brings forth, and there are extant in books, record of most horrible crimes, of which it has been the cause. That holy man Udalric, an Augustan bishop, testifies that after Pope Gregory had determined on establishing celibacy, and had forbidden even those to live with their wives, who had been married before the decree concerning 'celibacy had gone forth, the Pope had a mind on one occasion to fish in a pond which he had in his park at Rome; and that when he did so it led to the discovery, that the fish-pond contained more than six thousand heads of infants! The same Udalric also writes that Pope Gregory, being struck with awe and consternation at such a sight, revoked his sanction of the impious decree concerning celibacy. The successors of Gregory however easily swamped the foulness of this discovery, and the pious abolition of the decree by Gregory also; for they also, like their predecessors, considered that celibacy was adapted not only to increase their wealth, but to support their dignity.

A similar example presented itself also in my time, when some nuns at Neumburg were compelled to leave the place, on account of their flagitious lives, and the monastery was given to the Franciscans; and when these latter, for their convenience, caused some alterations to be made in the building; in laying these new foundations, there were discovered twelve pots, each one of which contained the dead body of an infant! An infinite number of similar instances have occurred at other places in every direction.

Rightly therefore did Gregory act in revoking his decree, by which, as Bishop Udalric remarks, he made a very beautiful application of the word of the Apostle Paul, who says, "It is better to marry than to burn," to which, I also add, "It is better to marry, than to incur the peril of eternal death by sin."

At Rome itself also on account of the great numbers of infants who are exposed monasteries are erected, of whom the Pope is nominated "the father!" And the near relatives of the infants, which have been so exposed, precede him in the public processions! I forbear to testify of an infinite number of other kindred enormities, which are too bad to mention.

Wherefore, it behooves us all to guard against such doctrines of devils as these, and to learn to hold marriage in all reverence; and with all reverence to speak of that holy life, which we see God himself has instituted; and which we hear is commended of him in the Decalogue, where he says, "Honor thy father and thy mother," to which holy matrimony, is also added the blessing, "Be fruitful and multiply." And concerning this holy marriage it is, that the Holy Ghost is here speaking, whose mouth is holy and chaste. But all those sins and vices, and all that turpitude which have entered into the originally pure creation of God by sin, we ought not to agitate, or deride, or touch, when speaking of holy marriage, but rather carefully to cover them; just in the same way as we see that God covered the originally naked Adam and Eve with coats of skin after their sin. For marriage ought to be treated and spoken of by all as honorable, being the holy union from which we all are born; and which is, as it were, the seminary not only of each nation but of the Church and kingdom of Christ unto the end of the world.

This high glory of marriage however the heathen and profane men do not understand. Therefore, all they can do is to collect the vices which exist in the marriage life itself, and in the abandoned female sex. And thus, separating the unclean things from the clean, they retain the unclean only; and the clean they see not at all. Hence also, certain profane law-

yers so irreverently judge and speak of this book of Genesis as to affirm that it contains nothing more than the marriage doings of the Jews. Are not then such men as these, I ask you, worthy of living to see marriage despised and unclean celibacy introduced, and themselves, subjected to its crimes and punishments, which exceed even those of Sodom?

The Holy Spirit however thought it not enough to say here "And Adam knew Eve;" but he also adds, "his wife!" For the Holy Spirit approves not wandering lusts and promiscuous intercourse! He wills that every man should live content with his own wife. And although, alas! even that union of married people itself is very far from being pure, as it would have been had man continued in his state of innocency; nevertheless even in the midst of the vices of lust and of all the other calamities of the fall of Adam, the "blessing" of God on marriage still stands unaltered. For the fact of Adam knowing Eve his wife, which Moses records, was not written for Adam and Eve's sake. When Moses penned these words, Adam and Eve had long been reduced to their original dust. It was for our sakes therefore that this was written; "That those who cannot contain might marry, 1 Cor. 7:9, "live content each with his Eve, and not desire strange women."

This expression, "knew his wife," is a phrase peculiar to the Hebrews; for neither the Latins nor the Greeks so expressed themselves. It is a form of speech particularly beautiful; not only on account of the modesty and reverence it preserves, but on account of the peculiarity of signification it conveys. For the verb YADA has a much more extensive meaning than the verb "to know" in our language. Thus, when Job says, concerning the wicked, "They shall know what it is to act against God" he means that they shall feel and experience the consequences of such actions. So, when David says, "For I acknowledge my sin," Ps. 51:3, his meaning is, I feel and experience what it is to sin. Again, when the angel of the Lord says to Abraham, "For now I know that thou fearest God," Gen. 22:12, his meaning is, "I know by sense and ex-

perience." And again, when the Virgin Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man," Luke 1:34, her meaning is the same as that of Job, David, etc. For, it is evident that Mary knew many men, but she had neither known nor experienced any man, as man or the male of God's creation. It was in this manner therefore that Adam "knew Eve his wife," as it is expressed in the present passage. Adam did not know his Eve as an object of sight or of a speculative knowledge, but he experienced in reality what she was as the "woman," whom God had created such.

That which follows, "And Eve conceived, and bare Cain," is sure evidence that the human nature was more excellent and perfect then than it is now. For there were originally no unfruitful embraces, as there are now in this old age of the world. As soon as Eve was known by her Adam, she was immediately impregnated and conceived.

II. Here a question may arise, why Moses says, "And bare Cain!" Why he does not say, And bare a son, Cain; as below, verse 25, where his expression is, "And she bare a son, and called his name Seth." Both Cain and Seth were sons. Why, then, are they not both called "sons"? The answer to this question is, that these different expressions of Moses were so ordered on account of the posterities. For, Abel being murdered by his brother, perished corporally; but Cain by his sin perished spiritually. And yet the generation or seed-bed of the Church was not propagated from Cain, though he was still alive corporally; for all his posterity perished in the flood. Therefore neither the blessed Abel, nor the accursed Cain, has in the Scriptures the name of "son." But Seth was the one from whose posterity Christ, that promised Seed, was ordained to be born. Seth therefore is the first of the children of Adam and Eve, who is counted worthy the name of "son."

V. 1b. *And Eve said, I have gotten a man with the help of (from) Jehovah.*

From this expression of Eve there may be gathered another reason why she did not call Cain a "son." It was the great-

ness of her joy and of her reverential awe, which prevented her from calling Cain a "son." For she thought something greater concerning Cain than a natural son. She considered Cain would be that man who should bruise the serpent's head. And therefore she does not say simply, "a man;" but, "a man of Jehovah," implying that he would be that man concerning whom the Lord God had promised her that her Seed should bruise the serpent's head. And although Eve was deceived in this her hope, yet it plainly appears that she was a holy woman, and that she believed in the salvation that was to come by the blessed Seed. And it was because she believed this, that she so greatly rejoiced in the son which she had borne, and that she spoke of him in the exalted terms contained in the text before us. It was as if she had said, "I have gotten a man of God, who will conduct himself more righteously and happily than I and my Adam conducted ourselves in paradise. Therefore I call him not my 'son.' He is a man of God, promised to me and shown to me of God." It might have been for this latter reason also, as well as for the former, that Eve did not call Cain "a son."

With respect therefore to Eve's adhering so closely to the divine promise and believing so firmly in the deliverance that should surely come through her Seed, in all this she did rightly. For, by the same faith in the "Seed" that was to come, all the saints of old were justified and sanctified. But with respect to the individual intended by the promise, she erred. She believed that it was Cain who should put an end to all those calamities into which Satan had hurled man by sin. This faith of Eve however rested on a certain opinion of her own, without any sure sign and without the sure Word. The promise indeed was true, and certain, and sure; but nothing was said or signified definitely, whether it was Cain or Abel who should be that great conqueror of the serpent.

In the matter therefore of determining the individual, Eve was deceived; and consequently her giving to her son so proud and joyous a name was all in vain. For the text shows that

Cain was so called from the verb KANAH, which signifies "to possess," or "to acquire." So that by this name Eve consoled herself against the evils she had brought upon herself, and set against them the acquisition of eternal life and salvation, which she should obtain by her Seed, against that loss of life and salvation which she had incurred by sin and Satan. It was as if she had said to her Adam, "I remember with sorrow what we have lost by our sin; but now, let us speak of and hope for nothing but recovery and acquisition. I have gotten a man of God, who will acquire and recover for us that glory which we have lost." It was this certainty of the promise therefore and her sure faith in it, which drew Eve into this haste and caused her to think that this her first son was the Seed concerning whom the Lord had made the promise.

But Eve, poor miserable woman, was deceived in this. She did not yet see the extent of her calamity. She did not yet know that from the flesh nothing but flesh can be born, or proceed, John 3:6, that sin and death cannot be overcome by flesh and blood. Moreover she knew not as yet the point of time in which that blessed Seed, concerning whom the promise spoke, should be conceived of the Holy Ghost and be born of a virgin into the world. Just in the same manner the patriarch after Eve knew not this point of time, although the promise of the Seed to come was gradually made clearer and clearer by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. In the same manner also, we in our day know assuredly that there shall be a final judgment, but the day and the hour we know not. Just as Christ says, even unto his apostles, Math. 24:36.

V. 2a. *And again she bare his brother Abel.*

It cannot be known for a certainty whether Cain and Abel were twins or not, although it is very probable indeed that they were twins. But be that as it may, it is certain that our first parents had various thoughts concerning these two sons, and that they imagined that their redemption was at the door. Cain was doubtless held in the highest honor and made the object of their chief delight; while Abel on the other hand was not

an object of so much pleasure nor of so much hope, as the names themselves of the two sons show. Cain was so called, as we have said, because they considered that it was he who should acquire or restore all things. On the contrary Abel signifies "vanity" or "that which is nothing or of no value or object." Some interpreters have rendered the name in our Bible "mourning" or "sorrow;" but the Hebrew term for sorrow is EBEL not HABEL. Moreover the expression HEBEL is of very frequent use in the sacred Scriptures. How often is it repeated in Ecclesiastes? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," Eccles. 1:2, and also in the Psalm, "Therefore their days did he consume in vanity," Ps. 78:33; that is, they attained not the "promised land" of Canaan.

Abel therefore was so called, as being considered one concerning whom there was no hope, or one respecting whom all hope was vain. But Cain was so named, as one of whom all things were hoped. These very names given to these two sons therefore plainly manifest the thoughts and feelings of the parents concerning them; that, as the promise was made concerning the Seed of the woman, Adam and Eve thought that the divine promise thus made was to be fulfilled through Cain, their first son; but that Abel would effect nothing, seeing that everything was to be successfully accomplished as they thought through Cain. Therefore they called him Abel. And this hope which Adam and Eve entertained concerning Cain was undoubtedly the reason why these two brothers were not brought up with the same care and concern. For to Abel was committed the charge of the cattle; but Cain was trained in the pursuits of his father, and to the cultivation of the earth, as being the superior and nobler employment. Abel was a shepherd; Cain was a king and a priest, being the first-born and destined by his birth to fulfil those high hopes and expectations of the recovery of all his parents entertained concerning him.

But here ponder the wonderful counsel of God! From the beginning of the world, primogeniture has always held a very

high privilege, not only among the people of God, with whom the right attached to primogeniture was an institution of God himself, and by him highly commended, but among the Gentile nations also. And yet facts and experiences prove, especially among the holy people, that the first-born have often disappointed the hopes of their parents and that the after-born have often attained to the condition and dignity of the first-born.

Thus were not our first parents miserably deceived in their hopes concerning their first-born, Cain, the murderer? So also Abraham, the exalted, was not the first-born, but Haran. So again Esau was the first-born; but he had to yield his birth-right and its blessing to Jacob. Again, David was the youngest of all his brethren, and yet he was anointed king. And the same wonderful counsel of God may be seen in many other instances in the Scriptures. For although the first-born had by divine right the prerogatives of the kingship and the priesthood, yet they frequently lost them, and the after-born were appointed to them in their stead.

And whence in most instances arose this perversion of things? Both from the fault of the parents and from the pride of the first-born themselves. The parents gave to their first-born greater liberty and indulgence; and then the first-born themselves thus corrupted by the indulgence of their parents despised and oppressed, through this pride in their birth-right, the rest of their brethren. But God is the God of the "humble." He "giveth grace to the humble, and resisteth the proud." Those first-born therefore, who exalt themselves in pride God puts down from their right and their seat; not because such do not inherit the right of their primogeniture, but because they grow proud of their gifts and privileges, and carry themselves with insolence and oppression; and such God cannot endure.

Thus when the angels, who had been endowed with gifts the most noble and the most bright, above all other beings, began to grow proud in heaven and to despise the humility of the son of God, they were cast down into hell and became the most hideous devils. For God cannot endure pride and he will have

his majesty preserved and held inviolate everywhere, as the prophet says, "And my glory will I not give to another," Is. 42:8, 4, 11.

Thus also, the people of Israel were God's peculiar people, and the holy city of Jerusalem was the habitation of God. But when they cast off the fear of God and grew proud, through a confidence in their high gifts and privileges, the whole people was cut off and their city laid waste by the Gentile nations. And this indeed is the common pestilence of our nature. We rest not content with the gifts which God has bestowed upon us, but abuse them through pride and insult our bountiful Creator and giver. God, for example, bestows empires, kingdoms, peace and other large blessings, that kings and princes might acknowledge him, worship him and give him thanks. But kings and princes so abuse these great gifts and favors, as if they were bestowed upon them for the very end that they might insult and trample under foot their Creator, who has been to them so bountiful a giver.

The very same evil of pride also is found in private and domestic life. God gives sound health, wife, children, and personal property; not that through these things we should offend him, but that in all such things we might acknowledge his mercy and render him continual thanks. And for this same end also, that we might always give him thanks, he has bestowed upon us the use of and the "dominion" over all his creatures. But how few are there who render unto God the thanks which are thus due to him! Do not almost all of us live in the continual and most shameful abuse of the gifts of God? God therefore is compelled to use in our case the same remedy which the Roman Emperor Vespasian adopted. He used to suffer his citizens to grow rich. For he was accustomed to say, that such rich ones were like a sponge, which when filled with water, if well squeezed, will give back the water in abundance. So when God has enriched certain ones with his bountiful gifts, if they grow ungrateful and abuse the bounty of their God, he squeezes them till they are empty again; as the

blessed Virgin says, "And the rich he hath sent empty away."

It was for this reason that God did not spare the first-born, Cain. He did not give the first birth-right to Cain, that he might grow proud of it and despise his God; but that he might adorn it, and reverence and fear his God; and when he did not this, God cast him off. And in this matter the sin belonged even to the parents also. They fostered this pride in their first-born as the names they gave their two sons plainly prove. For Adam and Eve placed all their hope in their first-born only. They called him "their treasure," as his name indicates. But Abel they looked upon as nothing and considered that he could do nothing; while they adorned Cain as a king and held him to be the "blessed Seed." From him therefore they promised to themselves great things, and of him they speak great things; and he on his part became filled with pride. But Abel they despised all the time as a man of naught.

God however in due time reverses all things. He casts away Cain and makes Abel an angel, and the "first of all the saints." For Abel, when murdered by his brother, was the "first" who was delivered from his sin and from all the calamities of this world, and he shines throughout the whole church to the end of the world as a distinguished star, through that illustrious testimony of "righteousness," which the whole Scriptures bear to his honor.

In this manner therefore was Abel, whom Adam, Eve and Cain despised as a man of naught, made in the sight of God a lord of heaven and earth. For after death Abel is placed in a higher state and condition than if he possessed a thousand earthly worlds with all their riches.

Such is the end of pride and presumption against God! Cain trusted in his birth-right and despised his brother in comparison with himself, and believed not the promise concerning Christ; Abel on the contrary took fast hold by faith of the promise made unto Adam concerning the Seed of the woman. And this faith was also the reason he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, as the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, Heb. 11:4.

V. 2b. *And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*

According therefore to the names given to the two sons by Adam and Eve, such was the condition of life to which each son was appointed by his parents; and the difference of these appointments manifests that exalted hope which the parents entertained concerning Cain above his brother. For although each "calling" of life is honorable, yet that of Abel is domestic only, while that of Cain is rather political or public in the nation. As Adam was himself a tiller of the ground, he trained Cain, whom he more greatly loved, to his father's higher calling; while to Abel is committed the more leisure care of the flock. So that it plainly appears that the one son was looked upon as the lord and the other as a servant by his parents.

V. 3. *And in process of time after the end of days, it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah.*

"After the end of days," that is, after a certain number of years had been fulfilled or accomplished. It is here that we are first informed that the godly parents, Adam and Eve, preached to their children often and much concerning the will and the worship of God. For we here find that both the sons brought unto God their offering. But you will inquire perhaps what, and concerning what, did Adam and Eve preach unto their children. They certainly had most glorious subjects for all their sermons and conversations. They remembered well their original condition, and what paradise then was; and without doubt they frequently pointed out to their children the place, now guarded by the prohibiting angels, and warned their children to beware of sin, by which they had been deprived of so many blessings and shut out from them.

