



EVERYONE'S LUTHER

GENESIS
CHAPTER THREE

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PART I. THE TEMPTATION TO FALL

GENESIS 3:1a. 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.

GENESIS 3:1b. 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; otherwise 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 APHKI 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, possibly 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 distinction 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. 2:17. 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.

GENESIS 3:6. 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 himself 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.

GENESIS 3:7. 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 remained 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 innocence, 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 innocence. 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.

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**GENESIS 3:8. 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!

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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

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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

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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:

**GENESIS 3:9. 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

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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!

GENESIS 3:10. 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

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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 guilty of death. Yet he calls him that he might be condemned by the testimony of his own mouth, as having sinned. 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

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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.

**GENESIS 3:11. 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

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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,

GENESIS 3:12. 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.

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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 remission 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

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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.

GENESIS 3:13. 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

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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 blasphemes 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

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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

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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

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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.

**GENESIS 3:14. 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 interpretation, 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.

**GENESIS 3:15a. 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.

**GENESIS 3:15b. 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 genealogy? 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 individually, 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.

**GENESIS 3:16. 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 OIKOUROUS, "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.

**GENESIS 3:17. 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 fellowmen. 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 dandelion 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, briers 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 creation, 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 apoplexy, 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.

**GENESIS 3:18a. “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:

**GENESIS 3:18b. 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.

**GENESIS 3:19a. 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 concerning 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, consult 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:

GENESIS 3:19b. 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 begotten 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.

**GENESIS 3:20. 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.

**GENESIS 3:21. 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 animals 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.

**GENESIS 3:22. 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 himself, 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 commentators 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 plentitude 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 subdeacons, 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!

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

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If you find typos or corrections, or have any suggestions, please send them to us at everyonesluther@gmail.com.