SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

Commentary on the First Book of Kings

Commentarii in Librum I Regum

SABBATISMUS

Saint Gregory the Great (540–604)
Commentarii in Librum I Regum · Commentary on the First Book of Kings

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[COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.]

PREFACE CONCERNING THE COMMENTARY OF ST. GREGORY THE GREAT ON THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

Since Peter Gussanville (Petrus Gussanvillaeus) has judged that this noble work should be rejected from the most holy Doctor, and the same has seemed so to some learned men, we ought to bring forth our opinion concerning it, before it is again published.

I. Concerning the author of this Commentary, there are altogether three opinions. The first is, that Gregory the Great is to be held as the true and indubitable parent of the same. This has been followed by as many as have labored in editing the works of the eminent Doctor for nearly a hundred and fifty years, except only one, Gussanville, the most recent of all. For by the earlier editors this Commentary was referred to the census of Gregorian writings as the genuine offspring of so great a Father. To their judgment almost all the learned agree, not only of our own, but also of the heterodox, who have woven an index of the works of the holy Doctor; among whom especially to be commemorated is William Cave (Guilielmus Cave) in the literary history of Ecclesiastical Writers published not so long ago.

II. The second opinion, contrary to this in every part, is that of Peter Gussanville, who entirely expunges this Commentary from the census of Gregorian works, although he still retained his name in the Gussanville edition, which must

not be concealed here. Nevertheless, the most fair man confesses that this commentary on the first book of Kings is most worthy of Gregory, which he sufficiently hints at in these words, by which his censorial judgment and decree are concluded: "would that we could vindicate so pious, so holy a work to Saint Gregory, saving the truth."

III. The third opinion, almost middle between both, is that the praised Commentary was collected and patched together from homilies delivered by Saint Gregory on the first book of Kings, by Claudius his disciple, later abbot of the monastery of Classe (Classensis). Toward this opinion most learned men incline, especially Thomassin in the discipline of the Church part II, book II, c. 28, n. 2, and Louis Ellies du Pin, in the New Library of Ecclesiastical Writers volume IV, or the VI century, on Gregory the Great. By this middle way we shall go most safely, led especially by Gregory himself, who indeed in book XII, indiction 5, epistle 24, writes these things to John the subdeacon: "Furthermore, because the same once most dear son of mine, Claudius, had heard some things spoken by me concerning Proverbs, concerning the Song of Songs, concerning the Prophets, also concerning the books of Kings, and concerning the Heptateuch, which I was not able to commit to writing on account of infirmity, he himself dictated them according to his own sense, lest they should perish through oblivion, so that at a fit time he might bring these same to me, and they might be dictated more correctly. (Which when he had read to me, I found that

the sense of my sayings had been very unusefully changed.) Whence it is necessary that your experience, all excuse and delay ceasing, approach his monastery, cause the brothers to meet, and in all truth bring to the middle whatever papers he brought concerning various scriptures: which you receive, and transmit to me most quickly." From these things it is clear that Saint Gregory explained some things from the books of Kings not by writing, but by living voice; that Claudius both received these and digested them, but did not everywhere attain the sense of his master Gregory, nor even his style; and that the holy Doctor resisted these as much as he could, lest they should come forth into public light, and commanded all copies to be brought to him, so that they might be corrected in leisure; which whether he performed we shall open in its own place.

IV. From these things it is easily understood what characters, or what marks belong to the Claudian collection, by which to recognize it, and to discern it from any other lucubration is not laborious: namely, since it is woven from the words and sentences of Gregory himself, it ought to redolent of his style, represent his doctrine and method of interpreting Sacred Scripture, and of inflecting it to moral and allegorical senses: yet so that sometimes, memory perhaps slipping, Claudius was compelled to supply certain things of his own; which was sufficient for our Gregory to almost repudiate this offspring.

Let us imagine some most celebrated herald of the divine word, who has delivered an elegant oration on penitence, which having been cursorily excerpted by a notary he hears was afterwards committed to types and given to public light. He reads this, and confers it with the autograph. He observes indeed that the argument of the oration is the same, the same partition into various members, the same proofs drawn either from the sacred Letters or from reason, the transitions not dissimilar; almost everywhere the same words, almost the same kind of speaking: nevertheless in some places he observes that the oration is disjointed, and less coherent. Here an obsolete word occurs, here he stumbles upon a place of Sacred Scripture wrongly explained; here one of the holy Fathers is praised for another; here virtue is delineated with darker colors and a ruder brush. Which things are surely sufficient for this Orator to reject such an offspring as supposititious, and to complain openly that the oration worked out by him had been corrupted and adulterated. In almost the same way Gregory speaks concerning his Homilies cursorily excerpted on the first book of Kings and other parts of Divine Scripture. Now indeed let us perceive whether the Commentary on the first book of Kings which is dealt with here, bears before it the marks and signs which we said were to be detected in the collection of Claudius.

V. Certainly he who has not read it sleepily, and especially has compared it with the books of the Morals, will not deny that this work is

redolent of the style and speech of Gregory; which because Gussanville denies, must now be demonstrated.

It is familiar to Gregory to unfold the sentences of the Sacred Scripture which he explains with wonderful variety, and to exhibit now the literal sense, now the typical, allegorical, and moral; which he who will not observe in this commentary, is to be said to be blind. In it surely as in the other exegetical treatises of Gregory, by the exactly same method the individual verses of the sacred book to be explained are so twisted, retwisted, and pressed, that whatever juice and flavor they contain may be altogether expressed.

VI. As far as the diction itself or the construction of the speech is concerned, Gregory delights in a certain preposterous context of vocabularies, frequent transpositions and as it were hyperbata, of which we have exhibited very many examples in the Preface to the books of the Morals, from which we have selected a few to be brought hither. Book XXXI of the Morals, num. 4: "For we know that rhinoceros (Scimus enim rhinoceros ille), that earthly prince namely, with how much cruelty he previously raged against the Lord." For, "for we know with how much cruelty that rhinoceros previously," etc. Homily 8 on Ezekiel, num. 27: "In which word of the blessed Jacob the mind is shown how it burned with the desire for Jesus (In quo verbo beati Jacob mens ostenditur quomodo Jesu desiderio ardebat)." For: "in which word how the mind of the blessed Jacob burned with the desire for Jesus, is shown." Homily 32 on

the Gospels: "For while the kingdom of heavens it is established that of the reprobate (Dum enim coelorum regnum constat quia reproborum)," etc. For, "for while it is established that," etc. Book II, of the Dialogues c. 2: "In order that . . . . . they might recognize the boy Benedict the grace of conversation from how much perfection it had begun (agnoscerent Benedictus puer conversationis gratiam a quanta perfectione coepisset)." For, "from how much perfection the boy Benedict," etc. Who however would deny that these examples are altogether similar to those which we read in book I of the Commentary c. 2, n. 10: "Let us see now holy Church with what praises of her fecundity she glories in the voice of Hannah (Videamus jam sancta Ecclesia quibus fecunditatis suae laudibus in Annae voce glorietur)." Where another would say: "Let us see now with what praises of her fecundity the holy Church," etc. And num. 12: "But where strength has clothed them, it is pleasing to behold how strong he made (Sed ubi eos robur induit, libet intueri quam fortes fecit)." When it would seem to be said: "But it is pleasing to behold how strong he made them, where," etc.

Gregory almost always walks with bimembral and as it were bipedal periods falling similarly, which one may also observe in our commentator and interpreter of the first book of Kings, greeting his lucubration even from the first threshold.

VII. Gregory not rarely uses deponent verbs, as the Grammarians speak, in a passive significance, especially the verb, to venerate (venerari),

which was abundantly demonstrated in the general preface. Indeed we detect the same in the Commentary, as in book IV, c. 4, num. 35: "By how much later he is beheld (the Pastor in public) the more devotedly he is venerated (veneratur)," that is, he is cultivated and honored. And num. 51: "Therefore they assert that they prevail in the word of wisdom or the spirit of prophecy, not that they may be venerated, but that they may be heard."

The holy Doctor by the verb to become known (innotescere) everywhere signifies to make known, as in homily 1 on the Gospels num. 1: "By how great percussions the approaching end of it (the world) precedes, it becomes known (innotescit)," that is, it shows; which is read in the same sense a hundred times in the Dialogues and more often in the Epistles. But in this sense also it is not rarely employed by the writer of the Commentary, e.g., book I, chapter 2, num. 16: "Which also brings forth what is conceived, when to neighbors . . . . . it becomes known (innotescit)." And chapter 3, num. 8: "For this mark of strength neither Moses, nor Elias was able to have, so that while incomparable signs became known (innotescerent)," etc. See also book II, c. 2, num. 11: "Nevertheless then he was so known to have blessed his own."

Gregory uses the verb to owe (debere) in a way almost peculiar to himself, which will be made clear by certain examples. Book XI, epistle 33, he writes to Marinianus: "And therefore it seems to me . . . . . that your fraternity ought to come

(debeat venire) to me before the summer time;" that is, may come. In the same place: "And I who see myself next to death . . . . . ought to pass (debeam transire) between your hands;" that is, may pass. Epistle 34 of the same book: "That is, four hundred solidi separately ought to have been made (fieri debuissent)," and a little after: "We wish that . . . . . your fraternity ought to expend (debeat erogare)," for may expend. Homily 17 on the Gospels: "That from the same rock of salt they ought to lick (lambere debeant)." In the same significance the verb to owe is to be accepted in book I of the Commentary c. 3, num. 14: "Because they had received all the Scriptures, so that in them they ought to have found (invenire debuissent) the Sacraments of the divine Incarnation:" that is, they might find. And book II, c. 2, num. 20: "That they themselves ought to punish (punire deberent) no one;" which is the same as might punish.

Adversity (adversitatem) Gregory often accepts not in a passive but in an active sense, or for the action of those opposing us; concerning which matter consult book II of the Morals n. 51, and the note to this place, where we confirm it by many testimonies. There could have been added what we read in Book of the Pastoral Rule part III, admon. 16, or chapter 15: "What by the clouds which are moved by the wind, unless the adversities of wicked men are designated?" That is, the impulses and attacks of wicked men opposing us. And in a not dissimilar sense it occurs in book V of the Commentary c. 1, num.

15: "Because our holy preachers are crowned with a greater victory, when they tolerate the adverse things of neighbors (adversis proximorum) (that is adverse things brought in by neighbors)."

Those who are accustomed to the Gregorian style, are not ignorant of how frequently speaking of Christ, he uses the antithesis of the adverbs over (super) and among (inter); as book XV of the Morals num. 20: "Since the only-begotten of the highest Father is God over all things, he was made man among all things." Similar things are extant in book XVI, num. 37; homily 7 on Ezekiel, num. 19; homily 23 on the Gospels and everywhere. And in the same way the author of the Commentary book I, c. 1, num. 4: "Because," he says, "he who was born among all, shone out above all." I abstain from bringing forth other examples. Those who are not strangers in unfolding and reading Gregorian works, know that there the verb to reform (reformare) frequently has a significance almost unknown to other writers, or at least used by few. Book XXII of the Morals chapter and num. 1: "Lest . . . . . the mind collapse into desperation, it reforms (reformat) this to hope through the memory of its virtues." And num. 9 of the same book: "It reforms the intelligence to it which it had lost." Twice it occurs in the same sense almost in the very threshold of the Morals, and book II on Ezekiel, Homily 7, last num.: "it reforms the mind to hope." In the Commentary indeed not far from the beginning, namely book I, c. 1, num. 20: "For he arose,

because he reformed the mind to the instance of preaching."

In Gregorian writings, especially in the Dialogues, is read even unto nausea: "the habit of holy conversation (sanctae conversationis habitus)." And he who wrote the Commentary has the same familiar. Read especially book IV, c. 4, num. 18.

VIII. Gregory is accustomed to designate the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus by the name of "a certain wise man": as book XXVII of the Morals, num. 53: "Through a certain wise man it is said: as ice in the fair weather," etc. And book XXXIII, num. 23: "For hence through a certain wise man it is said: Do not say, The mercies of the Lord are many:" See also book VII, num. 45, and book XX, num. 51. And in the exactly same way the Commentator and Interpreter of the first book of Kings book V, c. 4, num. 2, praising Ecclesiasticus cap. 2, says: "Whence well through a certain wise man it is said: Son, approaching the service."

Finally St. Gregory is accustomed to bring forth whole words and sentences from the Rule of St. Benedict, as we have demonstrated in book I of his Life c. 3, num. 6; which also we shall immediately show to belong to the author of the Commentary.

IX. As far as doctrine is concerned, it is almost the same as that of Gregory himself. The divinity of Christ is eminently asserted in book I, chapter 3, num. 4, 5, etc. The mystery of the Incarnation is best explained in book I, c. 1, num. 3. Concern-

ing the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, concerning the unbloody sacrifice of the new Law, and concerning the priesthood of the Christian religion read book II, chapter 1, num. 14, and book III, chapter 4, num. 31. Concerning the vision of God granted to the citizens of heaven alone (which Saint Gregory often proves) see book I, chapter 1, num. 4. Concerning Penitence, Confession of sins, Satisfaction, and Sacerdotal Absolution consult book III, chapter 5, num. 13 and 14.

After the manner of Gregory he conflates from three holy women the unique Mary Magdalene book IV, chapter 4, num. 13. What Gregory asserts concerning Christ alone free among men from the servitude of the devil, this Writer teaches book III, chapter 5, num. 9: "What is therefore the hand of the Philistines, unless that power of demons by which they lead souls dead in sin to eternal torments? From that hand of the Philistines he alone had been free who said: the Prince of this world cometh, and in me," etc.

These surely seem to almost demonstrate, that there is no other parent of the Commentary about which we discuss, than Gregory himself. Yet certain things occur either in the kind of speaking, or in the doctrine which least savor of and indicate Gregory.

X. 1st.

2nd.

3rd. What is especially to be observed, he who wove the Commentary seems sometimes to deviate from the doctrine of Gregory, especially

concerning free will, to which he attributes too much. For as if from God alone were the beginnings of faith and holiness, and the rest from us, he says in book III, cap. 5, num. 20: "Because good desires are ministered to us through divine grace; but we promote the gifts of grace through the effort of free will to the victories of virtues." But he is not consistent with himself: for book IV, cap. 2, num. 9, declining into another extreme he teaches that sometimes sinners, even when they wish, are not able to arise from sin: "Because," he says, "through imitation of the Pastor, the reprobate fall into the servitude of sin, also from its yoke when they wish, they are not able to be loosed." Which he confirms yet a little below num. 10: "Into the notice of depraved imitation, you gradually flow down: but the examples of his depravity, to which you spontaneously submit yourselves, you are by no means able spontaneously to leave. For everyone who doeth sin, is the servant of sin (John 8:35). To those therefore whom sins dominate by themselves, they are unable to be liberated from their yoke. For often they come to the Lord with prayers; they ask to be liberated, but they are not able to be heard. Since indeed it is dealt with them by divine judgment, that those who have not willed to avoid evils, when they could, may not be able to avoid them, when they wish: and those who spontaneously incur pre-recognized evils, are not able to flee them when experienced." He speaks not less harshly book VI, cap. 2, n. 5, although we are not able to deny that the same are read in Pastoral

part III, chapter 15, or admonition 16. And indeed they can be explained in the best sense concerning sinners, who bound by depraved custom, are scarcely able to break its chains, even if they profess to wish.

Furthermore book II, cap. 1, num. 6, he seems only to concede to the saints after death, rest and security, not glory; which fights against Gregory, especially book IV of the Dialogues chapter 25.

Among the blemishes of this Commentary it is permitted to note what he teaches book V, cap. 2, num. 15, and elsewhere, that formerly, that is in the ancient law, it was not only licit to hate enemies, but also commanded. For he understands that not concerning certain peoples whom God had commanded to be destroyed by internecion on account of idolatry and other crimes, but concerning any enemies, having badly interpreted those words of Christ: "It was said to the ancients, thou shalt love," etc., "and thou shalt hate thy enemy" (Matt. 5:27); which he understands not concerning a precept of the old law, but concerning a false interpretation of the law by the teachers of the Jews who adulterated the word of God.

Therefore although it seems to be confessed that the Commentary about which we act, is the work of Gregory, nevertheless it is by no means to be denied that this was interpolated by Claudius his disciple, and was vitiated in some part, nor was afterwards corrected by the holy Doctor, who namely would not have left those blemishes. Certainly after the writing of the above praised epistle (Book XII, 24), for Gregory afflicted with

so many diseases, distracted and tortured by so many cares, it was scarcely possible to recognize this work of such great mass, and to recall it to the anvil. Hence his counsel was to suppress it in perpetual darkness. Nor indeed for that reason does it seem that it should be contemned: for if it be purged from the few spots which we indicate, it will be able to contend for excellence with the best lucubrations of so great a master.

XI. Why therefore, you will ask, did its first parent think to reject it, and as much as he could, resisted its coming forth into public light?

We answer, that its interpolation was a sufficient cause for it to be repudiated. The principal reason however is to be sought from the highest modesty and humility of mind of Gregory, which indeed was so great, that he bore with difficulty that his works, whatever they might be, should be read and published. Concerning which matter the mox praised epistle is to be read in its entirety. Certainly in the Life of P. Virgilius Maro by the author Tib. Donatus, we read that this poet, "when he felt himself to be weighed down by disease, often and with great instance sought the chests, intended to burn the Aeneid: which being denied, he ordered in his testament that it be burned as a thing uncorrected and imperfect." Who for that reason would think so badly of the Aeneid as to judge it should be addicted to the flames? The same furthermore is to be said concerning our Commentary. Concerning that work therefore let this be the judgment.

We judge that it coalesced from Homilies delivered by Saint Gregory on book I of Kings collected by Claudius his disciple, and came forth with certain faults especially to be ascribed to a slip of memory. Now indeed with what machines Peter Gussanville endeavors to overturn this opinion is to be reported in the best faith.

XII. 1st. Gregory who everywhere indicates his genuine works, is everywhere silent concerning this.

On the contrary indeed Gregory, concerning the Homilies delivered by him and received by Claudius, and afterwards digested in the manner of a Commentary, speaks clearly in the place already indicated. Nor is it a wonder if those who woven as it were bundles from Gregorian sentences, Paterius, Tajus, Alulfus, or those who reviewed the works of the holy Doctor, have not remembered this Commentary. For first its copies were always very rare, and therefore less known. Gussanville himself confesses that all diligence was employed by him, but in vain, so that he might obtain some in Gaul, Belgium, England, Rome, Venice, where however he thinks it was first printed in the year 1537, and at Strasbourg, where according to Gesner in the Library it came forth with the Pastoral in the year 1496. Second, even if some of the commemorated writers had the opportunity of some copy, following the manner of Gregory not approving it, they judged that nothing was to be plucked from it, and that it should be passed over in the index of Gregorian works.

Nevertheless Ratherius a monk of Lobbes (Lobiensis), and afterwards bishop of Verona, who flourished around the year 928, writing "On the Contempt of the Canons" (of the Spicilegium of d'Achery, Vol. II), part I, a little before the end, praises something from this Commentary in these words: "Let him hear Gregory: the cause, he says, of the ruin of the people, are evil Priests;" which are read in book II, chapter 2, at the verse: "And he said to them: why do you do such things?" We ought not indeed to conceal that almost the same things occur in the book of the Pastoral Rule part I, chapter 2. But for "the cause of the ruin," etc., is read in the Pastoral, "the snare of ruin;" whence it is clear that Ratherius attended rather to the former place than to the latter. Nor is it a doubt but that if it were possible to explore diligently the pigeon-holes of all libraries, and to read unpublished books, many other testimonies concerning this Commentary would be present to us. Surely the "Exposition on the Song of Songs" which is ascribed to Gregory, Gussanville contends was also passed over in silence by all writers, and especially by Paterius. In the genuine and sincere Paterius however whom we are about to edit is found a noble place of this Exposition, as we shall sometime demonstrate in the admonition (See below). But let us proceed in diluting the objects of Gussanville.

XIII. The learned man contends that the author of the Commentary uses the Vulgate version of the Sacred Scripture, but Gregory the Italic and Hieronymian, which he believes to suffice

for proving the discrimination of both writers. That kind of proof has unsuccessfully yielded to a man otherwise learned: for only four times he says that testimony was brought forth by the holy Doctor from book I Kings chapter 15: "Was it not when thou wast a little one," etc. But in none of the places assigned by Gussanville is it read. Furthermore only eyes are needed that it may be understood that our writer has not always used the Vulgate version; indeed very often he recedes from it. In the very threshold is read: "there was a certain man from Ramatha (fuit vir unus de Ramatha)." In the Vulgate, "from Ramathaïim." In the Commentary, "son of Jeroboam (filius Hieroboam);" in the Vulgate, "son of Jeroam." In the Commentary, "sons of Thau (filii Thau);" in the Vulgate, "sons of Tohu." In the Commentary verse 4, "and he gave to Peninnah and to her sons and daughters (deditque Phenennae et filiis et filiabus ejus);" in the Vulgate, "and he gave to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters parts." To pursue the rest seems superfluous. From Habakkuk chapter III these things are praised in the Commentary book I, chapter 3, num. 4: "The Lord God is my strength, he will set my feet unto consummation, and he will set me upon high places; that I may overcome in the clarity of him;" which altogether disagree from the Vulgate version. Below from ps. 97 many things are brought forth quite otherwise than they are read in the Vulgate. Book I, c. 1, n. 10, is read from ps. 85: "And they shall adore before thee, O Lord, and they shall honor (honorificabunt) thy

name," the Vulgate having, "and they shall glorify (glorificabunt)." Chapter 2, num. 47, for, "and my cup inebriating," which the Vulgate ps. 22 has, there stands, "and my goblet (poculum) inebriating" Truly in a matter so clear we would waste time in vain. Nor however do I deny that some things from the sacred Letters are read here otherwise than in other Gregorian works. Doubtless Claudius cursorily receiving these was not able to render them with so much faith, that in representing the testimonies of Scripture he should not sin even in one syllable. On the contrary indeed we have observed many things brought forth in this Commentary otherwise than they ought to be read; which perhaps moved Saint Gregory to reject this work as adulterine. Concerning those things however it is worthwhile to warn in this place, lest they provide an occasion of erring.

In the end of book I, chapter 1, verse 28 of chapter I book I Kings it is read thus: "I have commended (Commendavi) him to the Lord;" and it should be read, "I have lent (commodavi)." Book II, chapter 4, this verse 3 chapter III. "His eyes (Eli's) had grown dim, nor was he able to see. The lamp of God before it was extinguished, Samuel," etc. It is thus brought forth corruptly: "nor was he able to see the lamp of God before it was extinguished;" to which reading no versions suffragate. Thus however Bede, Rabanus Maurus, Angelomus, the false Eucherius read; snatched away perhaps by the authority of Gregory, whose name they had read prefixed to this commentary.

And this surely is the most valid argument, that this work was known to the praised writers: from what earlier writer indeed would they have taken this faulty reading of the Scripture? Book V, col. 306, it is read: "he appeared therefore to the garrison (apparuit itaque stationi);" where it ought to be read as in the Vulgate, "both appeared (Apparuit uterque) to the garrison." Truly it is a fault of the copyists, not of the author; for in the explanation of this verse he says: "What is it that Jonathan is said to appear to the Philistines with his armor-bearer?" Therefore he read: "both appeared." Below also is read: "therefore both appeared," etc. Let us pursue the remaining objections of Gussanville.

XIV. "Nor indeed," he says, "does the style itself savor of the Gregorian, although in certain things the author has tried to imitate him; which perhaps provided the occasion of the error. Truly how dissimilar it is to the style of Gregory, only the reading of the Homilies on Ezekiel will prove." A brief proof indeed, but feeble, since it relies on the testimony of the adversary alone strengthened by no examples; especially if those things which we have brought forth to the contrary are reread.

"But what more," says Gussanville? "If the words of the author be weighed, it will appear clearer than the meridian light that he was some monk; who frequently has speech concerning monks and the government and discipline of monasteries;" which he proves with more.

XV. We do not unwillingly yield to the weight of reasons. But what from these militates against the opinion which we defend? Does Gussanville deny that Gregory was a monk, and an abbot of monks, to whom therefore it belonged frequently to have speech concerning monastic discipline? If indeed what this writer says concerning the monastic life be compared with the Rule of Saint Benedict, there will scarcely remain a place of doubting, that he was addicted to the observation of the same Rule. For in col. 78 we read, "novice fervor (fervore novitio);" which is found in the Rule of S. Benedict chapter 1. Under the beginning col. 93 occurs, "in the evil of inobedience death has prevailed (in malo inobedientiae mors praevaluit);" by which words is alluded to these of the Rule of S. Benedict chapter 2, "then at last to the inobedient let the penalty be to them prevailing death itself." Col. 95, the author discussing concerning obedience, seems to have before his eyes what Saint Benedict teaches concerning the same virtue both in chapter 5 of the Rule and c. 7. Book IV, cap. 4, num. 17, is read: "Who may not easily spend the most strait way of conversation for those newly approaching;" which are taken almost word for word from the Rule of S. Benedict chapter 58.

And from these no light conjecture arises, that Gregory did not have the Homilies concerning the book of Kings to the people, as Gussanville gratuitously feigns, but to the monks subject to him, only at that time, in which after the return from the royal city, he enjoyed greater leisure in

the monastery: which his son, or alumnus and disciple Claudius took care to receive.

XVI. The controversy which was concerning the author of the Commentary having been composed, certain things concerning the work itself, although few, remain to be observed. That it is mutilated, although in some very small part, is clear from the fact that in book I, cap. 2, num. 3, the writer mentions the explanation of the name of Elkanah brought in above, which nevertheless is read nowhere. We suspect there is a lacuna between num. 4 and 8 of chapter 1 book I, where from the explanation of those words: "From Ramath Sophim, from mount Ephraim," there is a transition to those: "Who had two wives;" those having been omitted, "and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroboam, the son of Elihu, the son of Thau, the son of Zuph," concerning which not even the least thing is touched upon in the Commentary.

Many things occur concerning Hebrew names which could have been illustrated by notes. But truly what were offering themselves to be said concerning them would scarcely have been able to be contained within the boundaries prescribed to us in these notes. Furthermore those who wish to be learned concerning these, are never going to read this Commentary, but will rather consult Origen and Jerome, especially in the books on Hebrew names and on the site and names of Hebrew places. Moreover, speaking of Jerome in note b to the prooemium, col. 2, incautiously there slipped from us what we said concerning the book of

Samuel explained by him; for those of ours who labor strenuously in editing this holy Doctor, judge the Exposition of the book of Samuel away from Jerome.

XVII. What indeed of our labor has been placed in this edition is now briefly to be opened. Since it was not possible for us to have the opportunity of any manuscript codex, in which this Commentary was contained, although any diligence was employed, we only reviewed it according to the better editions, especially the Guillotian and the Vatican, by the help of which we expunged not a few errors, and restored some things omitted. Sometimes also where all published are faulty, we have not doubted to emend them. Thus book I, c. 1, n. 1, was previously read: "afflicting (affligentes) this one . . . . . through the hands of the iniquitous;" where without doubt should be read, "fastening (affigentes)," which reading we have embraced. Also in book II, c. 1, num. 2, it was previously read, "to have cleaved to the eyes (oculis) of him;" but the series of the speech shows it should be read, "kisses (osculis)" for "eyes (oculis);" as it is still read now. Moreover when by conjectures alone we have attained by what reason the corrupt speech was to be healed, we have held it sufficient to inscribe the reading which seemed to us better in the margin.

In our manner also we have distinguished the chapters, as being longer, into more articles with numerical notes added. With little notes subjected to the page, we have either exhibited various readings, or illustrated certain places of

the Commentary. Would that the reader could pluck and taste the certainly not modest fruits of our labor.

Concerning the exposition on the Song of Songs which will follow this Commentary, and concerning other subsequent works there is no point in saying anything here, since we have prefixed prefaces, or admonitions to each. But in the preface to the Exposition of the Song the testimony of Saint Columbanus ought not to have been omitted, who among the Works of Saint Gregory reviews it with the book of the Pastoral Rule and the Homilies on Ezekiel, as is to be seen in the same Columbanus's epistle among the Gregorian ones (Book IX, last epistle).

SIX BOOKS OF VARIOUS EXPOSITIONS OF SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT, ROMAN PONTIFF, ON THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS, WHICH IS ALSO CALLED OF SAMUEL.

PROOEMIUM.