On the other hand there is no doubt that they exhorted their children to live in the fear of God, that they might console themselves with the confidence of his goodness toward them; assuring them that if they did so, they would attain to a better

state after this present life. And who could enumerate all the blessings of that former life, which they had originally enjoyed! To all their teaching was added that other branch of doctrine concerning the promise of the Seed of the woman, and of the great deliverance from all calamities to come. And most probably these God-fearing parents preached all these things to their children in a certain place, and especially on the Sabbath days. And it was doubtless by being stirred to do so by these sermons, that the children came to offer their sacrifices and to render unto God his worship.

PART II. OFFERINGS IN GENERAL. OF OUR FIRST PARENTS, AND OF CAIN AND ABEL.

I. Now this is the first passage of the Scripture in which mention is made of *MINCHA*, or "an offering," from which it plainly appears that the custom of sacrificing and offering victims is no recent thing, but a practice which has existed from the beginning of the world. It is no wonder therefore that the offering of sacrifices, which had been a custom handed down from Adam to Moses, as from hand to hand, should at length have been reduced by Moses into its own peculiar forms and into a certain order; all those things being rejected and repudiated, doubtless many, which the vain superstition of men had added to the original manner of sacrificing. Such additions are seen in the examples furnished by the heathen sacrifices, contained in Homer and Virgil, which sacrifices the heathen nations no doubt received from the primeval fathers, but which they multiplied and encumbered with many things through their superstition.

And while I am dwelling on the present passage, let the reader first of all consider with me that Adam and Eve are not parents only, nor is it their sole care to feed their children and to rear them for this present life. They hold the offices and perform the duties of priests also. And because they are filled with the Holy Ghost and illuminated with the knowledge of Christ who was to come, they set this great hope of their future

deliverance before their children also, and exhort them to show forth their gratitude to the God of such infinite mercy. For it is to be received as a sure fact, that the end of all the sacrifices which have been handed down to us from the beginning was none other than to set forth this *great hope!*

And now consider with me next, what kind of hearers there were to listen to this good and holy doctrine from the lips of Adam and Eve. These hearers and scholars were two. Cain, the first-born who appeared as a saint and was believed to be the lord of all, was a wicked man and believed not the divine promise. On the other hand, Abel, whose authority was as nothing and was thrust aside to take care of the cattle, was a godly man and believed the promise. And yet the ungodly Cain so concealed his ungodliness, that he heard his parents when teaching him and his brother, as if he solemnly revered the Word; and he also brought his offering, as his godly brother did. Here we have an example of the twofold church; the true Church and the hypocritical church, as we shall more fully explain hereafter. For although, in the passage now before us, mention is made of the sacrifice offered only, and not of preaching also, yet we are to rest fully assured that Cain and Abel did not bring their offerings without the preaching of the Word. For God is not worshipped with a mere dumb work. Here must also be the Word, sounding both in the hearts of men and in the ears of God. And in the same way also calling upon the name of the Lord was added to this original sacrifice.

Some may here inquire, whether Cain and Abel had any word or command of God for offering their sacrifice. My answer is, as all sacred histories confirm, that the great and merciful God of his superabounding grace always appointed together with his Word some certain and visible sign of his grace; in order that men being admonished and kept in remembrance by means of the certain signs or works of the sacraments may the more surely believe that God is favorable and merciful unto them.

In the same manner after the Flood, God set his bow in the

heavens, that it might be a sure sign and proof that he would not again visit the world with a like punishment. After the same manner also, circumcision was given unto Abraham, as we shall hear in order that he might hold fast the assurance that God would be to him a God, and that he would give him a Seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. To us under the New Testament are given Baptism and the Supper of our Lord, as ordained visible signs of grace, that we might be the more fully assured that our sins are all taken away by the suffering of Christ for us and that we are redeemed by his death. Hence the Church was never left so destitute of external signs, that men were suffered to remain in ignorance as to where God might be found without fail.

And although the world for the most part follows in the steps of Cain and abuses those external signs of the grace of God, turning them into hypocrisy, it is nevertheless evidently an unspeakable mercy that God represents himself unto us in so many ways. And this very great gift of God is that which is intended to be lauded by those high commendations contained in Proverbs, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in his habitable earth," Prov. 8:30, 31. But the Hebrew word *SACHAK* is not translated into German, "to play;" for wisdom here declares that her regard was always directed toward men, to the intent that she might reveal herself to men. The meaning is, as if God had said, "I have always so walked before the eyes and in the hearing of men, that they may always understand me to be present in their sacrifices, in circumcision, in their offering of incense, in the cloud by day, in the Red Sea, in the manna, in the brazen serpent, in the tabernacle of Moses, in the temple of Solomon, and in the cloud over the mercy-seat, and all these things were my delight; that by means of them I might present myself before the eyes of the sons of men and reveal myself unto them.

And it was also a great consolation to Adam, that after paradise had been lost and the tree of life also, and those other blessings of paradise which had been outward signs of the grace

of God, God gave unto him another sign of his grace; namely, that of offering sacrifices; in order that by this given sign he might understand that he was not cast off by God, but was still the care of his maker, and the concern of his Creator. And this is what God intended to be understood by Adam, when he had lighted his sacrifices and oblations with the heavenly fire, and when the flame which consumed them ascended to heaven; as we read concerning the sacrifices of Moses and of Elijah. For all these sacrifices were true symbols and representations of the divine mercy; of all these signs, miserable men had need, that they might not be without some continual light and indication of the grace of God.

In the same manner also the Word itself Baptism and the Lord's Supper are our morning stars, upon which we look as sure indications and representations of the Sun of grace. For we can definitely affirm, that where the Lord's Supper, Baptism and the Word are, there is Christ, the remission of sins and eternal life. On the contrary, where these signs of grace are not, or where they are despised by men, there, not only is there not grace, but also foul errors abound: so much so that men make to themselves other signs and appoint other modes of worship. Thus the Greeks worshipped their Apollo, and other heathen nations their demons. The Egyptians worshipped their Anubis, their Serapis, and crocodiles, garlic, onions, etc., etc. The Romans adored as their gods Jupiter Quirinus, and the abominable statues of Priapus, Venus, etc.

The very same thing has occurred also in the papacy. For after those true signs of grace began to sink in men's esteem and to be despised, superstition could not remain quiet. It sought out for itself other signs, such as vows, orders of monks, pilgrimages to the tombs of the saints, intercessions of the saints, and other superstitions. All these things are full of errors, and joined with ungodliness; and yet miserable mortals embrace them as certain signs of divine grace. And amidst all this you hear of no bishop who condemns, no school which exclaims against such blasphemies as these, nor which

teaches sounder things. For where the light of the Word is lost and these signs of grace also, which God has given unto men, people necessarily run after the desires of their own hearts. So also the Jews, when they had despised the tabernacle and the temple, sacrificed under trees and in groves, even until parents became so cruel as to sacrifice their own children.

All this idolatry, so various and so widely wandering out of the way, plainly shows how great a gift of God it is to possess the Word and those signs of divine grace, which God himself set forth and commanded. And if the Gentiles had been willing to follow in the footsteps of the Jews, they would never have fallen away into those monstrous idolatries under which they were sunk. And so also with respect to ourselves; had we held Baptism and the holy Supper of our Lord in that esteem in which we ought to have held them, we should never have become monks. Nothing concerning purgatory, nothing concerning the sacrifice of the mass, nothing about those other like iniquities, would ever have been taught and handed down to us in the Church. But after the light of the Word had been put out by the wicked Popes, it was easy enough to thrust upon men all these abominations.

Unspeakable therefore is this gift, that God not only condescended to speak unto men by his Word, but added also to the Word these visible signs of his grace; as in the New Testament, Baptism and the Supper of our Lord. Are not those therefore who use these signs in a manner beneath their dignity, or who treat them with contempt, worthy of being left as they are to purchase the Pope's dung, as the richest balsam, and to worship it, and to pray to it? For why dared they despise such goodness of the divine majesty? They might have had, if they pleased, these sure signs of the grace of God at their own houses without any expense and without any labor. But despising these, they travel to Rome and to Compostella, etc.; and thus spend their money and afflict their bodies, and at length most justly lose their souls. God be blessed forevermore, that he has in this our day recalled us by his Word from these mighty

errors and idolatries, and has so enriched us with the signs of his divine grace, that we may have them before our doors and in our home and even on our beds.

It was in this manner that God at first and from the very beginning of the world, in order to confirm his promise concerning our salvation, took this care that men might always have signs by which they might comfort themselves under their sins, and might lift up their heads by a confidence in the divine grace. For it is not the dignity of the work or act itself, but the mercy of God and the efficacy of the divine promise in the sacrifice, which are availing unto the worshipper. It is because God hath ordained these acts of worship, and because he hath promised that they shall be well-pleasing unto him, that Baptism and the Supper of our Lord are to us, what the sacrifice and offering after the promise were to Adam. For God in those sacrifices revealed his grace; and he approved those same sacrifices by himself igniting them and consuming them by fire from heaven.

II. And it was to these acts of worship that the first father brought up his sons; that they might in this manner render their thanks unto God, might bless God, and might conceive a sure hope in the mercy of God. But the wicked Cain, inflated with the dignity of his first birth-right, despised all these most blessed preachings of his parent. He brought his offering indeed as his father had commanded him; but, puffed up with the high opinion of his own sanctity, he imagined that God would approve the act of the worship itself, because of the dignity of the person, the worshipper. And Abel, who, according to the name given him, was nothing in his own eyes, also brought his offering; but he worships God thereby through faith in the divine promise; as it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. 11:4.

V. 4a. *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.*

Here, if you look at the acts of their worship themselves, you can see no reason for preferring Abel to Cain. For the Jews

expose their absurdity by their dreams when they say that Cain did not offer chosen wheat, but chaff only; and that was the reason why he was rejected of God. But the Jews are self-righteous worshippers and cleave unto the works themselves. The judgment of the Epistle to the Hebrews however is quite different; the testimony of which is, that it was "By faith that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," Heb. 11:4. The fault of the offering therefore did not lie in the things which were offered, but in the person who offered them. And it was the faith of the person and its weight, which gave the value to the offering made by Abel! But Cain, by the state of his person, rendered the offering which he made of no avail. Abel believed that God was good and merciful, and it was this faith that rendered his offering acceptable to God. Cain on the contrary trusted in the dignity of his first birth-right and despised his brother as a man of naught in comparison with himself. What therefore in the end was proved to be the judgment of God? God made the first-born to be as the after-born, and the after-born to be as the first-born. For he had respect unto the offering of Abel, and showed that the offering of this priest was acceptable unto himself; and, on the other hand, he declared that Cain was not acceptable to him and that he was not a true priest in his sight.

The Hebrew expression, *SCHAAH*, has a very wide signification; and I have carefully explained its full meaning in my paper against Latomus; and also, its like signification, as found in the prophet Isaiah. "In that day shall men look to their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel; and they shall not look to the altars, the work of their hands," Is. 17:7, 8, and likewise, Is. 66:12, "And ye shall suck thereof; ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees." The full meaning of the original expression therefore and its allusion are, that when a mother cherishes her babe in her bosom and looks upon it, she views it with a glad and delighted eye. This is the meaning, the allusion and the figure, which the original expression conveys. Its signifi-

cation therefore is much more extensive than that of the common verb, "to see," or "to behold." For when a mother looks at her babe, she smiles upon it with delight and carries in her countenance a peculiar expression of love. The modern expressions of our language do not contain a term by which the full import of this original word can be conveyed; nor does the Latin language, as far as I know, contain any expression adequate to its satisfactory translation.

Quite similar is that which Moses says in Exodus 33:15, "If thy presence (*facies tuae*) go not with me, carry us not up hence," that is, grant that we may ever have thy signs with us in our midst, by which thou appearest always before us, and makest manifest thy presence with us and thy favor unto us. And these signs, as I have said, were the pillar of fire and the cloud, etc. And though Moses does not, in this portion of the divine history explain what that sign was, by which God showed that the offerings of Abel were acceptable unto him; yet it is very probable that his acceptance and pleasure were manifested by fire sent down from heaven, by which the offering and the victim were ignited and consumed before the eyes of all present, by which it was plainly shown that God was delighted with the sacrifice Abel offered. For by this divine manifestation God showed that he judgeth the heart and the reins; because, in these two offerings, he "had not respect" unto the glory of the first birth-right of Cain; but, on the other hand, he "had respect" unto the mind of the despised Abel.

And here the whole Church first begins to be divided into that church, which is "the church" in name only, but which in reality is the church of hypocrisy and the church of blood; and into that other church, which is barren and desolate in appearance, and subject to sufferings and to the cross, and which, before the world and in the estimation of that church of hypocrisy, is really the Abel; that is, vanity and nothing. But Christ himself, who also makes this division and difference, calls Abel the "righteous" one and makes him the beginning of the Church of the godly, which shall continue even unto the end of

the world. While Cain is the beginning of that church of enmity and blood, which also shall continue unto the end of the world; as Augustine also setteth forth this history in his book, "The City of God."

A great doctrine therefore and a great consolation are set before us, while we trace both these churches to these their original fountains, as it were, and when we mark that wonderful counsel, with which God has ever ruled and overruled these things; ordaining that the true Church should at one time be greater and at another time less; yet, so that the hypocritical and the bloody church should always have the glory before the world and should crucify the true Church, which is the beloved of her God. For even thus at the beginning did commence the practical fulfilment of that divine prediction, that the seed of the serpent should bite the heel of the blessed Seed. And this same enmity and biting we experience to this very day. Therefore we ought not to be affrighted by this our appointed lot. It ought rather to be unto us a great consolation that we learn by our own experience to suffer those very things at the hands of our enemies, which the bloody Cain inflicted on the "righteous" Abel.

For it is not now the first time that the name of the Church is torn from us, and that we are called heretics, and that those who kill us glory that they are the only true Church, and maintain that assumed name by fire and sword, and by every kind of cruelty. The same thing befell righteous Abel. The same thing befell Christ our Lord, who was not a priest nor a king of Jerusalem before the people; and yet he was dragged by the priests and by the kings to the cross! And we all, as the apostle says, must be made conformable to Christ. And thus it is that the true Church is ever hidden and unknown, and is cast out, and its members held as heretics, and slain; while Cain alone has the glorious name and is held in estimation, and alone possesses the hope of doing great things; and therefore it is that he rushes on his brother with hostile enmity of mind and slays him.

Now these things were not political nor domestic, but truly ecclesiastical in the highest degree. Abel was not slain on any political or domestic account, but alone on account of the worship of God. For it was not enough for Cain that he was the lord of the family, he wishes to be the son of God; he will be the pope and father of the church. And therefore he takes upon himself the judgment of sacrifices, and condemns and slays his brother as a heretic.

Hence is the prophecy of Christ that the Church should be subject to various perils and that the time should come when those who should slay the godly should think that they were thereby worshipping God and doing him service. Therefore those who will consider themselves the most righteous among us, these are the pestilences and the persecutors of the Church. On the other hand, the true Church is that church which is never judged to be "the Church." But she is, according to her name, the Abel who was not only a figure of the true Church but the very beginning of it; that is, she is accounted as naught, so that when she is slain, her slayers think that God will care nothing about her, because Cain, they think, as being lord of all and king, may do and is able to do anything.

Now this is the offense of the cross, against which we have ever to fight by faith. For we are not to think that we are not the Church, because our adversaries condemn us and persecute us with every kind of cruelty thus securely. But, on the contrary, we are ever to consider that this cross and these judgments of the wicked are the sure and infallible signs of the true Church, as the tenth Psalm shows, also Psalm 72:14, "And precious shall their blood be in his sight;" and Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." In these Psalms therefore you hear that those who are slaughtered in this manner by the Cainites are so far from being from the care of God that their death is precious in his sight. Those therefore who are thus the care of God are the true people of God.

Wherefore, let us endure the cruelty of our adversaries and

let us joyfully give thanks unto God that we are not in the number of those who are the slayers; and who, because of their name and title, persecute "the Church," seize upon the property of others, and rush with cruelty and violence upon their bodies also. And indeed the histories of all ages and times testify that the true Church was ever a suffering Church, that the false Church was ever an evil and violent Church; and that the true Church was ever condemned by the church of hypocrisy and blood. Hence there can be no doubt among us of the present day that the Church of the Pope is the Cainite Church, and that we are the true, the Abel Church; and as Abel harmed not Cain, so we not only do no harm to the Church of the Pope, but suffer ourselves to be harassed, condemned and slaughtered by them.

Nor do we record these things falsely. It is well known to the whole world how often we are subjected to anathemas, distressed by subscriptions, and condemned by various denunciations. Nor have there ever ceased to be found men in almost every corner of Europe ready to offer themselves as the fierce executors of cruelest decrees. Neither Spain, nor France, nor England, nor Belgium, nor Bohemia, nor Poland, nor Hungary, nor Austria, nor Bavaria, has been free from witnessing this unjust cruelty and savage rage. And yet, what were they persecuting all the while? What, but godly doctrine, a doctrine perfectly agreeing with the writings of the apostles and prophets? Can there be any doubt or obscurity then in forming a judgment concerning the true Church? For can you possibly judge that to be the true Church where nothing sound is taught, where unjust tyranny is practiced, and where the highest power is joined with the greatest wealth? Is not that rather the true Church where there is sound and holy doctrine, healing to afflicted consciences? And where, for the sake of that doctrine, there are endured the cross, contempt, poverty, ignominy, and all those things of the same kind which the poor little helpless flock of Christ is recorded ever and everywhere to have suffered?

It is not only most useful therefore, but also most consoling, to have ever before our eyes this most certain demonstration, which carries with it so plain a distinction between the two Churches, that Church which is filled with men of enmity and malignity, such as that purple harlot, bearing the name of the true Church; and that other Church, which is accounted as naught, which suffers, which hungers and thirsts, and lies prostrate under oppression. For Christ records that he and his disciples both hunger and thirst in this world, Math. 25:35-46. But the judgment shall one day come which shall judge between the full and the hungry, between the goats and the sheep, between Cain and Abel. At this judgment God shall declare that he approves this suffering and hungering Church, and condemns the Church of hypocrisy and blood. These are our consolations and this is that sugar as it were, by which our present calamities must be sweetened and overcome. Such then is the theological part of this divine matter. Now let us come to the political part of it, and consider the judgment of God concerning that.

We doubtless may justly wonder why it was that God permitted the first son of Adam, to whom the honor of the first birth-right was always due throughout the whole human race, to fall so horribly that his whole posterity should afterwards be destroyed. But the cause was the very same as that on account of which God spoke with such bitter derision to Adam when he said, "Lest he also become as one of us," Gen. 3:22. The reason was the same as that for which the Lord guarded the garden by the cherubim. For God will crush all presumption and pride, which are implanted as it were in the heart of man by original sin. And such is our nature that we can endure anything else better than this crushing of our pride. We see what insolence and pride there are in all our nobles of the court, on account of the vain nobility of their descent. For truly vain is that nobility, which real worth and illustrious services to his country have not procured for a man.

It is said of Plato, the philosopher, that he also was accus-

tomed to give thanks to God for three things; first, that he was born a man and not a beast; secondly, that he was born a Greek at Athens, and not a barbarian; and thirdly, that he was born a man and not a woman. The fatuity of the Jews is just like this. They glory that they were born men, and not beasts; Jews, and not Gentiles; males, and not females. But to what, I pray you, does all this glory of origin amount? What vanity is it to see a certain ass in a palace with his gold chains on, not only thinking himself better than every one of the people, but also growing proud and insolent against God himself. Just so it was with the Romans. They prided themselves in the course of years on the glory of their nation's mighty deeds, always carefully thrusting from them the degrading term "barbarian." In a word, the greater any nation has ever grown in its own eyes, the more proud and insolent it has ever become. And the same is the nature of us all by sin.

But look at the judgment of God in this matter. Cain could truly and justly boast in the highest of all nobility, for he was the first-born of all mankind. But the greater and more glorious his origin was, by so much the more horribly did he fall. Hence general experience has also given place to the well-known proverb, which says, "The sons of the great are great evils."

Nor are these evils peculiar to private families only, mighty empires suffer the same. The nation of the Greeks was most glorious. They excelled all other nations in their learning and in the greatness of their illustrious deeds. But into what extremes of turpitude did they fall? And how miserably was their nation destroyed at last? And you may see the very same things fulfilled in all nations. Good therefore was God in permitting Cain thus to fall, that he might be an example to the whole world, that no one might ever glory in the nobleness of his blood, as the Jews boasted of their father Abraham and as the Greeks boasted of their wisdom. For God will have himself to be feared and us to be humbled. But this his will, though known to us, is for the most part known to us in vain. For we

are not moved by all these terrible instances of his wrath nor by the perditions and destructions of the first men and the first nations.

Universal experience therefore testifies, that the sentiment of the Virgin Mary is true, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats," Luke 1:52. For those things which are the first and the best become the most damnable, not from anything in themselves that is evil, but on account of the diabolical presumption and pride of men. This sad result the Gentiles also saw, as the well-known saying of one of their philosophers testifies, who being asked what God was doing replied, "Exalting the humble, and humbling the exalted." But the heathen philosophers saw not the cause of all these things.

Thus also the flesh judges it to be great glory to be born a male, and not a female. We see however that God has taken especial care that man, so great, should not be born of man, and so also Christ would have himself to be called "the Seed of the woman," not the "Seed of the man." O what would have been the pride of men had God willed Christ to be born of a man! No! all this glory is transferred from the men to the women, subject to the rule of the men. And all this was done that men might not glory in themselves, but be humbled. Nay, since the woman cannot bring forth without the man, God has therefore especially ordained that the men also should not bring forth of themselves without the woman. For such is human nature, that man cannot rightly use his glory, but ever abuses it with pride and rises up against him from whom he receives such gifts. It was for this reason therefore that Cain so awfully fell and lost the right of his first birthship, that we might be thereby taught to fear God and to give him thanks, and might be warned against abusing his gifts in arrogance and pride.

Vs. 4b, 5a. *And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.*

This is an important portion of Scripture, and therefore it is to be most carefully observed and most strongly enforced. For

it would be sufficient for all doctrine if under the New Testament trust in the mercy of God were set before men against all trust in works with so clear a testimony and in such plain words as it was thus set forth at the very beginning of the world. For when Moses says that the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect, does he not clearly show that God ever respects the person before the work, and that he first looks at the person who performs the work? And does not the sacred historian make it perfectly plain, that if the person be good, his work also pleaseth God; but that, if the person be evil, the work also of such an one does not please God?

Now this is the sum of our doctrine, which we profess and teach, that the person is accepted of God before the work! And that the person is not made righteous by the righteous work, but on the contrary that the work is rendered righteous and good by the good and righteous person, as the text now before us clearly proves. For because God, as here shown, had respect unto the person of Abel, he had respect also unto his offering. But on the other hand, because God had not respect unto the person of Cain, therefore unto his offering also he had not respect. This doctrine the text before us plainly proves, nor can our adversaries deny it. From the words of that text therefore follows this most clear and most evident consequence: that Abel was "righteous" before the work of his "offering," and that his work pleased God, because of his person; not his person, because of his work. Yet it is for the latter doctrine that our adversaries contend, who teach that the man is justified by his works, and not by his faith alone.

And it is in this manner that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews looks at this text with clear and pure eyes, when he says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh," Heb. 11:4. Cain also offered, and also before Abel brought his offering; but the former offered, inflated with the

glory of his birth, expecting that his gift would please God, because it was offered by the first-born. Cain therefore comes to offer without faith, without the confession of sin, without imploring the grace of God, without trust in the mercy of God, and without prayer for the remission of sins, having no other ground for his hope that he shall please God, than because he was the first-born; and this is what all self-justifiers do at this day. They look intently on their works alone and hope that they shall please God on account of their works. They trust not in the mercy of God only, nor hope in God that he will pardon their sins for Christ's sake. And such was Cain. But it would have been impossible for him to have displeased God, if he had possessed faith.

Abel, on the contrary, acknowledged himself to be an unworthy and miserable sinner; and therefore he fled unto the mercy of God and believed that God was favorable unto him, and that he was willing to have mercy upon him. God therefore who looks into the heart judged between the two brothers, who alike brought their offering. He condemned Cain, not on account of the offerings themselves, as if they were less good than those of Abel, for if he had offered even a nutshell in faith, it would have been accepted of God, but because his person was evil, without faith and filled with pride and arrogance. While, on the contrary, God had respect unto the offering of Abel, because his person pleased him. Hence it is that the text so clearly and particularly expresses it, that the Lord had respect first to Abel, and afterwards to his offering. For, when the person first pleases you, then also the things which that person does please you. But, on the contrary, all things are unpleasing to you, which that person does whom you hate.

The passage before us therefore is remarkable and important; for it is thereby clearly proved that God regards neither the magnitude, nor the multitude, nor even the price of the works done; but simply and only the faith of the person who does them. And that God despises neither the fewness, nor the meanness, nor the worthlessness of the works done, but

the absence of faith only, in the person who does them.

Of what avail is it therefore that the Jews glory and exclaim, "The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!" Jer. 7:4. What avails it that the Papists boast of their masses, their sackcloth, their horse-hair blankets, their hard labors, their sweats, and the magnitude, the multitude and even the price of their works? For God regardeth not works, not even those commanded by himself, when they are not done as the passage of Jeremiah just mentioned shows. Much less does God regard those works which are invented of men without his Word. He regards faith alone; that is, a trust in his mercy through Christ. It is by this faith and this trust that the persons begin to please God; then after this their works also please him. Hence it was that the offering of Cain did not please God, because Cain having no faith did not please him. On the contrary, the offering of Abel did please God and that because of his faith; because he trusted neither in his dignity, nor in his sacrifices themselves, nor in the work which he performed; but trusted alone in the promise given of God concerning the Seed of the woman.

The text before us therefore exactly applies to our doctrine concerning justification, that a man must be righteous before all works and be accepted of God without any works, through that grace alone which his faith believes and apprehends. Nor does even faith justify, as a work, but because it apprehends the mercy shown forth in Christ. It is in this trust in the mercy of God that the true Church walks, with a humble confession of her sins and unworthiness, while she believes that God will pardon her through Christ.

And now the works which follow upon this trust in God's mercy are as it were evidences and testimonies of the man's faith; and they please God, not on account of themselves, but on account of the faith of the person who offers them; or because he believes in the mercy of God toward him. This faith the other church, the Cainite church, not only has not, but ever persecutes it where she finds it. For she on the contrary,

like Cain, sets it down for a certainty that she shall please God on account of her works. But God hates this pride; for he can not endure such contempt of his grace and mercy, etc. This passage of Scripture therefore is worthy our most careful consideration.

PART III. CAIN'S CONDUCT UPON THE REJECTION OF HIS OFFERING AND HIS PUNISHMENT.

I. V. 5b. *And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

This and the few following clauses will give us a little grammatical trouble. But I hope we shall make our way out of the difficulty successfully. We have heard that Cain was disappointed in his hope. He had despised his brother in comparison with himself, and had judged that on account of the right of his primogeniture he should hold the first place with God as he had done with his parents. The judgment of God however was quite different from that of men. He showed that he approved Abel, but rejected Cain.

The result was therefore that Cain was violently enraged against his brother. For he could not endure with any patience that he should be thus rejected and excommunicated, and deprived also at the same time of his rule and priesthood. Just in the same manner also we see kings and princes to be utterly impatient of the judgment of the Church. For they are not satisfied with being kings and princes, they want to be accounted also righteous and saints before God; and they will take to themselves the name of "the Church." Exactly like these, Cain was filled with indignation when he saw that the honor of righteousness and grace before God was taken from him. For what else was this than being cast out of the Church and excommunicated? And his indignation at this dishonor was the greater in proportion to the measure in which he judged himself degraded beneath his brother. For his thoughts were these: "My brother will assuredly aspire to the headship

and rule, since he sees me thus despised and disregarded of God." And hence it is that Moses uses the adverb "very wroth," by which form of expression he would signify that Cain was vehemently offended because he was thus ignominiously confounded in public before his whole family; whereas he had always wished to appear the first among them.

This Cain-like wrath is just that rage which we see also in the Cain-like Church of the pope. For what is there which gives the pope, the cardinals, the kings and the princes greater offense than that I, a poor beggar, set the authority of God above the authority of them all, and that I condemn in the name of the Lord all those things which are worthy such condemnation. They themselves also acknowledge that there are many things which need rigid reformation. But that I, a poor, obscure person, coming into public out of some obscure corner, should presume to do this, is a thing which they consider to be beyond all endurance. And therefore they put forth all their authority against me and by the weight of that authority they attempt to crush us.

And most certainly there is not in the whole world a wrath more cruel than that of this Church of hypocrisy and blood. For in all political or civil rage there is some degree of humanity still left. No assassin is led to execution, however savage his nature may be, with pity for whom men are not in some measure touched. But when that false and blood-thirsting Church falls upon a poor son of the true Church, she is not satisfied with shedding his blood; she loads him also with her curses and execrations, and devotes him to every ignominy and insult, and even vents her rage upon his miserable, breathless corpse. Just like the Jews, who were not content with having nailed Christ to the cross, with the full purpose of not taking him down till he was dead, but even while he was breathing out the last breath of his soul they gave him in his thirst vinegar to drink mingled with gall. Such fury as this is never found in political wrath!

The wrath therefore and the pharasaic fury of the false

Church is a fury in its very nature diabolical. This wrath began in Cain, and it continues in all Cainites to this very day. And we can most truly glory that we also have to endure with godly Abel, just such wrath as this in our day. For who entertains a doubt, that if our bishops and certain furious princes could do it, they would slaughter us all in one moment? Who doubts that, if according to the prayers of the notorious Roman emperor, we all together had but one neck, they would with the greatest delight rush upon us sword in hand and cut off our head? Only look at the councils of these later years and their designs, and you will say that my testimony is true.

That which Moses adds, "And his countenance (*vultus*) 'appearances,' 'looks,' 'whole aspect,' fell," is a Hebrew expression; an expression which not only represents the deed done, or the fact, but also implies that the mind also was in such a state of commotion that it could not rest; and that although Cain could do no further harm, yet his wrathful will to do so was manifested by his countenance. He did not lift up his fallen brow nor speak in a friendly voice to his parents as before. And every answer he made them was rather a sullen murmur than a natural utterance. He was struck pale at the first sight of his brother after his offering, which God had accepted. And he showed by the threatening looks of his eyes that his mind was burning with the desire of revenge.

Moses expresses all this, when he says, "And his countenance fell;" for he does not mean his countenance or visage only, nor merely one part of his countenance; but he intends all his appearances, his whole appearance; his every look, gesture and motion; in the same manner as the apostle uses a Hebrew expression, when he says concerning charity that it "doth not behave itself unseemly;" that is, doth not carry an unseemly countenance, doth not contract its brow, doth not look with anger or disdain, doth not wear a threatening aspect; but is of a free and open visage, expressing with its eyes kindness and affection. For the latter are becoming, but the former are unbecoming and indicative of vice within. This clause therefore, "And his

countenance fell," contains a particular description of the anger and hypocrisy of Cain. He could neither look at his brother Abel, nor hear his voice, nor speak to him, nor eat nor drink with him in rest or quietude of mind.

If any one desires to witness an example of this Cain-like wrath, let him put himself in the presence of some Papist, who is seeking distinguished praise for doctrine or piety in his day and generation; and he will find that such an one is the subject of a rage against the truth, perfectly diabolical; to which fury, if you compare the anger of a judge, the latter will appear in comparison to be the greatest kindness, mercy and open candor. For in the judge anger is merely a duty; he is not angry with the person of the prisoner, but with his crime. But the Cainite wrath fires and distorts the eyes, scowls the brow, swells the cheeks with rage, and arms the hands. In a word, it is evident in every part of the body and in its every gesture, and that unceasingly. For it does not die away by time, as political or domestic wrath does.

Next follows the fatherly and most grave admonition of Adam, who would willingly have healed and saved his son if he could have done so. But this wrath knows no medicine or cure. Neither Cain nor any Cainite will hear either father or mother, or God Himself!

V. 6. *And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?*

All these circumstances plainly prove that the present was not the first time that Cain had been confounded in this offering of his sacrifice; but that from the hour of this sacrifice he had gone in perturbation of mind, filled with sadness and gnashing his teeth; and looking neither upon his father nor upon his mother without an evil eye; affected just as we have already said that pharasaic rage affects the whole man, and changes the whole visage and gesture. For Cain considered it to be a great indignity that at a public sacrifice, and in the midst of divine worship, and before the eyes of his father and his mother, Abel whom he had always despised and whom even his parents them-

selves had accounted a child of naught, should be preferred of God to himself; and thus pronounced of God worthy the glory of the kingship and the priesthood.

II. As soon therefore as he had fully shown that he was of a hostile mind towards his brother, he receives from his father Adam the admonition in our text. For my belief is, that these words are spoken by Adam himself, and that Moses says they were spoken "by the Lord," because Adam had now been justified and had been gifted with the Holy Spirit; and therefore those things which he now spoke by the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God are rightly said by Moses to have been spoken by God himself. Just as at the present day those who preach the Gospel are not in reality themselves the preachers and teachers, but Christ, who speaks and teaches in them and by them. And most certainly these words are spoken by Adam with peculiar gravity and intent; for he saw that his son could not patiently endure the indignity put upon him; he saw him grieve over his lost superiority; and he felt what havoc the Tempter might make in the corrupt nature of his son, who had done such evil to himself and Eve, when in a state of innocency and perfection. Adam therefore was filled with deep anxiety and addressed his son with that solemn gravity of language, which Moses records in the text. And although no one of the fathers has explained that speech of Adam to his son Cain in a manner worthy its gravity and importance; because perhaps none of them had sufficient leisure from their ecclesiastical engagements; yet I will attempt to move this stone of difficulty out of the way; and, as I hope and think, not without some advantage to the truth.