1. After the books of Moses and of Joshua, and of the Judges, the first book of Kings is shown eighth or ninth in the canon of the holy Scriptures. Which book indeed, just as also many volumes of the sacred eloquence, because it has not yet been explained by the doctors of the holy Church, some simpler ones judge this not to be mystical, and to say nothing more sublime through the spirit, by how much the more it seems to narrate plainer things through the letter. But if they read those things which the holy doctors have spoken in other books of explana-

tions, they would find how immense is the depth of this history also. For frequently in their expositions that which is said plainly through the letter here is declared to be very arduous through spiritual intelligence, and they openly insinuate that they understand far more sublimely concerning the sacred history than they read on the surface of it outside. For it is plain that Elkanah an Ephrathite man is described to have had two wives (1 Sam. 1:1, 2); that Eli the priest, while he is dissolved from the censure of correction by affection for his sons, falls from the seat, and perishes with a broken neck (Ibid., 4:18); that king Saul willed not to obey God in the demolition of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:9), but not much after lost both life and kingdom (1 Sam. 31:5). But these certainly plain things, as it pleases the simpler, the holy doctors, so that they might perceive them with worthy sublimity, sought their understanding not in the simplicity of the letter, but in the flight of allegory. For hence it is that when Saint Augustine (Book 17 of the City of God, c. 4) read the two wives of Elkanah through the history, looking into the spiritual height in the plainness of the reading, he explained one as the type of the Synagogue, but the other because she had the figure of the holy Church. Saint Jerome also (Against Pelagius, book I, c. 8; and against Jovinian book I, c. 10) the death of Eli the priest and of Saul, placed in the sacred history not for this alone, so that the punishment might terrify inobedient prelates, but also so that, while the repulsion of the ancient and transgressing rulers is read, the

end of the ancient law and priesthood might be designated. Therefore the sacred history of the Kings is not for that reason to be believed void of spiritual sacraments, because it has not been explained in series by the venerable fathers, but by so much higher and deeper, by how much, like the vastness of an immense river, from any small part it was able to be drawn out by explaining, and their small vessels having been filled, it runs down for others daily to be filled by the impetus of its fullness. While therefore they took certain things of this sacred history to the strength of their works, but passed over the fullness of it undiscussed in the secret of their sublimity, what else were they seen to do, than to take something from the immense river, which they might give to the thirsty minds of the faithful to drink?

2. Whose manner indeed we also follow in the present work, who approach this huge history for the sake of opening its intelligence, the universality of which to be explained however we do not dare to undertake, differing from the aforementioned venerable Fathers in this namely, because we do not choose dispersedly and from diverse places what we are about to explain, since they did not take according to order some part of this sacred history, but dispersedly certain testimonies, which they would have had to explain for the erudition of the faithful. Confiding therefore in the help of almighty God, we propose to explain from the beginning of the volume even to the anointing of king David, so that in this brief thing, which is discerned, we may be able

to experience if we ought to proceed further in explaining. For many while they propose immoderate things, are never able to become executors of their purpose, especially when a treater of the sacred eloquence carries the manner of a man standing in a high watch-tower, but the sacred Scripture the similitude of a vaster forest. Which man indeed situated on high, although he considers the vastness of the grove with sharp vision, nevertheless while he looks back at the tops of the mountains, while the extremes of the hills, while the heights of the trees, agreeing to himself in a certain equality, how great valleys, how distended plains lie hid in the middle, he does not attend. But if he begins to walk through what seems brief to him, suddenly he knows that he who had thought himself to have seen everything, very many things had remained which he had not seen. Whence also often the immoderate traveler is deceived, so that he completes the journey so much more dangerously, by how much the error of the night intercepts him in the way, the day having been completed, who as if in the space of a small journey did not even think to complete a part of the day. So so indeed, while we consider the understanding of the sacred history in a certain summit of its senses, by the grace of almighty God, we attend as it were the high tops of a more opaque forest from a certain sublimity. But because while these same senses begin to be more subtly considered and brought forth, they beget others more manifold than themselves, as it were on the surface, as it seems, of the whole

inspected grove, but the hollows of the valleys and the distended spaces of the Matine lie hid, which are not seen. More safely therefore we walk, if we so measure those things which we discern, so that we also think that those things which we are about to see by proceeding are to be run through. And so while we propose to explain a small part of the huge history, we terminate the course of the journey in the vicinity according to the module of our imbecility, as much distrusting in the thinness of our genius, as terrified by the depth of the sacred volume.

3. But also first I have judged not so much to institute as to beseech the reader, that he by no means weigh the weight of the sacred history by the inanity of my exposition, because the divine eloquences are never to be estimated from the measure of the treaters. For they are not for that reason to be vilipended, because they are not subtly considered; nor therefore high and venerable, because they are eloquently and subtly explained. For there is another virtue which is held so much among the wise of the world, as much as clear geniuses are able to extol it. But the sacred Scripture, because it is divinely inspired, overcomes even the clear geniuses of men by so much more sublimely, by how much the clear men themselves are inferior to God, and discern nothing in that spiritual sublimity, unless what is revealed to them by the goodness of the divine dignation itself. No one therefore is so perfect in the knowledge of it, that he is not able to profit further, because every profiting of man is inferior

to the height of the divinity inspiring it. Whence also it is said through the Psalmist concerning the Lord: "Who coverest the upper parts of it in the waters" (Ps. 103:3). For if by the appellation of waters those supernal deep intelligences of the angels are designated, while God is said to cover the height of the sacred eloquence in the waters, it is established indeed that man may always be inferior to it to whom only its inferior things are revealed. Hence also it is commanded through Moses that the remainder of the lamb be consumed by fire (Exod. 12:10), because namely the sacred Scripture, which was brought forth for recognizing the Redeemer, for the dignity of its sublimity are then also to be venerated when they are not understood. Therefore even if nothing is weighed which is said by me, nevertheless it is to be weighed that this sacred Scripture, which is unworthily explained by me, says many good and sublime things to him to whom almighty God has willed to open secrets. For the sacred Scripture was so wonderfully founded by almighty God, that even if it seems explained manifoldly, nevertheless secrets are not lacking to it by which it may keep things hidden, because it is almost never so explained, that there do not remain more things to it which may be explained daily. By which incomprehensibility of it indeed almighty God consulted human mutability by a great dispensation; for, that what is known might not be able to become vile, it was so wonderfully disposed, that what is known may not be known, and it may be read the more gratefully, by how

much it is daily learned; and while it intimates always fresh things, it may delight more sweetly.

4. Therefore the history of the Kings, because it was founded by that spirit by which also the other volumes of the holy Scripture are known, ought not to be believed to be less than those sacraments, to which it is not inferior in the title of authority. For all the writers of it are reported to have been prophets, who when they narrate historical things, signify spiritual things; they speak external things, and insinuate internal things; they propose earthly things, so that they may pursue celestial things. Whence also this first and second book of the same history is ascribed to the prophet Samuel for this, that from the title of the author the history which he writes may be felt, not so much history as prophecy; a simple and true letter, but too high and deep with the multiplicity of hidden senses. We however take from so great a weight of it according to the measure of our smallness things to be borne which we are able. For since it is sweet on the surface of the letter, higher in the types of allegory, useful for instructing morals, lucid in exhibiting examples, nevertheless I flee both to assert historical things, and to bring forth typical things, and to confer moral things, and to propose examples in individual places; although I am about to explain some things under one understanding, the Lord helping, but others under more. Especially since I have judged to give labor to writing in these times, in which while the old solicitude of worldly intention is immersed in the hearts of

certain ecclesiastical men, they judge new studies of writing to be superfluous for this reason, by how much they are not ignorant that the old ones of the venerable doctors abound. Who indeed would have to be convinced by reason, unless they pretended the sign of calumny, with an exposed forehead. For those who contemn new things as new, loathe those old things which they approve, with the satiety of secular cares. Whom surely the Scripture exposes more under the denotation of one, saying: "The sated soul will tread upon the honeycomb" (Prov. 27:7). The honeycomb indeed contains new honey. As if therefore it should say: While the care of earthly things is fed more immoderately, it does not rejoice in that which is accustomed to please greatly with the recent sweetness of the Scriptures. But because they find no commentaries of the ancients of this sacred history, they act more rightly, if they embrace the work of our labor with that charity by which it is expended for the utility of the little ones of the holy Church, and for the molestation of reprehensions bring to us laboring in so great depth of Scripture as it were a most deep sea the presidies of prayers. Hence indeed they make the fruit of our sweat their own, because while they love out of benignity, they turn it to the heap of eternal remuneration for themselves, both because a Scripture so closed and unexplained for so many times is led to common intelligence, and because the little ones of the holy Church while they receive the splendor of the new religion in

the coverings of the old Scripture, are helped in the progress of their devotion.

5. But because in the diverse works of the holy Fathers diverse testimonies of this history are found explained, the reader ought to note that sometimes in treating I follow their senses, but sometimes I sweat to disentangle the history otherwise, so that both the work which I approach by the hope of divine inspiration, may be valid by the authority of the ancient fathers, and by no means fastidious to the reader, while among those old things which he knows it represents to him also those new things which he does not know. Toward which pronunciation of sentences indeed I am sometimes led out of necessity, because the venerable Fathers also if they explained in series all things which they touched in part, would by no means have been able to observe that series of locution which they were seen to hold. While therefore I pass over the understandings of the holy Fathers, I use sometimes necessity, sometimes commodity, because I both remove fastidium from the reader, and while I discuss the whole in series, many things from the middle come against me which do not permit me to follow their sentences. In which work surely I flagitate the reader, that he consider not words from the comparison of the eloquent orators of the holy Church, but weigh the understandings of the sentences from the reasons of ecclesiastical discipline, because even if according to the prohibition of God I know not how to plant a grove in his house (Deut. 16:21), nevertheless I

leave in nothing the rule by which holy Scripture is faithfully explained. But also where what the skilled reader will have found pleases less, let him consider that while I approach the spiritual history and one deep with high senses, as a foreign sailor the storms of a great sea, it is not very reprehensible if the rudder of speaking is not led beautifully, when the foaming tops of the waves rush in, which often compel even the most skilled government to loosen the tiller. So so indeed neither the devoted plowman entering to cultivate silvosa places disposes straight lines of furrows, if he does not more often rescind them previously with the plowshare brought back, because no facility follows art, if no custom of culture be seen to precede the same skill of plowing. Truly let no one consider the plainness of history with this estimation, because frequently by so much more difficultly do we reach to the secrets of spiritual senses, by how much more plainly we see the site of the secret approaches in the letter; and by so much we are not able to touch the highest things of it, by how much the step is lower whence we think to touch the highest. For what is the understanding of the divinity, unless a certain ineffable summit of highness? And because almighty God is recognized through the Scriptures, what is the same sacred Scripture, unless a certain step, which is climbed so that that sublimity may be touched? As often therefore as the history is plainer, but the understanding higher, what else is it, unless because that sublimity has such a step from which it cannot easily be touched? If there-

fore the reader shall have inspected anything indecent even in the explanation of the plainer history, by so much more benignly will he be able to give pardon, by how much more rationally he recognizes that, while from the plain which is discerned we do not tend further to those sublime things, we easily vacillate. Therefore the prior things of the volume, because they contain so much the sacraments of the holy Church, as they demonstrate the morals of the chosen man, placed in the study of good conversation, I edisserate individually under both understandings, so that when in the acts of the ancients we recognize the reasons of the new faith, in them also we may take the edification of our conversation.

(1 Kings 1:1) There was a man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.

1. Whom, therefore, does this man suggest to us, if not our Lord and Redeemer, who both appeared in the infirmity of our flesh, and yet did not subject that same infirmity of the nature He had assumed to the blandishments of a more relaxed life? For "man" (*vir*) is named from "virtue" (*virtus*): but Man (*homo*), created in paradise, had a war with the apostate angel, whom, however, he did not care to resist through the virtue with which he was endowed. Therefore, created strong, but weakly subjugated to the enemy, he was not a man (*vir*) by struggle, who was one by gift. Thus the strong one [the enemy] became so powerful that condemned human na-

ture could not prevail against the victorious foe, had not He who existed above men assumed it. And so our Creator became our champion. But whether He was a man (*vir*), is known if He is considered from the virtue He displayed. He assumed our nature, so that while it conquered in Him, it might repair its created nobility, and what was weak might become strong in the Redeemer, which in Adam had been made weak from being strong (Matt. 4). To Him, indeed, while He was fasting in the desert, the tempter came, preparing the weapons of his ancient victory, and hurled the darts of gluttony, vainglory, and pride; but he found Him resisting him in all things. Therefore, He shone forth as a man (*vir*) through victory, who, by overcoming the strong, already victorious apostate angel, showed him not the power of His divinity, but the infirmity of His humanity. Considering this man, the prophet Jeremiah says: A woman shall compass a man (Jer. 31:22). Zechariah points to Him, saying: Behold the man, whose name is the Orient (Zech. 6:12). The blessed apostle Peter, preaching to the Jews, says of Him: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (Acts 2:22-23). Hence Cleopas, speaking with the same Redeemer on the way, says: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word (Luke 24:19). For He was a man (*vir*) who both expelled the ancient enemy from the Church

in this world, and, by dying, bound him in hell. And because He who by dying crushed the powers of hell, by rising again opened to us the gate of eternity, He showed us the greatness of His virtue not only by living, but also by dying and rising again. Because, therefore, our Redeemer is known to have performed works of great virtue through the humanity He assumed, he who signifies Him in a type is rightly said to have been a man (*vir*).

But it must be asked why he is called *one man*. For if this unity refers to number, it seems superfluous: for everyone is one, and not two. And Saint Samuel, by whom these things are written, is by no means to be believed to have begun in vain, against the custom of the writers of the holy Church. For the writer of that volume, when he set forth the life of the blessed Job as an example for the faithful, thus began: 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job' (Job 1:1). The Evangelist Luke also, when at the beginning of his Gospel he spoke in praise of a just priest, says: 'There was in the days of Herod the king a certain priest named Zacharias' (Luke 1:5). For neither did the former say, 'One man'; nor the evangelist, 'There was one priest.' What is it, therefore, that the chosen prophet, against the usage of writers, began his writing with such an introduction? But because he was not only a writer, but also a prophet, he knew of whom the history spoke; and he who was spoken of through the history, he knew whom he signified. Therefore, what he narrates concerning the history,

beyond the custom of history, this he speaks for the use of the Catholic faith, in the understanding of allegory. Whence also by this new custom, the whole Church at once confesses that Christ is one, God and man. He says, therefore, 'There was one man,' because he was speaking of the God-man, so that he might assert His divinity and humanity, and demonstrate more openly that the person of the Word who assumes and of the man who is assumed is not another, but one and the same person of God and man: which unity, however, can fittingly be referred to the excellence of His dignity. For although the holy Church has had no other Redeemer, it has had several men by the manifestation of virtue. Therefore, when he is called 'one', he is shown to be incomparable.

For He had no equal, who, while He provided for the human race by His excellent life and word, was able by a singular gift to give the gifts of Redemption. Whence also Paul says: 'they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5:17). Reproaching the Jews with this dignity of His excellence, He says through Himself: 'If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin' (John 15:24). The Psalmist also, considering the excellence of His beauty, said: 'Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips' (Ps. 44:3). Isaiah, testifying to the singular good of Redemption in Him, says: 'Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows' (Isa. 53:4). The eternal Father also,

showing His singular dignity, cried out from the magnificent glory, saying: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; 1 Pet. 2:17). He was the one man, whom Peter confessed, saying: 'For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). Paul asserts this magnitude of His excellence, saying: 'God also hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name' (Phil. 2:9). And because the excellence of His power surpasses not only the elect among men but also all the blessed angels, Paul, preaching this to the Hebrews, says: 'Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.' For to which of the angels hath he said at any time: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee'? And again: 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son' (Heb. 1:3, 4, 5). Rightly, therefore, is he called 'one man', to whom no one is compared. But now that we have recognized how great he is, let us hear whence he was.

4. Concerning Ramatha Sophim, from Mount Ephraim. Ramatha, Sophim, and Ephraim are Hebrew names, the first of which in our language means "consummate vision," the second, "watchtower," and the third, finally, is interpreted as "fruit-bearing" or "fructifying." For

what is the consummate vision, if not the perfect knowledge of almighty God? The teacher of the Gentiles indeed alludes to this consummate vision, saying: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known" (I Cor. 13:12). And what is understood by "watchtower," if not that sublimity of the angels? For a watchtower is chosen in a high place for a clearer vision. Moreover, it is rightly called Ramatha Sophim: because that perfect knowledge of our Creator can be possessed only by those blessed citizens who dwell in that supernal sublimity. For the splendor of the eternal light in its fullness is beheld not from the depths of this present exile, but from the state of eternal sublimity. Hence, Ramatha Sophim is well said to be situated on Mount Ephraim. For what is Mount Ephraim, if not heaven? It is indeed a fruit-bearing mountain, which always brings forth the flowers of eternal beauty and the fruits of unfailing joy. And well is it said that both Ramatha and Sophim are situated on Mount Ephraim, because that eternal vision of almighty God, and that high state of the blessed citizens, is not had on earth, but in heaven. For, implying that He is from Ramatha, He says: "As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father" (John 10:15). Hence again He says: "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22). He was from the watchtower, that is, from on high, who also, rebuking

the Jews, says: "You are from beneath, I am from above: you are of this world, I am not of this world" (John 8:23). He was from Mount Ephraim, who says: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). John the Baptist, affirming that He was from Mount Ephraim, says: "He that cometh from heaven, is above all" (John 3:31). Hence the Psalmist says: "His going out is from the highest heaven" (Ps. 18:7). Hence the teacher of the Gentiles says: "The second man, from heaven, heavenly" (I Cor. 15:47). Therefore, the man who is asserted to have been one, is said to have come from Ramatha Sophim, from Mount Ephraim: because He who, born among all, shone forth above all, appeared so great on earth for this reason: that He came from heaven. He was indeed from Ramatha Sophim, because although He shone incomparably here, the greatness of His excellence is not comprehended, except where the perfect knowledge of Him is displayed to the eternal citizens. For one had beheld Him here in the excellence of His virtue, who said: "That which we have seen and have heard, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (I John 1:1). But because he had not seen the greatness of His excellence, he promises it to us again in Ramatha, saying: "When he shall appear, we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

Moreover, by the name of this mountain, the most blessed ever-virgin Mary, Mother of God, can be designated: for she was a mountain, who by the dignity of her election transcended all the

height of any chosen creature. Was Mary not a sublime mountain, who, in order to attain to the conception of the eternal Word, raised the pinnacle of her merits above all the choirs of angels, even to the throne of the Godhead? For Isaiah, prophesying the most excellent dignity of this mountain, says: 'In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains' (Isa. 2:2). Indeed, she was a mountain on the top of mountains, because the loftiness of Mary shone forth above all the saints. For just as a mountain designates height, so a house designates a dwelling. Indeed, she is aptly called a mountain and a house, who, while she was illustrated by incomparable merits, prepared a sacred womb for the only-begotten of God, in which He might recline. For Mary would not have become a mountain on the top of mountains if divine fecundity had not raised her above the height of the angels. And she would not have become the house of the Lord if the divinity of the Word had not lain in her womb through the humanity He assumed. But she is rightly called a fruitful mountain, from whom the best fruit, that is, the new man, is generated; whom the prophet, certainly beholding her beautiful and adorned in the glory of her fecundity, says: 'There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up from his root' (Isa. 11:1). For concerning the fruit of this mountain, David, exulting in God, says: 'Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee. The earth hath yielded her fruit' (Ps. 66:6). The earth indeed has yielded

her fruit, because she whom the Virgin brought forth, she conceived not by a material act, but by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Hence it is said by the Lord to the same king and prophet: 'Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne' (Ps. 131:11). Hence Isaiah says: 'The fruit of the earth shall be sublime' (Isa. 4:2). For He whom the Virgin bore was not only a holy man, but also the mighty God. Concerning this fruit, it is said to the same blessed Virgin, in Elizabeth's greeting: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb' (Luke 1:42). Rightly, therefore, is she called the mountain of Ephraim, for while she is raised up by the ineffable dignity of the divine generation, in her fruit the withered seeds of the human condition grow green again. Therefore, the man from Ramathaim-zophim was made from the mountain of Ephraim: because He who by the power of His divinity created the angels, took on the form of humanity from the flesh of the most exalted Virgin. And because, through the humanity which He assumed, He willed to be born not from the unfaithful, but from the faithful, it follows: 'the son of Jeroboam, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph.'

Indeed, the names of four fathers are assigned: because when the Lord took flesh from a faithful people, He had as fathers through His humanity those whom the glory of the same number of principal virtues had illustrated. Whence also it is said by divine promise not to some unfaithful person, but to the faithful Abraham: 'In thy seed

shall all the nations of the earth be blessed' (Gen. 22:18). Hence the evangelist Matthew, weaving the order of His generation, says: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham' (Matt. 1:1). Hence He Himself speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying: 'Salvation is from the Jews' (John 4:22). Hence Paul says: 'Who have the adoption as sons, and the glory, and the testament, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever' (Rom. 9:4-5). To whom, indeed, because they possessed prudence in the knowledge of things, justice by which they desired to arrange known things rightly, fortitude by which they were able to execute the good things they willed, and temperance through which they might accomplish all things discreetly, they are aptly designated by the number four.

7. It follows: *An Ephrathite*. But why is he who is asserted to be from Mount Ephraim said to be an Ephrathite? This is clear in a literal sense (*ad litteram*), because someone could indeed be from Mount Ephraim without being born of the tribe of Ephraim. He is therefore called an Ephrathite so that he who is identified by his place may also be recognized by the lineage of his stock. And because Ephrathite means "fruitful," this is rightly ascribed to the person of the Redeemer, who is proclaimed in the prophecy of the prophet: *He shall be like a tree that is planted by the running waters, that shall bring forth its

fruit in due season* (Ps. 1:3). For, appearing in the foreordained fullness of time, He turned the flowers of heavenly doctrine into the fruits of the elect; and as many as He joined to Himself from the human race, He brought forth as so many fruits for eternity. In this passage, while the life of the Redeemer is described, the perdition of the devil is also secretly shown. For he was from Mount Ephraim, and yet he was not an Ephrathite: because he indeed fell from heaven, but the wicked tree did not yield good fruit.

(Verse 2) *He had two wives, the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.*

8. What is expressed by Peninnah, if not the Synagogue? And what is figured by Hannah, if not the holy Church? For Peninnah is said to have had children: because when our Redeemer appeared in the flesh, He found sons born in the faith of the Synagogue through the Law which He had given and the prophets whom He had sent. But Hannah had no children, because the holy Church, then a novice and newly joined to her heavenly spouse, did not yet bear children by preaching. Whence it is also said to her in the Song of Songs by the voice of the same spouse: *Our sister is little, and hath no breasts* (Cant. 8:8). Or certainly, she is said to have had no children not because of an inequality of age, but through the barrenness of sterility. What, then, is the sterility of Hannah, if not the obduracy of Judea? For she who could not convert the hard hearts of the Jews to the faith of

the Redeemer was indeed sterile. But it should be noted that Peninnah, who is said to have borne children first, is named the second wife. The Synagogue indeed first brought forth sons in faith, but she was nevertheless lesser in dignity than the holy Church. Therefore, she was the second wife, not in the timing of the marital union, but in the inequality of prerogative. It follows:

(Verse 3) *And this man went up out of his city upon the appointed days, to adore and to sacrifice to the Lord God of hosts in Shiloh.*

9. For what spiritual city of the Redeemer has existed, if not the sacred Scripture? This city, to be sure, has conferred upon its citizens as many means of defense as precepts; it has provided them with as many weapons as counsels of salvation. Moreover, what was it for our Redeemer to ascend, if not, in the form of humanity, to reveal the high things of His divinity? And because He is known in the sacred Scripture, He is rightly said to ascend from His city. Indeed, the appointed days are the promises concerning Himself, placed in the holy Scriptures. They are indeed days, because they shine for the elect for the purpose of knowing Him. They are also appointed days, because we are not ignorant that they were placed in the same sacred word by the ancient Fathers. For Moses prefigured the day of His ascent when he said: "The Lord will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren, like unto me: him you shall hear" (Deut. 18:18). He also appointed the day, who said: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his thigh, till he come

that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of the nations" (Gen. 49:10). Appointing the day of this ascent, Micah says: "And thou, Bethlehem, land of Judah, art by no means least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a ruler, who shall rule my people Israel" (Micah 5:2). Hence Isaiah says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. 7:14). For as many promises of the Law and the prophets there are concerning Him, so many appointed days for His ascent do we behold. For He was ascending as if on appointed days when He said to the Jews: "Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Hence again He says: "For had you believed Moses, you would perhaps have believed me also; for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). Therefore, He ascended on the appointed days, because by appearing He showed the signs of the promises which He had placed in the holy Scriptures. Moreover, the appointed days can be understood as the promised splendors of miracles at His coming. Gazing upon these appointed days, the prophet Isaiah says: "Say to the fainthearted: Be strong, and fear not: behold our God will bring the revenge of recompense; God himself will come, and will save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear: then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Isa. 35:4-6). But let us see whether He ascended on them, we who have recognized the

appointed days for the Redeemer's ascent. For when asked by John whether they should expect Him or another, He answered the disciples who had been sent, saying: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is the man who shall not be scandalized in me" (Luke 7:19). Therefore, He ascended on the appointed days, who, in order to drive the darkness of ancient error from the hearts of His elect, shone with so many splendors of promised miracles. But He ascended that He might adore and immolate, because He wished to be known for this purpose: that by dying He might redeem those whom He had taught by living. Indeed, He adored, because for the example of the elect, He presented Himself to God the Father as entirely humble and abject through obedience. But He immolated, because He who by living gave us examples of humility, delivered Himself to God the Father on the altar of the cross as an oblation and a victim, and those whom He taught by living, He redeemed by dying. For He knew that both were very necessary for us, and therefore He did not bestow one without the other. For when He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Herod sought by fraud to kill Him (Matt. 2:13); but if the Redeemer had died then, He would indeed have immolated, but not adored: because by dying He would have become a victim, but He would by no means have taught by living those whom He was to free by death. And if, teaching us by living, He had disdained to

die, He would surely have adored and not immolated. Therefore, that He might adore, He fled into Egypt from the king who persecuted Him, and that He might immolate, He reproached Peter who was dissuading Him, saying: "Go behind me, Satan, for you do not savor the things that are of God, but the things that are of men" (Matt. 16:23). For, intimating that He adored, He says: "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Hence He also says: "I do always the things that please him" (John 8:29). Also, intimating that He immolated Himself, He says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18). And a little before: "I am the good shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep" (John 10:11). Paul, beholding Him immolate, says: "He delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness" (Eph. 5:2). He ascended, therefore, that He might adore and immolate: because He showed Himself by so many miracles for this purpose, that He might instruct us by words and examples, and that by dying He might overcome our death.

But it should be noted that when the Ephrathite is said to go up to sacrifice, the almighty God to whom he sacrifices is called the God of hosts. Why is this known to happen, unless it is because by the Redeemer's death not only the Jewish people, but all the Gentiles were

redeemed? For what are the faithful multitudes of the nations, if not the armies of almighty God? Indeed, the Psalmist, exhorting these armies to exult in the triumph of their king, says: "All you nations, clap your hands, shout to God with a voice of exultation" (Psalm 46). Likewise, seeing them gather, he said: "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name" (Psalm 85:9). Therefore, He is called the Lord of hosts, because indeed through the Lord's death not only is the elect of Judea gathered, but all nations are brought to the service of almighty God; and while they lead faithful battle lines, robust with the arms of virtues, against hidden enemies, they attain the supernal kingdoms through the glory of triumph.

The place of the sacrifice is also declared, for it is said: "In Shiloh." For Shiloh is interpreted as "sent," or "mission." For what is designated by this mission, if not the command of obedience enjoined upon the only-begotten by the supreme Father? What else does it mean that he is said to sacrifice in Shiloh, if not that he gave himself to death in no other way than as he had been commanded by the Father? Indeed, he would not sacrifice in Shiloh if he were to die otherwise than as he had been commanded by the Father. Hence he also said through himself: "As the Father has given me a commandment, so I do" (John 14:31). Hence Paul says: "He became obedient to the Father unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). In Shiloh, therefore, he both worshiped and sacrificed: because both in living

and in dying, he did the will of his Father. It follows:

(Verse 3) There were there the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the Lord.

Concerning whom it is rightly asked why they are called priests of the Lord, when not much further below they are reported to be sons of Belial. But if this is asked simply according to the letter concerning the sons of Eli, the answer is easy: because at that time they were called priests of the Lord, when the priests of idols were designated by the names of false gods. When, therefore, they are called priests of the Lord, they are distinguished by the marks of their faith from the worshipers of idols. For by these words their faith is proclaimed, and not their life: because they practiced depravity in their deeds, but they did not err in the faith of the Creator. This, however, is also fittingly ascribed to the prelates of Judea at the time of the divine incarnation. These priests are indeed reported to be two, and this itself is not referred to for the praise of virtue, but for the censure of their cunning. Hence the Lord himself also threatens them, saying: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27).

But what does it mean that they are reported to be there? For if Shiloh, that is, "mission," signifies that precept of the supreme Father, how were the prelates of Judea there, who did not venerate by receiving him upon whom it was enjoined,

but killed him by casting him out? Yet they were there, because although they raged cruelly for the Lord's death, from that cruelty they did not obtain what they had determined by their raging, but were fulfilling the eternal Father's plan in the death of His only-begotten Son. For their plan was to hand him over to death for this reason, that the people might not be able to believe in him; but he who had his persecutors as helpers in the paternal precept enjoined upon him, died, rose again, and the whole world believed in him. For the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there, that is, in the "mission": because our Redeemer, to fulfill the will of his Father, had the prelates of the Jews as supporters, although they themselves did not believe they were supporting him in any way, whom they had not feared to kill. Hence it also follows:

(Verse 4) So the day came, and Elkanah sacrificed, and gave to Peninnah, and to her sons and daughters, portions.

What day do we believe this to be, if not the one that Isaiah established by the testimony of Holy Scripture, saying: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth" (Isa. 53:7)? For the day came when the brightness of the promised oracle revealed the time of the Lord's passion. Then Elkanah sacrificed, because our Redeemer offered Himself to the eternal Father in the sacrifice of our absolution through death on the cross. Then he gave portions to Peninnah and to her sons and daughters, because

He undoubtedly brought back the elect of Judea, whom He found in the underworld, to the joys of paradise. For their portions are the gifts of perennial joys. Hence the Psalmist, choosing the state of his lot, also says: "Let my portion, O Lord, be in the land of the living" (Ps. 141:6). It is well, however, that Peninnah and her sons and daughters are named separately in receiving their portions. For Peninnah signifies the teachers of Judea, her sons the stronger of her hearers, and her daughters the weaker, designating her subjects. Therefore, the mother, and the sons, and the daughters are mentioned separately, because on account of the disparate merits of the ancient elect, their rewards were not equal. It follows:

But to Hannah he gave one portion, being sad, because he loved Hannah.

What is the meaning of this, that when he gave portions to Peninnah, and to her sons, and to her daughters, he was not sad at all; but when he gave one portion to Hannah, he is said to have been sad? But what is the one portion of Hannah, if not the temporal affliction of the holy Church? For He was giving her this portion when He said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful" (John 16:20). He was giving her this portion when He commended Paul to Ananias, saying: "Go thy way, for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16).

Hence, in receiving it, the same teacher of the Gentiles glories, saying: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh" (Col. 1:24). Hence again he says: "I bear the marks of Jesus in my body" (Gal. 6:17). Hence he says: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (ibid., 14). For he had received the one portion from the spouse, who resolved to glory only in the cross. When, therefore, Elkanah gave portions to Peninnah, he was not sad, because our Redeemer, after the triumph of His death, had already joyfully restored the elect of the synagogue to the joys of paradise. But he gave Hannah her portion sadly, because he could not but compassionate her whom he was leaving as a spouse of death and an heiress of the cross. Hence also, when Stephen was suffering, the heavens being opened, Jesus is said to stand (Acts 7:55). For His standing is His compassionating.

But what is added, "because he loved Hannah," can be fittingly understood as the cause of both things. For whether one understands that he was sad for this reason, because he loved Hannah, or that for this reason he gave her one portion, it is not void of a good meaning. For if he did not love her, he would by no means wish to compassionate her sufferings. For why is she led out of Egypt, unless because she is invited to suffering? But places flowing with milk and honey are promised to her. Well, therefore, when he is said to give her one portion, he is said to

love her: because our Redeemer, although He entrusted the labor of His cross to the holy Church, undoubtedly established for her far more excellent gifts of retribution in heaven. Expounding on the increases of this passion, he adds and says:

But the Lord had shut up her womb. Her rival also afflicted her, and troubled her exceedingly, insomuch that she reproached her, that the Lord had shut up her womb.

17. The Lord indeed closed the womb of the holy Church, because by His supreme judgment, she could not generate in the faith of our Redeemer the rejected people of the Jews. Her rival, to be sure, afflicted her, because the synagogue raged against her with threats and reproaches. But upon her, whom neither threats nor insults had broken, it also inflicted punishments with torment. Thus, it is well said that it not only afflicted her, but also vehemently tormented her: because the rejected Judea moved against the chosen Church with the terror of threats and struck her with blows. Whence it is also said of Saul, who was then persecuting, in the Acts of the Apostles: "Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to Damascus, so that if he found any men of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2). For he who was breathing threats and slaughter, to be sure, not only afflicted but also tormented the Church, which he was wrongly emulating. For he confesses that he was its rival, saying: "For you have heard of my former

life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14). And because Judea fell into such a depth of damnation that it rejoices in that from which it is cast out by the eternal censure of God, it is added: "So much so that she reproached her because the Lord had closed her womb." For it still considered it a great thing that it would not be able to convert to the faith. As if, therefore, the prophet, marveling at the magnitude of its blindness, says: It is oppressed by such a darkness of error that it insults the good for the very reason that it can no longer become good itself. Because the holy Church grieved for it as it was perishing, it follows:

(Verse 7) But Hannah wept

18. For she also brought forth the laments of her sorrow, saying. "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2-3). And because she did not receive joy from their conversion, it is added:

(Verse 7) And she did not take food.

She would, in fact, take food if she had received the refreshment of joy from the complete conversion of Judea. Therefore, she who wept did not take food, because she who grieved for the perishing Judea did not receive joy from its salvation. But the food of joy, which is not given

to the holy Church from the conversion of the Jews, is offered through the exhortation of her spouse. For the words of her preaching, even if the reprobate hearers do not receive them, are not without the reward of retribution. For almighty God remunerates even that which is expended on the reprobate without their profit; and what they inflict as adversity upon the chosen preachers, He weighs out to them as a gain of retribution on the scales of a just examination. Whence it is aptly added below:

(Verse 8) Therefore Elkanah her husband said to her: "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart afflicted? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

19. As if, therefore, the Redeemer were to say to the mind of the teacher, through the solace of internal inspiration: In vain do you complain about the lost profit of preaching, you who receive a more abundant fruit to the extent that you extend the affection of charity even to your enemies. Therefore, you grieve over that from which you should have rejoiced. And because He Himself is the reward of the elect, He asks, saying: "Am I not better to you than ten sons?" For Hannah would have borne ten sons if the primitive Church had generated in the faith the people of the Jews, who were placed under the decalogue of the Law. And because some, by preaching, benefit others, while in many things they displease the Creator, it is shown by reason that her husband is better to Hannah than ten sons are. Moreover, by the fact that it is asked why she weeps, the perdition

of Judea itself can be designated. As if to say: She is mourned in vain, for whom indulgence is by no means granted through the prayer of the just. When, therefore, He subsequently asks: "Why do you not eat?", the joy from the conversion of the Gentiles is certainly intimated to her. As if to say, therefore: Since you are to give birth to the whole world, you are joyless in vain that she who has been cast out does not leave the darkness of error.

It follows:

(Verses 9 and 10.) So Hannah rose after she had eaten and drunk in Shiloh. And Eli the priest was sitting upon a stool, before the posts of the temple of the Lord. And as she was in bitterness of soul, she prayed to the Lord, weeping abundantly.

For what was it for the holy Church to eat at that time, but to receive the food of solace through divine encouragement? And what was it for her to drink, but to rejoice in the sweetness of the internal consolation poured into her? For if food strengthens, drink exhilarates; therefore, we take food when, having seen the eternal rewards, we are strengthened amidst adversities. And we drink, as it were, after the food: because where the mind of the elect strengthens itself in the thought of eternal goods, it rejoices all the more copiously amidst the great adversities it endures, the greater the rewards it sees stored up in heaven for its great labors. Indeed, rendered bold then by the heavenly repast, she renews her strength, so that she may despise earthly things all the more forcefully, the more the love

of heavenly things exalts her. Well, therefore, is Hannah remembered to have risen after she ate and drank. For she rose because she reformed her spirit for the urgency of preaching.

And because the Jewish people still had the rites of sacrifices, and still the honor of the legal magisterium, and the sublimity of the pontifical dignity, Eli the priest is said to sit upon a stool. Yet because he could exhibit this magisterium of the Law not spiritually, but carnally, he sat not within the temple, but before the posts of the temple. For what is the temple of the Lord, if not the spiritual understanding of the holy Scriptures? The posts of the temple, however, are the Law and Prophecy. Hence also on the mountain the Lord appeared transfigured in the midst of Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30): because the splendor of His divinity is then beheld when His sacraments are sought not in the killing letter (2 Peter 1), but in the spiritual significance of the Law and prophecy. Eli, therefore, sat before the posts of the temple, that is, outside, because the doctors of the synagogue had been expelled from the spiritual understanding of the Scriptures, and yet, in the subversion of the subject people, they had the authority of the magisterium and the dignity of prelacy. But Hannah is written to have wept with a bitter soul.

And since we have related Hannah's drink to the joy of the holy Church, which is shown to rejoice, how is it narrated that she wept with a bitter soul? But it can be reasonably understood that the contemplation of the heavenly reward

had lifted her to joy, and compassion for the rejected Judea stirred her, affecting her with bitterness of soul. Indeed, caught in the whirlwinds of a great persecution, with the heavenly rewards revealed to her, she exulted; but she fell into bitterness because she saw the formerly chosen people perishing. Hence she is also described as praying and weeping abundantly, so that by the gift of such great affection, she might be able to obtain the salvation of her people from the Lord. All this can also be understood in another way. For she ate in Shiloh, that is, in the ministry to which she was sent; because although she could not win over the entire Jewish people, she nevertheless converted many of them to the faith of the Redeemer by preaching. Hence, when Peter preached, on one day five thousand men believed (Acts 4:4), and on another, three thousand (Acts 2:4). And because what we drink, we can swallow more easily than what we eat: Hannah ate and drank, because by preaching she converted some with difficulty, but others with ease. For at the aforementioned preaching of Peter, several thousand believed in one moment, but Paul did not believe until after he had vehemently opposed the preachers themselves with threats and slaughter. But after Hannah ate and drank in Shiloh, she rose: because as she took away from Judea those who were predestined for eternal life, she prepared herself for the preaching to the Gentiles. But what sort of child she desired to bear is shown by what is added:

(Verse 15.) "And she vowed a vow, saying: O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt look down on the affliction of thy servant, and wilt be mindful of me, and not forget thy handmaid, and wilt give to thy servant a man child: I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall not come upon his head."

What is it that Hannah asks for a male child from the Lord, except that she desires those whom the holy Church seeks to bear through preaching to be strong with Evangelical perfection? Indeed, in comparison with Evangelical perfection, those works of the Law, which seemed strong, were not strong, but weak. For there it is commanded: *You shall love your neighbor, and you shall hate your enemy* (Leviticus 19:18). But in the Gospel, the Lord commands, saying: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you* (Matthew 5:44). There the impurity of fornication is cut away from the body, so that the strength of one's way of life, as if excelling with a male sex, an impure thought is also cut away from the heart: *Whoever*, he says, *looks at a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart* (Matthew 5:82). The Synagogue, therefore, which through the weakness of its precepts begot the Jewish people, did not give birth to the male sex, but rather the female. And so when Hannah asks that a male child be given to her by the Lord, what else is she seen to desire, if not to beget through the Gospel such men who may

appear strong, both in the exterior cleanliness of the body and in interior charity?

And because the order of preachers does not seek human glory from the conversion of the gentiles, it is added: *I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.* For he gives the son to the Lord who does not usurp for his own praise anything from the one whom he begets by preaching. Also, he gives him to the Lord all the days of his life, who ascribes nothing to his own favors from the virtues in which the subject progresses by improving. For the days of the life of an elect subject are the holy virtues, which by shining illuminate his soul, lest on the way to the heavenly fatherland it be darkened by the night of vices.

25. But the perfect order of a preacher, while disdaining to receive favors from the profit of preaching, does not take away the temporal goods of subjects by coveting them. Whence it is also well subjoined there: And a razor shall not go up upon his head. When a razor goes up upon the head, it shaves the hair. For what is designated by the hair, which is superfluous to the body, if not an abundant supply of earthly substance? And what is expressed by the razor, if not the greed of evil pastors? With this razor the head of an born son is shaved, when the goods of the subjects are snatched away through the greed of the preachers. For hence also it is said to delinquent Judea through the prophet: Thy pastors are wolves in the evening, leaving nothing till the morning (Zeph. III, 3). For in the evening pastors become wolves, because as this world

grows dark and wanes at its end, they do not fear to snatch the goods of their subjects. They leave nothing till the morning, because while they gape after temporal things, as the advent of the future judgment dawns, they reserve no rewards to be given to themselves. Whom without doubt Micah denotes, saying: The prophets that seduce my people, that bite with their teeth, and preach peace; and if anyone giveth not something into their mouths, they sanctify a war against him (Micah III, 5). Prophets indeed seduce the people of the Lord, when reprobate preachers confound the judgments of their hearers. And biting with their teeth they announce peace, because in the appetite of their rapacity, while they look up to the earthly gifts of the flagitious, they promise them the security of divine indulgence. But they sanctify a war against those who do not give anything into their mouths, because with strict sentences they even terrify the just, who do not present earthly things to them according to their desire. Who indeed place a razor upon the head of the son, while under the pretext of charity they preach heavenly things, so that through greed they may take away earthly things from them. That the holy Church certainly does not hold this razor as a plunder of subjects, the excellent doctor shows in himself, saying: I seek not the gift, but I seek the fruit (Phil. IV, 17). Hence also he says: He that preacheth the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. But I have not used this power (I Cor. IX, 14, 15). For he who does not care to receive necessary food from his subjects, plainly

shows with what sublimity of worldly contempt he refutes base gains and illicit gifts. Anna therefore, while she vows that a razor will not go up upon the head of her son, openly insinuates the morals of the holy Church, which gives birth to the elect for eternal life by speaking, 18 but never takes away their temporal goods through avarice. But because this is said of Anna while she is still vowing, and not giving birth, it is aptly subjoined:

(Vers. 12.) And it came to pass, as she multiplied prayers before the Lord, that Heli observed her mouth.

26. What was it for the holy Church to multiply prayers before the Lord for the desire of giving birth, if not to insist with assiduous prayers for the conversion of the Synagogue? And what was it for the Jewish priesthood to observe her mouth, if not to lay wait for the preaching of the holy Church? For he observed her mouth, because he vehemently studied to reprehend the right preaching of faith. But he is well said to have observed her mouth then, when she multiplied prayers, because he studied to harm her so much the more craftily, by as much as he recognized her greater desires in the earnestness of preaching. Finally, he would not have observed her mouth, but would have attended to it, if he had wished to hear the preaching of our faith for the fruit of his own salvation. It follows:

(Vers. 13.) Now Anna spoke in her heart, and only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard at all.

27. What else is the heart of the holy Church, if not that devout and erudite beatitude of the faithful which is within her? But Anna spoke in her heart, because the preaching of the holy Church only profited those who were to be illuminated by the true light from divine predestination. But what is the movement of the lips, if not the promotion of signs in the holy preachers? Who indeed, although they seemed like lips speaking outwardly and standing at the bottom, while they gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, exhibited great movements of merits. Whence also that huge lip of the holy Church, while speaking seemed as if to stand at the bottom, because he was not only humble in word and conversation, but also sublime in the power of signs, as of his movement, he extolled himself even to heaven, saying: Our conversation is in heaven (Phil. III, 20). Therefore Heli only saw the lips of Anna moved, and heard not the voice at all, because the Jewish priesthood wondered at the works of the apostles, but through their preaching was not promoted to salvation. Therefore the voice of Anna was not heard, because although by the showing of signs the holy Church was wonderful, yet when she uttered the words of preaching, she inflamed strangers to the love of the Redeemer. But what does Heli think of her, whom he does not understand? It follows:

(Vers. 13.) Therefore Heli esteemed her to be drunk.

28. This indeed we also recognize according to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, because

on the days of Pentecost the holy apostles were believed to be drunk, when, having received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they spoke the great works of Christ in every tongue (Acts II, 4). But spiritually the holy Church is believed to be drunk, whom Judea does not esteem to assert true things, but to preach heretical and false ones. Yet she was drunk, not with the drinking of error, but with the repletion of the Holy Spirit. For drunkenness is accustomed to change the heart, to alienate the mind. But he proceeded with a changed heart, who, lately entering houses, terrifying all the faithful with threats, tearing them with slaughters, now preached that Jesus whom he had persecuted was the true Son of the omnipotent God (Acts IX, 5, 20). Whence also glorying that he had lost the insanity of his former sense, he says: Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly (I Tim. I, 13). Testifying that he had received another heart, he says: But we have the sense of Christ (I Cor. II, 16). Whence also he preached so much the more attentively, by as much as in the sense of Christ he had received the force of greater love. 19 But while the holy Church ardently loved, while she faithfully preached the things which she loved, the priesthood of the Jews held her words in the burden of impatience, not in the sweetness of devotion. Wherefore it also follows:

(Vers. 14.) And he said to her: How long wilt thou be drunk?

And because he attempted to impose silence on her, he subjoined:

(Vers. 14.) Digest a little the wine with which thou art wet.

29. Anna would have digested the wine with which she was wet, if the holy Church, vanquished by the threats of the Jews, had grown lukewarm from the fervor of preaching. And because they furthermore strove to withdraw the sense of preaching from her, Anna is ordered to digest the wine a little. Did not Heli then order Anna to digest it, when the princes of the Jews denounced the beaten apostles, telling them that they should not speak anymore in the name of Jesus? But because they would not digest that wine with which they were wet, answering, they said: We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts V, 29). And again: We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Ibid., IV, 20). But because the holy Church among the words of liberty preserved the virtue of meekness, it follows:

(Vers. 15.) Not so, my lord.

30. For she called him lord, to whom she exhibited the ministry of preaching, but calling him lord, she denies that she is drunk; so that she might subject herself to a higher order out of humility, and contradict a false objection out of truth. For calling him lord, she honored him; and denying that she was drunk, she showed humbly enough what she was not. But the objection of drunkenness against the holy Church can be understood otherwise. For while she insisted on the ministry of evangelical preaching, while from the

gain of believers, she came into the great glory of the peoples, the priests of the Jews did not think that she coveted the summit of eternal goods, but desired the glory of earthly sublimity. Therefore while she is called drunk, with an overturned state of mind, she is reprehended for postponing heavenly things and coveting earthly ones.

31. But she who despised the falling goods of the world, says: Not so, my lord. For I am an exceedingly unhappy woman. As if she said: Thou thinkest that I covet the felicity of a falling world, but I see myself so much the more unhappy, by as much as I recognize the joys of my felicity farther from hence. But because I believe I will be happy there, here I judge myself so very unhappy, in that I concupisce no glory. For indeed the holy Church is called a woman for fecundity, exceedingly unhappy for fortitude, because she was both about to bring forth the world by the word, and could not perfectly despise the glory of the world, if supernal love did not strengthen her with wonderful fortitude; or she was exceedingly unhappy, because she grieved not a little concerning the perdition of her people. Whom truly the wise Solomon vehemently admiring, says: Who shall find a valiant woman? (Prov. XXXI, 10). In which place also it is to be noted that she does not say an unhappy woman, but I am exceedingly so. For she was exceedingly unhappy, to whom no blandishment from the world was pleasing. Or certainly she asserts herself exceedingly unhappy, who remembers that she was expelled from the joys of eternal life through the

merit of the first fault, to which she does not prevail to return, except through many tribulations of this life. For she would not exist exceedingly unhappy, if she could have returned to the lost joys of paradise without present tribulation. For hence Paul, showing the inevitable tribulation of this exceeding unhappiness, says: Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (Acts XIV, 21). As if therefore the holy Church answering the Jewish priesthood detracting her should say: Thou ascribest a kingdom to me in the felicity of time, but mine is that to which one does not attain except from the affliction of much tribulation, it follows:

(Vers. 15.) I have drunk neither wine nor anything that can intoxicate.

32. For she drank no wine, because she sought no temporal gains from the office of preaching. She drank nothing else that can intoxicate, who the concupiscence of the flesh did not overturn into the lapse of vices. But according to the former sentence she drank no wine, who had nothing of heretical pravity in her refection. She would drink something else that can intoxicate, if she had swelled up deceived by the eloquence of the word. But because with a right intention she taught true things, subjoining, she says:

(Vers. 15.) But I have poured out my soul in the sight of the Lord.

33. For to pour out the soul in the sight of the Lord is to preach the science of the word of God conceived in the mind for the sole love of the Creator. The soul indeed is poured out, when the

innate intellect of the word of God is divulged to the utility of the hearers. For whoever preaches the word of God for human favors, whoever for earthly commodity, because another thing is attended to from the preaching, that word of the soul is not proffered in the sight of the Lord. Wherefore also the doctor of the Gentiles asserts, saying: We are not as many, adulterating the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, before God in Christ we speak (II Cor. II, 17). Anna therefore poured out her soul in the sight of the Lord, because the holy Church perfect in the summit of all virtues, brought forth great words of eloquence in the erudition of the faithful, but from the words of life she desired to please God alone. Whose ministry of preaching she also commends, saying:

(Vers. 16.) Count not thy handmaid as one of the daughters of Belial, for out of the multitude of my sorrow and heaviness I have spoken until now.

34. As if she said: She who speaks to thee the goods of eternal life, deserves not to be despised as an idolater. She also asserts herself to be his handmaid, so that he may recognize from the name of her ministry that she covets to serve him for eternal gains. It follows: For out of the multitude of my heaviness and sorrow I have spoken until now. As if she should speak more openly, and say: Hence recognize that I have nothing from an evil spirit, because from the great penalty of persecution I come to speaking, and I leave not the earnestness of preaching vanquished by

any penalties. Also the sorrow of Anna can be referred to the affection of the holy Church, her heaviness to her passion. Indeed she spoke from the multitude of sorrow, who proffered the word of preaching to the perishing Jewish people from the affection of compassion. Which Paul insinuates, saying: I speak the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sadness, and continual sorrow in my heart: for I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. IX, 1, 2, seq.). But let him who insinuates that he speaks from the multitude of sorrow, say whether he speaks from a multitude: Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned (II Cor. XI, 24). But the holy Church patiently tolerating adverse things, humbly manifesting the virtue of her innocence and truth, by speaking persuaded some priests of Judea of the good of her preaching. Wherefore it is also subjoined:

21 (Vers. 17.) Then Heli said: Go in peace, may the God of Israel grant thee thy petition which thou hast asked of him.

35. For first Heli contradicted the praying Anna with uttered contumelies, but afterwards he was well pleased with her devotion to him. What is this, if not that the Jewish priesthood both through some ministers of its office withstood the preaching Church, and through others consented to the truth of our faith at length

recognized? For of those withstanding it is said, who denounced the beaten apostles, telling them that they should not speak anymore in the name of Jesus (Acts V, 40). But of those consenting the same Luke remembers, saying: A very great multitude of the priests obeyed the faith (Ibid., VI, 7). Then therefore Heli prayed for the vow of Anna's fecundity, when that very great multitude of priests, obeying the faith, desired the number of the elect to be multiplied through the preaching of the holy Church. Whom he certainly wished to go in peace, because he desired her to attain the fruit of preaching, without the sorrow of passion. And because the holy Church was well pleased with herself in their vow, it follows:

(Vers. 18.) Would that thy handmaid may find grace in thy eyes.

As if she said: According to the intuition of thy desire let the grace of divine dispensation follow the work of my ministry. It follows:

(Vers. 18.) And the woman went her way, and ate, and drank, and her countenance was no more changed diversely.

36. The woman went her way, because the holy Church preached the word of faith to the Gentiles. Which also the apostles say threatening the Jews: Because you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles (Acts XIII, 46). She is well called a woman then, when she recedes, because through the preaching of the Redeemer she was to exhibit the fruit of great fecundity among the Gentiles. But she ate, and drank, and yet her countenances were no

more changed diversely, because she had great gains from the conversion of the Gentiles, but the persecution which she had suffered in Judea, she also found among the Gentiles. But discoursing the order by which she went away, he says:

(Vers. 19.) And they rose in the morning, and worshipped before the Lord; and they returned, and came into their house at Ramatha.

37. But what is it that above is said of Anna alone singularly: The woman went her way, but now plurally: They rose in the morning, if not that she is recognized to descend with her husband? And because the husband of the holy Church is the Redeemer of the human race, who had already ascended to the heavens, when he left Judea herself overwhelmed in the darkness of her incredulity, how can it now be understood of Anna and her husband Elcana in the type of Christ and the Church that they should rise early together, and return equally to their city? But because we have already said that the city of Ramatha designates the heavenly country, how does this suit the holy Church, which immediately when she ceased from the preaching of the Jews, did not ascend to the heavenly country? But because the Lord rising from the dead, having sent doctors in preaching speaks, saying: Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. XXVIII, 20), it is not absurd that the holy Church is sensed to rise and return with him. For he who never deserts his elect through spiritual presence, both remains with those who stand, and recedes with those who go

away. But we said that Ramatha designates the heavenly country, but we did not say that it can signify nothing else. What else then 22 does it signify in this place, if not the fulfillment of the prophecy in the calling of the Gentiles? Ramatha indeed is called a consummated vision, as we have already said. But what is the already fulfilled calling of the Gentiles, if not a consummated vision of the prophets? For he asserted a vision, but not consummated, who pronounced concerning the future still what he had seen, saying: All the nations thou hast made shall come and adore before thee, O Lord (Ps. LXXXV, 9). Hence also he promises, saying: All kings of the earth shall adore him, all nations shall serve him (Ps. LXXI, 11). A consummated vision therefore is rightly called the promise of the prophets, because without doubt, God being the author, according to their oracles, all nations believed in the Redeemer of the human race. But Anna is said to rise in the morning with her husband, because the holy Church in the rising of the internal light passed over to the Gentiles with the word of preaching. Or she rises in the morning, because she deserted Judea in the night of infidelity. She also rises in the morning, because she found a prosperous journey in the conversion of the Gentiles. And she adored before the Lord, because in the repulsion of the Synagogue she venerated the incomprehensible judgment of the omnipotent God. She adored indeed, and receded, because when she receded from the preaching of her nation for the sole ordination of the omnipotent God, by divine

judgment through obedience she followed what she could not penetrate by understanding. But adoring she returned, because she proposed to fulfill the ministry of preaching in the calling of the Gentiles, but she sought the very mode of that preaching in supernal contemplation. For to return for preachers is to recur to the light of divine contemplation. Thence indeed they draw the light, by which they may both shine to the veneration of the faithful, and which by speaking they may pour into the minds of their hearers. For hence it is that the excellent preacher before is lifted up to the secrets of the third heaven, and thus is shown to dispose earthly things, and entering the secrets of paradise he perceives words, which it is not lawful for a man to speak (II Cor. XII, 4), so that he may discern and speak profitably outwardly. Anna therefore is remembered to have returned, because the holy Church while she disposed earthly things, how those same earthly things are to be disposed, is instructed in that contemplation of God to which she often returns. And then at length she comes into her house, because she could place herself in the devotion of her hearers, when she knew the mode of approaching them by returning upwards. For the devotion of the Gentiles built the house of the holy primitive Church, which, while she founded it for herself in them, she inhabited with the solicitude of custody. Which house namely being placed is described in a consummated vision, because it could not be founded before the time

of her calling foretold by the prophets arrived. It follows:

(Vers. 19 and 20.) And Elcana knew Anna his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And it came to pass after a circle of days, Anna conceived and bore a son.

38. Elcana then knew Anna his wife, when our Redeemer looked upon the foreordained time of calling the Gentiles, in which while he poured the grace of supernal love into the bosom of the new spouse, namely the holy Church, he might generate a new offspring of faithful from her. For as if he did not yet know her, when the preachers wishing to pass into Asia were forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts XVI, 6). Hence it is, that when he sent his disciples to the preaching of Judea, the Truth forbids them by himself saying: Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not (Matt. X, 5). But when Elcana 23 knew Anna his wife, then the Lord remembered her, because the Gentiles then seemed to come into the memory of God, when the holy Church, conjoined to the Word of God through the grace of love, is visited in salvation. What is the circle of days in this place, if not the manifestation of the divine will showed in the innumerable rays of the Holy Spirit? Which indeed while it exhibits innumerable clarities of the supernal disposition to the minds of its preachers, suspended in contemplation, without doubt, like many days, a circle of times holds enclosed. The circle of days indeed precedes the conception of Anna, because the Word of God is not poured

into the holy Church for teaching, before the rays of the supernal disposition are more fully recognized by her. Who conceiving bore a son, because those whom she brings forth in the faith of the Redeemer are robust in a new conversation.

(Vers. 20.) And she called his name Samuel, because she had asked him of the Lord.

39. Samuel is interpreted, his name is God. Whom therefore does Samuel more conveniently insinuate to us, than the order of preachers, which is called to the faith from the Gentiles? For because he is strong in conversation, sublime in power, and while a special sign of divine grace is seen in him, devout crowds of hearers are brought to the veneration of his preaching, his name is rightly declared by appellation. Hence it is that it is said to Moses by the Lord: I have appointed thee the god of Pharaoh (Exod. VII, 1). Hence also prohibiting in the law, he says: Thou shalt not detract the gods (Ibid., XXII, 28). And it is to be noted that he whose name is called god, was a son, not a daughter, because certainly the pastoral dignity, when it is depressed by an infirm conversation, is not adorned by the splendor of so high a name. Because therefore the order of doctors promoted to the ministry of evangelizing from the Gentiles was not unequal by the grace of merits of the dignity of its excellence, it is rightly said now: She called his name Samuel, because she had asked him of the Lord. And it is to be noted that in this place what she merited by asking is said to be asking. By open words therefore it is shown why the firstborn of Anna is

counted by so great a name. Which is such as if he said: Therefore she imposed so great a name on him, because he who is born by supernal gift was great by the grace of merits. But that it may be shown with what zeal the provident mother cherishes him, it follows:

(Vers. 21 and 22.) And her husband Elcana went up, and all his house, to offer the solemn sacrifice, and his vow; and Anna went not up. For she said to her husband: I will not go, until the infant be weaned.