V. 7a. *If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up, (shall there not be a remission,) and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth (lieth) at the door.*

I cannot sufficiently wonder how Moses was able to condense so mighty a subject in so few words. Our translation does not properly express the sense. And although Augustine was not altogether unacquainted with the Hebrew language, yet his

knowledge of it was not thorough; for he renders this important text thus, "If thou offerest aright, and yet dost not rightly divide the offering, thou hast sinned. Rest, and be quiet." What such sins are those well acquainted with the Hebrew know. Though the doctrine which Augustine deduces from his rendering of the passage is theologically correct and good, the Septuagint translators of the Hebrew seem also not to have been duly qualified for the magnitude of the work they undertook. Wherefore, leaving for the present both the translations and the opinions of all other commentators, we will now strictly follow the proper sense of the Hebrew in the text before us. That sense is the following, "If thou doest well, there shall be remission, or alleviation; if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," etc.

Moreover it is ordained by nature, as even the philosopher testifies, that words should be made to serve things, and not things made subservient to words. The sentiment of Hilary is well known, which a certain master of sound opinions also thus cites: "Words ought ever to be understood according to the matter contained in them, and intended to be expressed by them." In every exposition or explanation of the Scriptures therefore the subject-matter is first to be considered; that is, we are first clearly to see the thing spoken of in each case. When this is strictly done, then the words are to be brought to a due application to the thing, if the grammatical laws of the language will permit; but the things are never to be made to bend to the words. And it is because the Rabbins and those who follow them do not this, for they have lost the things, and so cleave hard to the words only, that they often fall into the most absurd sentiments and opinions. For, as they possess not thoughts worthy of those spiritual things, of which the sacred Scriptures speak, they err from the subject-matter treated in each case by the Word and draw the words after them into vain and carnal cogitations.

But it is certain that the Jews have lost Christ; how then can they possibly understand aright either the things of the Gospel

or the things of the Law? They know not what sin is, nor what grace is, nor what righteousness is. How then should they be able to explain successfully such passages of the Scriptures? Just so the Jews are in general the "wise" or sophists of our day. For what sound knowledge have they of such divine and mighty things as these! Being ignorant therefore of the thing itself, how is it possible that they should rightly understand the words of the Scriptures in which it is expressed? And although a knowledge of the words is prior in order; yet the knowledge of the things is better and more important. For if you alter the things, the words also will be changed into another sense to correspond with the altered things, and a new grammatical construction altogether is the sure result.

Thus the great grammarian of Gerunda possesses an excellent knowledge of the words, and indeed there are many in our day who far surpass me in a critical knowledge of the Hebrew language, but because he understands not the divine theme, he miserably corrupts this passage; for he explains it thus: "If thou doest well thy offering shall be more acceptable than that of thy brother, because thou art the first-born." You here see that Gerundensis understands what the names of the things are, but not the things themselves; what the term is, but not what the matter is. For the very design of God in this text is to show that he will have no regard to first birthship at all. How then could the offering of Cain ever have been more acceptable to God than that of Abel on account of his primogeniture? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews knew what the thing was, and therefore he gives a very different statement of the sacred matter, namely, that it was "by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." The rendering of Jerome is much better than that of Gerundensis. The version of the former is, "If thou doest well, thou shalt receive; if thou doest ill, sin (he adds the pronoun "thine own sin") will lie at the door." Yet, even thus Jerome does not reach the true sense. For when he explains the verb SEETH as meaning "to receive," which really signifies "to relieve," or "to alleviate,"

no one I think will approve his rendering. But all this Jerome has from the Jews, who have always been of the opinion that God would have rewarded Cain if he had offered liberally. Now therefore I will simply state what my view of this important passage is.

First of all then it is necessary, as I have said, that we hold fast the divine matter in question. The divine matter then involved is that which cannot deceive, as being the foundation of the whole divine cause, that nothing pleases God unless it be done in faith, according to that universally applicable and well known sentence of the Apostle Paul, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. 14:23. And Solomon also says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," Prov. 15:8. The other great foundation of the cause of God is, that sin is so mighty that it can be put away by no sacrifices, nor by any works whatever, but by the mercy of God alone, which mercy must be apprehended and received by faith. And all this is manifested and shown to have been the good pleasure of God by the first promise concerning the Seed of the woman, without which Seed there is no redemption. Now these foundations the Rabbins possess not, for this knowledge comes by the Spirit of Christ alone, who like the mid-sun illumines all the darkness of nature and sin. Whatsoever therefore militates against, or is contrary to, these foundations, we at once reject as false and impious.

And although for myself I have no objection whether you understand "sin" here as referring to the past sin, or to the future sin of Cain, yet it seems to me better to understand it as referring to sin in general. The force of the whole passage therefore lies in the Hebrew verb SEETH from NASA, "be alleviated," or "lifted up," or "relieved." And in this very case we have a remarkable example of the difference between the name or term of the thing and the thing itself. For if you apply the term to "lift up," or to "lift off," to a corporeal or solid substance, it signifies "to elevate" or "to lift up on high;" as in Isaiah, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and

lifted up," Is. 6:1. But this is a very different signification of the Hebrew verb from that which it expresses in the Psalm, "Blessed is the man whose sins are 'lifted up' or 'lifted out,'" Ps. 32:1, and yet the Hebrew verb is the same in each instance. Now, a common grammarian of the Hebrew language understands the former meaning of the original verb, but he is ignorant of its latter signification. For, "to lift up a throne on high," is quite another thing from lifting up or lifting off, sin from the conscience; that is, remitting or taking away sin.

Wherefore, the meaning is, "If thou hadst done well or if thou hadst been good; that is, if thou hadst believed, thou wouldst have had God favorable and merciful toward thee, and there would have been a true alleviation to thee; that is, a remission of sin. But since I see that God had not respect unto thee, it evidently follows that thou wert not good in his sight; and that therefore thou wast not relieved from thy sin; wherefore, thy sin remaineth."

However it is a most beautiful and striking similitude to make use of the verb "to lift up" or "to lift off" in order to compare sin to a heavy burden, under which Cain was so oppressed and prostrated, so that unless it were taken off he could not draw his breath. And the epistle to the Hebrews shows the manner in which we are released from this burden, when it says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," Heb. 11:4.

By this mode of interpreting this important passage the words or the grammatical construction perfectly agree with the matter contained in them, which is, that God has respect unto faith only, and judges those alone to be good who believe. And these words of Adam contain also a most severe rebuke. Their meaning is, as if Adam had said to Cain, "Thy pride has destroyed thee. Thou camest before God inflated with the glory of thy primogeniture, and thoughtest that God would accept thee on that account. But I clearly perceive by this judgment and reprobation of God that thou art destitute of faith, for God rejects none but the unbelieving."

Not one of the Rabbins explains the passage before us in this manner. For they see not that Adam is here inculcating in his son, after the manner of the Apostle Paul, that word of Christ in the Gospel, "He that believeth shall be saved," Mark 16:16; and also that word of the apostle himself, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Rom. 3:28. For what else does Adam here say to Cain, than that God is merciful to those who believe in the blessed Seed, and who cast away all trust in their own works, and all ideas of their own merit? For his meaning is, "If thou shalt do this, thy sin shall not lie thus as a heavy burden upon thee. Thou shalt be relieved of that load, nor shalt thou thus roar with rage; for God has promised that he will not impute sin to any one that believeth."

If therefore you refer these words to the past sin of Cain, they contain also a most grave fatherly admonition. Their import is, as if Adam had said, "Hitherto thou hast not believed and therefore thou art thus rejected; and if thou shalt still go on thus, thou wilt be cast off utterly. But if thou shalt do well or become good, that is, if thou shalt believe in the promised Seed, I take upon myself to assure thee that the result will be that thou shalt be relieved of thy burden of sin;" that is, as the Psalm interprets this expression of Adam, "sin shall not be imputed unto thee," Ps. 32:2.

The clause which follows, thy "sin lieth at the door," is a figurative description of sin, which for my part I should prefer understanding as being used as a proverb. For this figure exactly describes the real nature of sin, showing that, while in the act, it lies like a beast dead asleep; it does not bite, nor terrify, nor torment, but rather fawns and pleases. Thus when Eve first and afterwards Adam ate the forbidden apple in paradise they did not think that God had seen it, much less did they think that both should be so bitterly punished for what they had done. So also ferocious beasts, when they are just satisfied with food, are more tractable and more inclined to sleep than to harm. In the same manner also sin, while it is in

the act, is delightful, nor is its poison or pain felt; it rather lies down and goes to sleep. For whoever saw a miser to be racked with pain while an opportunity of great gain stood before him? Whoever knew an adulterer to grieve at the opportunity given him of gratifying his wishes? If thou hadst at that moment torn his skin with a scourge, or beaten his head with a mallet, the temptation would have vanished. But while sin is asleep and its punishment unfelt and unseen, it is the height of pleasure to the miser to rush upon his gain, and to the adulterer to possess the object of his sinful desires; nor does there seem to be, nor does he wish for, any end or any bound to his pleasure.

Adam is speaking therefore in this passage not only of the sin of Cain, but of sin in general; showing what the real nature of sin is. For that which was the state of Cain is the state of all men. Before he offered his sacrifice Cain proudly boasted of the privileges of his primogeniture; he despised his brother and assumed to himself the first place in all things. Sin was then lying still and asleep; but it was "lying at the door;" that is, in a place or state in which it was likely to be disturbed. For it is by "the door" that we go in and out, and therefore a place by no means adapted for a long sleep. And this is also the very nature of sin. Although it does lie asleep, yet it lies in a place where it is not likely to sleep long, for Christ says, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed," Math. 10:26. The wicked man thinks indeed that his sin is asleep and hidden; but it lieth asleep at "the door," and at length it is awakened by conviction, brought to light, and made known: for "at the door," and rest and sleep are things directly opposed to each other. For as darkness is opposite to light, so is sleep to an unquiet place; they are things contradictory to each other in their very nature. In this manner therefore may the present passage be interpreted in its reference to Cain's past sin.

And if you explain these same words in their reference to the future sin of Cain, their meaning is this, "If thou shalt harm thy brother, and indulge the wrath conceived in thy mind, I tell thee that thy sin will indeed lie asleep; but it will lie asleep at

the door; that is, in a place where it will surely be disturbed; and therefore, it is impossible but that it must be awoke and roused up, when as a furious beast it will lay hold upon thee." And so the event proved. For after Cain had committed the murder, while he was burying his brother alone, his sin was asleep. But how long? No longer than until the sound of that voice of God reached his ears, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" The present words of Adam therefore are a true description of all sin. It always "lieth at the door." For such is the nature of the minds of men, that as long as they escape the eyes of men, they think their sin will lie hidden and unknown. But unless they do well; that is, unless they believe that God will pardon their sin through Christ, it will surely be awakened and revealed to their torment and destruction.

The figurative proverb therefore which lies in these words of Adam contains the most solemn truth, that nothing remains hidden, but that all things are revealed and made known, as the Apostle Paul also says, "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment," 1 Tim. 5:24. Hence we see the judgment of God in an especial manner in the cases of criminals. How many persons are murdered in secret and yet the authors of those unnatural and horrible crimes are brought to light by means the most wonderful. The grave admonition therefore of Adam to his son Cain is that he would guard against indulging in sin, resting fully assured that it would not remain hidden, but that God would certainly bring it to light and punish it. The poets of old did not wander far from this great truth when they represented Cupid, the god of lustful desire, naked but blind also. For as our sin seems to us to be hidden, we think that it is hidden from all others also. But God at length brings to light and reveals things the most deeply concealed.

I believe therefore the meaning of these words of Adam, which I have thus given, is their true and simple sense. By them the father is admonishing the son to believe in God and in the promised Seed; assuring him that if he does so, God will

show himself merciful unto him. But, says the father, if thou follow the lusts of thy heart, thy sin will indeed lie at rest in thy soul; that is, it will appear to thee to be concealed and hidden, but it will be lying all the time "at the door;" that is, in a place where it cannot lie long asleep or out of sight. For that which "lieth at the door" is beheld by all who enter in and by all who go out.

Let us not forget however, as I before observed, the grand and principal truth taught by this portion of the Holy Scriptures, that God from the very beginning of the world is One who judgeth between the flesh and the spirit, and who respecteth not the dignity of the person or his works. For God hath here respect unto Abel, not moved by any work which he performed, but simply by his faith in which he offered his sacrifice. But unto Cain God had not respect; not because the offering of Cain was less splendid or sumptuous than that of Abel, but because he had not faith, and therefor his primogeniture profited him nothing.

And this is a very powerful argument against the Jews, who, as John tells us, gloried in their race and descent, boasting that they were the children of Abraham, John 8:33. If therefore the honor and prerogative were anything in God's sight, Cain certainly had wherein to glory. And what avails also the glorying of the Jews that God spoke unto them by Moses? Are we to conclude, think you, that Adam, the first teacher, was a teacher less than Moses? No! Adam was greater than Moses and superior to him in many respects. He did not teach like Moses circumcision, nor the other legal ceremonies, which were necessary to a stiff-necked people to prevent them from superstition, but Adam taught faith in the promised Seed, which should bruise the serpent's head. All the primogeniture of Cain therefore and all his other privileges and his works profited him nothing; for God had respect only to faith in the promised Seed. Hence it is that Paul plainly says to the Jews in the New Testament, "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," Gal. 3:7. And Evangelist John

says the same things concerning the Jewish people, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John I:12, 13.

I believe therefore that the above interpretation of the words of Adam is their original and true meaning. For, first of all, it is in perfect accord with the fundamental truth of the holy Scripture and with the sacred matter itself spoken of. And secondly, it does not violate any law of grammar, and it moreover tends to illustrate beautifully and variously by its figures the divine things contained in the words used by Adam. But the Rabbins, being ignorant of the things spoken of by Adam, are not at all helped out of the difficulty by all their knowledge of the terms employed in the patriarch's speech. How absurd for instance is the opinion of some, who apply the expression, There shall be a "lifting up" to the "fallen countenance" of Cain. As if Adam had said, "Then thou shalt be able again to lift up thy countenance, which is now wholly changed and fallen." These absurdities are indeed properly noticed by all our more recent commentators, to whom also our thanks are due, for their faithful labor in translating the original text grammatically. But true theology is indispensable, which alone can rightly judge of and rightly teach the things spoken of in the Holy Scripture.

V. 7b. *And unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it.*

Some men have most absurdly wrested this passage to prove by it free will. But it is perfectly evident that Adam does not here really affirm that Cain could do what he advised him to do. He is only admonishing or entreating him to do it. For it by no means follows that we can do what we are commanded to do. "The desire of sin," Adam here says to Cain, "shall be toward thee;" that is, as Paul expresses it, "Sin is in thy members," Rom. 7:5. Again, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," Gal. 5:17. "But thou shalt not be eternally condemned, because thou

feelest this motion of sin in thy members. If sin entice thee, do thou rule over it by faith. Suffer it not to rule over thee, or thou shalt perish for ever." Likewise Paul commands in Rom. 8:13, "By the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body."

This part of Adam's speech therefore is intended to bring us to acknowledge what the life of the godly in the flesh is: namely, that it is a perpetual struggle of the spirit against sin. Those therefore who sleep and snore, and prepare themselves not for this fight, are easily vanquished. Adam however appears to wish, by this his speech not only to admonish his son to guard against sin in the future, but also to comfort and lift him up from his distress on account of the past; for he beholds his son both filled with anguish on account of the divine rejection and now also tempted to revenge. But says Adam to his son, "Rule over thy sin, and thou shalt find God merciful. Believe in him, and he will pardon thy sin."

The Hebrew verb in this passage is MASCHAL; the same as that which the Lord used above when he said unto the woman, 3:16, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." In these words the meaning of the Lord is, that the wife should obey the husband and listen to her husband, and that she should not take upon herself the judgment in all things; and that if she did so, the husband in his authority as the man, should rebuke and prevent her. It is in the same manner that Adam here speaks to Cain, saying to him, "Sin will entice thee and prompt thee to revenge." This is the father's meaning, when he says, "And its desire shall be toward thee; but do thou say unto sin, I will not obey thee. Refrain thyself and rule over it." These words of Adam therefore contain an admonition full of consolation, showing that on account of the blessed Seed we are no longer under sin, and that therefore we ought to rule over it. For Adam's speech embraces both doctrines; the doctrine of the fear of the Lord and the doctrine of faith. We ought to fear God, because "sin lieth at the door," and we ought to have faith in God because he is merciful.