40. But what is the immolation of the solemn sacrifice, if not that oblation of love of the holy Church, by which she is conjoined to the Creator in eternal contemplation? But to this Elcana then ascended, when our Redeemer already triumphing over death, already ascending 24 the darkness of our possibility, sublimated to heavenly things the flesh which he took up for our salvation. With whom all his house also went up, because he extolled the prior elect of the Synagogue into the altitude of immortality. Then he immolated the solemn sacrifice, when he exhibited himself to the eternal Father through the matter of glorified flesh in heaven, and made joyful the nature of angels, as concerning our redemption, so also concerning their reparation. Anna is invited to this solemn sacrifice, because the holy Church by the spiritual exhortation of the supernal spouse is inflamed to the eternal contemplation of divine clarity through daily desires of love. Who nevertheless abstains from her ascent, 24 that she may nurse her son, because

that she may profit Christ's little ones here, she patiently sustains the delay of her glory. Had not that mother been invited to the immolation of this solemn sacrifice, who said: I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Phil. I, 23)? But she who through the desires of love is drawn to the sight of the spouse, would she love to nurse the son, let her say: But to abide still in the flesh, is needful for you (Ibid., 24). With which food he also insinuates that he nourished the Corinthians, saying: I gave you milk to drink, not meat (I Cor. III, 2). Indeed to nurse the little ones of the holy Church is for the pastors of the infirm or simple hearers to nourish their hearts with the food of plainer Scripture. To whom certainly the same excellent doctor says: For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (I Cor. II, 2).

41. But infants are weaned, when the little ones of the holy Church receive the increments as much of spiritual erudition as of good conversation, and already require not the plainer things of sacred eloquence, but the high sacraments thereof. And a weaned infant is brought to appear before the sight of the Lord, when through the exhortation of preachers any subject profiting well is adorned with good works. For he who is brought to this that he may appear, is not only carried that he may see, but also that he may be seen. For because in the end many will hear from the Lord: I know you not (Matt. XXV, 12), Samuel is said to appear in the sight of the Lord, because an elect and humble subject, while he perfectly

despises present things, the extreme judge arriving is by no means reprobated. But those whom the world retains fixed in its love, do not appear in the sight of the Lord. For those who in the honor of passing things desire to be seen more elevated, this indeed they do by being proud, so that they may never be seen honorable by him by whom alone they ought to be seen. Whence also the elect king, and placed in the summit of things, lest he should be deceived in the flower of the world beseeches, saying: Cast me not away, O Lord, from thy face (Ps. L, 13). Anna therefore also promises to wean her son, and to bring him that he may appear before the sight of the Lord, because the holy Church teaches the elect subjects whom she erudites perfectly to despise present things, and to do good things, and to hasten to eternal goods through humility. And it is to be noted that he is asserted led from the place of weaning, who is exhibited as owing to appear in the sight of the Lord, because namely, it matters not a little of the spiritual journey, when from that which we learn of heavenly magistery we tend into the use of perfect operation. But because one must never cease from the study of the same good work, it follows:

(Vers. 22.) And let him appear there forever.

42. For we continually appear there whence we never depart. Continually therefore to appear in the sight of the Lord is to obscure the decorum of good conversation by no darkness of life, because he who flows down to no illicit things, never exits from the secret of divine intuition;

and placed as if in light divine goodness looks back at him because it does not attend to that darkness of sins which it condemned by the election of its examination. Until therefore the infant be weaned, Anna denounces that she will not ascend to immolate the solemn sacrifice, because the holy Church proposes to guard her sons so long, as long as she may be able to become secure concerning their perfection that they themselves may not further recede from the accepted goodness. Yet the ascent of the solemn sacrifice can be referred to the altitude of holy preaching. For concerning the ascent of her husband it is written by the Prophet: He ascended upon the cherubim, and he flew upon the wings of the winds (Ps. XVII, 11). Upon the cherubim indeed the Lord 25 ascended, because he ascended into the sublime minds of his preachers, and places the altitude of his science. And he flies upon the wings of the winds, because before their spiritual eyes he elevates himself into the altitude of wonderful intelligence by the breathings of the Holy Spirit. And he made darkness his covert (Ibid., 12), because he hides the sublimity of his majesty from the reprobate. But his tabernacle is round about him (Ibid.), because to those whom he elevates through sublime gifts, he also manifests the glory of his Majesty.

43. But well when the ascent of Elcana is asserted, all his house is exhibited to have ascended, because those to whose minds he is eminent in the altitude of his contemplation he holds as if domestics and familiars. But what is

the solemn sacrifice of Elcana, that is of our Redeemer, if not the ineffable love of that internal erudition in the hearts of his saints? For each of them is ineffably well pleased with himself in him, because the showed sublimity of the Redeemer teaches himself so sublimely. Anna therefore denies that she ascends with her husband, until she nurses her son, because the holy Church so long avoided touching high things by preaching, as long as she knew that her rude hearers like infants could by no means take high things. For hence in the very beginnings of the holy Church it was done that, as to the still infant son of Anna, through the writings of three evangelists, namely Matthew, Luke and Mark, milk was propinated, who writing the history of the Lord's humanity, treated few things concerning his divinity; but when the infant people of the Church grew, and profited unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ (Eph. IV, 13), to whom the drink of milk had not sufficed, required to be fed with solid food. Thus mother Church was compelled to ascend, so that she herself might also become a cherubim, and might approach the Redeemer flying above her, might assume wings, might hold him walking upon them in the altitude of sacraments, and from his Majesty might take what she might give as food to the demanding only son. Whence it came to pass that the evangelist John being asked by the brethren, surpassing not only human but also angelic things, transcended all created things, and preached the only begotten whom

he merited to see in the bosom of the Father, saying: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John I, 1). Then therefore Anna ascended, when the holy Church extolled herself into the celsitude of divine preaching so sublimely. Then also she immolated the solemn sacrifice, because concerning the cognition of divinity she kindled a flame of wonderful devotion in the hearts of her hearers. The solemn sacrifice indeed was, from incomparable eloquence, a singular oblation of devotion. Then she brought the son into the sight of the Lord, when she intimated to the hearts of her hearers the perfect cognition of the highest divinity. Which cognition indeed of God, because it is not only to be held by faith, but by confession, and what we believe, and confess, we are permitted neither to be ignorant of further, nor to be silent about, the weaned boy, who is brought to the house of the Lord, is declared to remain continually in the sight of the Lord. It follows:

(Vers. 23.) And Elcana her husband said to her: Do what seemeth good to thee; remain until thou wean him.

44. What is it that the counsel of Anna is strengthened by the authority of her husband, if not because the proposition of the holy Church is not presumed from human judgment, but from divine? For whatever the holy Church wished to dispose in the nations subject to her, then at length she considered it ratified, when she recognized from the judgment of internal truth what was to be disposed. And because we have an

advocate 26 with the Father (I John II, 1), who intercedes for us, he subjoins, and says:

(Vers. 23.) And I pray that the Lord may fulfill his word.

45. What is the word, which is asserted to be fulfilled, if not the predestinated conversion of the Gentiles? And because through his blood we are reconciled to God, he himself prays for the fulfilling of the word, by whose obtainment our salvation is perfected. Also to pray for him is to exhibit himself continually to the eternal Father in the assumed humanity for our salvation; which while he does not cease to offer himself thus, he makes an approach to life for our reception. But because he perfected the counsel of his disposition by seeking it out, it is aptly subjoined: The woman therefore tarried, and gave her son suck, till she removed him from the milk. Then it follows:

(Vers. 24.) And she brought him, after she had weaned him, with three calves, and three measures of flour, and a pitcher of wine; and she brought him to the house of the Lord in Silo.

46. For what is signified by a calf in this place, if not the proposition of imitating the life of the perfect? But it is a calf when it rises in the heart of one profiting, but an ox when through the robustness of virtue it is brought to the affection of a great conversation. In which place it is greatly to be asked why not one calf, but three are asserted to be brought to the tabernacle. But the infant is shown to be deferred in three calves, that he may insinuate the form of those who are in-

structed to the ministry of preaching. For the perfect doctor watches both for converting sinners and for guarding the just. For as a husbandman of the highest father of the family he inserts each ox into the plows, so that he may not only watch over those standing lest they fall, but may also be able to raise the fallen that they may subsist. But he who has two oxen in the solicitude of subjects, that he may be able to be perfect, let him join a third ox in divine contemplation, so that he may both open the hearts of neighbors with a whole yoke, by speaking, as if by plowing, and always extend himself through the singular fortitude of love to the sight of his Creator. Samuel therefore is brought to the house of the Lord in three calves, when everyone profiting well proposes that from the labor of preaching he may be able to profit neighbors, and from the secret of quiet to adhere to the intimate vision of the Creator. And because the mind of the unskilled will never be able to exhibit this well, he is also offered in three measures of flour. For when breads are made from flour, the preparation of refection is perfected. But that he is offered not in breads, but in measures of flour, good devotion is shown to propose doctrine, not to exhibit the commodity of doctrine itself. Therefore a measure of flour signifies the preparation of holy preaching. But the infant is brought in three measures of flour, because while we propose to preach, we prepare the word of science for sinners to conversion, for the just to the state of perseverance, and for ourselves to supernal contemplation; or certainly

one measure is, as we have said, for the conversion of the sinner, another for the discipline of the married, but the third for the excellent purity of the continent. And measures indeed are said for the measure of discretion. Whence also the blessed Paul asserts, saying: Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety (Rom. XII, 3).

47. Which indeed, because the order of preachers chosen from the Gentiles had not from the levity of vanity, but from the virtue of good intention, it follows: And a pitcher of wine. But the virtue of good intention is the charity of God, which is poured abroad in the hearts of the elect, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Which doubtless gift of charity is rightly figured by the appellation of wine, 27 because it occupies the mind, and alienates it from earthly affections, so that it may have no intention towards the world, which it inflames to desire heavenly things alone. But, that the beginning, not the perfection, of this virtue also may be designated, it is shown to have been a pitcher of wine, and not a cup. For in a pitcher we lay up what we may sometime propinate through a cup. For hence it is that he who had tasted the perfection of supernal charity, confessed to almighty God saying: Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup which inebriateth me, how goodly is it (Ps. XXII, 5)! In a pitcher of wine therefore Samuel is shown offered, because every elect, when he is prepared for the ministry of evangelical preaching, proposes the good of that preaching, not for the vain ambition of this

world, but to bestow for charity alone. In calves therefore he is brought for the proposition of fortitude, in measures of flour for the doctrine of the word, in a pitcher of wine for the intention of charity.

48. Which indeed beginnings of virtues, where they are to be perfected he teaches, when he subjoins: And she brought him to the house of the Lord in Silo. The house of the Lord is rightly understood the holy Church, which indeed is asserted to be situated in Silo. But Silo is the place in which the ark of God is asserted to have remained. What else therefore does Silo signify in that place than the tradition of the old law? For it as if contains the ark of God, while it exhibits outwardly the carnal letter, which it holds closed in its secrets spiritual science. What is it therefore, that the house of the Lord is asserted to be situated in Silo, if not because the holy Church is known to be founded in the sacrament of the Scriptures as if in a place? Thither Samuel is asserted brought, there offered, because besides the holy Church there is no place where the merits of virtues may grow, and come to the summit of perfection. But when he himself who is asserted brought, the cause of his delay is also remembered, when it is subjoined:

(Vers. 24.) But the boy was yet a little child.

For if he were not then a little child, while he could approach by himself, he would not behoove to be led hither by another. It follows:

(Vers. 25.) And they immolated a calf, and offered the boy to Heli.

49. Above it was said of Anna alone: And she brought him with her, after she had weaned him. But now of Elcana equally, and of Anna it is subjoined: And they immolated a calf, and offered the boy to Heli. Then the calf was immolated, when Samuel was brought, and offered. If therefore Elcana was then there, both when he was brought, and when he was offered, why was it not said, they brought him with them, as it was said, they immolated, and they offered? But because we referred these things to the Church and to Christ, to her belongs to nurse, to her to bring, to offer and to immolate to himself and to Christ. She indeed presses upon the word of preaching, but to whom she insinuates doctrine she by no means subministers the virtue of fulfilling operation. She indeed exhibits the letter of Scripture by speaking, but the good itself she can only give to those asking with the spouse. The calf therefore is immolated when divine grace is poured into the heart of the one asking well, so that the goods which he deliberates by destining he may cheerfully bestow with the zeal of good work. For the calf is then immolated, because the victim of a purposed good work from almighty God is received with the oblation of a devout mind, if that which the mind exhibits to him by vowing, is all sacrificed to God through cheerfulness. Concerning this immolation of the calf the Lord says in the Gospel: If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more 28 will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him (Matt. VII, 11;

Luke XI, 13)? Hence Paul says: He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings, every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver (II Cor. IX, 6, 7). For what is it to determine in the heart, if not to propose from deliberation? While therefore he said he determined, he as if asserted the calf brought. But while he added, not with sadness, or of necessity, because God loves a cheerful giver, he expounded how the brought calf should be immolated. Calves therefore are brought when we are prepared to propose fortitudes well, but the calf is immolated when the deliberation of a good purpose is bestowed on God in the oblation of great devotion. But both, that is the husband and wife, are asserted to have immolated a calf, because the same cheerfulness is shown to faithful subjects by the voice of the preacher, and in their hearts divine grace is propagated. Equally therefore they immolate a calf when in the heart of a well profiting subject divine concurs with human preaching. But three calves are brought, because when we purpose to bring help to the fallen and standing, and aid of custody to ourselves, while with one good intention we attend to these things, they are indeed three in respect of the work, but one in the gift of oblation. They are indeed three, because towards us, and towards our neighbors they are exhibited in diverse respect and at diverse times, but they are one calf, because they are proposed together, and with equal devotion of oblation are bestowed

on God, and one cheerfulness is in them, and another is not had.

50. It follows: And they offered the boy to Heli. In Heli not only the persons of the old doctors, but also the doctrines are figured. What is it therefore that the boy Samuel is asserted to be offered to Heli, if not this, which is openly known, because whoever strives to profit others by preaching, must write not only new things, but also old? Whence also the Lord in the Gospel by a parable says: Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old (Matt. XIII, 52). Samuel therefore is then offered to Heli, when the mind of a well profiting subject is erudited in the science of the law and the prophets, so that he may read the killing letter in the books of the ancients, but may also understand it according to the quickening spirit; and so may receive what sounds outwardly, that he may recognize what the spirit inwardly sounds besides the sound of the elements; and he may have new things for faith, but, as often as it shall be necessary, he may bring forth the old Scriptures for the confirmation of the New Testament. For then indeed he will be able to defend the new, when he recognizes the reason of them from the old. Openly therefore Samuel is asserted to be offered to Heli, because only he preaches the new sufficiently who is not ignorant of that reason by which the old are to be understood. And because we cannot understand those same old Scriptures without a preceptor,

and a doctor profits nothing in us by teaching, if what he himself speaks outwardly is not poured into our hearts by divine grace, the mother did not offer the boy alone, but with her husband. But to him to whom she delivers her son Anna insinuated herself with the word of preaching, saying:

(Vers. 26.) I beseech thee, my Lord, as thy soul liveth, I am that woman, who stood before thee here.

51. Before Heli Anna stood, because the holy Church did not fall by any persecutions of the doctors of the synagogue. Which is such as if the Church glorying said to the 29 prelates of the Synagogue: Therefore I could bring forth the world through the Gospel to God, because I bore unvanquished the adversities which you brought upon me. For if overcome by punishments I subjected myself to the oldness, I should by no means have brought forth a new offspring of so many nations to the Redeemer. And because she speaks humbly, she calls him Lord by beseeching. But because she desires a pledge of eternal life to be given to him in the faith of the Redeemer, she says: As thy soul liveth. But she who gloried that she had stood, brought forth great things concerning herself. And because she had said those same great things humbly, not proudly, she straightway referred them to the praise of almighty God, saying:

(Vers. 27.) I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him, therefore I also have lent him to the Lord.

52. Divine grace therefore bestows sons on the holy Church, that she may instruct them in the doctrine of truth, adorn them with good morals, a pious custody may watch over them, perfectly make them decline from evil, and to prepare for the eternal country a sufficient abundance of good works. These indeed are of the pastoral ministry, but the elect preacher diffides that he is able to fulfill them by his own strengths. Because therefore neither by his own virtue can he beget any through the Gospel, nor guard those whom he begets, it is rightly now said by Anna in the type of the Church: I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord, all the days in which he shall be lent to the Lord. For that she may be able to beget she beseeches; and that these whom she obtains by praying may permanently remain in holy conversation, those also she commends to almighty God with prayers. And because she never ceases from those same prayers, she says she commends her son to God all her days. For to commend a son to the Lord all days is for her to supplicate for the salvation of those whom she begets all the time of this life. For the days in which we are commended to the Lord signify the times of the present life. In which days indeed by how much the more we need the valid aids of divine protection, by so much the heavier temptations of malignant spirits we are attacked. But because in many codices it is read not commended, but lent, it is not devoid of a good understanding. For from mother Church in

this life sons are lent. But whatever we lend, that we expect to be given back to us in the faith of the receiver. But days are the clarities of spiritual virtues. In which days indeed the son of Anna is lent to the Lord, because to him the holy Church offers the elect in the clarity of virtues, so that them afterwards almighty God may exhibit to herself to the augmentation of her eternal joy in the splendors of rewards. And it is to be noted that he is asserted commended all days, so that to him concerning that which is to be had of spiritual conversation nothing may be wanting, whom the elect preacher will not be able to receive in eternal life dark from any part. It follows:

(Vers. 28.) And they adored the Lord there.

And we members of the holy Church, when through the scriptures of the Old Testament, we are submitted to the veneration, and precept of the Creator, there indeed we adore the Lord, because we hold the faith of the old Fathers, and exercise the same faith through love in good work.

CHAPTER II.

These things concerning the principle we have brought forth by typical exposition; now in the words of the same history let us seek our erudition through moral signification.

(I Kings I, 1.) There was one man, he says, of Ramathaimsophim.

1. In this one man who more rightly 30 is designated than every new despiser of the world? For he is called a man, because he is strong in

purpose; but one, because singular in love; for he is a man, because from great virtue he despises all present things; but one, because he covets to enjoy the sight of almighty God alone. For whoever perfectly despises earthly things, is a man from fortitude, but if he does not ardently desire to see his Creator, he is not one from intention. The perfection therefore of the man is placed in the encomium of unity, that he who potently despises the world may not divide his mind, may gape after supernal things alone, may sigh only for those eternal joys which are of the vision of the Creator. Such indeed was he who confessing to God says: What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth (Ps. LXXII, 25)? Hence also he says: My face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I still seek (Ps. XXVI, 8). For he who willed nothing on earth, was indeed a man; but he who neither in heaven, nor on earth willed anything besides him, who, having despised all things, sought only his face, not only a man, but also existed as one. Concerning this unity the Lord in the Gospel speaks to Martha, saying: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary (Luke X, 41, 42). Hence Luke speaking of the perfect number of believers, says: And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul (Acts IV, 32). For they had one heart, because by the intention of reason they had looked upon the Creator alone; they had one soul, because by the affection of love they desired to see his face alone. Hence it is that the loving Prophet reputes

with himself, saying: My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God (Ps. XLI, 2)? For obtaining this unity the Truth teaching says: Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple (Luke XIV, 33).

2. Which also are ours, because we who, renouncing the world, have sought the secret of a more remote life, are called monks. Monos indeed in Greek, but in Latin is called one. By this title of appellation we are inscribed, so that the voice of our name may insinuate to us the altitude of dignity, and our mind may by so much the more ardently erect itself to the vision of the Creator, by how much the sublimity of clarity, in which it ought always to consist, it carries as if pre-borne on the forehead. But the sublimity of divine love is bestowed on the true elect in the catholic Church alone. Well therefore the man, who is called one, of Ramathaimsophim, is asserted to have been of Mount Ephraim. Ramathaim indeed, as I have already said, is a Hebrew name, but in Latin locution is called a consummated vision. Which appellation indeed suits the holy Church, which was foreseen of old by the prophets, but disposed in the end of the world in the faith of the Redeemer. A consummated vision therefore the holy Church is called, because through the Redeemer of the human race she is erected in the summit of religion, which formerly was only foreseen by the spirit of prophecy. But this Sophim is described as built on mount Ephraim (Above, at the begin-

ning of the allegorical exposition), because she is most high in the contemplation of God, and fruitful in spiritual virtues. For Sophim is called a watchtower, Ephraim fructifying. Which words indeed rightly insinuate the situation of the holy Church, which is not only high by the intention of vision, but by the excellence of conversation. By which words also both the madness of heretics, and the sterility of other wicked men are reprobated. They indeed, while they deviate from the rectitude of faith, have not the speculation of sublimity; but these, because they see the right things which they should do, and always dissimulate doing them, have indeed the watchtower, but do not hold the mountain of virtues 31 by an excellent life. But the holy Church because she is in Sophim, that is sublime in speculation, glories, saying: Our conversation is in heaven (Phil. III, 20). Because also she is established in the mountain of virtues through the fruit of good work, reprobating the crushed faith of the reprobate, she says: Faith without works is dead (James II, 20, 26). Hence also preaching she says: Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Gal. VI, 10). The man therefore who is called one is remembered to be of mount Ephraim, because both to despise earthly things, and to desire supernal things, profits him alone who through the catholic faith contains himself within the holy Church. It follows:

(Vers. 1.) And his name was Elcana, the son of Jeroboam, the son of Eliu, the son of Thohu, the son of Suph.

3. This name also we showed above, that from the Hebrew language into ours, it is turned the fervor of God. Which name indeed of the man well suits the order of spiritual exposition. For he who is called one man, it is necessary that he be counted from the fervor of God. For who could either despise temporal things, or love heavenly things without divine grace? It is necessary indeed that divine grace should prevent him, so far as, kindled by the fire of the Holy Spirit, by how much the more ardently he loves the highest things, by so much the more strongly he may contemn the lowest. To whom also in the order of genealogy the names of four fathers are written, because in the faith of the Redeemer he is begotten by the preaching of those who believed in the same Redeemer of the human race through the writings of the four Evangelists from every part of the world. Who is also called an Ephrathite. Of mount Ephraim he is also an Ephrathite who in a fertile land is not sterile. For many within the holy Church are counted by the name of faith, of which they bring forth no fruits of action. Who doubtless while they come forth from the Church, are sensed to be as if from a fruitful mountain; but because they themselves have not the fruit of good works, they are not Ephrathites. Of mount Ephraim therefore is, and is not an Ephrathite, he who has learned the catholic faith in the Church, but

does not bestow works worthy of faith. Such indeed the truth in the Gospel threatens, saying: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof (Matt. XXI, 43). Hence under the species of a fig tree, commanding the husbandman of the holy Church the repulsion of the unfruitful soul, he says: Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground (Luke XIII, 7)? Hence John the Baptist threatening, says: For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire (Matt. III, 10; Luke III, 9). Of mount Ephraim also he had shown them to be, but not Ephrathites, of whom the Truth in the Gospel by a parable says: He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season (Matt. XXI, 41). The man therefore of mount Ephraim, is called an Ephrathite, because whoever we hold the catholic faith within the holy Church, while through the ardor of affection we cast away earthly things, we love heavenly things, it behooves both that from the earthly things which we despise we be separated by the labor of good work, and to those heavenly things which we love we be prepared. To be therefore in the Church, and not to do good works, because it does not profit to the acquiring of the good of eternal salvation, the man who is asserted of mount Ephraim, is also remembered to have been an Ephrathite.

4. Whence also he is described to have had two wives, because he is joined to the active life through the fecundity of good work and to the contemplative life through the love of internal delectation. For which reason sons are said to have been to Phenenna, but to Anna sons were not. For what are the sons of the active life, if not the fruits of good works? 32 And what is it that Anna has not sons, if not because a rude contemplation does not quickly obtain those joys of internal contemplation which it has already begun to love? Sons indeed are the joys of the contemplative life of internal vision. But the mind, which begins to contemplate eternal things, arrives by so much the more difficultly to receive their joys, by how much also it does not attend to their beauty. Who therefore prevails to rejoice in the glory of that beauty which he does not see? But the mind which newly elevates itself in the contemplation of eternal goods, rises to them by so much the more slowly, by how much it does not swiftly lay aside the familiar darknesses of its humanity, because while it does not prevail to cast away from itself worldly cares, it as if bears dust in its eyes, by which it cannot see that which it desires. First therefore the dust is to be cast away from the eye, then the eye to be fomented. The dust indeed is cast away when from the intention of the mind all phantasms of corporeal things are removed, and the eye is fomented, when by the use of continual meditation the same intention of the mind is raised to eternal things. Which indeed when by long custom it shall have learned

to tarry in supernal things, by the same length of custom, it obtains purity, by which while it more clearly looks upon eternal things, it may be able more fully to exult in their glory. Anna therefore is said not to have had sons, so that not only the imperfection of the beginner may be designated, but also the celsitude of the contemplative life. For it is situated in a great summit of merits, which cannot easily be had in the joy of its fecundity. Hence it is indeed that Jacob desires to have Rachel for a wife (Gen. XXIX, 18, seq.), but yet Lia is first sub-laid to him, so that for obtaining her beauty a septenary number of years may be doubled in the service of his father-in-law, because the lover of the contemplative life, desires to acquire this quickly in the fertility of eternal joy, but yet the Spirit the bestower of all gifts does not quickly give it to him, lest he should despise it as vile when had, if facility represents this to him according to his vow; but he may enjoy it by so much the more sweetly, and guard it more solicitously, by how much the more difficultly he merits it. Wherefore also it follows:

(Vers. 3.) And this man went up out of his city upon the appointed days, to adore and to offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Silo.

5. He went up indeed on the appointed days, because in the splendors of the eternal vision he profits by degrees. For what are those manifestations of internal light, if not the days of the elect mind? and they are indeed appointed days, because they are disposed by divine ordination for those placed in the proficiency of spiritual life;

they are also appointed days, because into their clarity we cannot be admitted when we will, but when we are lifted up by divine dignation. For sometimes he receives us in the contemplation of internal light, sometimes he leaves us to fall down even to the darknesses of humanity that are to be borne. For as if on appointed days he elevates us, on which he does not continually open the pleasantness of internal light, but shows it through the times of his disposition. Therefore they are our days, because we are received in great splendors, when the beauty of internal glory is revealed to us. But they are named appointed days for this reason, because that we may enjoy the intimate light, it is not of our endeavor, but of divine dignation. For often by long-lasting silence, by instant supplications, by frequent groans, we flagitate that that glory of internal light be opened to us, and we do not merit to be received in its pleasantness. Often we do no such thing for the desire of it, but suddenly divine grace prevents us, erects us from the bottom of our infirmity, ravishes us to supernal things, and to us not hoping shows the glory of its light. On appointed days therefore we go up, because into the contemplation of heavenly things 33 we cannot be sublimated by our endeavor, but by divine disposition. The days of ascent also they are, because when we do not enjoy that sublime light, we are in the bottom; and when we are assumed into the high vision of it, how much we had lain in the bottom before the hour of our assumption, we recognize. We then displease

ourselves in what we were, but we please ourselves in what we are, because the mind already absorbed by the love of heavenly things, while it rejoices in the light which it enjoys, disdains all earthly things with exceeding horror. Whence also the blessed Peter, while he is assumed into the mountain, while he is overshadowed by the bright cloud, while the glory of the transfigured Savior is shown to him, says: Lord, it is good for us to be here (Matt. XVII, 4). For because now by the gift of almighty God he merits to be present at sublime things, he ineffably loves the incomparable good there, from the beauty of which he reproves all things that pass away as foul.

6. But what is it that the same man is said to go up out of his city? But what else is a city, if not the defense of those dwelling together? But what is this city, if not the perfect custody of circumspection of a fortified heart? This indeed as if it protects the cohabiting citizens with high walls, because while he watchfully keeps awake for guarding the virtues, the cunning enemy does not disturb their internal peace. In this city certainly that wise man commanded us to consist, who says: With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it (Prov. IV, 23). Hence also the Lord commands the disciples, saying: But sit you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high (Luke XXIV, 49). In the city indeed we sit when through daily solicitude we rest in the defense of internal custody. Sitting in which we are endued with power from on high, because prepared already for the habitation

of the Holy Spirit we are sublimated by his grace into the contemplation of supernal glory. In this therefore that the Ephrathite man is said to go up out of his city, what else than the fault of our negligence is indicated? For through contemplation we who not only of the heart, but also have not the custody of the body, wish to search heavenly things. And indeed often we look indecently, we hear idle things, we speak superfluous things, we have sleep, food not for the refection of the body, but for the use of delectation. Therefore when we wish to discuss ambiguous things, to look upon supernal things, to forsake our darknesses, to taste the savor of internal sweetness, from the secret of it by so much the more worthily we are repelled, by how much the more negligently we dissipate the fortitudes of our fortification; and already for us by so much it is more difficult to ascend, by how much relapsed to ourselves we have not cared to erect the fortifications of the heart to the altitude of custody. Let the man therefore ascend out of his city, so that he who desires to profit through internal contemplation, may order his exterior senses, rule his mind, and as if received in high fortifications may expect, where supernal illustration may visit him. For to the ascent of the appointed days he who already prepared keeps awake, is made worthy of the custody of purity, so that he may be more often visited by divine dignation. But while he is said to ascend, the cause also of the ascension is remembered, when it is subjoined: To adore and to offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Silo.

7. Whoever is lifted up into the citadel of divine contemplation, in that all things, the light illuminating, he looks upon, both what may admirably terrify him, and what may ineffably delight him. For that highest vision, as it opens itself to the elect mind, and mercifully shows the unsearchable abyss of the judgments of God and the abundance of his goodness 34 so that it may cast down the seer with great fear, and lift him up with immense joy; and indeed he is cast down by terror that he may forsake the state of worldly affection, and is mulced by joy that what he begins to foretaste of the goodness of the Creator he may more ardently covet. Then indeed he adores, when, that immensity of omnipotence considered, he is so submitted to the Creator, that against spiritual conversation he may not be lifted up by the impulses of carnal concupiscence. But adoring he immolates, because by how much the more humbly he is prostrated by divine veneration, by so much the more sweetly he is fomented by the blandishment of that highest clarity. To adore therefore for him who ascends, is to be submitted to divine omnipotence by a great veneration of chaste love; but to immolate, is to be ineffably delighted by the sweetness of divine light. For the elect mind as if consecrates itself to God for a spiritual immolation, while in that ineffable gladness of its elevation the fire of divine charity more ardently inflames it. The study therefore of every elect to God is shown under the Ephrathite man, and he is said to adore, and to immolate, because so the elect mind desires

to look upon supernal things, that profiting by spiritual vision, it may both crush every state of carnal life, and may take the plenitude of eternal gladness. For although to this altitude of highest contemplation a carnal someone is not assumed, yet as to that spiritual conversation, into which by that ascent of contemplation he profits, before he profits, he is in a certain manner carnal. For this itself is as if carnal, not to be able to be separated from the intention of corporeal things through the altitude of vision.

8. But, that the temerity of human audacity may be repressed, he is first said to adore, afterwards to immolate. The ascent of the contemplator indeed is ordered, if he begin from fear. But what else is fear itself, than the preordained purgation of the elect mind passing over to specular divine glory? For he merited to look upon the rays of divine light so much the more purely, by how much, cast down by a more valid fear, he is exhibited more purged for the vision of intimate Majesty. So therefore the conversation of this Ephrathite is shown to us outwardly, that to those tending to perfection what is to be done inwardly may be rationally demonstrated. Therefore while we desire to be sprinkled with the clarity of the highest glory, let us prefix the daring of our presumption in this passage of fear, so that by how much the more venerably we fear the almighty Lord, by so much the more perspicaciously we may see the glory of his benignity. The magnitude of which fear is also sometimes struck into the elect mind after the showing

of the joyful vision. Which indeed while it is done, is not done that it may purify the mind for the vision of glory, but that it may guard it from elation. Whence also Peter, and James, and John first saw the glory of the transfigured Lord, then the fear struck into them they fell down, lest elated they should lose what humbly assumed they had merited to see (Matt. XVII, 2, seq.). Sometimes therefore adoration precedes immolation, sometimes immolation adoration, but doubtless by divine disposition, not by our endeavor. The Ephrathite man indeed, that he might first adore, and afterwards immolate, is described to have ascended, because indeed the order is so perfect, that out of veneration, which is born from the dread of divine strictness, we are efferated to the speculation of joyful majesty. Yet divine clemency sometimes so exhilarates the elect minds with the infusion of its sweetness, that it does not induce them into the magnitude of fear. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 4.) Therefore the day came, and Elcana offered sacrifice.

9. What is it that he says: The day came, and he sacrificed; and did not say: He adored, and sacrificed, if not 35 because, as I have said above, we are so often extolled by divine dignation to seeing the glory of divine clarity, that we are then disturbed by no immisted consideration of judgments. And although without great veneration the elect soul never assists almighty God, yet as if she immolates, and does not adore, while she so enjoys that felicity of highest joy, that she is

shaken by no dejection of fear. Indeed into this affection had come she, who said: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth (Cant. I, 1). What affection of fear does she pretend, who desires to kiss? Hence also it is written concerning Moses: Because he spoke to God, as a man is wont to speak to his friend (Exod. XXXIII, 11). For, as if the day coming, sacred Scripture shows him so to immolate, that no adoration of fear had prostrated him. In which place I see this to be noted, that that he might adore, and immolate, he is said to ascend, yet not to have adored and immolated, the day coming, but to have immolated only. There are therefore other days on which we ascend, that we may adore, and immolate; another is that day which while it shall have come, we immolate. For while by our endeavor we are suspended in the meditation of divine things, they are as if the days of our appointed ascent, because we look upon certain rays of spiritual light, some we ourselves ordain for ourselves, from the bottom of our humanity we are sublevated by a certain altitude. But because by these meditations without divine grace nothing is done, and because neither do we prevail to strike fear into ourselves, nor to exhibit the suavity of divine sweetness, the days of ascent indeed they are, in which we appoint to adore and immolate, but yet in them we neither adore, nor immolate. But another day comes, and we immolate, because we are sprinkled with the sudden light of divine grace, and concerning the glory of his Majesty we perceive an ineffable abundance of love. This day therefore is not any

of those, but follows them, because doubtlessly if by our disposition we are not able to receive this largess of divine grace, yet we never merit it, unless we altogether care, that both by meditating, and daily reading, and praying, and in those spiritual clarities which we can, we tarry. But the day is said to have come, that supernal dignation may be designated, because when he visits the elect souls, it is not of our faculty, but of his goodness. It follows:

(Vers. 4 and 5.) And he gave portions to Phenenna, and to her sons, and to her daughters. But to Anna he gave one portion sad, because he loved Anna.

10. For the sons of Phenenna are the counsels of the sacred mind, which through the study of piety of the active life grow up. Which sons doubtless receive portions with their mother, when the counsels of piety grow fat to the splendor of supernal grace in the devotion of good works. Indeed the pious mind, by how much the more sublimely it is lifted up in divine contemplation, by so much the more devotedly it extends itself in holy operation. For the portions of this mother, and of the sons, are the preparations of holy works. But one portion he exhibits to Anna sad, because through contemplation, by which she desires supernal things, as long as, impeded in this aerumna of time, she does not obtain the supernal things which she loves, in tears alone she has the pasture of refection. Indeed she holds herself fasting, as often as, remembering herself cast out from eternal joys, she cannot weep. One

portion therefore she receives from a sad one, because she is never refected according to her vow, unless when she is satiated by weeping. Which the Ephrathite man sad attributed to her, who when he attributed a portion to Phenenna, was not sad, because namely he gladdens in the preparation of good works, because from the supernal joys which he loves as long as he is deferred, 36 he does not gladden. This portion certainly he had attributed to Anna, who intuering himself excluded from eternal goods spoke in saying: My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God (Psal. XLI, 4)? But the imperfection of one still beginning is designated, while one wife of the Ephrathite is said to afflict and vehemently anger the other. For to each perfect one by no means is the fight of wives committed, by which firm experience he already knows discretely to dispose the indigence of work and the intention of contemplation. For as if in peace he possesses each wife, who neither deputes the times of work to contemplation, nor disquiets the leisure of contemplation through the intention of work.

(Vers 6.) Her rival also afflicted her, and vehemently angered her; insomuch that she upbraided her, that the Lord had shut up her womb.

11. Anna is afflicted by her rival, when the immoderate intention of good work disturbs the quiet of internal vision. She is afflicted, when that which is approved to be more noble is preferred to her, and she is vehemently angered, because the contemplation of the elect mind is straightened,

while he who desires to be in the contemplation of sublime things dilates himself more immoderately in the works of the active life. To anger indeed is to straiten. The vision of the mind indeed is straitened, when, impeded by the occupations of works, in that immensity of internal light it is by no means dilated. And because she is said to anger her vehemently, it is to be noted that also the immoderate solicitude of good work harms contemplation not a little. Phenenna indeed vehemently angers Anna, because the mind, while it is immoderately expended on the active life, it is very difficult, that when it occupies itself to disposing earthly things, it may potentially rise in the vision of heavenly things. To whom also as if to a barren one Phenenna upbraids, because while from the active life we quickly bring forth the fruits of good works, and to the joys of internal contemplation we do not easily prevail to reach, that one is perceived to be barren, while rude we despair of her fecundity. While therefore for fecundity we love Phenenna, Anna is afflicted, angered, and noted with the opprobrium of sterility, because while we do not restrict the solicitude of good actions with that discretion with which we ought, we render the purity of contemplation so much the more difficult to us, by how much the more noble life by excellent study we by no means retain. But because he has begun to ascend to higher things, if he is strong in his purpose, tolerating tentations of this kind, he does not despair. For he leans to those high things of contemplation which he has begun, and despises

to be consoled concerning the food of action, who has coveted to be delighted in the species alone of the Creator. Aptly therefore it is subjoined:

(Vers. 7.) Moreover Anna wept, and did not take food.

12. In weeping indeed the ardent desire of divine contemplation is shown, but in the disdain of food the despection of passing gladness. For the mind which with fervent desires desires internal things, while it respuits the blandishment of earthly gladness, while with instant groans it expetits the pleasantness of supernal light to be infused into itself, it weeps surely, and does not take food. This food indeed he fastidiated, who said: My soul refused to be comforted (Psal. LXXVI, 3). But he who designed to take the food of solace from the delectation of created things, the feasts of his delights, because he shall have found in the Creator alone, he says: I remembered God, and was delighted (Ibid., 4). To these feasts indeed he exhorted his weeping wife, when he said: Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for 37 I will still give praise to him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God (Psal. XLII, 5). Which exhortation doubtless is here also recognized, because by her husband why she weeps, and why she does not eat, and has an afflicted heart, she is interrogated. As if he should say: Why concerning the not had perfection of contemplation art thou saddened, which if rude thou dost not obtain, profiting thou shalt obtain? Whence also she who afflicted by her rival was unwilling to eat, exhorted by

her husband she did eat; because she who by a sounder counsel despises the lowest things, has the perfection of contemplation in hope, which she has not yet in the virtue of experience. Almost for failing and lapsed contemplation the joy of renewed hope is food. To the voice of her husband therefore Anna is refected, when the intention of contemplation shaken through tentation is excited by him who had begun to love himself to the hope of his proficiency. Whence having taken food she rose, poured out prayers to almighty God, and vowed to him the male sex, if she merited to receive this from him.

13. He vows a born son to almighty God, who expetits the joy of contemplation to the fruit of the mind, not to the favor of vanity. But to those well petitioning in the desire of contemplation carnal prelates vehemently are wont to insist against; by so much the more ineptly indeed they think those coveting a more secret life to act, by how much they themselves are ignorant of the force of internal sweetness. Who if sometimes against spiritual subjects with the voice of harsh invective they rage, by them they are to be sedated with most humble reason. For if they irrationally erect themselves against those acting rightly, the reverence of the superior order exacts that then they should be honored, when they exceed the mode of reason. Whom indeed both namely carnal prelates, and spiritual subjects, Heli and Anna well insinuate; for when he sat before the posts of the temple of the Lord, and Anna prayed, Heli observed her mouth, and called her

drunk. But she, who patiently sustained injuries, exhibited the humility of response with the truth of reason. She asserted herself to be his handmaid to speak out of much grief and sorrow, and the raging mind in himself, she not only sedated, but also for obtaining the fruit of her desire she converted to prayer.

14. But because we have said these last things to the history, we do not act beside the thing if in these words of sacred history we require our erudition a little more subtly. If therefore the order of things is required, first she did eat, and drink, then she had a bitter mind, she prayed to the Lord weeping largely, afterwards she vowed a vow, and multiplied prayers. What does the multiplication of Anna's prayers signify, if not that perfection of the elect, to which the egregious Doctor exhorts us, saying: Pray without ceasing (I Thess. V, 17)? For without ceasing to pray unless a perfect man can; for to pray without ceasing is through the affection of supplication to always assist the Creator. But he who is still depressed by the infirmity of imperfection, by so much does not beseech the Lord without ceasing, that in the very time of prayer he slips from his sight by the wandering of the mind. But well before the multiplication of prayers the holy woman is said to have vowed a vow, because unless someone exhibit himself wholly heavenly through the rigor of purpose, he is so much the more often led out from the affection of supplication, by how much by the mobility of the mind he is turned into the gyre of worldly intention, and is not held

in the sight of the Lord through strong custody. But the mind of the elect will be able to vow itself to heavenly joys by a spiritual purpose, if it already knows to weep largely, if by the largess of weepings it has already learned to taste the savor of supernal sweetness, and, occupied in that joy 38 of its internal refection, it fastidiates to look upon earthly things. Openly therefore before her vow Anna is described to have wept largely, because someone will not be able to exhibit himself wholly so heavenly, by forgetting earthly things, unless, kindled by great weepings, in the solace of a mind already dead to the world he knows to receive the suavity of intimate delectation. And because in the joy of the soul this solace of tears is not received, if he does not first affect himself through the bitterness of compunction, and whatever in himself lives of passing gladness he transfixes with the dagger of salutary sadness. Anna is related to have wept before with a bitter mind, and so to have been able to weep largely. Which Solomon well insinuates, saying: The heart that knoweth the bitterness of its own soul, in its joy shall not the stranger intermeddle (Prov. XIV, 10). The stranger indeed is he who still has the intention of delectation concerning exterior goods. Who certainly is not received in the joy of a bittered heart, because he cannot experience what internal gladness is, unless he who cures perfectly to contemn the exterior. But it is still to be noted that before all these things she is related to have risen and before she rose, to have eaten and drunk. What is the food of the elect soul, if

not according to the voice of truth: Every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God (Matt. IV, 4)? and what is it for her to rise, if not to erect herself to the state of supernal intention? Before therefore she had risen, than to have been of a bitter mind she is said, and before she rose to have eaten and drunk, because the elect soul will not be able to grieve concerning the aerumna of the present life, if she does not extend herself to those things which she has lost in heavenly things; and she does not elevate herself to those highest things, if she fasts from the pasture of sacred Scripture. That we may rise therefore, we eat and drink, because then we are erected to the altitude of supernal love, when we are corroborated by the profound and plainer senses of sacred Scripture. Then if we rise, we acquire the bitterness of the heart, because while we are borne into supernal things through love, those things which are in the bottom do not offer to us the blandishments of joy, but the asperity of affliction. But already from a bitter mind we ascend to the streams of weepings, because when we are transfixed by a continual and valid compunction, those evils which we incur in this valley of tears, and the future things which we fear, and the eternal goods which we have lost, we prevail to weep more copiously. Hence indeed we proceed to the secrets of vows to be vowed, because while from all that which pleases outside the largess of weepings buries us, it shows us as if made wholly heavenly to supernal gazes, and we vow vows to which so eternal goods please, that our

mind may inquinate itself through no earthly and carnal things. Then the multiplication of prayers follows our proficiencies, because by so much the more willingly, more often and more instantly we seek eternal things by praying, by how much in the solace alone of future goods we respire. But in the morning they adore, and return into their city.

15. After the multiplication of prayers to adore in the morning with his wife Anna is to guard the virtue of humility among great gifts of virtues; and because in that sublime vision the soul which is still weighed down by this burden of corruption cannot stand longer, aptly they are related to have returned into their city. The elect soul, when, infirmity weighing it down, it is repelled from the contemplation of God, that it may be able to return into the same altitude of vision, it ought to have the edifices of fortification constructed, in so far as, relapsed to itself, it may hold itself in the high, whence it may rise again to the same altitude of intimate charity. Which also under the type of Jerusalem is said to the elect soul through the Prophet: Stand on high, and look about towards the east, and behold the joy that comes to thee 39 from thy God (Baruch. IV, 36; V, 5). As if he should say, although to remain continually in the contemplation of God thou canst not, lest thou shouldst be cast down even to the lowest things, that from the high towers of thy custody thou mayest be able to ascend without difficulty to contemplating him whom thou desirest. Indeed into Ramatha his city he

returns, if when he is repelled from the vision of divine Majesty, he is retained in the contemplation of holy angels. But when to think concerning that subtler nature, that is the angelic, he does not prevail, if to the blessed martyrs, or other elect, who are already received in eternity, he recurs by meditating, because he thinks concerning their perfect glory, doubtlessly then in his city is received, he who is prohibited to tarry in sublime things. But well the same Ramatha is called his city, because what he familiarly loves, he indubitably believes to be his, for this city to be his he had known, who said: We know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven (II Cor. V, 1). Hence again he says: But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free: which is our mother (Gal. IV, 26). But he who into that sublime city cannot return, let him return nevertheless into his city Ramatha; and he who is cast down from that highest one, let him be held in the vision of this Church still peregrinating in the bottom, but radiating with the effulgence of sublime life. By how much indeed from here he will be able to return again to review the beam of the high and true light, by so much he does not cast down that sense which the burden of the flesh retracts from the secret of internal light even to the lowest things of the earth.

16. But what is it that after the circle of days Anna conceives and brings forth, if not because the joy of perfect devotion contemplation once elevated to the beauty of the Creator does not re-

ceive? After the circle of days therefore she is said to have conceived and brought forth, because while from custom contemplation is ravished to supernal things, in the vision of supernal light it receives the gift of desired fecundity. For the circle of days is the infusion of divine light. Which indeed in its circuit is girt by many days, while by its one clarity it irradiates the mind, but the rays of its splendor through the turns of dispensative manifestation it insinuates to it, until it comprehends more perfect joy concerning ampler manifestation. Or certainly after the circle of days Anna conceives, because doubtlessly as long as the rudeness of contemplation shakes the acies of the mind into the gyre of mutability, the mind itself does not rise to perceiving the full joy of internal majesty. For as if in a certain circle the days pass, when the mind of the beginner elevates itself into the summit of contemplation, but scarcely through the beam of light of the beheld does it preserve her, still bedewing and running hither and thither, fixed in its light. After the circle of days therefore she conceives, because first from the vertigo of her mutation she is led into the strength of standing, and when to stand fixed from use in contemplation she shall have learned, she apprehends the joy of perfect devotion in the fruit of her fecundity. Which even conceived she brings forth, when to her neighbors she becomes known to the glory of supernal majesty.

17. But the born boy is led in three calves to the tabernacle, because concerning the largess

of spiritual gift we ought to render thanks to the highest Trinity. Concerning which calves the prophet beseeching the Lord says: Take away all iniquity, and receive the good: and we will render the calves of our lips (Osee XIV, 3). As if he should say: For the largess of gifts we will render the sacrifices of praise, through the obsequy of lips. 40 But into the house of the Lord the boy to be offered is led, when the proficiency of the sacred mind is revealed to the doctors of the holy Church, so that while it is discussed by the collation of the wise, it may by no means be maculated by the fraud of the cunning enemy. The house of the Lord can also designate the eternal country. Concerning which indeed the Psalmist exulting, says: Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever (Psal. LXXXIII, 5). Into the house of the Lord the boy is led, when the elect mind is lifted up into high things, and concerning all that limits spiritually it is busy to render thanks to almighty God, from whom it recognizes the gifts of its proficiency expended to itself. But well one calf is immolated, when three are related to be brought, because although the Trinity of persons is sung by the confession of the faithful in divine praises, the inseparable unity of the same persons is preached. But what kind, or how great is praise, if it be not devout? Aptly therefore to the three calves as many measures of flour are joined, so that concerning that which in the praises of God we say with the mouth we may be satiated through devotion. For without

flour he offers a calf, who in the praises of God indeed utters words, but with a wandering mind does not intend to those things which he speaks. But if proffering words praising God, or praying, we grow cheerful, while we mix the joy of intelligence, we sociate a vessel of that wine which gladdens the heart of man to the flour. This indeed he insinuates, who exopting says: May God, our God, bless us, may God bless us: and all the ends of the earth fear him (Psal. LXVI, 7, 8). As if he led three calves to the tabernacle, who praising God, by repeating the name of his divinity, expounded the properties of the persons. But when they should fear, not them, but him he said, doubtlessly who brought three calves immolated one. And because he mixed flour to the calves, and wine to the flour, he glories, saying: I cried to him with my mouth: and I extolled him with my tongue (Psal. LXV, 17). For while he cried, as if to immolate the calf of sacrifice he led, but he could not have exulted under his tongue, if he did not understand the high words of his prayer. When he cried therefore, he understood what he cried, and when he exulted in the oblation of almighty God, he not only had a calf, but also measures of flour, and a vessel of wine. Therefore the calf, the flour and the wine, is the praise of God, the understanding of praise, and the gladness of a devout mind. But why are the measure and the vessel named in the oblation of God, if not because they are the names of measure? This also what spiritually it may indicate Paul expounds, saying: Every one hath his proper gift from God;

one after this manner, and another after that (I Cor. VII, 7). Hence Truth says: Good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom (Luke VI, 38). This measure sacred Scripture commanded us to guard, saying: Lift not up a burden above thyself. But the elect soul must vehemently beware, that she may offer these three to almighty God with the ardor of pious devotion, and with the study of manifest truth. Whence also the son of the same Anna is asserted to be offered to the priest. Which indeed we also do, if when we profit in holy conversation, when with already fecund minds we bring forth the fruit of spiritual joys, we lead to the examen of our prelates all that which is generated in us from supernal contemplation. And because elect men among sublime gifts do not forsake the good of their humility, it follows:

(Vers. 28.) And they adored the Lord there.

18. In the house of the Lord they adore the Lord, who both 41 with a high mind elevate themselves into the contemplation of the supernal country, but through humility are sublaid to almighty God, and with all the heart in the virtue of the Spirit are so sublimely elevated. These things not out of order, but summarily expounding to the history, or moral understanding we have perstringed, so that the words of the spiritual canticle which follows according to the moral and typical explanation we may indagate a little more widely.

CHAPTER III.

(II Kings II, 1.) And Anna prayed, and said: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord.

1. In the person of Anna we have already shown the type of the holy Church to lie hid. Who indeed, the boy being already born, asserts herself to exult in the Lord, because concerning that which she drew the gentile people to the faith of the Redeemer she did not vainly swell, but held the intention of her gladness in him, from whom she received the gifts of her fecundity. By which words indeed she so indicates the site of her gladness, that she equally shows the cause of the same exultation. Barren indeed she wept, bringing forth she exulted, to portend the customs of the holy Church, who grieves herself to be cast forth into this valley of tears from the joys of paradise, but for gaining souls patiently sustains the aerumnas of her exile. In this only she is wont to exult, if in the aerumna of time, by which she is pressed, through the glory of her fecundity, the elect being multiplied, the losses of the heavenly country be repaired. She says therefore: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, because she has obtained the fruits of her purpose. In which place it is to be noted that this which glorying she speaks is asserted to have been prayed. For it is premised: And Anna prayed, and said: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord. But she who is recognized to petition nothing from God by flagitating, why is she asserted to have prayed? But because the holy woman knew through the spirit of prophecy that this was future, and vehemently options it to be done, she both speaks by

exulting, and by praying. She exulted indeed in the certainty of future things, vehemently exopting that to be done which she knew by the revelation of the sacrament. So also the holy Church thence recollecting recounts the divine benefits by loving and venerating, preaches and prays, because indeed speaking without she executes that, which within she desires to be done with a wondrous desire, and being done venerates with great devotion. She says therefore: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, because the gifts which she receives to the fruit of eternal gladness she does not convert to temporal joy. It follows:

(Vers. 1.) And my horn is exalted in my God.

2. What is the horn of Anna, but the power of the holy Church? Which horn indeed then raised itself wonderfully, when the Son of God through assumed humanity made himself a partaker of our nature. In that therefore the horn of the holy Church was exalted, in which human nature now shines elevated above the angels. But in this that the holy Church singularly asserts this her God and Saviour, she latently shows the repulsion of the Synagogue. In God therefore our Saviour our horn is exalted, because the sublimity of Ecclesiastical power in humanity was erected for us of the Redeemer. Whence also concerning the same Redeemer through Zachary it is said: He hath raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the house of David his servant: as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets (Luke I, 69, 70), because she recounts her horn exalted, she latently indicates, because before she had a horn which was not ex-

alted. The holy Church indeed before the advent of the Redeemer had a horn, because in the patriarchs and prophets she received from God as well the order of living rightly 42 as the power of correcting delinquents. But nevertheless she had not an exalted horn, because although she could live justly, nevertheless she could not return to the joys of Paradise without the presence of the Redeemer. But now the horn of the holy Church is exalted, who have now received the coming Redeemer of the world, through whose grace we not only can live rightly, but also pass over to the joys of paradise, because he already died and rose again for us, in whose death death died, and paradise unbarred itself to his faithful. Our horn therefore is exalted in our God, because, the grace of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the multitude of the elect, we see the impressed image of the Redeemer, while those who despise all earthly things flee the pleasures of the flesh, leave their own things, with so much higher power radiate, by how much the holy Church did not have these so great ensigns of virtue in the multitude of the ancients. Our horn is exalted in God our Saviour, because as many of us as receive him, he gave to us power to be made the sons of God (John I, 12). This horn our Saviour willed to exalt, when he said: Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy (Luke X, 19). Hence also asserting he says: Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven (Matt. XVI, 19). Hence again he repromises, say-

ing: You shall sit upon seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Ibid., XIX, 28). Let Anna therefore say: My horn is exalted in my God, that namely the glory of the holy Church may be designated, who obtains the singular summit of power from the presence of the Redeemer. And because she is now distended in the whole world, who formerly was straitened within Judea by persecutions, it follows:

(Vers. 1.) My mouth is enlarged over my enemies.

3. For what enemies of the Church are to be understood other than the Jews? Over whom indeed she has an enlarged mouth, because against their perfidy she moves the tongues of all the nations of the already faithful. The mouth therefore of the holy Church is enlarged, because through the universal orb she is diffused, and while she erudites all nations by the preaching of the truth, she reprehends the folly of the Jews, as if with an enlarged mouth. And because she could do this thence, because she joyfully received the Redeemer of the world coming in the flesh, she expounds the cause of her enlarged mouth, saying:

(Vers. 1.) Because I have joyed in thy salvation.

4. Now who the Saviour of God may be we have known. Concerning whom also Isaiah vaticinating says: All flesh shall see the salvation of God; all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God (Isa. LII, 10; Psal. XCVII, 3). But Jesus in our speech is called Saviour. Concerning whom also Habacuc repromises joy to himself,

saying: I will joy in God my Jesus (Habac. III, 18). Behold by the voices of the ancient Jews the Lord Jesus is asserted to be God. But now the Jews expect a Saviour, whom by no means they believe to be God. But perhaps the Jews contend to reprobate this in their mouth, and while they interpret Jesus Saviour, they understand God the Saviour not of the person of the Only-begotten, but of the Father; nevertheless in the same place it is subjoined, whence the person of the Only-begotten may be more openly demonstrated: The Lord God, he says, is my strength, and he will make my feet in the end, and he will set me upon high places, that I may conquer in his glory (Ibid. 19). Behold he speaks to God saying: Set me upon high places. But because he says: That I may conquer in his glory, it is certainly another concerning whom he speaks. Who therefore is it concerning whom he speaks if not the only-begotten Son of God, whom he believes to be not only true man, but also God? While therefore he speaks to God, saying: I will joy 43 in God my Jesus, and I will conquer in his glory, he does not demonstrate another God, but God another person. These are the reasons of the holy Church, these the invincible assertions against the perfidy of the Jews diffused through the universal orb. Therefore the holy Church has an enlarged mouth over her enemies, because now, God being the author, everywhere she is known, whence also the perfidy of the Jews may be convinced. Let them therefore hear the cause of the enlarged mouth, who deny the Salvation of God, and con-

cerning the joy of our Saviour let them be striken with the argument of their confusion. But they can be striken, but from their blasphemies they will not cease. Already the world has received the Salvation of God, all flesh has seen him, the Jew does not believe, because, as I said, he expects a Saviour, who is not God. Let them hear therefore the malediction of the prophet saying: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord (Jerem. XVII, 5). The Jews trust in man, who take refuge from believing in the Redeemer, while they wait for Antichrist in the end of the world. In whose confusion the Psalmist preaches, saying: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God (Psal. XCVII, 3). As if he should confound the perfidy of the Jews saying: Why do you defer visions for the future? He whom you expect has already come, he whom you had promised has already appeared to all the ends of the earth, when you closed your eyes, he passed by; nay rather you were made so blind, that so great a light stood before you, and you did not see. Therefore, rejoice to the Lord all the earth, sing, and exult, and sing psalms; sing psalms to our God on the harp, and with the voice of a psalm, on the ductile trumpets, and with the voice of the cornet. Rejoice in the sight of the Lord the king; let the sea be moved and the fulness thereof, the orb of the earth, and all they that dwell therein. The rivers shall clap their hands for the same, the mountains shall exult before the face of the Lord, because he cometh, because he cometh to

judge the earth (Ibid. IV, seq.). As if he should say: Because they are pressed with so immense blindness, that by no means they merited to see, you rejoice more abundantly, who have seen. But how wonderfully, and ineffably it is to be rejoiced, coacervating the signs of joy, he says: Rejoice, sing, and sing psalms. Gestiating also to insinuate the celebrity of gladness, enumerating its instruments, he says: Sing psalms to the Lord on the harp, and harp, and with the voice of a psalm, on the ductile trumpets and with the voice of the cornet, rejoice in the sight of the Lord the king. What is in the sight of the king, if not in the knowledge of the Redeemer? But by how many this solemnity of joys is to be acted he expounds, saying: Let the sea be moved, and the fulness thereof, the orb of the earth, and all they that dwell therein. O unhappy Judea, the ends of the earth have seen the Salvation of God, all the earth commoved rejoices, the universal orb gladdens, the rivers clap their hands, the mountains exult; but the impious hearts of the Jews do not believe, and in the darkness of their blindness they are struck with the penalty of lividness. But him whom they do not fear to blaspheme, the holy Church commends more attentively, saying:

(Vers. 2.) There is none holy as the Lord is.