PART IV. HOW CAIN MURDERED HIS BROTHER
AND WAS REQUIRED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT,
AND HOW HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF.

I. V. 8a. *And Cain told (talked with) Abel his brother.*

Our translation has it, "And Cain said to Abel, his brother, adding the words, "Let us go out doors." But this is one of the inventions of the Rabbins, to whom how much credit is to be given, I have fully shown. Lyra, following the invention of Eben Ezra, relates that Cain told his brother how severely he had been rebuked of the Lord. But who would believe that for which there is no authority in the Scriptures? We hold therefore to that meaning of the text which the Scriptures plainly show to be its true sense, that Cain, being reprobated or rejected of God, indulged his wrath, and that he now added to his former sins, contempt of his parents and of the Word, thinking thus within himself, "The promised Seed of the woman belongs to me as the first-born. But my brother, Abel, that contemptible one and that one of naught, is evidently preferred to me by the divine authority itself, manifested by the fire from heaven consuming his sacrifice. What shall I do, therefore? I will dissemble my wrath until an opportunity of taking vengeance shall occur."

The words therefore, "And Cain spoke to Abel his brother," I understand as meaning that Cain, dissembling his anger, conducted himself toward Abel as toward a brother, and that he spoke to him and conversed with him, as if he bore with a quiet mind the divine rejection he had just experienced, and the sentence of God thus pronounced against him. It was in this manner also that Saul dissembled his wrath, who likewise pretended a benevolent mind and good-will toward David. "I know well," said Saul, "that thou shalt surely be king," 1 Sam. 24:20; and yet he was all the while thinking of the way in which, having killed David, he might prevent his being king. Just in the same way did Cain now converse in dissimulation with Abel his brother, saying to him, I see that thou art chosen

of the Lord. I envy thee not this divine blessing, etc., etc. This is the very manner of hypocrites. They pretend friendship until an opportunity of doing the harm they intend presents itself.

That such is the true sense of the passage all the circumstances clearly show. For if Adam and Eve could have gathered the least suspicion of the intended murder, think you not that they would either have restrained Cain or removed Abel, and placed the latter out of danger? But as Cain had altered his countenance and his carriage toward his brother, and had talked with him in a brotherly manner they thought all was safe, and the son had bowed to and acquiesced in the admonition of his father. This outward appearance and carriage deceived Abel also, who, if he had feared anything like murder from his brother, would doubtless have fled from him, as Jacob fled from Esau when he feared his brother's wrath. What therefore could possibly have come into the mind of Jerome, when he believed the Rabbins, who say that Cain was here ex-postulating with his brother?

Wherefore Cain is here the image and the picture of all hypocrites and murderers, who under the show of godliness slaughter the good. For Cain thus being besieged by Satan covers his wrath, waiting the opportunity to slay his brother Abel; meanwhile he converses with him, as a brother beloved, that he might the sooner lay his hands upon him unawares.

This passage therefore is intended for our instruction; that we may learn to understand the ways of murderers and hypocrites. For thus it truly always comes to pass that every Cain talks with his brother, as Cain of old talked brotherly with Abel; and on the other hand also, every Abel trusts in every Cain, as a brother would trust a brother; and thus he is murdered, and the pious parents meanwhile are deceived.

Just so the Pope and the bishops of this day talk and consult much concerning the peace and the concord of the Church. But he is most assuredly deceived who does not understand all these councils directly the contrary. For true is that word of

the Psalm, "The workers of iniquity speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts," Ps. 28:3. For the very nature of all hypocrites is, that they carry an appearance of goodness, speak friendly to you, pretend humility, patience, and charity, and give alms, etc.; and yet they are all the while planning slaughter in their heart.

Let us learn therefore by this history to know a Cain, and to guard best against him when he speaks the most friendly, and as a brother to a brother. For it is in this way that our adversaries, the bishops and the Pope, talk with us in our day, while they pretend a desire for concord and peace, and seek reconciliation of doctrines; whereas if an opportunity of seizing us and executing their rage upon us should present itself, you would soon hear them speak in a very different tone. For all the time there is death in the pot, 2 Kings 4:40; and under the best and sweetest words there lies concealed a deadly poison.

V. 8b. *And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

Here then you see the deceptiveness under the above dissembled conversation of Cain with his brother. Cain had been admonished by his father with divine authority to guard against sin in the future and to expect pardon for the past through the promised Seed. But Cain despises both admonitions and indulges in his sin, as all the wicked do. For true is the saying of Solomon, "When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt, and with ignominy cometh reproach," Prov. 18:3.

Just in the same manner our ministry of the Word at the present day deserves no blame. We teach, we exhort, we rebuke, we turn ourselves every way, that we may recall the multitude from the security of sin to the fear of God. But the world, like an untamed beast, still goes on and follows not the Word, but its own lusts, which it strives to palliate under the appearance of what is honest and right. The prophets and the apostles also stand before us as examples of the same labor

in vain, and we also are taught the same by our own experience. Our adversaries being so often admonished and convicted know they are doing wrong, and yet they lay not aside their murderous hatred against us.

From the case of Cain therefore learn what a hypocrite is; namely, one who pretends to the worship of God and charity, and yet at the very same time destroys the worship of God and slaughters his brother. And all this semblance of good-will is only intended to create the better opportunities of doing the harm designed. For if Abel had foreseen the implacable wrath and the truly diabolical fury of his brother, he might have saved his life by flight. But as Cain betrayed nothing of this kind while he talked with his brother in seeming affection and put on the appearance of his usual good-will, Abel perished before he felt the fear of danger.

There is no doubt that Abel, when he saw his brother rising up against him, entreated and implored him not to pollute himself with this awful sin. But a mind thus beset by sin pays no regard to prayers, nor heeds uplifted hands. Just as Cain therefore had despised the admonition of his father; so now also he equally despises his brother, fallen on his knees before him.

These things instruct us in that cruel tyranny of Satan, under which our nature when involved in sins is bound. Hence Paul calls such, "The children of wrath," Eph. 2:3; and declares that such are "taken captive by Satan at his will," 2 Tim. 2:26. For when we are mere men; that is, when we apprehend not the blessed Seed by faith, we are all like Cain, and nothing is wanting but an opportunity to murder our brother. For nature, destitute of the Holy Spirit, is driven by that same evil spirit by which Cain was driven to murder. Whereas if there were in any one those sufficient powers or that free-will of which men talk, by which a man might defend himself against the assaults of Satan, these gifts of nature would most assuredly have existed in Cain, to whom belonged the first birth-right and the promise of the blessed Seed. But it was not so.

And the condition of all men is the same. Unless nature be helped by the Spirit of God, it cannot uphold itself nor stand. Then why do we vainly and absurdly boast of free-will? Now follows another remarkable passage.

II. V. 9. *And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?*

Good God! into what depth of sin does our miserable nature fall, when driven onward by the devil. At last murder was committed on a brother. And perhaps murdered Abel lay for days unburied. When therefore Cain returned to his parents at the accustomed time, and Abel returned not with him, the anxious parents said to him, Cain, thou art here, but where is Abel? Thou art returned home, but Abel is not returned. The flock is without their shepherd. Tell us therefore where thy brother is? Upon this, Cain, growing indignant, makes answer to his parents, by no means with due reverence, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

But it happened to Cain as to all the wicked, that by *excusing* he *accused* himself. Agreeably also to the words of Christ our Lord, "From thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," Math. 18:32. The heathen had also a striking proverb among them, "A liar ought to have a good memory." Such was the judgment of heathen men, though they knew nothing of the judgment of God and of conscience, and were capable of judgment and giving admonition concerning natural and civil things only. And true it is that liars expose themselves to many dangers of detection, and betray many facts, by which they may be convicted and refuted. Hence the Germans have this proverb, "A lie is a very fruitful thing." For one lie begets seven other lies, which become necessary to establish the first lie, and to make it wear the face of truth. And yet it is impossible after all to prevent conscience from betraying itself at times, if not in words then in countenance and gesture. This will be proved by numberless examples hereafter. I will cite one example here.

In Thuringia there is a small town in the district of Orla,

called Neustadt. In this town a harlot had murdered her infant, to which she had secretly given birth, and had thrown it, after the murder, into a neighboring fish-pond. By a singular occurrence a portion of the linen in which she had wrapped the infant brought the horrid deed to light, and the case was brought before the magistrate; and as the simple men of the place knew no better means of investigating the crime in order to discover its author, they called all the young women of the town into the town-hall and closely examined them all, one by one. The judgment concerning all the rest was quite manifest, and it was evident that they were all innocent. But when they came to her who was the real perpetrator of the deed she did not wait for the questions to be put to her, but immediately declared aloud that she was not the guilty person. This declaration at once caused the magistrate to suspect that she really was the author of the deed, because she was more anxious than all the rest to clear herself from any suspicion. Therefore she was seized by the constables and forthwith suffered death.

Indeed examples of the same kind are infinite and occur daily, showing that where persons are most anxious to *excuse* themselves, they most effectually *accuse* and betray themselves. So true is that word which we have just before heard that sin does indeed lie asleep and concealed, but it lies "at the door."

Just so in the present case. Cain thinks that he has made an effectual excuse for himself, by saying that he was not his brother's keeper; whereas, by the very mention of his brother's name, he at once confesses that he ought to have been his younger brother's keeper. And then again does he not, by the same admitted confession, that he ought to have been his brother's keeper, accuse himself of being of a hostile mind towards his brother? And does he not moreover strike into the mind of his parents a surmise of the murder committed? For Abel nowhere appears and is not to be found. Just so also Adam excuses himself in paradise, and lays all the blame on Eve. But this excuse of Cain is far more idle and absurd; for while

he excuses his sin he doubles it. Whereas on the contrary, the free confession of sin finds mercy and appeases wrath. It is recorded in the history of St. Martin that when he was pronouncing to some notorious sinners the pardon of their sins, he was rebuked by Satan, who asked him why he did so; to whom St. Martin is said to have replied, "Why I would pronounce the pardon even of thy sins, if thou wouldst say from thy heart, I repent that I have sinned against the Son of God, and I pray to God to pardon me for the same." But the devil never does this. For he persists in and defends his sin.

All liars and hypocrites imitate Cain their father in his lie, by either denying their sin, or excusing it. Hence they cannot find pardon of their sins from God. And we see the same in domestic life. By the defense of wrong doing, anger is increased. For whenever the wife, or the children, or the servants have done wrong, and deny or excuse their wrong doing, the father of the family is the more moved to wrath; whereas, on the contrary, plain confession always meets pardon or a lighter punishment. But it is the very nature of hypocrites to excuse and palliate their sin, or to deny it altogether, and under the show of religion to slay the innocent.

But here let us take a view of the manner in which sins follow each other and increase more and more. First of all Cain sins by presumption and unbelief. When priding himself on the privilege of his first birthright, he takes it for granted that he shall be accepted of God on the ground of his high merit as the eldest son. Upon this pride and this glory of self-righteousness immediately follow the envy and hatred of his brother, whom he sees preferred before himself by a certain sign from heaven. Upon this envy and hatred follow hypocrisy and lying. He talks with his brother in dissembled affection, whom he all the while designs to murder, and whom by his affectionate conversation he throws the more effectually off his guard. Upon this hypocrisy follows murder. Upon this murder follows a lying excuse to cover his awful sin. And the last stage of the whole sin is despair and desperation and this last step is the fall from heaven to hell!

And although Adam and Eve in paradise did not deny their sin, yet they confessed it quite coldly, and shifted it from the one to the other. Adam laid it on Eve, and Eve laid it on the serpent. But Cain went further than them both, for he not only did not confess the murder he had committed, but declared that he had nothing to do with the care of his brother. And did not this speech at once prove that his mind was in a state of hostility against his brother? Though therefore Adam and Eve confessed their sin with only half their hearts, yet they had some claim to pardon, and they were punished with less severity accordingly. But Cain, because he denied his sin determinately, was rejected, and fell into despair.

And the same judgment awaits all our Cainite popes, cardinals and bishops, who although they plan in their minds plots of murder against us, yet say like Cain their father, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

There was a common proverb of old, "What is it to the Romans that the Greeks die?" So we think that our dangers and calamities only belong to ourselves. But how does this principle agree with the commandment of God? For his will is, that we should all live together, and be to each other as brethren? Cain therefore by this very saying of his heavily accuses himself when he makes the excuse that the custody of his brother was no matter of his. Whereas if he had said to his father, "Alas, my father, I have slain Abel, my brother. I repent of the deed I have done. Return upon me what punishment thou wilt," Had he thus spoken, there might have been room for a remedy; but as he denied his sin and contrary to the will of God cast off the charge of his brother altogether, there was no place left for mercy or favor.

Moreover Moses has arranged all this narrative thus particularly and remarkably on purpose that it might be a testimony and memorial of all hypocrites, that he might, by his peculiar manner of recording the solemn facts, graphically paint forth what hypocrites really are, and that he might show how awfully they are seized upon by Satan as his instruments, and in-

flamed by him against God and against his Word and his Church. It was not enough for his murderer that he had killed his brother contrary to the command of God, but he adds to that sin the further sin that, when God inquires of him concerning his brother, he becomes filled with indignation and rage. I say when God inquires of him, because, although it was Adam who spoke these words to his son Cain, yet he spoke them by the authority of God and by the Holy Spirit. In so awful a sin therefore was it not a most kind and gentle manner of expression to inquire, "Where is Abel thy brother?" And yet to this voice, which contained in it nothing severe, the hypocrite and the murderer grows so ferocious and proud that he replies, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" And he is fired with indignation that he should be called to an account concerning the matter at all. For the reply of Cain is the reply of a spirit of resistance and indignation against God.

But to this sin Cain adds a worse sin still. For when he ought to have fallen under this accusation of having committed the murder, he himself at once turns round and accuses God and expostulates with him: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He prefaces his reply with no expression of reverence or honor, though due both to God and to his father. He did not say, "Lord, I know not." He did not say, "My Father, didst thou make me the keeper of my brother?" Such expressions as these would have indicated feeling of reverence towards God or towards his parent. But he answers as being Lord himself and plainly manifests that he felt indignant at being called to account even by him who had the high right even to call him to that account.

And this is a true picture of all hypocrites. When standing in the most manifest sins they grow full of insolence and pride, and aim all the while at appearing most righteous persons. They will not believe even God himself when rebuking them by his Word. Nay, they set themselves against God, contend with him and excuse their sin. Thus David says, "that God is judged of men, but that at length he clears and justifies himself, and prevails," Ps. 51:4. This is that insolence of hypocrites which Moses here paints.

But how does this attempt of Cain succeed. Thus while he uses every means to *excuse* himself, he most powerfully *accuses* himself. Thus Christ says, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," Luke 19:22. Now, this servant wished to appear without guilt, saying, "For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: Thou takest up that which thou layest not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow: therefore I hid thy talent in a napkin," verses 20 and 21. Now, what *excuses* more plausible than these could the wicked servant adopt? Yet by what means more effectual could he *accuse* himself? For Christ at once uses his own very words against this wicked servant, and condemns him out of his own mouth. And this is the very way and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Such examples are profitable to us that we may learn not to contend with God. On the contrary therefore when thou feelest in thine own conscience that thou art guilty, take heed with all thy soul that thou contend neither with God nor with men by defending or excusing thy sin. Rather do this, When thou seest God points his spear at thee, flee not from him; but on the contrary flee to him with humble confession of thy sin, and with prayer for his pardon. Then will God draw back his spear and spare thee. But when by the denial and excuse of thy sin thou fleest farther and farther from him, the nearer is God to thee as an enemy and the more closely and hotly does he pursue thee as such. Nothing therefore is better or safer for thee than to come to him at once with the confession of thy fault. For thus it comes to pass that, when God conquers us, we also conquer by him.

But Cain and hypocrites do not this. God points his spear at them, but they do not humble themselves before him nor pray to him for pardon. Nay, they even point their spear at God, just as Cain did on this occasion. Cain does not say, "Lord, I confess that I have killed my brother; forgive me." On the contrary, though being the accused, he himself accuses God by replying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And what was the

effect of his pride? By it he openly confessed that he cared naught for the divine laws, which say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev. 19:18. And again, "Do not unto another that which you would not have another do unto you," Math. 7:12. These laws were not first written, nor only written, in the Decalogue, but they were inscribed in the minds of all men by nature. Yet Cain not only acted directly against these laws, but showed that he cared naught for them, nay, that he absolutely despised them.

In this way therefore Cain stands the picture, as we have said, not only of a wicked man, but of a man the most wicked, who, though a murderer, is yet a hypocrite wishing to appear a saint; being all the time one more prepared to accuse God than to appear worthy of accusation. And this is what all hypocrites do. They blaspheme God and crucify his Son, and yet wish to appear righteous. For after their murders, blasphemies and all other sins their whole aim is to seek means whereby to excuse and palliate the great sins they have committed. But the result always is that they only betray themselves and are condemned out of their own mouths.