5. In the description of the Redeemer all incomparable things are designated. For thence the true Redeemer is shown, because in all that which is said to his glory no one is compared to him. For he redeemed all who excels all. Which rightly is said against Judea, who by so much

the more audaciously despises the Redeemer, by how much she recollects herself to have had many men, who have shone with great praise of holiness. For hence it is that upbraiding the illuminated blind man they say: Be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not from whence he is (John IX, 28, 29). Hence likewise they glory, and say: We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man (John VIII, 33). But Moses was 44 a man, Abraham a man, Christ a man. Nevertheless those were assumed to the speaking of God, this one assumed into divinity. Those assumed to the ministry, this one as the Only-begotten assumed to the kingdom. Whence also he speaks, saying: All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine (John XVI, 15). There is none holy as the Lord is. This also sacred Scripture testifies, saying: In whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally (Col. II, 9). Hence John says: And of his fulness we all have received (John I, 16). There is none holy as the Lord is. Because in that he is asserted Lord, the excellence of his holiness is commended. But the Jews assert Christ, whom they expect, to be a mere man, and nevertheless believe him to be their Lord to come and singularly holy. But the Psalmist reprobating them, exhorts us to the joy of faith, saying: Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy. Know ye that the Lord he is God (Psal. IC, 1, 2, 3). They call him Lord, who is not God.

Therefore we should joy, we should serve in gladness, who have such a Lord, who also may truly be believed to be God, who proved the majesty of divinity, which he asserted in himself, by incomparable miracles. Therefore they who deny his invisible divinity, let them believe the patent works. But how wondrous is that holiness, which sanctifies sinners? Whence also concerning the sinful woman he says: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much (Luke VII, 47). Knowing this excellence of holiness, she who was placed in the flux of blood, says: If I shall touch only the hem of his garment, I shall be healed (Matt. IX, 21). But who would assert her faith, if the effect of faith were not patent? For as she touched his garment, the blood stood. Therefore there is none holy as the Lord is, because whoever could exist as holy, received of his gift that he could be holy. For interpreting this by the subsequent word, the holy Church converts to the same Redeemer out of exceeding charity, saying:

(Vers. 2.) For there is no other beside thee.

6. Holy is understood. Outside him someone would be holy, if without the gift of the Only-begotten he could have had the spirit of sanctification. But who would dare to assert this concerning men, which concerning Angels by no means is established? For it is written: By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth (Psal. XXXII, 6). The Word of the Lord is the Only-begotten of God. Whom indeed the evangelist John insinuating, says: In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John I, 1). If therefore even the angels are believed to have been sanctified in the Son, much more concerning men it is believed that outside him they cannot find the grace of sanctification.

7. This also can be understood without any sub-audition. Therefore when she says: Neither is there any other beside thee, what else is designated in the Redeemer than the incommutability of divine essence? Whence also to the blaspheming Jews he says: Before Abraham was made, I am (John VIII, 58). Insinuating the same thing to Moses in Genesis, he says: I am who am (Exod. III, 14). For to the Only-begotten God to be is dissimilarly never to be. Which state certainly is by so much far from all mortals, by how much it is more clearly known that in single moments through many things they are varied. This also can pertain to the state of justice, because for the elect to be is to remain in God through justice. And because the Only-begotten of God is God, there is not another beside him, because no one of the elect is unless in him. Because if it is referred to his divinity, that by no means it may evacuate the intellect of his humanity, because he cannot be just 45 who does not have the faith of divine Incarnation; the Jews therefore are struck by these single words, who, while they contemn the Redeemer, expect Antichrist, who is clearly proved not to be God. Whence also through blessed Job it is said: Let the companions of him that is not, dwell in his tabernacle (Job XVIII, 15). The tabernacle of Antichrist is the love

of perfidy, by which he contradicts the faith of the Redeemer. In which tabernacle indeed the Jews now remain, because while they lovingly inhabit the site of their perfidy, they fight against the Redeemer. Who also are related to be the companions of him who is not, because in their purpose they aid the devil, who, while he fell from the love of that highest essence, forthwith lost to be true. To whom indeed not to be is not to be able to return to that highest blessed essence through the participation of love. And because the people of the Jews, had not only the arduous conversation of the ancient fathers, but also the ostension of miracles to the augment of elation, it is subjoined:

(Vers. 2.) And there is none strong like our God.

8. As if she should repress Judea vainly glorying, saying: Whom thou assertest to have done great things, were mere men; him whom I preach, was not only a holy man, but also a mighty God. While therefore strength is regarded, excellence is indicated, because indeed altogether weak is all the strength of man in comparison of deity. In which place however the assertion of divinity does not prove the excellence of work, but the incomparability of strength shows the truth of deity. As if she should say: In this he is known because he brought forth true things, because the deity which he asserted in himself he proved by incomparable works. Whence through himself he says: If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not

have sin (John XV, 24). But now the works themselves are to be discussed. Moses divided the sea (Exod. XIV, 12), Elias the river (IV Kings II, 8); our Lord Jesus walked upon the sea (Matt. XIV, 24). What therefore is more elegant, to exhibit a way to the people crossing in the dry channel of the deep, or to make the very face of the sea a way? Those indeed, because they were weighed down by the burden of humanity, required a way in the solid of the deep by which they might proceed; but he who is known to have assumed the weak things of human nature into the celsitude of divinity, was borne upon the waters by his own virtue. Moses from the consortium of the speaking of the Lord obtained the splendor of his countenance (Exod. XXXIV, 29), Josue fixed the sun by prayers (Josue X, 12, 13); but because Jesus is God, he resplendished before his disciples in the virtue of the sun. The sons of Israel could not intend into his face, those who merited to discern his glory fell down, that thou mightest openly know that it existed divine by which human things passed transitorily. To him, those assisting in the mountain, it is said by the eternal Father: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him (Matt. XVII, 5, 6). And therefore also Elias, who closed heaven lest it should rain, and unbarred it that it might rain (III Kings XVII, 1) in his comparison what is he who the heavens being opened, exhibited the Father as a witness of his divine generation? There is therefore none strong as the Lord, because whatever of virtue Moses could show, the Lord did,

not himself. But Jesus exhibited all the things which he wondrously carried out by his own virtue, because he was also the Lord to Moses. For not Moses to the people proceeding through the deserts, but the Lord rained manna (Exod. XVI, 13, seq.). Not Moses, but the Lord in a pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day, preceded the people (Ibid., XIV, 19). Not Moses, but the word which was made to him, produced water from the rock (Ibid. XVII, 6). Not Moses, but the Lord exhibited fowls to those concupiscing (Ibid. XVI, 17). Whence also the Lord represses the Jews glorying in the strength of the fathers, saying: Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven (John VI, 32). 46 Hence the Psalmist not vainly extolling Moses, but laudably exalting the Lord, says: He did wonderful things in the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis. He divided the sea and brought them through: and he made the waters to stand as in a vessel. And he conducted them with a cloud by day: and all the night with a light of fire. He struck the rock in the wilderness: and gave them to drink, as out of the great deep. He commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven. And he rained down manna upon them to eat, and he rained upon them flesh as dust: and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea (Psal. LXXVII, 12, seq.). But the Lord Jesus incomparably strong did not appear in the virtue of another, but in his own. Whence also mighty of himself, commanding the paralytic, he says: I say to thee, arise (Matt. IX, 6). Hence also it is

written: And as many as touched him were made whole from whatsoever languor they were held (Mark VI, 56). And again: Virtue went out from him, and healed all (Luke VI, 19). For this ensign of strength, neither Moses, nor Elias could have, that, while incomparable signs should become known, they should most openly designate the advent of the Only-begotten. Rightly therefore the Synagogue is damned with perpetual silence, when it is subjoined:

(Vers. 3.) Do not multiply to speak lofty things. Let old things depart from your mouth.

9. As if she should say: While you discern incomparably new things, you reprehensibly extol the deeds of the ancients. For as if a shadow those things had preceded. But now the true faithful openly venerably adore these works of our Redeemer, because what was shadowed there by the occultation of the sacrament, in the advent of the Redeemer was patent, to have expected the body of the truth to be revealed. Therefore if they are referred to the new, they are not old, because understood in the Holy Spirit, they do not receive any vetusty. Concerning which spirit indeed renewing all things, the Psalmist prays, saying: Send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created: and thou shalt renew the face of the earth (Psal. CIII, 30). They are therefore old, if they are compared with the works of the Redeemer; but when we bring those forth spiritually to confirm these, by that spirit by which we understand these, those are renewed. Therefore the holy Church while she reprehends the

Jews concerning the narration of the ancients, what else is designated than them to understand carnally the spiritual acts of the Fathers? For the Synagogue erects herself the more rashly against the holy Church, by how much she is the more proudly extolled by the knowledge of the law and the prophets, which to her fathers she learned to have been divinely inspired, but to herself materially exhibited. Whence it follows: Do not multiply to speak lofty things, glorying. And that they may cease to swell, it subjoins, saying: Let old things depart from your mouth. For now those things are old to her, which, as I said, are not understood through the renewing spirit. It is therefore such as if she should say: It is worthy that thou shouldst be silent from the narration of those, whose new and splendid senses thou art ignorant of. Which indeed although thou understandest subtly, ought not to afford thee the tumor of arrogance, because God is the Lord of sciences. For the Redeemer of the human race, because he is the Word of the highest Father, is certainly the Lord of all sciences. High indeed, and great things Isaias spoke, great things Jeremias spoke; but indeed they would say nothing, if this Word the Lord of sciences did not indicate sciences to them, before they spoke. Whence also frequently in the books of the same prophet Isaias it is read: The word that came to Isaias the prophet. Frequently also in the book of Jeremias it is written: The word that came to Jeremias the prophet. Seeing this Word the Lord of sciences in the highest bosom of the highest Father, John

says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John I, 1). Hence Paul insinuating the Lord of sciences our Redeemer 47 says: Because in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally (Col. II, 9). While therefore she says: Let old things depart from your mouth, because God is the Lord of sciences, what else is it to say, unless to show the Synagogue by open reason, that by so much the more solicitously she ought to be silent, by how much she is ignorant not only what they are, but also from whom are those things which she speaks? As if she should say: That science, which thou assertest to have been of thy fathers, ought not to have given thee so much arrogance, by how much it was not theirs, but of the only-begotten Son of God, and thou dost not understand that same science. She says therefore: Let old things depart from your mouth. So that the Jews by no means may deprave what they do not prevail to understand rightly. God is the Lord of sciences, she says, that what they truly prove to be of God, they may not falsely ascribe to men. But while Judea is reprehended concerning the words of boasting, because she is compuncted with no fear, also concerning the occult motions of perfidious hearts torments are announced to her. For it follows:

(Vers. 3.) And they prepare thoughts.

10. As if she should say: Him whom thou dost not fear to blaspheme, thou shalt have as a judge not only of the tongue, but also of the heart. Whence also through Isaias he comminates, say-

ing: I come that I may gather together their works and their thoughts (Isai. LXVI, 18). Hence through Moses the Lord comminating, says: Are not these things stored up with me, and sealed up in my treasures? (Deut. XXXII, 34). And because by these words silence is bidden to the Synagogue, let us now see the holy Church with what praises of her fecundity she glories in the voice of Anna. For subjoining she says:

(Vers. 4.) The bow of the mighty is overcome.

11. Who pray is the bow of the mighty, if not the fraudulent cruelty of the Jews? For from a hidden place, as if from a bow they had inflicted a wound on the Redeemer, whom they killed by the hands of the gentiles. But the bow of the mighty is overcome, because he who died by their wound, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sent the promised Holy Spirit to the disciples. Whence it is subjoined:

(Vers. 5.) And the weak are girt with strength.

12. By the appellation indeed of strength, the virtue of the Holy Spirit is shown. Whence also the Lord repromising the same Spirit to the disciples, says: But stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high (Luke XXIV, 49). But strength is rightly called the grace of the Holy Spirit, which as the elect receive, they become strong against all the adversities of this world. But who are to be understood by the weak in this place, if not the apostles? But weak indeed, when the bow of the mighty is bent, not when they are clothed with virtue from on high. For in the hour of the Lord's apprehension it is written of them,

because, leaving the Lord, they all fled (Matt. XXVI, 56). Or was not Peter then very weak, when he feared the voice of an interrogating little maid-servant, and denied the Redeemer (Ibid., LXIII, 74)? Already indeed the bow of the mighty was overcome, the cruelty of the Jews annihilated, because the Redeemer having conquered death had risen; and nevertheless still the weak apostles feared the overcome mighty, the doors being shut (John XX, 19). But when strength indued them it pleases to look upon how strong it made them. For with a sudden sound the Holy Spirit came upon them, and changed their weakness into the virtue of wondrous charity (Acts II, 22, seq.). For they began to preach Christ already indued with strength, who did not blush to flee by lying hid the threats of persecutors; and who had feared the words of women, broke the authority of princes with liberty. Strength conquered dread, terrors, threats, and overcame massacres; and those whom supervening it indued, it illustrated with the ensigns of wondrous audacity in the heavenly warfare, so that amid scourges, massacres and opprobriums they should not fear 48, but should exult. For it is written of them already indued with this strength: The apostles went rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus (Acts V, 41). Hence already preaching, they say: My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations (James I, 2). Rightly therefore it is said: The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are

girt with strength. Because first he rose from the dead, and so the Redeemer went away to heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples. For first the bow of the mighty was to be overcome, and afterwards the weak to be girt with strength. Whence also it is written: For as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John VII, 39).

13. In which place it is to be noted that this is said against Judea, who by so much the more proudly despises the miracles of the Redeemer, by how much she recognizes him dead amid punishments. She says therefore: The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength. As if she should answer to the Synagogue calumniating the death of the Redeemer, saying: Do not despise that he could die, but rather wonder because being dead he rose again, and overcame the cruelty of thy nation by reviving. And because she shows this concerning the past, she not only speaks by denouncing to her, but by insulting. For as if to the inanely insulting one she should upbraid, saying: What did it profit you to have killed him whom the snare of death could not hold? You killed him, lest after him the whole world should go; but therefore after him the whole world goes, because he proved himself the true Son of God, while by dying he redeemed the human race, and while by rising again he showed himself living, and ascended to heaven, and destined the promised holy spirit to his disciples. And because for the merit of her incredulity the Synagogue was repulsed from

the participation of the promised grace, the holy Church upbraiding her with this very thing, subjoining, says:

(Vers. 5.) They that were before full, have hired out themselves for bread, and the hungry are filled.

14. Who were those filled before, if not they who had the knowledge of God, before the other peoples? Therefore who are to be understood by those filled before, other than the Jews, who in the faith of the Creator were erudited almost from the very beginning of the world? These indeed hired themselves out for breads. For what do breads signify in this place, if not the mysteries of divine Incarnation? But the place of finding the breads is sacred Scripture. Whence also the bread, which came down from heaven, says to those ignorant of finding him: Search the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me (John V, 39). Therefore they hired themselves out for breads, because they had received all the Scriptures, that in them they ought to have found the sacraments of divine Incarnation: but when the bread came, the Synagogue, which had hired itself out for bread, left the place, in which she ought to have found the bread which she sought. She had indeed the Scriptures, as I said, to know the Redeemer, but she confuted him coming who had come according to the Scriptures. Therefore the hungry are filled, because they who believed from the gentiles, while they reverently receive the mysteries of divine Incarnation, have heav-

enly food to the use of internal delectation. The hungry indeed they are called, because before the advent of the Redeemer, cast out by the hunger of infidelity, they had no food of spiritual refection. Or certainly they are called hungry, because they receive the sweetness of spiritual food with great avidity. But the filled, who hired themselves out for bread, let them hear him whom they expected: I am the living bread which came down from heaven (John VI, 33, 41, seq.). But because they did not merit to agnize him, they answered: Is not this the son of Joseph? how doth he say, I came down from heaven (Luke IV, 22; John VI, 42)? But he himself, who 49 knew all things prophesied that the hungry would come to the recumb of his delectation, saying: Amen I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness (Matt. VIII, 11, 12). Therefore the filled hired themselves out for breads, but the hungry are filled, because the children of the Synagogue in the holy Scriptures had the pasture of faith concerning the future Incarnation of the Redeemer; but now, those being cast out, while the gentiles truly believe in him, they receive the sacraments of his divinity and humanity in the refection of internal delectation.

15. But because it is said by the excellent Doctor: And did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them,

and the rock was Christ) (I Cor. X, 3, 4), it can reasonably be gathered because those ate, and were not filled, these ate, and are filled. Which indeed against the Synagogue is rightly said by the holy Church, that they who are under grace by wondrous celsitude may be designated to pre-emine those placed under the law. For what was it for them to hire themselves out for breads, if not to search the sacraments of the coming Redeemer in sacred Scripture? Of whom indeed every one ate, and was not filled, because he believed the future Incarnation of the highest Only-begotten, but did not see him present. Indeed to eat was to him, to retain sweetly the divine Incarnation in the desire of the mind, and to not be filled was to him not to see his desired presence. But the weak, who were to be girt with strength, heard the proclamations of their satiety from that bread by which they were filled: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them (Luke X, 23, 24). For they who wished to see, already by desire ate the bread of internal delectation; but because they could not see, they had the joy of desire, but did not have satiety through fruition. For although the Scripture may say: For thou didst give them bread from heaven prepared without labor, having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste (Wisd. XVI, 20), it is so said to be received by them, as to be known, as, known by them through faith,

through the desire of charity it could be concupisced. Therefore to the Synagogue glorying in the first fathers, these girt with strength are preferred, so that while the new lofty summit of the elect is beheld, by no means she may vainly glory further. And because from the discumbency of the holy Church the food of life is never taken away, insinuating as well the future as the past, she says:

(Vers. 6.) Until the barren hath borne many: and she that had many children is weakened.

16. Who is the barren, if not the holy Church, as we have already said more widely above in the type of Anna? What is it therefore the hungry to be filled, until the barren hath borne, if not until the end of the world to possess the bread of life? Which also he himself repromises, saying: Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. XXVIII, 20). For they are not unless hungry whom the holy Church brings forth. Therefore until she brings forth, the hungry are filled, because even to the end of the world she generates sons to God, who while they believe the Redeemer to have come in the flesh, eat the bread of life, which they desire, and are filled with fulness. But until the barren bears many, she who had many sons is weakened. To be weakened to the Synagogue is to not be able to bear by the institution of the old law. For she who lost the faith of her former husband, now bears to the devil and not to God. But it is well said: She who had many sons, because while in the truth of the Scriptures she erudited the people 50

subject to her anciently to concupisce the advent of the coming Redeemer, from the embrace of the heavenly spouse she brought forth sons. But now she who had sons is weakened, and has no sons. She indeed exhibits the Scriptures to her auditors, but because she denies the Redeemer, she never generates sons to God. She is therefore said to be weakened, to whom spiritual fecundity is denied. And because as well the repulsion of the Synagogue as the election of gentility were made by the incomprehensible judgment of God, it follows:

(Vers. 6-8.) The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he humbleth and he exalteth. He raiseth up the needy from the dust, and lifteth up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory.

17. He responds as if to someone astonished by the rejection of such an elect nation, saying: Why do you seek a reason in these things, which the highest reason does incomprehensibly? Which kind of questioning the excellent teacher also rebuking, says: O man, who are you that reply against God? Does the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why have you made me so? Or has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor (Rom. 9:20, 21)? It is such, therefore, as if he should say: Because the Lord of all is rightly known, let us feel that his work, both in the rejection of Judea and in the election of the

gentiles, is to be venerated and not discussed. The Lord indeed kills, because by an incomprehensible judgment he separates the once elect people of the Jews from the knowledge of the truth, and damns them forever. He makes alive, because he receives the gentiles to the acknowledgment of his only-begotten temporally through faith, and leads them eternally to contemplate his glory. He brings down to hell, because by his strict judgment the avenging Gehenna receives those to be punished forever who by the fault of perfidy divide themselves from the veneration of the Redeemer. He brings back from hell, because he receives the gentile people approaching devotedly to the faith of his Son, for whom the immense obscurity of error existed like a deep prison of the abyss. He makes poor and makes rich, because he both despoils the rejected Judea of spiritual virtues, and adorns the elect gentility both with the price of faith and with the splendors of good works. He is also said to humble and to exalt. For indeed the Synagogue, by receding from the Redeemer, laid down the heights of her exaltation, and the holy Church, by venerating the Redeemer, rose from the depth of infidelity where she had lain cast down, into the height of right faith and the celsitude of Christian power. Therefore because Judea despised the Son of God and the gentiles merited him, rightly is the former believed to have been humbled, and the latter exalted. It follows: Raising up the needy from the dust, and lifting up the poor from the dunghill,

that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory.

18. By the needy and poor the gentile people is understood, who is said to be raised from the dust and lifted from the dunghill, because when he is received into the faith of the Redeemer, both his smallest and his more serious sins are forgiven. For because dust is easily shaken off, and those whom dung pollutes are horribly defiled, dust signifies lighter sins, and dung signifies more serious ones. It is also well said that the needy is raised from the dust, and the poor is lifted from the dunghill. Indeed he was sleeping in those things from which he could be raised by a light touch of grace. But in the others he was lying, because, having fallen into more serious things, he was in need of the hand of great help. But now let us hear to what height he is preferred, who as a needy man is raised from the dust, and who as a poor man is lifted from the dunghill.

19. That he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory. For who are designated as princes in this place if not the holy apostles? Concerning which princes indeed it is said to God through the Psalmist: You shall make them princes over all the earth, they shall be mindful of your name, O Lord (Psalm 44:17, 18). What is it that the poor man sits with princes, if not because the order of preachers, elected from the gentiles, obtains the height of apostolic authority in the holy Church? Indeed he sits with princes, because from the throne of heavenly magisterium he exhibits the doctrine of salvation. And he holds the throne of

glory, because he scatters the odor of good fame to those whom he excels in dignity. Or certainly he holds the throne of glory and sits with princes, because he both radiates with the honor of sublimity and shines with miracles. But how he who is raised to such sublime dignity ought to use it, he indicates when he subjoins: (Vers. 8.) For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them he hath set the world.

20. The poles of the earth are the extremities of the earth. But by the name of poles he wished those very preachers elect from the gentiles to be designated. The extremities of the earth indeed they are called, because from a certain vile and abject gentility they are produced. Who indeed are said to be the poles of the Lord for the mortification of their own will. The Lord's indeed they are, because they seek not their own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. But while they are said to be the Lord's, a certain singular sanctity is designated in them. But they who are the Lord's, let them see that the world is placed upon them, not under them. For what is designated by the name of the world if not the subject fulness of the faithful of the holy Church? Upon the poles of the earth indeed God hath set the world, because preachers to this end are preferred to the holy Church, that they may relieve their infirmity, and carry the weak also to the heavenly country, as a superimposed burden. Therefore they ought not to always look upon themselves as prelates, but sometimes subject, so that by discipline they may preside to coerce vices, but by estimation and

obedience of ministry they may often be subject to them to whom they preemine by the care of prelacy. And because great are the burdens which preachers sustain, she subjoins and says:

(Vers. 9.) He will keep the feet of his saints,

21. As if she should say: Among so immense burdens they would fall, if the Lord did not keep their feet. The feet indeed of his saints are the affections of minds. Which indeed are kept by the Lord, because by them the grace of wondrous devotion is infused, from which they bear so great a burden willingly. To keep the feet of the saints indeed the Lord is said, because they would flee the mass of so great a weight, if charity infused from above did not lighten this intolerably heavy thing for them. They can also be designated by the appellation of feet the states of fortitude. But the Lord keeps the feet of his saints, when he strengthens them with wondrous fortitude, that among so immense burdens they may by no means fall. And because he is said to keep not a foot, but feet, what do we understand in both feet of the saints, if not fortitude and humility? Lest indeed we fall, we consist in both feet. For whoever preside over faithful flocks, in the way, by which they tend to the supernal country, sometimes prosperous, sometimes adverse things they find. For the prosperous things themselves, because they excite elation to the mind, greatly impugn it to a fall; nevertheless lest the elect mountain fall, hence it strives to subsist by the foot of fortitude, thence it consists by the foot of humility. Firm indeed state between either temp-

tation it would retain, if by so solid humility it consisted, that no prosperity should elevate this, no adversity should cast it down. 52 What is it therefore that is said: He will keep the feet of his saints, if not because weak is all the virtue of man without the help of the Creator? Weak indeed is our humility, while it is stroked by the favor of prosperity, it is prostrated by the impulse of inept joy. Weak is our fortitude, while it is impinged by adversity, it is lightly overcome. But by sad things we are elided, by joyful things enervated, when almighty God deserts us to ourselves, not when he impends the help of his protection. She says therefore: He will keep the feet of his saints, because almighty God aids our infirmity in bearing the burdens of our subjects, so that neither adverse things may wear us down, nor joyful things seduce us. Then indeed our feet are kept by the Lord, when, strengthened by divine help, we contemn the obviating joyful things of the world, we dread no adverse things, when with stable patience we bear evils willingly and with unshaken humility we refrain a sublime mind from vain delectation.

22. But the feet of the saints can be understood as the faith and love of the Redeemer. By which feet indeed they walk in steps, when the faithful out of faith follow with love him whom they believe. These feet indeed he asked to be kept for himself by the Lord, who prayed, saying: Upon my high places set me, that I may conquer in his brightness (Habac. III, 19). He is set upon the high places, to whom the divinity of the Redeemer

is revealed. And in his brightness he conquers, because while he is illustrated by the rays of his brightness, all the temptations of the malign spirit are destroyed. He indeed holds his feet set in the mountain, who is arduous in the contemplation of truth, and accensed by the love of him whom he believes the Only-begotten of the highest Father. Upon the high places indeed Peter was set, who when he confessed to the Lord, saying: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, forthwith heard: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven (Matt. XVI, 16, 17). For founded by faith, accensed by charity, him whom he loved he also preached. Well therefore concerning the reprobate it is subjoined:

(Vers. 9.) And the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

23. For who are understood by the wicked in this place, if not the Jews, who are extraneous from the piety of true faith, and bloody by the death of the Redeemer? Concerning whom it is rightly said: They shall be silent in darkness, because the saints set upon the high places confess the Redeemer of the world, whom they behold in the brightness of divine majesty, with eternal praises. In darkness therefore the wicked are silent, because the Jews therefore do not preach the Redeemer, that that ineffable brightness of divinity does not illustrate them. For it is written: Let the wicked be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord (Isai. XXVI, 10). Looking indeed upon them damned in these darknesses,

John says: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (John I, 5). Hence David not wishing, but prophesying, says: Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and their back bow thou down always (Psal. LXVIII, 24). In darkness therefore the wicked are silent, because although the Jews proffer the words of divine Scripture in the praises of God, while they deny the Son, they consecrate no obsequies of voices to God the Father. For he is silent to God, who, praising the Father, is silent of the praise of the Only-begotten. But he whom crucified they despise, when he shall come as judge they shall be terrified. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 9, 10.) Because no man shall prevail by his own strength, the adversaries of the Lord shall fear him.

24. But now he is hard in infidelity, strong in error, and him whom he contemns to believe God, he does not fear to blaspheme audaciously. Like a man indeed now he cannot be overcome, but then like a man by no means shall he be strengthened, when he who was crucified by their snares 53 shall be beheld in his majesty. Then his adversaries shall fear, when they shall behold all things to be moved by the virtue of the crucified, when all things to be submitted to his judgment, when through the high heavens they shall hear the thundering judgments of their eternal damnation. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 10.) And upon them shall he thunder in the heavens.

25. For who are designated by the name of heavens in this place, if not the holy apostles? To which heavens indeed the Lord repromising the glory of his sublimity, says: You shall sit upon seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. XIX, 28). The Lord indeed insinuating the thunders of these heavens to the Jews, says: They shall be your judges (Luke XI, 19). Upon the wicked Jews therefore then he will thunder in the heavens, because from the holy apostles then they will hear the terrible judgments of their damnation, so that by their examination they may receive the sentence of eternal death, who preaching humbly the goods of eternal life they afflicted with persecutions. But because these things ought to be understood of the last judgment, it follows:

(Vers. 10.) The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.

26. What are the ends of the earth, if not the lasts of this world? But the Lord judges the ends of the earth, so that the sentence of his equity may leave nothing unpunished or unremunerated, because while he concludes the extremes in judgment, he leaves nothing to be discussed.

(Vers. 10.) Then he shall exalt the horn of his Christ.

27. When he shall receive all the elect into the eternal contemplation of his Only-begotten, that he may preside over them with that eternal and ineffable Majesty, who while they lived in the peregrination of the present life were not with him. Then he shall exalt the horn of his Christ, when the sublimity of the Redeemer shall be

beheld in his celsitude 54. Concerning this sublimity it is said through John: We shall see him as he is (I John III, 2). For the power or kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is always equal; but then it is said to be exalted, when we shall be such that we may prevail to look upon his sublimity; for whatever the human mind can now feign to itself concerning that sublimity, is altogether nothing in comparison of that glory. For it is written concerning it: That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him (Isai. LXIV, 4; I Cor. II, 9). First therefore the empire is given to Christ, then his horn shall be exalted, because then the celsitude of his sublimity is beheld, when our nature also is lifted up from the bottom of its corruption, when by rising again it receives the integrity of its renovation, by which it may prevail to contemplate the preeminent light of the Redeemer.

28. But if any one wishes the kingdom to be understood by the horn, by the kingdom of Christ the holy Church is designated. Which horn indeed shall be exalted, because our lowest things shall be brought to the equality of angels. Wherefore also the Lord says in the Gospel concerning the elect: They shall be as the angels of God in heaven (Matt. XXII, 30). Concerning this sublimity of his horn he again says: Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father (Ibid. XIII, 43). The horn of Christ therefore shall be exalted, because the holy Church shall be extolled in the eternal contemplation of

her Redeemer; and she who now in this valley of misery is depressed by the punishment of her deposition, death then being absorbed, renovated by the summit of eternal joy, shall be lifted up. But these things we have already brought forth by typical explanation, it remains that we express them morally in the following volume.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

53 1. In the superior book, while we discussed the text of sacred history morally, we placed the fecundity of Anna in the perfection of the highest contemplation, because to conceive for the mind is to rejoice ineffably concerning the highest contemplation of almighty God, but to bear is to not be able to hide the ensigns of conceived charity in the mind. But now, what is it to say a canticle to the bearing one, if not to preach the Creator, whom she ineffably loves, with true proclamations? She says therefore:

(I Kings II, 1.) My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord.

2. But she who ate and drank, who had a bitter mind, who wept largely, who vowed a vow, because that mind can worthily praise almighty God, which by worthy agonies has arrived at the heights of his charity, she indeed by daily use has learned to contemn all things; and while she casts away all created things from her intention, she rejoices so much the more in the vision of eternal majesty, by how much the species of any

creature does not prevail to retain her in its love. She therefore says: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, who, all things being contemned, loves him alone. Into this affection indeed he had come, who said: For what have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? (Psal. LXXII, 25). Hence rejoicing in God, he says: Thy face, thy face, O Lord, will I seek (Psal. XXVI, 3). Hence the spouse in the Canticles asks, saying: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth (Cant. I, 1). While therefore she says: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, what else 54 than that she glories to have inhered in his kisses whom she ardently loves? And therefore she alone says these things, who experienced knows what the force of love is in the nuptial chamber of the spouse. Illustrated indeed by all the victories of passions, and preferred by the summit of virtues, she arrived at that sublimity from which through the joy of wondrous devotion and exultation she placed her heart in God. And because she says her heart, what else did she assert than the liberty of her mind? The reprobate indeed do not have their own hearts, because the devil possesses them. Whence also concerning the traitor it is said: When the devil had now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him (John XIII, 2). For if Judas, and not the devil, possessed his heart, he himself rather would place good in it than the devil evil. To which contrary the elect man speaks, saying: I carry my soul in my hands (Job. XIII, 14). For what else are the hands of the elect than the power of internal liberty? What

is it therefore for him to carry his soul in his hands, if not to retain the glory of internal liberty in power? As often therefore as we gravely transgress, we do not have our heart. Wherefore also Jeremiah reproaching the gravely transgressing Judaic people, says: Hear, O foolish people, and without understanding (Jerem. V, 21). Hence again converted another prophet confesses to God, saying: Thy servant hath found his heart (II Kings VII, 27). She says therefore: My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord, that she might assert the liberty of the mind, without which she could not worthily praise God. It follows:

(Vers. 1.) My horn is exalted in my God.

55 3. In the horn the intention of the elect mind is designated, which is wondrously extolled when rejoicing it arrives at him who consists over all things. Whence also she asserts her horn to be exalted not in some other, but in God. For he who loves passing goods, his intention indeed is depressed, not exalted, because it is fixed in the bottom where it is located by desire. Hence it is that the Lord says in the Gospel: Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also (Matt. VI, 21; Luke XII, 34). Therefore the Lord wished to exalt our horn, when he said: Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven (Matt. VI, 20, 33). They had an exalted horn to whom Paul conformed himself, saying: Our conversation is in heaven (Philip. III, 20). But he who loves heavenly things only, if he knows not to taste that sweetness of internal delectation, although he be greatly exalted, yet he has not arrived at the sublimity of this exalta-

tion. He therefore is sublime with this exaltation, who profiting through the increments of virtues, has obtained the sublimity of the highest contemplation, not only that he may perfectly love heavenly things, but also that by the perfection of love he may rest in the sole contemplation of almighty God. He has his horn exalted in God, who enjoys the high vision of internal light, in which he glories with a certain familiar singularity. Wherefore she says not, In our God, but in my God. For she says my concerning him whom she familiarly and singularly loves. At what dignity of divine familiarity he certainly had arrived, who said: Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, and I will exalt thee (Psal. CXVII, 28). Hence Isaiah says reproving the incredulous: Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? (Isai. VII, 13). Whose horn therefore by exaltation is lifted up in God, singularly confesses her God, because that highest infusion of divine sweetness makes the exalted mind both susceptible of itself and greatly familiar. It follows:

(Vers. 1.) My mouth is enlarged over my enemies.

4. Who are the enemies of the elect mind, if not malign spirits? What is it therefore to have an enlarged mouth over enemies, if not to reprobate all the persuasions of malign spirits by the most ample largeness of grace infused in itself? Narrow indeed does he have a mouth, who prevails not to go against all the frauds of malign spirits by the consideration of reason. The mouth indeed

of the mind is its reason, and to speak to deliberate. For the mouth is filled when the reason of the mind by grace infused in itself is lifted up into the contemplation of the highest truth. Indeed to be filled is to him to be imbued by the illustration of the highest truth. There indeed he learns, both what he should eternally appetize, and what he should temporally contemn. And because the highest truth is love, by the subtilty of truth the elect soul is lifted up, and is inflamed by the charity of that thing which it has learned, and keeps the magistery so much the more strictly, by how much the more fervently the force of love enviscerates it to itself. To whom doubtless although malign spirits suggest evils, by the opening of an enlarged mouth they are confounded, because, instructed by the truth of the highest wisdom, and accensed by the torches of the highest love, it has now an immense light of wisdom against the suggestion of error, it has also ineffable charity against the offered pomp of this world. In the immensity of light it sees what it should reprobate, but through the force of the highest charity it loves to reprobate the inept things which it knows. Through wisdom it reprehends suggested evils, but in the virtue of charity it redargues them when caught. The mouth therefore she enlarges over her enemies, because from the abundance of reason she deliberates many things against demons; and the more acutely she destroys their objections, in that she acknowledges in sublime things that

whence she reprobates suggested evils. Whence forthwith insinuating the cause, she says:

56 Because I have joyed in thy salvation.

5. Which indeed is such as if she should say: Because my horn is exalted in my God. This certainly is to rejoice in the salvation of God, to have an exalted horn in one's God. Which is not taken concerning any joy of salvation, but concerning that most perfect joy, by which the elect and perfect soul rejoices in the spouse after the manner of a bride. Concerning which joy doubtless David beseeches, saying: Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and confirm me with a principal spirit (Psal. L, 14). She therefore who glories herself to have an enlarged mouth over her enemies, is described to have first rejoiced in the salvation of God, because that blessed mind will be able validly to reprobate the persuasions of malign spirits, which being sublimely assumed into the divinity of the Redeemer through contemplation, receives from him both magnitude of wisdom and fullness of charity. Whom indeed she proclaims with worthy praises, saying:

(Vers. 2.) There is none holy as is the Lord; for neither is there any other beside thee, and there is none strong like our God.

6. For with these voices of Hannah every elect soul cries this to the Redeemer in praise, which it believes from him in gift. But from this order of pious confession an order is intimated, by which we may follow those same goods of the gift which she brought forth serially. Therefore the Lord is asserted to be holy and strong, by whom we are

sanctified, led to rest, and glorified. We receive sanctification from the Lord in the virtue of regeneration; to be, however, that is rest from the mutability of this corruption, in the termination of exile, fortitude in the triumph of resurrection. The first therefore of these gifts we follow in this life, when the soul of each of the elect is in the flesh, but both yet placed in the agony of work; the following however in the soul alone without the flesh, after the life of the flesh, and already assumed from the labors of this life; the last indeed, in flesh and soul, but both already renewed through the glory of eternity. First therefore he is called holy, because to those regenerated through the laver of salvation the charity of God is infused in our hearts, by whose grace we are prepared for the goods of the eternal country, so that while this life glides away through the time of its decursion, that life may receive us, of whose joy the souls of the elect departing hence may possess without fear of death. Then to be is ascribed to him, because secure we expect the day of our consummation, namely the clarity of the ultimate resurrection, while in that gift of accepted rest we learn not to fear the discussion of the extreme examination, but to expect the joy of promised glory. But in the last place he is asserted strong, because in the joy of the future resurrection our infirmities are corroborated, when the flesh rises from the dust; but that same dust of our flesh translated into the glory of perpetual incorruption, returns no more to the misery of its fragility. But it is also to be noted because in these

three we are led from one to another; but when he who receives this which he had not begins to have what was not a habit, he loses not what he had before. For when we are led from sanctification to rest, and from the rest of the soul we are led to the strength of eternal incorruption, both the sanctification of charity is increased to us in that rest, and rest and love excresce greatly in the resurrection. For each soul conjoined through love beholding its Creator in so great gifts, let it say with the voices of Hannah how well the gift of perfect regeneration and the force of love savors to it. Let it say: There is none holy, as is the Lord. Let it say how better a gift to it is the promise of rest in the hour of its transit: Neither is there any other beside thee. Let it say how optimum a pleasing reward to it is its ultimate renovation, in the joy of its perfect spirit and glorified flesh. Let it say: And there is none strong, like our God. And it is to be noted because Hannah speaks this in the song of prayer. For to the elect mind it is to ask these things in the song, with joy to desire gifts so grand. For to it to ask is to desire, and to joy to sing. But she who so joyfully beholds the gifts of her dignity, how strongly she exprobrates occult enemies becomes known. For it follows, and says:

(Vers. 3.) Multiply not to speak sublime things glorying, let old things recede from your mouth.

7. For malign spirits speak lofty and old things, when they suggest to the faithful that the high things which are seen of this world are to be appetized. He therefore who has already learned to exalt his horn in God, who knows how to be

held in the joy of Majesty, whatever is offered to him of the blandishment of the gliding world, he despises by reprobaching, saying: Do not multiply to speak lofty things, boasting: let old matters depart from your mouth. And if she should speak openly, and say: By this those things which are offered displease me, by which through desire I see other things which please me greatly.

8. Which indeed to say, because it belongs to him who is already acknowledged fit for the ministry of preaching, aptly also against arrogant wise men, and against negligent professors of holy life, these things protracted are perceived. For he speaks lofty things boasting, who through the knowledge which he has received glories sublimely to understand. But he speaks old things, who, the eloquence of holy Scripture being postponed, is occupied with secular words. It is said therefore to the arrogant: Do not speak lofty things, boasting. By which words indeed it is shown that he does not prohibit the manner of speaking, but the affection of intention. As if she should say openly: speak lofty things, but flee to glory concerning that which is called high. Whence also Paul piously admonishes the disciple, saying: Be not highminded, but fear (Rom. XI, 20). He did not say Speak not high things, but Be not highminded; as also here it is not said Speak not lofty things, but Speak not boasting, because sacred eloquence must be sought out deeper, but the deeper seeking profits, he ought to coerce himself from the fastuousness of vain glory through the custody of humility. It is said

also to those speaking idly: Let old matters depart from your mouth. For old things are the words of the world, because while the mind of the speaker is fixed in them by intention, he is despoiled of the decorum of his devotion. Wherefore they ought not to speak lofty things boasting, and why old things ought to depart from their mouth, this cause demonstrates, which is subjoined:

(Vers. 3.) For God is the Lord of sciences.

9. Let the knowing and arrogant therefore hear that he himself is not the lord of sciences, but God. For rightly glorying he would say, if of the knowledge by which he swells, not almighty God, but he himself had existed lord. Let us also hear, when we speak the words of the world, that God is the Lord of sciences. For now the knowledge not only of the New, but also of the Old Testament innovates the minds of the elect; for he came who should say: Behold I make all things new (Isai. XLIII, 19). Since therefore we have so many new things which we can speak, we by no means prevail to speak old things without fault. Let old things therefore depart from our mouth, so that when the fault of damned oldness is restrained even from speech, we may pass over into the beauty of the new man. Which indeed if we contemn, let us hear:

(Vers. 3.) And to him are thoughts prepared.

10. As if from a lesser fault, comparison being understood, 58 he should terrify us, saying: Hence let those speaking idly think how they ought to fear the fault of speech, if he to whom by speaking it is offended, keeps even the excesses of

thoughts to the examination of his judgment. Let the arrogant likewise hear what follows:

(Vers. 4.) The bow of the mighty is overcome, and the weak are girt with strength.

11. For already in the allegorical exposition we have said that unclean spirits are designated by the appellation of these strong ones. Who doubtless because they fell by being proud from heavenly glory, are aptly proposed for a terror to elated doctors, that they may now think humbly of themselves by so much as they contemplate even angels fallen from supernal glory through the appetite of vain glory. Which also we recall our Redeemer to have done in elated disciples, who when they boasted to have demons subject to them, forthwith heard from him: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven (Luke X, 18). The bow therefore of the strong is the pride of malign spirits. But they are called strong, either because they felt great things of themselves, or because they overcome the human race by the impetus of great temptations. Which bow indeed while impious intention bent, it studied to cast the darts of malice above itself against the Creator. I will place, said their prince, my seat to the North, I will be like the Most High (Isa. XIV, 13, 14). But the bow of the strong was overcome, because God resisted the pride of apostate spirits, precipitated them from heaven, stripped them of the conditional glory of virtue, that in fallen angels man might learn what he should fear. For what will become of an earthen vessel, if God does not spare even golden ones full of the fetor

of pride? Whence also Peter speaks in his Epistle, saying: God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment (II Pet. II, 4). As if therefore an elect and humble preacher should say to the proud: That you may cease from elation, look upon the punishments of due damnation in angels conformable to you, namely fallen ones.

12. And proposing whom they ought to imitate, she says: And the weak are girt with strength. If on account of the presumption of estimation evil angels are called strong, the appellation of weak rightly convenes to blessed spirits, who presuming nothing of themselves, are subject to the virtue of their maker by perpetual humility. The weak are girt with strength, because, by the merit of voluntary subjection, the holy angels are conjoined to their Creator by the bond of internal love. To whom aptly the name of girding agrees, because anyone girded, by that girdle with which he is girded, is retained from every part, because namely those most blessed spirits are so solidated in eternity, that they can never fall from it. Hence it is that an angel is sent to Daniel preaching in Babylonia, who is asserted to be girded with fine gold (Dan. X, 5). Hence it is that John in the Apocalypse beheld the angel with whom he had colloquy girded about the breasts with a golden zone. But because the same blessed spirits rose from the merit of humility into the glory of love, but because they have the same glory in the embrace of eternity, and have it not in

the fear of loss, they are indeed ineffably glorious, but that ineffable glory they can never lose. That therefore he may cease to glory, let the arrogant hear: The bow of the mighty is overcome. And that the damned fault of pride being left they may profit in humility, it is said to him: The weak are girt with strength. For strength is bestowed on the weak, when by the merit of subjection the virtue of supernal charity is infused into the meek. We are girded also when we are prepared for the ministry of the word. Well therefore the weak girded with strength are preferred 59 to those glorying in lofty speech, because those spirits who are sent into ministry, for the sake of them who receive the inheritance of salvation, before they were girded to the ministry were humble. For infirmity is recorded before, but after the girding of strength. These indeed girded for us Paul insinuates, saying: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation (Heb. I, 14)? Concerning whom the prophet also speaks, saying: Thousands of thousands ministered to him (Dan. VII, 40). As if therefore she should say: First acknowledge yourselves, and so prepare yourselves for the salvation of others, because the good of preaching is then well fulfilled, when the preacher who is sublime in word is busy to be humble in ministry. But because she reproves proud and arrogant preachers by speaking, she subjoins, saying:

(Vers. 5.) They that were full before have hired out themselves for bread, and the hungry are filled.

13. Those are filled before who, while they receive the foods of tumor in the refection of the mind, cannot take the delights of holy virtues, as if already full of food. But nevertheless they hire themselves out for bread, because in the Scriptures which they understand they think themselves to receive the spiritual gifts of virtues according to the magnitude of wisdom. But they cannot be filled, because they can by no means add the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the repletion of arrogance. For the holy spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will not abide when iniquity cometh in (Wisd. I, 5). Hence also it is written: God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace (I Pet. V, 5). In vain therefore they desire to receive the things which are of God, who in that they are proud render the bestower of gifts adverse to themselves. They cannot therefore be filled, because they do not obtain the gifts of spiritual graces. But who are the hungry, if not those empty of the foods of vices, fasting from tumor? The hungry therefore are filled, because holy men endowed with the citadel of humility, while they do not feel high things of themselves, merit the high gifts of virtues. For through the good of humility, they become the seats of the Holy Spirit, whom while they receive remaining in themselves, they are more fully filled with his gifts. Whence also through the Prophet the Lord says: Upon whom doth my spirit rest, if not upon

him that is humble, and quiet, and that trembleth at my words? (Isa. LXVI, 2). Greatly therefore are the hungry filled, because in the fulness of gifts the Holy Spirit rests upon the humble.

14. Which nevertheless can be said not inconveniently against negligent ministers of the sacred altar and audacious receivers of the Lord's body. But those were filled before, and saturated with the food of vices, who hire themselves out for bread, because they prepare the body for the reception of the Eucharist. Who doubtless eat, and cannot be filled, because although they receive the sacrament with the mouth, they are by no means filled with the virtue of the sacrament. From that virtue of the sacrament therefore they fast, because they had been filled before. For they do not receive the fruit of salvation in the eating of the saving host, who bear in mind those flagitious acts with which they had filled themselves. They are not filled therefore, except the hungry, because fasting perfectly from vices they receive divine sacraments in the fulness of virtue. And because even elect men cannot be without sin, what remains, if not that they endeavor daily to be evacuated from the sins with which human fragility does not cease to maculate them? For he who does not daily exhaust what he transgresses, although the sins which he gathers are very small, little by little the soul is filled, and they worthily take away from it the fruit of internal saturation. Paul insinuating us to evacuate from this repletion, says: Let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chal-

ice (I Cor. XI, 28). For what is it in this place 60 to prove, if not, the wickedness of sins being evacuated, to exhibit oneself proved and pure to the Lord's table? Concerning the filled he also subjoins: For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. Therefore we who transgress daily, let us daily run to the laments of penitence, because that alone is the virtue which evacuates what fault coadunates in the belly of the soul. And then truly the hungry are filled, because the more studiously we are cleansed by the lament of penitence, the more abundantly we receive the fruit of divine grace in spiritual refection. Which doubtless saturation of the elect, because it extends even to the end of the world, she subjoins, and says:

(Vers. 5.) Until the barren hath borne many: and she that had many children is weakened.

15. Who therefore by the appellation of this barren one is designated, if not she concerning whom Paul speaks, saying: But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free: which is our mother (Galat. IV, 26, 27)? Whence also a little after he coadapted the vaticination of Isaiah to her, saying: For it is written: Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband (Isa. LIV, 1). But how is Jerusalem barren, namely the holy society of blessed angels, understood, when according to the signification of its voice concerning the eternal vision of peace it is fecund with perennial joy? But if she is the mother

of elect men, barren indeed was she when the human race had perished in Adam. For as it were she could not brought forth, when she lost him in whom she ought to have extended the bosom of her fecundity by the persuasions of the fallen spirit. For so long are the weak girded until the barren bears, because by the valid ministry of humble angels we need them so long, until as many as are predestinated to life of the human race, even unto the end of the world they are gathered. For the Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds (Matt. XXIV, 31; Mark XIII, 27). For to gather them then they are to be sent, in whose salvation they are daily sent, because they will not gather to the kingdom, unless to those to whom through the strength of their girding they now afford help. Even unto the end of the world the hungry are filled. But well also is this barren one said to bear many, because not all men, but the elect only are brought to eternal joys. Aptly therefore she is also said to bear, because by the ministry of angels we are taught to seek supernal things, that we may prevail to arrive at their goods. But when this barren one bears, she who had many children is weakened, because by how much the fuller lucre of the elect through the ministries of angels the supernal kingdoms receive, the children of this Babylonia are diminished. For she is as it were weak in her bearing, who by the inordinate love of passing things, as she is wont, can by no means beget children. For everywhere now they preach heavenly king-

doms, which indeed while the minds of the faithful hearing love, while they also seek them by good morals, Babylonia is as it were bound in her bearing, because our mother Jerusalem bears them to God through the orb, whom she has been wont to bear to Gehenna with the weary womb of perdition. Whose strength of the girded nevertheless is not ascribed to themselves, but to him by whom they are girded. Aptly therefore it is subjoined:

(Vers. 6.) The Lord killeth and maketh alive.

16. In which words indeed also an order is to be noted. First indeed it is said to kill, then to make alive, because unless we cease to love the world, we cannot live to God through love, John bearing witness, who says: If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him (I John II, 15). Whence also he who remembered himself killed and made alive, who himself prostrated and erected, 61 spoke, saying: The world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Galat. VI, 14). He lived, but not with the life of the world, because he said: And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me (Ibid., II, 20). Not therefore any of the girded, but the Lord kills and makes alive. Because indeed to be killed and to be made alive is to concupiscene no present things, and to desire eternal things. To whom therefore thanks should be returned concerning these gifts he expounds, saying: The Lord killeth and maketh alive. Whence also the often already named preacher of the gentiles says: Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (I Cor.

III, 7). But by what order almighty God operates these things in the elect, he expounds, saying:

(Vers. 6.) He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again.

17. For that he may mortify, he leads to hell; and that he may vivify, he brings back from hell. For to the almighty God to lead to hell is to terrify the hearts of sinners by the consideration of eternal tortures. To him also to bring back from hell is to lift up the terrified minds of the penitent and those mourning their commissions, by the hope of indeficient life. For then we cease to sin when, our hearts being softened by supernal grace, we dread future torments. And we are brought back from hell when, visited by internal consolation, we respire into the hope of pardon from the lament of penitence. Aptly therefore the Lord is said to lead to hell and to bring back, because human hardness in the preaching of man alone is neither shaken by terror nor raised by love. For if it were of doctors to mortify as many as their preaching touched, they would cease to sin; and if it were of them to vivify, whosoever should hear heavenly things from them, the love of their intimate affection would forthwith accend them to perquire those things with every effort. But now, since they often threaten eternal supplications to sinners, since they preach to them those heavenly goods which they can, and they neither fear supplications nor concupiscite joys, let us cry with the voices of Hannah in the praises of God, and imputing to him also that, by which some through them profit, let us say: The Lord

mortifies and vivifies. The Lord therefore leads to hell, and brings back, because they are able to fear future torments, they to love supernal joys, in whom by those voices which man speaks without, the piety of God operates within. But there is that in which each one may know himself, if he has already been led to hell and brought back, if he has died to the world, he lives to the heavens; for if he is elect, he profits. Concerning the same profit she subjoins:

(Vers. 7) The Lord makes poor and enriches.

18. The rich of the world therefore glory in their large faculty, because by the high and incomprehensible judgment of God heavenly goods are hidden from them. The Lord therefore makes poor, because while he insinuates eternal goods to the elect, they hold themselves so much the poorer, by how much they see themselves driven from true riches. Whence also that king who was most broad in the possession of the world, because the Lord had shown true riches to him, cried to him, saying: Look upon me, and have mercy on me, because I am alone and poor (Psal. XXIV, 16). Hence the prophet Jeremiah, expressing in himself the illumination of each elect, says: I am the man seeing my poverty (Lam. III, 1). Therefore to make poor to the Lord is to excite the minds of the elect in the contemplation of perennial goods to the contempt of all visible things. But to whom he reveals the highest things, he insinuates that the same highest things are to be sought for a long time at the price of labor, let her say because he who makes poor, also en-

riches, because doubtless while we perceive the cognition of heavenly goods from almighty God, we also follow from him the virtue, that we may strive for them with worthy labor. Well therefore is it subjoined:

(Vers. 7.) He humiliates and raises up.

Because in the contemplation of heavenly things they behold how abject they are on earth, but in that same abjection of temporal inopia they raise themselves by the grace of God on the wings of merits to the joys of perennial life. They perceive humility therefore in the estimation of exile, but sublimity in the preparation of holy operation. It follows:

(Vers. 8.) He raises up the needy from the dust, and from the dunghill he lifts up the poor, that he may sit with princes.

20. For dust is the subtle deliberation of illicit thought, which renders that mind foul in which it rests. For what is designated by dung if not the foul audacity of a perpetrated flagitious act? Whence also the prophet beholding the life of carnal men overwhelmed with the mire of foul work, says: The beasts have rotted in their dung (Joel I, 17). By an apt series therefore the gifts of God are numbered in the conversion of flagitious men. For the needy is raised from the dust before the poor from the dunghill; because first the deliberation of unclean thought is cut off from the heart, and afterwards fault is resected from action. Aptly also the needy is said to be raised from the dust, the poor to be lifted up from the dunghill, because deliberating depraved

things within he sleeps from the contemplation of justice, perpetrating illicit things without he lies in iniquity through act. And because already with the strong he attains trophies from malign spirits, the needy raised up and the poor lifted up what he merits he expounds, saying: That he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory.

21. To sit indeed is of one triumphing. Whence also in the Apocalypse of John the Lord shows the dignity of our victory, saying: To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Apoc. III, 21). Which also Paul beholding, numbering the gifts of our raising up and session in the praises of God, says: And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus (Ephes. II, 6). With him therefore princes sit, because they who by his help repress the forces of malign spirits, in their triumph have the dignity of session to whom they dominate from the virtue of him presiding over them. With him also princes sit, because although they are discerned to stand through the body in this aerumna of sliding life, nevertheless they have the seat of merits with the Redeemer in sublime places, from whose conformity of brightness they are not separated even in this valley of foulness. Needy also in things and poor are they who for the Gospel have left all things which they could have in the world. Who certainly that they may be able to sit with princes, ought to be raised from the dust, and lifted up from the dunghill.

For what are the favors of the tongue, what else are the infulae of sliding dignities, if not dust? For they blind that mind from true splendors which they dirty by flattering. And what are perishing riches, and transitory faculties, if not dung to those loving eternal things? For they are dung which holy souls have in the contempt of humility, not in the appetite of desire. Whence also Solomon beholding a rich man of the world saddened in the loss of temporal goods, says: The slothful is stoned with the dung of oxen (Eccli. XXII, 2). As if he should say: From that he sustains the lashes of sorrow, which he who desires to labor for eternal life contemns like dung. Hence Paul says: I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ. From the dust therefore the needy is raised, and from the dunghill the poor is lifted up, when the mind, renouncing the world, whatever was wont to please it 63 from the favors of human tongue, from the honor of dignities, and from the abundance of things, it treads upon, while it looks back only to eternal things, which alone it ardently loves. For to him to be raised, and to be lifted up, is to despise with the sublimity of the mind those things which he leaves in body. And to sit with princes for him is to be present with the citizens of the supernal country through the joy of eternal quiet. Who certainly then holds the throne of glory, because he who presides so sublimely never keeps silent from the praises of his Creator. For admiring this seat of glory the Psalmist speaks to the Lord, saying: Blessed are

they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever (Psal. LXXXIII, 5). This seat of glory Isaiah preaches, saying: Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of praise (Isa. LI, 3). Showing this also holy Tobias says: And all its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones: and Alleluia shall be sung in its streets (Tob. XIII, 22). But let the rescued poor man behold those things which follow, because to the session of princes, to the throne of glory he is not straightway led as soon as he has been lifted up:

(Vers. 8) The pillars of the earth, she says, are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

22. Because by the name of earth sinners are designated in sacred eloquence, the hinges of the earth can conveniently be taken as those in which the world circles through inept desires, and leads from one to another. When therefore we behold converted sinners, let us break out into the praise of the Creator with these voices of Hannah. For as if in other words we then say: Now they have begun to be of the Lord through his grace, who for a long time were held in the wheel of passing things through the concupiscence of the world. And when, the allurements of secular life being already relinquished, they strongly tolerate strong temptations, let us say: He has set the world upon them. For he has set the world upon them, who, before it was imposed upon them, was under them. For they now have him in the burden of temptations, who by flattering them served as if subjected, when they lay down in

it following delights and pleasures. And because they have great temptations from him, who had great delectations in him, it is added:

(Vers. 9.) He shall keep the feet of his saints.

23. By which words indeed the help of divine protection and propitiation is so shown, that the grave perils of temptations are designated. For as if he should say: They sustain so grand temptations from that world to which they had adhered, that he alone suffices for helping who cannot be wanting to his faithful in tribulation. For to keep the feet of his saints, is to corroborate through grace the shaken affections of the elect in temptation, lest they fall. Whence also he who had nodded to a fall, and yet had been conserved by the Lord, the prophet said: But my feet were almost moved, my steps had well nigh slipped (Psal. LXXII, 2). Hence again: I was pushed; and I was overturned that I might fall, and the Lord received me. The Lord is my strength, and my praise, and is become my salvation (Psal. CXVII, 13, 14). And concerning the infirmity of enemies he subjoined, saying:

(Vers. 9.) And the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

24. But what is it that when the Lord is said to keep the feet of the saints, the silence of the wicked is mentioned, unless because we are by no means impelled to the lapse of sin, unless when the perverse temptations of malign spirits are suggested to us? When therefore the Lord keeps our feet, the wicked are silent in darkness, because while we are protected by divine grace,

the unclean spirits can by no means give us the voice by which they may precipitate us. For they are silent in darkness, because they possess the dark hearts of the reprobate, from whose obscurity they dare not proceed to us. But why he should keep the feet of the saints she expounds, saying:

(Vers. 9.) Because not in his own strength shall man be corroborated.