While Cain here studies to render himself quite pure in appearance, he most effectually and foully defiles himself. He thinks he has made a most plausible excuse, when he says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But this very excuse becomes his most effectual accusation. And thus according to the saying of Hilary, "Wickedness is ever closely accompanied by folly." And so it was in the case of Cain. Had he been as wise as he was wicked, he would have excused himself in quite a different manner. But since God has ordained that wickedness should thus be ever accompanied by folly, Cain's excuse becomes his plain accusation. And for this very reason: The defense of truth against her adversaries is always easy. For Cain thus testified, both by his words and by his gestures, that he cared not for his brother, but hated him; so all wicked men by various means ever betray their wickedness. By the example of Cain therefore things the most important and the most

instructive are set before us; all of them tending to show that God suffers not hypocrites to remain long undiscovered, but that he compels them to convict themselves by those very means by which they craftily strive to conceal their hypocrisy and their sin.

Moses does not in this description use a multitude of words, according to the practice of the world in general; for these in setting forth a subject embellish it with various striking ornaments of figure and speech. But we know by experience, that the real feelings of the mind cannot be fully described by the paintings of any human eloquence. And indeed an abundance of words only makes the affection of the mind described to appear less than it is in reality. Moses therefore acts quite differently. By the use of a very few words he discloses a great abundance of subject-matter.

The divine historian above used the expression, "And when they were in the field." Here Moses indicates that the murderer Cain had watched his opportunity; that when alone he might attack his brother, when also alone. And all the connected circumstances plainly show that Abel was not then unemployed, for he was in the field, where he had to do the things his father had given him to do. Here Moses moreover shows that Abel's parents were free from all fear of danger. For although from the beginning they had feared that the wrath of Cain would eventually break out into some still greater sin; yet, by his compliance and kindness, and by his pretended affection, he prevented all suspicion of evil from remaining in the minds of his parents. For had there been the least apprehension of evil still existing, they certainly would not have permitted Abel to go from their presence with Cain alone. They would have caused his sisters to go with him as companions, for some sisters he no doubt had. Or his parents themselves would have prevented by their presence and authority the perpetration of so great a wickedness. And as I said, the mind of Abel was perfectly free from all suspicion. For had he suspected evil at the hand of his brother in the least degree, he

would doubtless have sought safety by flight. But after he had heard and seen, as he thought, that Cain bore the judgment of God patiently and did not envy his brother the high honor which God had bestowed upon him, he pursued his work in the field with all security.

What orator could describe with eloquence equal to its importance the real nature of that act of Cain, which Moses expresses in these few words? "And Cain rose up against his brother." Many descriptions of awful cruelty exist in books on every side, but no description of cruelty could paint it in a more atrocious and execrable light than the picture drawn by the few words of Moses, when he simply says, Cain "rose up against" his brother Abel. As if he had said, Cain rose up against Abel, the only brother he had, with whom he had been brought up and with whom he had lived in the one only family upon earth up to that day; all which family communion he utterly forgot, and not only so, but he forgot their common parents also. The greatness of the grief which he would cause his parents by such a grave crime never entered his mind. He never thought that Abel was a brother, from whom he had never received any offense whatever. For Cain knew that the honor of the more acceptable sacrifice which Abel had offered, proceeded not from any intent or ambition in him, but from the will and doing of God himself. In a word Cain did not consider in what position he himself would be; that by this wicked deed, he who had hitherto stood in the highest favor with his parents would lose that favor altogether and would fall under their deepest indignation.

It is recorded in history that when a painter, who was painting the story of Iphigenia, on the point of being sacrificed to Diana by her father, had given to each one of the surrounding spectators his appropriate countenance, with a latitude of art which might best express his pain and sorrow, he at length came to the father himself, who was also a spectator; but feeling convinced that no art of the painter could adequately represent his feelings and countenance, he covered his head with a mantle,

Moses I think does the same thing in the present passage, when he uses the verb *YAKAM*, "Rose up against." What tragical pictures would the eloquence of Cicero or Livy have here drawn, while they were strikingly portraying the wrath of the one brother, and the dread, the cries, the prayers, the tears, the uplifted hands, and all the horrors of the other; applying to the description all the power of their mind and language? But such feelings cannot be fully described by all these powers of eloquence. Moses therefore writes most appropriately, when he sets forth things so inexpressible by mere dots, as it were, in order that by his few words the feelings of the reader may be engaged to meditate on the facts the more closely and deeply for himself. For the vain attraction of words is like paint applied to natural beauty; it only mars and spoils the force of the reality.

Of the same expressive character are the few words which he next adds, "And slew him." He does not by those few words represent a common murder, such as we see committed by men in general; for they sometimes kindle quarrels from the most trifling causes and commit murders in the end. Such murderers however immediately after the murder is committed are filled with distress; they grieve for the deed they have done and acknowledge those delusions of the devil by which he blinded their minds. But Cain felt no distress; he expressed no grief, but denied the deed he had done. This satanic and insatiable hatred in hypocrites is described by Christ by saying, "When they kill you, they will think that they do God service," John 16:2. So the priests and the kings filled Jerusalem with the blood of the prophets and gloried in what they did, as if their deeds were great and successful exploits; for they considered such murders as proofs of their zeal for the law and the house of God.

And the furious cruelty of the popes and the bishops in our day is just the same. They are not satisfied with having excommunicated us again and again, and with having shed our blood, but they wish to blot out our memory from the land of

the living; according to the description of such hatred expressed in the words of the Psalm, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof," Ps. 137:7. These instances of hatred are satanic, not human; for all forms of human hatred grow into mildness by time; and after we have avenged the offense and pain given, the hatred at length ceases. But these instances of pharisaic hatred increase in virulence day by day; and for this very reason, because they are justified under the cloak of religion and godly zeal. Cain therefore is the father of all murderers, who slaughter the saints and whose wrath knows no end, as long as there remains one saint for them to kill. All this is proved by the example even of the crucified Christ himself. For as to Cain, there is no doubt of his having hoped that by putting Abel to death, he should still hold the high honor of his first birthright. And in the same way the ungodly always think that their cruelty will profit them in some way. But when they find that their hope is vain they at once fall like Cain into despair.

Now when the fact of this atrocious murder was made known to the parents, what do we think must have been the dreadful feelings which it excited? What the lamentation? What sighs and groans it caused? But I dwell not on these things; they are rather scenes for the eloquent and able orator to describe. I will only observe that it was a marvel that both parents were not struck lifeless with pain and grief. For the calamity was rendered the greater by the fact that their first-born, who had created in them such large hopes concerning himself, was the perpetrator of such a horrible murder. If therefore Adam and Eve had not been helped from above, they could never have surmounted this family calamity; for it was a catastrophe exceeding all catastrophes the world has ever known. And hence Adam and Eve were without that consolation which we may have under sudden and unexpected calamities, which consolation is that like evils have befallen others and have not come upon us alone. But our first parents had two sons only, though I believe that they had daughters

also; and therefore they had not the many examples before them which are always before our eyes.

Who can doubt however that Satan by this new kind of temptation in Cain increased greatly the grief and trial of our first parents? For they no doubt thought, Behold this is all our sin. We, when in paradise, wished to become like God; but by our sin we are become like the devil. The very same thing has befallen us, in the case of our son. We loved this son alone, and made everything of him. Our other son Abel was righteous before us, above this son; but of his righteousness we made nothing. This elder son we hoped would be he who should crush the serpent's head; but behold! he himself is crushed by the serpent! Nay, he himself is become like the serpent, for he is now a murderer. And whence is this? Is it not because he was born of us, and because we through our sin are what we are? Therefore it is from our flesh, therefore it is from our sin, that this calamity has broken forth!

It is very probable therefore, and the events of the series of years which followed confirm this probability, that the sorrowing parents, struck with the awfulness of this calamity, abstained for a long time from connubial intercourse. For it appears that when Cain committed this murder he was about thirty years of age, more or less. During this period some daughters were born unto Adam. For since it is said below, V. 17, that "Cain knew his wife," there is no doubt that he married a sister. Moreover since Cain himself says, V. 14, "And it shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me;" and as it is further said, V. 15, "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him;" it appears most probable from all these circumstances that Adam had many more children than Cain and Abel, but these two only are mentioned on account of the important and memorable history concerning them and because those two were their first and principal children. For it is my full belief that the marriage of our first parents, during the first thirty years of their union, was most fruitful. In some books the names

Calmana and Dibora are found as being daughters of Adam; but I know not whether such authors are worthy of any credit. As therefore Seth is recorded as having been begotten a long time after this awful murder, it seems to me very probable that the parents, distressed beyond measure at this monstrous family crime, refrained for a long time from marriage communion. Moses does not indeed touch upon all these things in his narrative; he intimates them only in order that he might excite, as we have said, the reader to a deep consideration of this memorable history, the circumstances of which he records in the fewest possible words, as if presenting them to be seen as through a lattice.

But I return to the text now immediately before us. Cain is an evil and a wicked man, and yet in the eyes of his parents he is a divine possession and a divine gift. Abel on the contrary is in the eyes of his parents and in their estimation as nothing, according to the signification of his name; but in the eyes of God he is truly a righteous man; hence it is that Christ himself honors him with this exalted appellation, when he calls him, "Righteous Abel!" Math. 23:35. This was the divine judgment concerning Abel, which Cain could not endure, and therefore he thought that the only manner in which his hatred of his brother could be satisfied was by murder. And he moreover thought that by this awful means he could still retain the high honor of his primogeniture. But he was far from thinking that he committed a great sin by this murder; because as being the first-born he thought he had a right to do this. He killed him therefore as I think, not with a sword, for I conclude that there were, as yet, no iron weapons, but with a club or with some kind of stone.

And after the murder, Cain remained quiet and unconcerned, for he thought that the deed would be concealed by hiding the body, which he buried, or perhaps he cast it into a river, considering that by such means he could rest the more sure that the body could not be found by his parents.

When Abel therefore had been from home a longer time than

he had been accustomed to be, the Holy Spirit inspires Adam to utter the words of the text and to inquire of Cain concerning Abel, saying, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Here therefore the sermon and the prophecy of Adam, of which we have heard before, begins to be fulfilled; where he had said, "If not, sin lieth at the door." For Cain thought that he had concealed his sin and had laid it to rest, and that all would thus be hidden. And true it was that his sin did lie at rest; but it lay at rest "at the door." And who now openeth the door? None other than the Lord himself. He rouses up and wakens the sleeping sin. He brings the hidden sin to light.

And the same thing must be fulfilled in all sinners. For unless by repentance thou first come to God, and thyself confess thy sin to God, God will surely come to thee, awake thy sin and discover it to thee. For God cannot endure that any one should deny the sin that he has committed; as the psalmist also testifies, "When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was changed as with the drought of summer," Ps. 32:3, 4. For although sin hath its sleep and its security; yet that sleep is "at the door," which cannot long remain unawakened or hidden.

When Moses here says, "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?" I understand Moses to mean, as above, that it was Adam who spoke by the Holy Spirit in the person or place of God; and that God there assumed the person of a father speaking to his son. This sacred phraseology therefore, "And the Lord said," etc., is intended as thus used by the Holy Spirit to commend the high authority of parents; whom when children dutifully hear and dutifully obey, they hear God and obey God. And I believe that Adam knew by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, that Abel had been slain by his brother; for he spoke at once concerning the murder, "What has thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;" although Cain all the time endeavored to conceal the deed.

PART V. HOW CAIN WAS PUNISHED FOR HIS MURDER.

I. And if Eve heard these words spoken to Cain by his father; what do we think must have been the grief and horror of her mind! They must indeed have been beyond all description. But the calamity fell still nearer and heavier upon Adam himself. For as he was the father, he was compelled as his duty thus to rebuke his son and to excommunicate him from his family and from the Church of God for his sin. And although he did not slay him, for the law concerning punishing a murderer by death, which is pronounced hereafter in the ninth chapter, was given after the patriarchs saw murders becoming frequent; and though inspired by the Holy Spirit so to do, he even "set a mark upon his son, lest anyone finding him should kill him;" yet it was an awful punishment which was inflicted on Cain and upon all his posterity. For in addition to the personal curse of bearing about this mark of a murderer he was excommunicated from his family, driven from the sight of his parents and from the society of his brothers and sisters, who still continued with their parents, as in the Church of God.

Now Adam could not have performed all this awful duty without the deepest pain; nor could Eve have heard all that Adam said without the same indescribable anguish. For a father is a father, and a son is a son. Adam therefore would willingly have spared his son and would willingly have retained him at home. And we do now sometimes see murderers reconciled to the brothers of those whom they have murdered. But in this terrible case no place was left for reconciliation. Cain is bidden at once to be a vagabond upon the face of the earth. The pain therefore of the parents was doubled. They see one of their sons slain by the other; and now they see the slayer excommunicated by the judgment of God and cut off forever from the society of the rest of his brethren.

Moreover when we here speak of excommunication from the Church, you are not to have in mind our present Churches,

magnificent structures superbly built with carved stones. The temple or Church of Adam was a certain tree, as in paradise; or a certain little hill under the open heaven, at which they assembled together to hear the Word of God and to offer their sacrifices, for which purpose they had altars erected, and God was present with them when they thus offered their sacrifices and heard his Word, as is manifest from the divine presence at the offering of Abel.

And other portions of sacred history testify that altars were erected in the open air and that sacrifices were there offered. And indeed the same practice for many reasons would be useful even now; that we might assemble together in the open air, pray with bended knees, preach the Word, give thanks to God and bless each other, etc. It was from a temple of this kind and from such a Church, not a conspicuous and magnificent Church in a certain place, that Cain was ejected or excommunicated. He was thus doubly punished; first, by a corporal punishment, because he was cursed as a vagabond in the earth with the mark of a murderer set upon him; and secondly, by a spiritual punishment, because he was cast out by excommunication, as from another paradise, and ejected from the temple and Church of God.

Lawyers also have made much use of this passage of the holy Scriptures, and have treated it with becoming dignity, seeing, as they did, that the Lord inquired into the matter before he passed condemnation upon the murderer. The Scripture therefore the framers of laws have so applied, as to determine thereby, that no man should be condemned until his cause had been fully known; nor until he had first been called to the bar of judgment, had been convicted, and had confessed his guilt. We have seen the same also before in the case of Adam. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" Gen. 3:9. And again further on, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know," Gen. 11:5; 18:21.

Let us however, leaving for the present all civil and political doctrine, look at the all-blessed theological or divine doctrine and consolation, contained in this, when it is recorded that the Lord inquired for Abel after his death. For in this fact we have made manifest unto us the resurrection of the dead. Because God by this inquiry testified that he was the God of Abel, though now dead; for he inquired after him though now slain and no more. From this passage therefore we may frame this most immovable argument; that if there were no one who had the care of us after this life, Abel would not have been inquired for after he was slain. But God does here inquire after Abel, even after he is taken away out of this life, he has not a will to forget him, he still retains the remembrance of him; he asks "Where he is." God therefore we see is the God of the dead. My meaning is that even the dead, as we here see, still live in the memory of God and have a God who cares for them, and saves them in another life beyond and different from this corporal life in which saints are thus afflicted.

This passage therefore we repeat is most worthy our observation, in which we see that God had great care of Abel, even when dead; and that on account of Abel though dead he excommunicated Cain, and visited him with destruction even while living, though he was the first-born. This therefore is great and glorious indeed, that Abel though dead was still alive and canonized, as we call it, in another life; a canonization far more blessed and more really divine than is the state of any of those whom the Pope has ever canonized! The death of Abel was indeed horrible; for he did not suffer death without excruciating torment nor without many agonies of tears. And yet his death was a goodly death; for now he lives a better and more blessed life than he did before. For this corporal life of ours is lived in sins and is ever in danger of death. But that life which is to come is eternal and perfectly free from all trials and troubles, both of the body and of the soul.

No! God does not inquire after the sheep and the oxen that are slain, but he does inquire after the men who are slain. Men

therefore have the hope of a resurrection. They have a God who inquires after them, even after their death in the flesh, and who brings them back from that death unto eternal life, a God who inquires after their blood as most "precious" to him, as the Psalmist also says, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints," Ps. 116:15.

This inquiry for the saints after their death and this their resurrection, are the glory of the human race, obtained for it by the Seed of the woman, which bruised the serpent's head. And the case of Abel is the first example of this promise which was made to Adam and Eve; and by this example God showed that the serpent harmed not Abel, although he caused him to be thus murdered by his brother. This was indeed an instance of the serpent's "bruising the heel" of the woman's Seed. But when he attempted to bite his head, that is, his life, he himself was crushed. For God, in answer to Abel's faith in the promised Seed, required his blood after his death and proved himself thereby to be Abel's God still. This is all proved by what follows.

V. 10. *And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*

Cain's sin hath hitherto lain "at the door." And the preceding circumstances plainly show how hard he struggled to keep his sin asleep. For, being interrogated by his father concerning his brother Abel, and his father having asked him where he was, he adds to his murder absolute falsehood. And this answer of Cain moreover shows that the words of the inquiry were spoken by Adam in his own person, and not in the person of the divine Majesty. For Cain considers that the deed was hidden from his father, of course as being mere man, but he could not have so thought concerning the divine Majesty. Therefore had it been God who had spoken to him in his own proper divine Person, he would have returned a different answer. But as he thought that he was speaking to a man only he denied the deed he had done altogether, saying, "I know not." As if he had added, There are numerous perils by which a man

may perish. He may be destroyed by wild beasts; he may be drowned in some river; or he may lose his life by some other death.

And Cain no doubt thought that his father would imagine any other death of Abel than that his own brother had perpetrated such a deed as to murder him. But Cain could not deceive the Holy Spirit in Adam. Adam therefore then speaks openly in the person of God and at once convicts him of the murder, saying, "What hast thou done?" As if he had said, "Why dost thou persist in denying the deed; be assured that thou canst not deceive God, who hath revealed to me all. Thou thinkest that the blood of thy brother is hidden by the earth with which thou hast concealed it. But it is not so absorbed by the earth and concealed by it as to prevent its crying aloud unto God" Thus did Adam by the Spirit of God indeed wake in Cain his sin lying asleep "at the door," and drag it forth to light.

The text now before us therefore is full of consolation to the saints to support them against the enemies and murderers of the Church; for it teaches us that our afflictions and sufferings, and the shedding of our blood, fill heaven and earth with their cries. I believe therefore that Cain was so terror-struck in his mind by these words of his father and that he was so confused and astounded that he knew not what to say nor what to do. For no doubt his thoughts were, "If my father Adam thus knows all the circumstances of the murder which I have committed, how can I any longer doubt that the whole is known unto God, unto angels, and unto heaven and earth. Whither therefore can I flee? Which way can I turn, wretched man that I am?"

It is exactly the same with murderers to this day. They are so harassed with the stings of conscience, after the crime of murder has been committed, that they are always in a state of alarm. It seems to them that heaven and earth have put on a changed aspect toward them and they know not whither to flee, so awful a thing is this crying of blood that has been

shed and so horrible an agony is an accusing conscience.

But it is just the same also under all other atrocious sins. Those who commit them experience the same distresses of mind, when sorrow of spirit lays hold of them for what they have done. The whole creation seems changed toward them, and even when they speak to persons with whom they have been familiar, and when they hear the answers which they make, the very sound of their voice appears to them altogether changed and their countenances seem to wear an altered aspect. Whichever way they turn their eyes, all things are clothed as it were with mourning and horror. So fierce and destroying a monster is a guilty conscience. Unless therefore such great sinners are succored and upheld from above, they must put an end to their existence from anguish and intolerable pain and despair.

In this place also Moses adopts his usual brevity, which however exceeds in force all words. In the first place, he makes use of a very striking figure of speech when he attributes to the shed blood of Abel the cry of a voice which fills heaven and earth. For how can that voice be small or weak which is uttered from earth and fills the ears of God in heaven. Abel therefore who when alive was patient under injuries, gentle and placid of spirit, now, when dead and buried in the earth, is utterly unable to endure the injury he has received. He who before dared not utter a syllable of complaint against his brother, now cries aloud and so engages the attention of God by his cry that God himself descends from heaven and charges the murderer with his crime. Moses therefore here uses the strongest term. He does not say, "The voice of thy brother's blood speaketh unto me from the ground," but "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me." etc., as heralds proclaim their intelligence aloud, when with exerted voice they call men together to a public assembly.

And all these things are thus written, as I have observed, to cause us to see that our God is merciful and that he loves his saints, has a peculiar care of them, and inquires about them,

and searches them out; and that on the contrary he is angry with the murderers of his saints, hates them and will assuredly punish them. And this consolation is most necessary for us; for, when we are oppressed by our enemies and murderers, we are apt to conclude that our God has forgotten us and has thrown off all care of us. For we think within ourselves that if God did care for us, he would not permit such things to come upon us. And Abel might also have thought the same, saying to himself, God surely cares nothing for me; for if he did, he would not suffer me thus to be murdered by my brother.

But only look at what follows, and see whether God had not all the while a greater care of Abel than Abel could possibly have had of himself. For how could Abel, had it been possible for him to have survived the murder, have inflicted on his brother such vengeance as God here inflicts upon him, after his death, by his brother's hands? How could he, if alive, execute such awful judgment on his brother as God here executes? For now Abel's blood cries aloud unto God, who while alive was of a spirit the most gentle and meek. Abel, now dead, accuses his brother before God of being a murderer; whereas if alive he would bear all the injuries of his brother in silence, and would even conceal all his feelings under them. For who was it that betrayed Cain and accused him of having slain his brother? Does not the text here tell us that the accuser was the blood of the murdered Abel? Yes! that blood still fills the ears of God and of men with its cries which have not yet ceased.

These things, I say, are all full of consolation; especially unto us who now suffer persecution from the Popes and wicked princes on account of our doctrine. They have exercised toward us the utmost cruelty and have vented their rage against godly men, not in Germany only, but in other parts of Europe also. And all this sin is disregarded by the papacy, as if it were nothing but a joke. Nay, the Papists really consider it to be the "service" of God, John 16:2. All this sin therefore as yet "lieth at the door." But it will be awaked and made

manifest in its time. For the blood of that best and most faithful of martyrs, Leonard Caizer, which was shed in Bavaria, cries aloud still. Nor has the cry of the blood of Henry of Zutphan, shed by his own countrymen, ceased; nor the blood of our brother Anthony of England, poured out by his English enemies. Not to mention a thousand others, who although their names are not so prominent and renowned were yet fellow-sufferers with confessors and martyrs. The blood of all these, I say, cries aloud still, and that cry will in its time cause God to descend from heaven and execute judgment in the earth, a judgment which will be awful and intolerable to the enemies of the Gospel.

Let us not think therefore that our blood is disregarded of God. Let us not imagine for a moment that God regardeth not our afflictions. No! he collects all our tears, and puts them into his bottle, Ps. 56:8. The cry of the blood of all the godly who have thus been slain penetrates the clouds, enters the heavens, and comes even unto the throne of God, and moves him to come forth and vindicate the blood of the righteous that has been shed, Ps. 79:10. And in the same manner as these things are written for our consolation, so are they also written for the terror of our adversaries. For what think you can be more awe-striking to our tyrants to hear than that the blood of all they have slain continually cries aloud and accuses them before God? God is indeed long-suffering, especially now toward the end of the world; and therefore sin lieth the longer "at the door." Vengeance does not immediately follow. But it is sure and certain that God is most righteously offended with all this sin, and that he will never suffer it to pass away unpunished.

Such is the judgment of God on Cain. But I believe that this judgment was not executed on the first day of the murder, but that some time intervened between the murder and this terror on Cain. For God is in his nature long-suffering, because he waits for the returning of sinners to himself. But he does not on that account omit or forget to punish them.

For he is the righteous judge both of the living and of the dead, as we confess in the creed of our faith. God therefore exercised this his judgment in the very beginning of the world, memorable in the case of these two brothers. He judged and condemned the living murderer, and justified the slain righteous Abel. And he excommunicated Cain and drove him into those agonies of soul that the space of the whole creation seemed too narrow to contain him. For from the moment he saw that God would be the avenger of his brother's "crying blood," he found safety nowhere. While to Abel on the contrary the space both of earth and of heaven gives an unbounded latitude of security.

Why should we ever doubt therefore that God ponders and numbers in his heart the afflictions of his people, and that he measures our tears and inscribes them all on adamantine tablets? These tears the enemies of the Church of Christ can never erase by any device of theirs, but by their repentance alone for what they have done to his saints. Manasses was a terrible tyrant and a most inhuman persecutor of the godly. And his banishment and captivity would never have sufficed to have blotted out these sins. But when he acknowledged his sin and repented in truth, then the Lord showed him mercy.

So Paul had, and so the Pope and the bishops have now only one way left them, to acknowledge their sin and to supplicate the forgiveness of God. But as they do not this God will surely require at their hands in his fury the blood of the godly. Let no one be doubtful of this. So here Abel is dead, but Cain is still alive. But O! good God! what a life of misery does he live! For his wishes are that he had never been born. Because he ever hears the voice of his excommunication and expects every moment death and the vengeance of God upon his sin. And the awful case of our adversaries and of the Church's tyrants shall in its time be exactly the same.

II. V. II. *And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;*

Thus far have we heard how the sin of Cain was revealed by the crying blood of his brother Abel; and that he was hereby convicted of the murder by his father Adam, and that the judgment of God concerning the two brothers was, that the one should not only be justified but canonized, as we say, and declared to be a saint, and the first fruits as it were of this blessed Seed of the righteous, but that the other brother the first-born should be condemned and excommunicated or cast out as the following sacred narrative now shows. For Moses now proceeds to record the punishments which were inflicted of God on this fratricide.

And here in the first place the carefulness and discrimination of the Holy Spirit, even "from the beginning," is most worthy of our observation. For above, when the punishment was inflicted on Adam for his sin, the person of Adam was not cursed, but the earth only. And even the earth was not cursed absolutely in itself, but a certain excuse, as it were, was made for it. For the curse was pronounced thus: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," Gen. 3:17. Hence it is that Paul says, Rom. 8:20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly," that is, not of its own will or fault. But because the earth instrumentally caused man to become a sinner; therefore also the earth was compelled to bear the curse as the instrument, in the same manner as gold, the sword, etc., are cursed, not in themselves, but because men sin by their means. This is a most beautiful reasoning as it were in the Holy Spirit, when he thus distinguishes between the earth and Adam. He makes the curse fall on the earth, but preserves the person of Adam.

But in the instance before us the Holy Spirit speaks of Cain otherwise. He curses the person of Cain. And why is this? Is it because the sin of Cain, as a murderer, was greater than the sin of Adam and Eve? Not so. But because Adam was that root from whose flesh and loins Christ, that blessed Seed, should be born. This Seed therefore is that which was spared. For the sake of this blessed Seed, the fruit of the

loins of Adam, the curse is transferred from the person of Adam to the earth, the very instrument. So that Adam bears the curse of the earth, but his person is not cursed; because from his posterity Christ was to be born.

But because Cain by his sin fell from this glory of being the root of the blessed Seed; therefore his person is cursed. And the Holy Spirit says to him, "Cursed art thou," that we might understand that he was cut off from the glory of the promised Seed and was condemned never to have in his posterity such a seed as *that Seed*, through which the blessing should come. This was Cain's rejection from all that stupendous glory of the promised Seed. For Abel was now slain; therefore there could now be no posterity from him. But Adam was appointed still to serve God by his generating children. In Adam alone therefore, Abel being slain, and Cain being accursed and rejected, the hope of the blessed Seed rested until Seth was born unto him.

The words of the Holy Spirit here are indeed few, when he says to Cain, "Cursed art thou." But they are words worthy the deepest and most diligent consideration. The words are in their import, as if the Holy Spirit had said to Cain, "Thou art no longer he from whom the blessed Seed can be hoped for." By these few words therefore Cain is rejected forever and is cut off as a branch from its stem; so that he can no longer hope for that glory which he so much strove to hold fast. For Cain's great desire was that the glory of this future blessing should be propagated from his loins and proceed from his posterity. But the more he strove to secure this glory, the further he was from obtaining it. And just so it is with all the wicked; for the more they labor to accomplish their purposes, the more surely they fail and fall.

And here begin, as we observed on the offerings of Cain and Abel, the two churches, which are ever at perfect enmity with each other; the Church of Adam and the godly which possesses the hope and promise of the blessed Seed; and the church of Cain, which lost this hope and promise by sin

and never could recover it. For in the Deluge the whole posterity of Cain was utterly destroyed, so that no prophet nor saint, nor any head of a church of the posterity of Cain was left in existence; so utterly were all things denied to Cain and taken from him by this one word, when the Holy Spirit said to him, "Cursed art *thou*."

But the expression "From the earth" is added. This is as it were a tempering of the awful wrath of God upon Cain. For if the Holy Spirit had said "From heaven," it would have taken away the hope of salvation from the whole posterity of Cain forever. But since the expression is, "From the earth," the fall of Cain's posterity from the promise and glory of the blessed Seed is threatened and determined; and yet a door was left open by which it might come to pass that some private persons of the generation of Cain might, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, join themselves to the posterity and Church of Adam, and be saved; as indeed in after ages it came to pass. For although the Jews alone retained the glory of giving birth to this blessed Seed and possessed the promise which was in him, according to the Psalm, "He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his ordinances, they have not known them," Ps. 147:20: yet the Gentiles had the right of beggars, if I may so express it; and by begging they obtained the same blessing through the divine mercy, which the Jews possessed through the true posterity of Adam or the promise of God.

In like manner also all rule in the Church was absolutely denied to the Moabites and Amorites, and yet many private individuals among them embraced the religion of the Jews. It was thus also that all right in the Church was taken away from Cain and his posterity absolutely. Yet so that permission was left them to beg as it were for this grace. This right of being beggars was not taken from them. For Cain, because of his sin, was cast out from the right of sitting at the family table of Adam. But the right was left him in his posterity to beg and gather up as dogs the crumbs that fell from his father's table, Math. 15:26, 27. This is signified by the Hebrew expression, *MIN HAADAMA*, "From the earth."

I make these observations because there is a great probability that many of the posterity of Cain, in the earliest ages of the world, joined themselves to the holy patriarchs. But they abode in the Church as private persons only and without any office in it, as those who had utterly lost the promise of the blessed Seed being born from their body and posterity. And the loss of this promise was a serious matter to them. And yet this great curse was so mitigated toward them, that there was granted to them, as we have said, the right of being beggars for it as it were. Heaven was not absolutely denied them, provided they would join the true Church; as it is written, and particularly described in Is. 56:3-8.

But this joining the true Church among his posterity Cain strove to hinder in various ways. For he set up new forms of worship and invented numerous ceremonies; that thereby he also might appear to be the Church. Those however who departed from him and joined the true Church were saved; although they were compelled to despair of the glory of Christ being born from their body or posterity. But let us now return to the sacred text.

Moses here uses a very striking personification. He represents the earth as being a dreaded beast, when he speaks of her as having opened her mouth and swallowed the innocent blood of Abel. But why does he speak of the earth in terms so terrible, when all these horrid things were transacted without her will or knowledge? Nay, since the earth is a good creature of God and these things were done against her will, and her struggle to prevent them? For Paul, as we have just observed, says, "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly," etc., Rom. 8:20. My reply is, this was done, and the Spirit thus spoke, according to Moses, as a terror to Adam and to all his posterity, that they might live in the fear of God and dread the sin of murder. For the words of Adam mean and are as if he had said, "Behold the earth hath opened her mouth and swallowed the blood of thy brother; but she ought to have swallowed thee, the murderer. The earth indeed is a

good creature, and is good to the good and the godly; but to the wicked she is full of yawnings and loud cries." It is to this end that Moses records the Holy Spirit as having used these terrible expressions in reference to the earth through the mouth of Adam. It was to strike terror and confusion into murderers. Nor is there any doubt that Cain, after he heard these things from the mouth of his angry father, was terror-struck in his soul like Judas and overwhelmed with confusion, so that he knew not which way to turn. The expressions, "Which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand," are indeed full of terror; and they point out the awfulness of this murder, in deeper colors than any pictures could represent it.

V. 12a. *When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength.*

The Lord above said unto Adam, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." But here the Holy Spirit speaks to Cain otherwise. His words before us are as if he had said, "Thou hast watered and manured the earth, not with enriching dung and reviving rain, but with thy brother's blood. Therefore the earth shall be to thee less productive than to others. For the blood which thou hast shed shall hinder the strength and the fruitfulness of the earth to thee." And this is the second part of the punishment; namely, the bodily curse on Cain: that, although the earth should be just alike cultivated by Adam and by Cain, yet it should be more fruitful to Adam than to Cain, and should yield its return to the former for his labors; but that to the labors of Cain it should not yield any such returns of fruitfulness on account of the blood shed; which should hinder it, though by nature desirous to return her fruitfulness and strength for all labors of men.

But here also we must offer a remark concerning the grammatical peculiarity of the original language. In the present passage, Moses terms the earth, HAADAMA. But in the passage which follows, "A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth," he uses the term AREZ. Now ADAMA signifies, accord-

ing to grammatical interpreters, "that part of the earth which is cultivated," in which trees grow and other fruits of the earth which are adapted for food. But AREZ signifies "the whole earth," whether cultivated or uncultivated. This curse of God therefore properly has reference to that part of the earth which is cultivated for food. And the curse implies that where one ear of wheat should bring forth three hundred grains for Adam, it should bring forth scarcely ten grains for Cain the murderer; and for the end, that Cain might behold on every side of him proofs that God hates and punishes the shedding of blood.

V. 12b. *A fugitive and a wanderer (vagabond) shalt thou be in the earth.*

And this was a third punishment contained in the divine curse on Cain, which continues to rest on murderers to this day. For unless they find reconciliation they wander about, having no fixed abode or certain dwelling-place.

We have here two original terms, NO VANOD, "a vagabond," and "a fugitive." but my manner is to distinguish them thus. I consider NO to signify, "the uncertainty of the place in which you are or dwell;" that is, how long you can remain there. In the same manner as the Jews at this day are "vagabonds" or wanderers; because they have no certain or fixed dwelling-place and are in hourly fear lest they should be compelled to go forth from where they may be dwelling. But NOD signifies, the "uncertainty of the place to which you can go;" that is, the not knowing where to go; so that, while on the one hand you have no certain place in which to dwell, to that misery is added the further misery, that when you must leave your present uncertain place of abode, you know not whither to go. The original NO VANOD therefore contains in it a double punishment: the not being able to remain with any certainty in any place, and the not knowing whither to go, when you are driven from your present uncertain place of abode; as we find it also in Psalm 109:10, "Let his children be continually vagabonds." VENOA IANUU BANAV, that is "let them, by wandering, wander;" or, "let them be wanderers indeed, or utter wanderers;"

that is, let them never find a place in which they can dwell with certainty or safety. If they are this year in Greece let them be compelled the next year to wander into Italy; and so on perpetually.

Just such is evidently the miserable state of the Jews at the present day. They can fix their dwelling-place nowhere permanently. And to this calamity of the Jews of the present day God adds another misery in the case of Cain that, when he is driven from one place of abode, he should not know where to find another, and thus should live suspended as it were between heaven and earth, not knowing where to stop nor where to find any continuing place of rest or refuge. And in this manner was the sin of Cain visited with a threefold punishment. In the first place he is deprived of all spiritual or Church glory, for the promise concerning the blessed Seed being born from his posterity is taken away from him. In the second place the earth is cursed to him in her fruitfulness, which is a domestic punishment reaching to all his provision for this life. And thirdly the punishment of a political or civil calamity is inflicted on him, in his being made a vagabond and never able to find any certain place of abode or rest.

But still a way of joining the true Church is left him, but without the promise! For as I have said, if any of Cain's posterity did join themselves to the true Church and to the holy fathers they were saved. And thus there was left them the domestic privilege, but without the blessing. And so the political privilege was preserved to them that they might build a city and dwell there, but for how long was still left uncertain. Cain therefore in his posterity is still a beggar as it were in the Church, in the domestic household, and in the civil state.

And moreover with these punishments of Cain there was joined as an alleviation that he should not be slain immediately on account of the murder which he had committed; as also afterwards a like Levitical law was ordained concerning manslaughter. But Cain was preserved alive as an example to others that they might fear God and flee from the sins of murderer. Let

these observations suffice therefore concerning the sin of Cain and the judgment and vengeance of God on the same.

But there are some who here reply and indeed the saints themselves often so argue to themselves that the godly also sometimes endure these same curses, while the wicked on the contrary are free from them. They look at the Apostle Paul as an instance, where he says that he also "wandered about and had no certain dwelling-place." And verily our own condition is precisely the same at the present day. We preach to the Churches and have either no certain dwelling-places at all or are driven into banishment or are in fear of banishment every hour. And the same was the condition of Christ, of his apostles and prophets, and of the patriarchs of old.

In the same manner the Scriptures say concerning Jacob, "The elder shall serve the younger," Gen. 25:23. But does not Jacob become a servant when we see him a most distressed supplicant? Does he not from fear of his brother haste away into exile? Does he not on his return home supplicate his brother and fall on his knees before him? Is not Isaac also seen to be a most miserable beggar? Gen 6:1-35. Abraham his father also goes into exile among the nations and possesses not in all the world a place to set his foot, as Stephen says, Acts 7:1-5. On the other hand, the mocking and wicked Ishmael is a king and from him are born the dukes of the land of Midian, Gen. 25:16, before Israel entered into the land of promise. In the same manner it will be seen in the 17th verse of the present chapter that Cain first built the city Enoch, and from him were born shepherds, workers in metals, and inventors of music. All these things seem to the world to prove that the curses of God are wrongly confined to Cain and his posterity, seeing that these same curses frequently rest on the true Church; while on the contrary it is well with the wicked, and they flourish.

These things are often a stumbling block, not to the world only, but to the saints themselves as the Psalms in many places testify. And the prophets also are frequently found to grow

indignant, as does Jeremiah, when they see the wicked possess freedom as it were from the evils of life, while they are oppressed and afflicted in various ways. Men may therefore naturally inquire, Where is the curse of the wicked? Where is the blessing of the godly? Is not rather the contrary the truth? Cain is a vagabond and settled nowhere; and yet Cain is the first man that builds a city and has a certain place to dwell in. But we will reply to these inquiries more fully hereafter. We will now proceed with the text of Moses.

PART V. CAIN'S CONDUCT UPON BEING PUNISHED.

V. 13. *And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment (iniquity) is greater than I can bear (than can be remitted).*

Here Moses seems to have fixed a cross for the grammarians and the Rabbins. For they crucify this passage in various ways. Lyra recites the opinions of some who explain this passage affirmatively, considering it to mean that Cain said in his despair that his sin was greater than could be pardoned; and it is thus that we have rendered this expression of Cain. Augustine also retained this view of the passage, for he says, "Thou liest, Cain; for the mercy of God is greater than the misery of all the sinners of the whole world put together."

The Rabbins however expound the passage as being a negative interrogation, making Cain to say, "Is my iniquity greater than can be remitted?" But if this rendering be the true one, Cain not only does not acknowledge his sin, but excuses it and moreover insults God for laying upon him a punishment greater than he deserved. But it is just in this way that the Rabbins almost everywhere corrupt the sense of the Scriptures. Consequently I begin to hate them and I admonish all who read them, to read them with great caution and judgment. For although they did possess the knowledge of some things, by tradition as it were from the fathers, yet they corrupted them in various ways; and therefore they often deceived by those corruptions, even Jerome himself. Nor did the poets of old ever so fill the world with their fables as the wicked Jews did the Scriptures

with their absurd opinions. A great labor therefore is thereby thrown in our way to get hold of the pure text and to clear it from their false opinions and comments.

The cause of all this error is that some are grammarians only, but know nothing of the divine things concerned; that is, they are not divines also; therefore they are compelled to dream and to guess, and thereby to crucify both themselves and the Scriptures. For how is it possible that such persons should be right judges of things which they do not understand? Now, the divine subject matter in the present passage is that Cain is accused in his own conscience. And no one, not only no wicked man, but not even the devil himself can endure this judgment of his own conscience; as James also witnesses, "The devils also believe and tremble before God," James 2:19. And Peter also says, "Whereas angels which are greater in power and might cannot endure that judgment which the Lord will exercise upon blasphemers," 2 Pet. 2:11. So also Manasses in his prayer, Vs. 4, 5, confesses that all men tremble before the face of the Lord's anger.

All these things therefore fully prove that there was not in Cain under his judgment enough spirit left to enable him to set himself against God and to expostulate with him. For God is an almighty adversary to contend with, and he always makes his first attack upon the heart and fastens his grip on the conscience. Now of this matter the Rabbins know nothing, nor have any understanding of it whatever; and therefore they speak on this judgment of God as if it were a matter transacted before men, in judgment where a fact is either falsely denied or vainly excused before the judge. The judgment of God however is quite a different matter. For there, as Christ says, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Math. 12:37. Cain therefore does acknowledge his sin in the present passage, but he does not grieve so much concerning his sin as concerning his punishment for it. Cain's words therefore are here to be understood affirmatively, and they show the horribleness of his despair.

A further proof of Cain's entire despair is, that he does not utter one word of reverence. He never mentions the name of God or of his father. His conscience is so confused and so overwhelmed with terror and despondency that he is not able to think of any hope of pardon. So the Epistle to the Hebrews gives the same description of Esau, saying, "Who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for change of mind, though he sought it diligently with tears," Heb. 12:16, 17. Thus in the present instance Cain feels his punishment, but he grieves more for his punishment than for his sin. And all persons in like despair do just the same.

The two original words of this passage, *MINNESO* and *AVON*, again form two crosses for grammarians. Jerome translates the clause, "My iniquity is greater than can be pardoned." Sanctes, the grammarian of Pagnum, a man of no mean erudition and evidently a diligent scholar, renders the passage, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But by such a rendering, we shall make of Cain a martyr and of Abel a sinner. And concerning the original word *NOSA*, I have before observed, that when it is applied to sin, it signifies "to lift sin up, or off, on high;" that is, "to take it out of the way." Just as we by the use of a common figure say, "to remit sin," or "the remission of sins," as we have in, Ps. 32, *ASCHRE NESU PESCHA*, which, when rendered literally, means, "being made happy by having been relieved from crime or sin." We render it, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven;" that is, whose sin is taken away. As we have it also again, "The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity," *NESU AVON*, that is, "shall be relieved from their crime or sin," Is. 33:24.

The other original term *AVONI*, grammarians derive from the verb *ANAH*, which signifies "to be afflicted," as in Zacharia, Behold thy king cometh unto thee poor or afflicted," Zach. 9:9. Our translation renders it "meek," etc., as we find it also Ps. 132:10, "Lord remember David and all his meekness, or

lowliness;" that is, "all his afflictions." From this same original root is derived the expression, "low estate," or "lowliness," of his handmaiden, used by the Virgin Mary in her song, Luke 1:48. It is the meaning of the original word AVONI which induced Sanctes to render it, in the present passage, punishment.

But here the original AVONI signifies "iniquity," or "sin," as it does also in many other passages of the Holy Scriptures, which appears more plainly from the verb to "lift up" or "to lift off," which stands connected with it. Hence it is that grammarians, who are nothing more than grammarians; and who know nothing of divine things, find their crosses in all such passages; and crucify, not only the Scriptures, but themselves and their hearers. But in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures the subject or divine matter and sense are first to be determined; and when that appears in all respects consistent with itself, then the grammatical propriety is to be explained. The Rabbins however take a directly contrary course, And hence it grieves me much that divines and the holy fathers so frequently follow them.

V. 14. *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me.*

From these words it still more plainly appears that the sentence and curse on Cain were pronounced by Jehovah through the mouth of Adam. Cain here acknowledges first that he is driven out from the domestic and political communion; and secondly that he was excommunicated from the Church.

Of the difference of the meaning of the original words ADAMAH and EREZ we spoke above. We have shown that EREZ signifies the whole earth generally; but that ADAMAH means the cultivated part of the earth in particular. The meaning therefore of these words of Cain is, "I am now compelled to flee from thy presence and from that place of the earth which I have cultivated. The whole world indeed lies before me, but I must be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth; that is, I

shall have no certain dwelling place." In the same way murderers among us are punished with exile and become vagabonds in the earth. These words therefore afford a further evidence of the manner in which the words, which Adam said above are to be understood, "Cursed art thou upon earth." They refer to Cain's being driven away into banishment. This part of Cain's punishment therefore is a civil or political punishment, by which he is shut out from the whole civil community.

But that which Cain next adds, "And from thy face shall I be hid," is an ecclesiastical or Church punishment. It is an excommunication from the true Church of God. For as the priesthood and the kingdom rested with Adam, and Cain on account of his sin was excommunicated from Adam, he was thereby also deprived of the glory both of the priesthood and of the kingdom. But why Adam adopted this punishment of expelling his son from him and excommunicating him from his presence, is explained by the words which we just before heard from the father's mouth, "When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength;" as if he had said, "Thou art cursed and thy labors are cursed also. Therefore if thou shalt remain with us upon earth it cannot be but that both thou and we also must perish with hunger. For thou hast stained the earth with thy brother's blood, and wherever thou art thou must bear about the blood of thy brother with thee, and even the earth herself will exact of thee the punishment of that blood by not yielding to thee her strength."

There is a sentence almost the same as this pronounced on Cain by Adam in 1 Kings 2:29-33, where Solomon gives commandment to Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, saying, "Slay Joab, and thou shalt take away the innocent blood which was shed by Joab from me and my father's house. And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head. But unto David, and unto his seed, and unto his house, and unto his throne, shall there be peace for ever from Jehovah." As if he had said, "If Joab suffer not this punishment of his unjust murder, the whole king-

dom must suffer that punishment and be shaken from one end to the other by wars." It is just thus Adam speaks in the present passage. As if he had said, "If thou shalt remain on the earth here with us God will bring punishments upon us for thy sake, so that the earth will not yield to us her fruit."

But now let us offer our reply to the question above raised concerning Cain and his posterity not being the only persons subject to the curse of wandering and affliction, seeing that the saints also, it is argued, are subject to the same; and that Cain though thus cursed was yet the first who built a city, etc. It was said to Cain as his curse, "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon earth." And yet Cain is the first man who builds a city, and his posterity from that time so increased that they seduced, oppressed, and so utterly overthrew the Church of God, as not to leave more than eight persons from the posterity of Seth remaining. The whole of the other multitude of mankind, who perished in the Flood, had followed Cain as the sacred text plainly declares, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose," Gen. 6:1, 2. And it is also said that these sons of God, when they came unto the daughters of men, begat giants and mighty men, which were of old, men of renown, verse 4. As therefore Cain had so great and mighty a posterity and as he built the first city, how can it be true, men ask, that he was a fugitive and vagabond upon earth, according to the curse pronounced upon him?

We will reply therefore to the literal facts before us. For what we have said above in reference to the New Testament, concerning Paul and the apostles, and Christ himself, and the prophets, that is altogether a different subject. When Adam here says to Cain, "A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be upon earth," he speaks these words to him to send him away; designedly joining no precept or direction therewith. He does not say to him, "Go to the east;" he does not say, "Go to the south;" he does not mention any one place to which he should

go. He gives him no direction what to do. He simply sends him away, but as to whither he should go or what he should do, he expresses no concern. As to what the will and the way of his son may be hereafter, the father takes no care whatever. He adds no promise of protection. He does not say, "God will take care of thee;" nor, "God will defend thee." But as the whole wide heaven lies open to the bird, leaving him the liberty to fly where he will, but giving him a sight of no place in that heaven, to which he might flee in safety for protection from the attack of the other birds, so does Adam dismiss Cain. This Cain fully feels; and therefore it is that he adds the utterance, "And it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Now the condition of Adam in paradise was different from that of Cain, and better. Adam had sinned, and by his sin he had sunk under death. But when he was driven out of paradise God appointed to him by his command a certain employment, that he should till the earth in a fixed and certain place. God also clothed him with a covering of skins. This, as we have said above, was a sign that God would take care of him and defend him. And that which exceeded all things else, a glorious promise was made to the woman concerning her Seed, which should "bruise the serpent's head." But no one thing like these mercies was left to Cain. He was sent away absolutely without the mention of any certain place or any certain employment. No command was given him nor any promise made him. He was like a bird set loose in the wide heavens, as we have said, to wander in its flight where it may. Such was the state and meaning of Cain's being truly and properly "a vagabond," "a wanderer" without any fixed dwelling-place.

And thus unsettled and wandering are all who have not the Word and the command of God, by which a certain place of worship and a certain ministry are vouchsafed unto them. And just such were we under the papacy. There were plenty of ceremonies of worship, and of works and exercises. But all these were undertaken and done without any command of God. This was truly a Cain-like trial, to have no Word of God; not

to know what to believe, nor what to hope, nor what to think; but to do all things and to undertake all things without any knowledge or hope concerning the event. For what monk ever existed who could affirm or know that he did any one thing rightly? For all things were mere human traditions and the inventions of mere human reason, without the Word. And in the midst of these things we all wandered about, fluctuating in our minds, like the wandering Cain; not knowing anything of what the judgment of God would be concerning us; whether he would look upon us with love or with hatred. And in this uncertainty were we all at that time taught and trained.

And in this same way were the whole posterity of Cain wanderers and unsettled. For they had no promise nor command of God and were without any certain rule either to live by or to die by. And if any of these did come to the knowledge of Christ and joined the true Church, this did not come to them through any promise of God, but through his pure mercy.

But Seth, who was born afterwards, had together with his posterity the certain promise, certain dwelling-places, a certain worship of God, and certain rites of worship. But Cain on the contrary was always essentially "a vagabond." For although Cain did build a city, yet he was ever in uncertainty how long he should retain it as a dwelling place; for he had no promise of God on which to depend. And whatever things we possess without the promise of God, how long we shall possess them is always an uncertainty. For Satan can either disturb them or take them away in a moment. On the other hand, when we move, fortified on every side by the command and promise of God, Satan's strivings against us are all in vain, for God fortifies and secures by his command all that we possess. Although therefore Cain was the great lord as it were of the whole world and possessed all the riches of the world; yet because he was without the promise of the help of God and was thereby deprived of the guardianship of angels, he had nothing else to depend on, but human counsel and human reason. He was therefore truly "a vagabond" and unsettled wanderer.