25. As if she should say: Therefore he holds them, because without him they could not stand. For although a man of virtue is acknowledged, in his own strength he has the fear of a fall, he has not the strength of standing, and so many times he falls by concupisciting illicit things, as many times as his internal footsteps are deserted by the Lord holding him. Or indeed was he not a man to whom it was sung in the chorus of young women: Saul has struck a thousand, and David ten thousand (I Reg. XVIII, 7)? Who indeed when among burdens he is left to his own strength, being impelled into the fault of his flesh fell, and experienced in himself that a man has not in himself the state of strength, but the lapse of infirmity. Whence also fearing to slip back, he requests him by whom he ought to be held to standing, saying: Forsake me not utterly (Psal. CXVIII, 8). Let no one therefore deceive himself, as if he should find in himself the strength of standing, because although we often overcome great wars of occult enemies, if we pursue them as if turned into flight by worthily reprobating them in their persuasions, then the fugitive spirits dread not us, but

him whom they behold in us. Or certainly if they fear us also, they certainly fear for this reason, because they see us assumed into the strength of divine grace. Aptly therefore is it subjoined:

(Vers. 10.) The adversaries of the Lord shall dread him, and over them in the heavens he shall thunder.

26. For we are heavens then, when we are lifted up into the altitude of the divine grace presiding over us. And we have thunders against his adversaries, when with the valid voices of holy desires we elide all that breathes upon us from their suggestion. For whatever thunder strikes, it kills. The thunders therefore of the heavens are the perfect desires of the elect. For as it were from the altitude of the heavens sounding terribly they proceed, when from that culmination of mind they strike malign spirits, over which almighty God so presides, that by the love of him presiding it easily overcomes all that the audacity of the enemy suggesting evil things was able to move to battle. But the Redeemer forewarning we know that he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved (Matt. X, 22). By the same Lord also promising, we have learned that in whatever hour the sinner shall be converted, he shall be saved (Ezech. XVIII, 21). In the extremity therefore of her canticle let Anna add, and say whence she may terrify the sinner, say whereby she may render the just man more cautious.

(Vers. 10.) The Lord, she says, shall judge the ends of the earth.

27. She does not say the earth, but the ends of the earth. The ends of the earth indeed are those who have closed the last things of their life with the perpetration of fault. For he who sins, and corrects what he transgresses, is earth through sin, and is not the end of the earth, because by transgressing he has deposited the high things of his redemption, but from the bottom of his deposition before the judgment he has risen again. For he has wept what he has done, and so much the more joyfully sustains the judge to come, by how much in the damnation of earthliness through penitence he himself holds in himself the scourges of vengeance. Because therefore the Lord judges the ends of the earth, let the sinner converted to the Lord not dread prior or middle things. Because also the Lord judges the ends of the earth, let the just man, his justice begun, not presume. For if sudden death intercepts him sliding from that equity from which he can still fall, because in his last things fault is closed, he is judged by the law of the ends of the earth. It follows:

(Vers. 10.) And he shall give empire to his king, and shall exalt the horn of his Christ.

28. This indeed above, because we have referred it to the Redeemer, in the order of this explanation also 65 we do not change. For he himself is our peace, who hath made both one (Ephes. II, 14).

CHAPTER II.

For the divine word follows, and says:

(Vers. 11.) And Elcana went to Ramatha, to his house.

1. Which man indeed, we show to designate the Redeemer of the human race; but his wife Anna, his Church; the boy Samuel, the people of the Gentiles believing; also the city Ramatha, the heavenly country. What therefore is it that after the canticle of his wife Elcana is said to have gone to his city Ramatha, when Anna said the canticle to God after the boy was born, and the Redeemer ascended to the heavens before the holy Church had begotten the Gentile people in faith? Which indeed is sought only by those who are known to know only the corporal presence of our Lord. For did Paul not then have him with him who had ascended to the Father, when he said: Do you seek a proof of Christ that dwelleth in me (II Cor. XIII, 3)? who also confesses saying: As of God, before God and in Christ we speak (II Cor. II, 17). What is it therefore that to the holy Church sometimes he was present through the grace of the gift, sometimes he withdrew himself from her through the dispensation of probation? For he was present, that in the acquisition of the Gentiles he might abundantly pour forth the words of life; but sometimes as if absent he hid himself from her, that, the gift of the word being taken away, she might know what she was without his presence. After the end therefore of the canticle it is said: Elcana went to his house, because the holy Church from his presence preaches high things, who when he withdraws himself from mortals by dispensation, continually represents

himself to the eternal citizens. For that house of his of the supernal citizens, which the Lord inhabits by loving, filling and associating, is eternal society. Into it therefore he goes when he leaves Anna, because he who healthfully withdraws himself from us still profiting, to the perfect and consummated citizens of the eternal country he unceasingly joins and exhibits himself, for this reason that they already proved ought no longer to be proved by his absence. Aptly therefore after the canticle of Anna it is said: Elcana went to his house, because the holy Church, which teaches such sublime things to the elect, as she is always deserted by the pious dispensation of the Lord, so also she does not always have the same high things which she may teach. But many hear the words, detest past malice, and propose works of the correction of life; but when they have ceased to hear, as if they had never heard the same words of life, they return to iniquity. The hearer of the holy Church the Gentile people was devout to hearing, and prompt to working. Aptly therefore it is subjoined:

(Vers. 11.) But the boy Samuel was a minister in the sight of the Lord, before the face of Heli the priest.

2. As if it were openly said: From that which he heard, he studied to please almighty God. Who aptly is called a boy, because although he had undertaken grand things to be done for the defense of our faith, yet in the same generation of faith he was still new. And because he offered a placid ministry to almighty God, he was a

minister in the sight of the Creator. For he is in the sight of the Lord, whom in the oblation of obsequies divine dignation willingly beholds. Fearing greatly to be expelled from which sight of the Lord indeed, one prays, saying: Cast me not away from thy face (Psal. L, 13). In which also vehemently desiring to be received, he reckons with himself the delay of his procrastination, saying: When shall I come, and appear before the face of God (Psal. XLI, 3)? Hence Elijah glories; and says: The Lord lives, in whose sight I stand (III Reg. XVII, 1). Therefore Samuel was a minister in the sight of the Lord, because in the obsequies of the new religion the Gentile people was greatly accepted by almighty God. By which word indeed the repulsion of Judea also is latently intimated, while Samuel alone, in whom the faithful people of the Gentiles is expressed, is said to minister before the Lord. Therefore he alone was in his sight, because indeed the Jewish people had ceased to please him. Both of which the Lord speaks through Malachi. For insinuating the repulsion of Judea, he says: I have no pleasure in you, and I will not receive a sacrifice from your hand (Malach. I, 10). But he who expelled Jewish perfidy from his face, subjoining whom he might willingly behold, says: From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place a clean oblation is offered to my name (Ibid., 11). But it is to be subtly seen what is said: Before the face of Eli Samuel ministered to the Lord, because the order of ancient doctors knew long before by seeing,

and preached by prophesying, the ministry of the preachers of the holy Church, the conversion of the Gentile people, their love and reverence concerning the obsequy of the Redeemer. For he had known him prone in the ministry of the Lord, who said: All the kings of the earth shall adore him, all nations shall serve him (Psal. LXXI, 11). Hence Haggai speaks, saying: The desired of all nations shall come, and the house of the Lord shall be filled with glory (Haggai II, 8). Hence Isaiah says: There shall be a root of Jesse, who shall rise to rule the nations; in him the nations shall hope (Isa. XI, 10; Rom. XV, 12). Hence the Psalmist says: Praise the Lord, all ye nations, and praise him together, all ye people (Psal. CXVI, 1). Hence the patriarch Jacob says: He shall be the expectation of nations (Gen. LIX, 10). Before the face of Eli therefore the boy Samuel was a minister of the Lord, because what the Gentile people afterwards had worthy of God, the order of ancient doctors foresaw through the spirit of prophecy. And immediately concerning those cast off it is subjoined:

(Vers. 12, 13.) Moreover the sons of Eli were children of Belial, not knowing the Lord, nor the office of the priest to the people.

3. You understand they were. For who are the sons of Eli other, if not the Israelites according to the flesh, who knew the sacred Scripture published by the fathers, and yet knew not him whom Scripture had promised? Whom indeed Truth itself in the Gospel reproves, saying: Abraham rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw

it, and was glad (John VIII, 56). And likewise: If you believed Moses, you would indeed believe me also, for he wrote concerning me (Ibid. V, 46). They knew not the Lord therefore, who despised the Redeemer coming in our flesh. Whence he complains through Isaiah, saying: The ox has known his owner, and the ass the crib of his Lord; but Israel has not known me (Isai. I, 3). As if he should say: And I opened the ways of my incarnation to him long before through the prophets, and yet he received not that which I had promised when exhibited. Wherefore also he knew not the office of the priests to the people. For he would know the priestly office, if he should preach that he who had been promised by the law and the prophets had already come for the redemption of the human race. Into whom indeed because not only he believed not, but also became insane by persecuting, he both knew not the Lord and the office of the priests to the people. Whose malice nevertheless would be less, if he who wished not to profit the lesser by preaching the advent of the Redeemer, had feared to harm. It follows therefore, and says:

67 (Vers. 13, 14.) But whosoever had sacrificed a victim, the boy of the priest came, while the flesh was being cooked, and he had a flesh-hook with three teeth in his hand, and he cast it into the kettle, or caldron, or into the pot, or into the pan, and all that the flesh-hook lifted up, the boy took for the priests.

4. For what is it to sacrifice a victim, if not to offer the confession of true faith to almighty

God? And what are the vessels in which the flesh is cooked in sacrificing, if not the minds of the faithful? Which while they believe the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, to be the true Only-begotten of the highest Father, doubtless in these the flesh is cooked which is sacrificed to God through the obsequy of intimate devotion. Who is the boy of the priest other than the people subjected through obsequy to the perfidious pastors of the Synagogue? Who aptly is called a boy, because while he preferred to hold the infirm things of the law according to the letter, he refused to grow into a perfect man through the Gospel. But what is it that he is destined for bringing in the snatching of foods? What is it again that in the violence brought in he is said to hold a three-toothed flesh-hook? But the food of the elect soul is the person of the Redeemer. Which food indeed is cooked in sacred vessels, while through the heat of the Holy Spirit it is prepared for the sweetness of refection in the elect minds. For the flesh is cooked, while through the grace of the Holy Spirit we both firmly believe and efficaciously confess the Dominican humanity assumed into the nature of divinity. Whence also through Moses he insinuates that the flesh of the paschal Lamb is to be eaten, saying: You shall not eat of it anything raw, nor boiled with water (Exod. XII, 9). For to eat of it raw is, beside the grace of the Holy Spirit, to believe our Redeemer to be a pure man. But with water it is cooked when the essence of the Redeemer is ventilated through human wisdom. Therefore the Jews eat

it raw, the heretics boiled with water, because the former deny his divinity, the latter through human wisdom evacuate the sacraments both of his divinity and humanity. Therefore the boy of the priest is sent for taking away the foods of the faithful, because the people of the Jews, expelled from the faith of the Redeemer, vehemently studied to take away the love of his faith from the heart of the faithful. Who aptly is said to have had a three-toothed flesh-hook in his hand, by which he might prohibit the part of the flesh which he could fix to be cooked when drawn out. For the flesh-hook brought in the hand of the boy is the persecution of the Jewish people against the holy Church. And because he tempted to harm the faithful with allurements, pains, and terrors, the flesh-hook had three teeth indeed. But well is it said that what the flesh-hook lifted up the boy took for the priests, because it was a great feasting of the iniquitous prelates, if the crowd of flattering or raging satellites should subvert him whom they had known to stand through confession in the sublimity of our faith. It follows:

(Vers. 14, 15.) Thus they did to all Israel coming to Shiloh, even before they burnt the fat.

5. The fat indeed is the internal richness, in which doubtless that devotion of the mind is expressed, by which the minds of the elect are coupled to their Creator in more perfect charity. Who rightly sacrifice with flesh already cooked, because no one will be able to rise to the sublimity of charity, unless he first loves the mysteries of the incarnate divinity which he believes. For

to believe through the Holy Spirit the humanity of the Lord Jesus assumed into divinity, is to cook the flesh which is sacrificed to God. Before therefore the fat was burnt, 68 the boy studied to snatch away the flesh in all Israel, because the apparitors of the Synagogue thought to overturn the new confessors of Christ before perfect charity should associate them to almighty God. Which the very words of the sacred history more openly indicate, by which it is said: While the flesh was being cooked. By which words indeed not the perfection of cooking, but the preparation is intimated. But the order of this nefarious exaction is shown through those things which follow:

(Vers. 15.) The boy of the priest came and said to him that sacrificed: Give me flesh to cook for the priest; for I will not receive boiled flesh from thee, but raw.

6. He should give raw flesh to the boy, who before persecutors should assert the pure humanity of Christ, and the boy should cook it for the priest, because the Jewish people through the fire of malice should think this, which its prelates should willingly receive in the refection of their mind. Therefore the boy of the priest came, and sought raw flesh, when the Jewish people serving the letter of the law, suggested to the faithful to deny the divinity of the Redeemer. Coming therefore he says: I will not receive boiled flesh from thee, but raw. Because whom the faithful he compelled to confess a pure man, he wished not even to hear to be God. Whose importunity of the people indeed is shown, when sacrilegious words are

doubled in nefarious exaction. For it follows: For I will not receive boiled flesh from thee, but raw. Because he greatly desired to hear Jesus our Lord and Redeemer, not Lord and man, but a pure man only. But those whom he tempted as if imperfect in the flesh, he found perfect. For they who were compelled to deny the divinity of the Redeemer, not only refused to deny the Redeemer, but took care to draw their compellers to life. Whence also it follows:

(Vers. 16.) And he that sacrificed said to him: Let the fat first be burnt today according to the custom, and take to thee as much as thy soul desires.

7. From a bestial appetite indeed he strives to avert the one asking for raw things, who promises him boiled things at his pleasure. As if to the evilly hungering Jews the holy Church should offer a response, and for simple humanity, which they cupiscite to devour through desire, should repromise the food of divinity, saying: First let that be cooked which you may have as an intellect in the Holy Spirit for the refection of life. Or did not the boy of the priest then seek raw flesh, when to him who had been born blind and was illuminated by the Lord it was said: Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner (John IX, 24)? What is it to say, give glory to God, unless that you should not attribute the praises of your cure to this one, because he is not God? and he who is asserted a sinner, is not only denied to be God, but also a just man. To whom indeed he refused to offer the raw flesh which he sought,

he offered boiled, because whom he instantly asserted the author of his salvation, from the shown sign of so great admiration, he showed to be not only a holy man, but true God. But the people who had begun to follow beasts, reason being lost, importunately demanded raw flesh to be exhibited to them. For it follows:

(Vers. 16.) Thou shalt give it now, or else I will take it from thee by force. It follows:

(Vers. 17.) For the sin of the young men was exceeding great before the Lord. And he subjoins the cause by which this sin would be demonstrated to be great, saying:

(Vers. 17.) Because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord.

69 8. A sin is acknowledged to be exceeding great, which is not deleted by the tears of penitence. For the prophet beholding this exceeding great sin of the Synagogue, says: The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, with a point of a diamond (Jerem. XVII, 1). Or certainly the sin was exceeding great before the Lord, because it drew others away to sinning. Wherefore also it is subjoined: Because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord. For they withdrew men from the sacrifice, because they prohibited the hearts of the infirm to proceed to the confession of the right faith. And it is to be noted because they who are withdrawn from the sacrifice are called men, because doubtless if they persisted in the true confession of our faith, the divine word would sign these with the appellation of sons of God. To whom indeed the Lord says through the Psalmist:

I have said you are gods, and all of you sons of the most High, but you shall die like men (Psal. LXXXI, 6, 7). But it follows:

(Vers. 18.) But Samuel was a minister in the sight of the Lord, a boy girded with a linen ephod.

9. A linen garment is known to be subtler than a woolen one. But Samuel is aptly asserted to be clothed with a linen ephod, by whom the order of priests elect from the Gentiles is designated. For in comparison of the legal life the new conversation of the Gospel is the subtilty of linen. For there something animal is precepted, there every one is cursed from whom no seeds of offspring are left in Zion. But in the New Testament, because all things are subtler, whosoever uses its precepts is decorated as if with a more delicate garment of linen: for there the abstinence of marriage is damned, here it is cultivated with wondrous praises; there priests generate carnally, here they bring forth the fruit of spiritual offspring so much more copiously, by how much also through the conjugal good they cannot feel the detriments of pudicity. But well while the garment of Samuel is expounded it is said to have been of linen, that he might openly show the glory of the new priesthood, which should shine with the brightnesses of a new pudicity. But while Samuel is said to be a minister in the sight of the Lord, he is mentioned girded with a linen ephod, because divine obsequies are then well exhibited, when the person of the exhibitor is not defiled with the filths of carnal pleasure; and the gift of ministry is then accepted to God, when through the cleanness of

holy conversation the person of the minister is pleasing to God. And because he profited among the primordia of his novelty, it still follows:

(Vers. 19.) And his mother made him a little coat, which she brought to him when she went up with her husband to sacrifice to the Lord the solemn victim.

10. To sacrifice a victim of the holy Church is to accend the hearts of her auditors into the love of the Creator through the eloquence of preaching. Then therefore a little garment is said to have been brought to Samuel, because while he yet profited through the increments of his novelty, he received from the Church monuments of justice apt for his smallness, with whose splendor he might radiate. It follows:

(Vers. 20.) And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, saying: The Lord render to thee seed of this woman, for the loan which thou hast commended to the Lord.

11. Because in the person of Eli the priest also the good doctors of the ancient people are designated, he is known to have blessed Elkanah and his wife, because doubtless the order of those same ancient doctors foresaw the spiritual coupling of Christ and the holy Church, and with devotion preached the future progeny of their elect worthy of heaven. Which although it was done long before, yet then he became known to have so blessed them, when, the grace of our redemption being already revealed, every faithful one could believe, because our ancient fathers foretold so many goods 70 concerning this reno-

vation. And that the order in which it was done may be acknowledged, it is subjoined:

(Vers. 20.) And they went to their own place.

12. To go into her own place with her husband for the holy Church, is sometimes to flee the molestations of the active life, and to be vacant for the joys of the supernal life through contemplation. For that mother had relinquished the boy for an hour, who said: I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philip. I, 23). Was she with the boy, when the force of love had extolled that same egregious doctor even to the third heaven (II Cor. XII, 2-4)? Was she then with the boy, when received into paradise, he heard words which it is not lawful for man to speak, and was snatched into his own place, because he showed, saying: We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one to come (Hebr. XIII, 14)? But she who went away with her husband into her own place, her maternal bowels compelled her to return to her son. For he spoke and said: To remain in the flesh is necessary for me for your sake (Philip. I, 24). It follows:

(Vers. 21.) The Lord therefore visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bore three sons and two daughters.

13. In the three sons are designated whoever are more perfect of the holy Church, who are known to have always done brave things for the faith of the Trinity. But if the holy Church brought forth only perfect ones, our infirmity could not arrive at the rewards of eternal life. The fragility therefore of two daughters follows the strength

of the sons, because although the holy Church brought forth brave ones against the prideful enemy of the human race, nevertheless even her infirm members are led through the two precepts of charity to the joys of the eternal country. And because whoever at that time had begun to be erudited to the sacerdotal ministry did not always remain in the beginnings of his inchoation, it follows:

(Vers. 21.) And the child Samuel was magnified before the Lord.

14. In which place it is to be greatly noted that Samuel is called a boy and magnified. But also when he is asserted to be magnified, he is recorded to have this encomium of his virtue not in the sight of men, but in the sight of the Lord. Why therefore a boy, if not because he was sublimated to the altitude of perfection? Samuel therefore is said to be a boy and magnified in the sight of the Lord, because the new order of preachers, although it arrived at the altitude of great conversation, did not lose the virtue of its humility. For to be magnified before God would not profit him, if he ceased to be a boy, because humility having been lost, he would not be able to please almighty God from the altitude of conversation. Finally those had already been magnified, who in the name of Jesus cast out demons from the obsessed; but because they had lost the good of their boyhood, truth argues them, saying: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven (Luke X, 18). Hence again denouncing, he says: Unless you be converted, and become as little

children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. XVIII, 3). Because therefore the life of the new preachers is both sublime in merit, and plane through humility, Samuel is aptly asserted to be magnified and a boy. And because from both they are very acceptable to God, he is asserted to have been magnified not simply, but in the sight of the Lord. It follows:

(Vers. 22.) Now Heli was very old, and he heard all that his sons did to all Israel: and how they lay with the women that waited at the door of the tabernacle.

15. In the person of Heli not only the old priesthood, but also the doctrines of the ancient fathers are figured, 71 because from this that he presided in spiritual dignity, he undertook this of duty, that by salutary preaching he might instruct those for whom he offered placable hosts to the Lord. What is it therefore that Heli is asserted to be an old man, if not because the force of heavenly mandates is infirm in the hearts of the reprobate Jews? Heli indeed was a young man as long as the sacred Scripture obtained the force of great authority in the elect of the Synagogue, because evidently he had received the promises of the Redeemer to come, and expected him with great desire. Heli therefore grew old then, when Judea lost the devotion of observing the promise, so that she might discern the Redeemer desired by her fathers proving himself by miracles before her, and entirely blind might doubt of the presence of truth in so great a light of his. He is also said to have been very old, that surely all the force

of faith in the Synagogue may be taught to have withered. But truly we say that if Heli was very old, he lived entirely weak. For what was it then for the old man to live by Scripture, if not to minister a very weak aspiration of faith to the Synagogue? He could indeed be a very old man and live, when the hearts of the Jews were nodding that they should neither believe the Lord Jesus to be the true Redeemer, nor openly condemn him as if a blasphemer. For the evangelist John shows the debility of this old age, saying: Some said: He is a good man. And others said: No, but he seduceth the people (John VII, 12). Hence the Jews themselves bringing forth the astuteness of their callidity, say: How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly (Ibid. X, 24). Hence also they say: Master, we would see a sign from thee (Matt. XII, 38).

16. But Heli, being very old, heard all that his sons did to all Israel. He certainly heard these things because he knew them. For what we have known, we hold enclosed within the halls of memory. Indeed, the consulted sacred oracles bring forth from within themselves all the perfidy of the Jews written without, and show it as if preserved by memory for a long time. Amos, as if ascribing the knowledge of this hearing to Heli, says: The Lord will not do a word upon the earth, which he shall not have revealed to his servants the prophets (Amos III, 7). Hence Habakkuk confesses to the only-begotten God, saying: Lord, I have heard thy hearing, and I was afraid; I have considered thy works, and I was terrified; in the

midst of two animals thou shalt be made known (Hab. III, 1, from the LXX interpretation). For the ancient teachers of the Synagogue to hear the crimes of the sons is to foreknow them. But what he foreknew, he explains, for he says: All that his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women, who waited at the door of the tabernacle. For to sleep with Jewish women is to be polluted by various heresies. Moreover, those women are rightly recorded to wait at the door of the tabernacle. For what is the door of the tabernacle, if not the letter of the spiritual law? But while the Jews understand the sacred Scripture according to the letter alone, they established heresies there, whence they could have entered into the secret of the true faith. For just as through the door to the interior of the tabernacle, so through the letter of the sacred Scripture one enters into the spiritual cognition of the Redeemer. Because therefore Judea is deceived through the observance of the letter, the women are recorded to wait at the door, not within the tabernacle. And because in all the Scriptures the Jews contradict our Redeemer, not one woman is said to have been there, but many. These things indeed the sons of Heli do for themselves, because according to the voice of the prophet: The soul that shall sin, the same shall die (Ezek. XVIII, 4, 20); but they are said to do those things to all Israel, because while the prelates perish in the night of their error, their subjects are involved in the blindness of their darkness. Therefore the sons of Heli sleep with women, because the reprobate Jews, by the

admixture of their heresies even unto the end of the world...

(Vers. 23.) And he said to them: Why do you do such things, which I hear to be very evil things from all the people?

17. Behold, Heli was an old man, and he spoke sharp things, because the virtue of the sacred oracle, although it fails in the heart of the reprobate, nevertheless before those who understand rightly, it subtly seeks out the faults of the Jews. For discussing strictly, he says: Why do you do such things, which I hear to be very evil things from all the people? But he who inquiring asks Why do you do? surely shows them to strike against the night of heresy without the discretion of reason. Moreover, he says that they themselves have done the very evil things which he heard, and he asserts those very evil things to be from all the people. What is this, if not because the universality of the Jewish people had fallen into the depths of heresies? But the cause of their ruin was the reprobate priests. Whence also Hosea prophesying says: The cause of the ruin of the people are the evil priests (Hosea V, 1). For the subject people fell for this reason, because they strove to imitate the falling prelates. When therefore he says: which I hear to be very evil things from all the people, those very things ought to be understood to be done by the people, not reported. Which is such as if he should say: The very evil things, which I hear to be done by all the people, why do you do them? Whence also immediately insinuating more openly what he said, he says:

(Vers. 24.) Do not, my sons; it is no good report, which I hear of you, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress.

18. In what, then, would the people of the Lord transgress the mandates, if they themselves slept with the women? But because this happened to them in figure, it surely prefigured that which was to be done at the time of the Lord's Incarnation. For when the priests sleep with the women, the subjects transgress the mandates of the Lord, because while the prelates are stained by the admixture of heresies, the reprobate multitude of the subject Synagogue is merged in those same stenches. Therefore he says: Why do you do such things, which I hear, very evil things from all the people? Which is such as if he should say: You delinquent so much more gravely, by how much more foully you stain the whole people with your crime. Something similar is also said through the prophet: From Dan, he says, is heard the snorting of his horses and chariots (Jerem. VIII, 16). In which place, surely, it is not to be understood that he reports the sound heard from Dan, but that he himself, raging with chariots and horses, does that same sound which is heard. In which place this also is to be noted, that he who reported that he had heard very evil things from all the people, subjoined words of mild affection, saying: Do not, my sons; it is no good report which I hear of you, that you make the people of the Lord to transgress. And indeed Heli reprehended sharply, and admonished mildly, because the Scripture of the ancient fathers, both denouncing the error of

the Jewish people, rebukes it, and from the night of its same error, with benign affection, calls it to the day of the true faith. Indeed he calls them sons, that they may acknowledge that they ought to be the heirs of the paternal promise; and may receive the Savior of the world so much more devotedly, by how much they are not ignorant that his promise was made to the fathers. But also desiring to recall them from the audacity of sin, he subjoins the reason, saying:

(Vers. 25.) If a man shall sin against a man, God can be pacified towards him; but if he shall sin against God, who shall pray for him?

19. For a man to sin against a man is to do perverse things, man against man. What is it, therefore, that he says: God can be pacified towards him, if not because such sins were light in comparison with those which the Jews thought to commit against the Son of God? Indeed they sinned against God, because he whom they strove to kill had shown himself to be God by the most manifest light of miracles. For the Lord showed this through himself, saying: If I had not done among them the works which no other man hath done, they would not have sin (John XV, 24). And that he might show the implacability of God the Father, he subjoins saying: But now they have no excuse for their sin, because they have both seen and hated me, and my Father (Ibid.). It is such, therefore, as if he should say: By whose prayer is that sin indulged, which is committed against the indulger himself? Who shall beseech the almighty Father for him, who condemns the

co-eternal Only-begotten to death? For he would say nothing more clearly, if he confessed, saying: This one, whom you persecute as if a pure man, is also God. Therefore the law of reason requires that he who persecutes the creator be defrauded of pardon. But divine piety leads the strictness of reason; for it shows the equity of the law, but it did not hold the vigor of the produced assertion in the execution of the promulgated right. For by the rigor of equity it was decreed that he should reach to the obtaining of indulgence by no prayer; but for whom no prayer of man was sufficient, the piety of the Redeemer was not lacking. Every man who might pray for transgressions is taken away; but for whom no man was sufficient, God himself was made a man, a pious intercessor. For hanging on the cross he prayed, saying: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke XXIII, 34). God was therefore pacified towards those who sinned against God, not by another's prayer, but by his own. But God was pacified not towards all, but towards some. For some persecutors of the Lord were converted by the preaching apostles, but the others perished. For of these Luke mentions, saying: The number of them was made five thousand (Acts IV, 4). But of the reprobates it is subjoined:

(Vers. 25.) And they heard not the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

20. Through the prophet the Lord denounces, saying: I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live (Ezek. XVIII, 23; and XXXIII, 11). How then does it suit him to will

to slay the sinner, and not to will the death of the sinner? But in the aforementioned testimony follows that from which truth may be recognized; for he says: But that he be converted and live. For he who wills the sinner to live so that he may be converted, if the divine foreknowledge knows him to be inconvertible, he slays him. Therefore the Lord wills to slay, but those whom he foreknows will not to be converted. For he is asserted to be merciful and just when it is demanded by the Prophet: Lord, he says, deliver my soul, our God is merciful and just (Ps. CXIV, 5). Through mercy, indeed, he expects the conversion of sinners; through justice he damns those not converted. Through mercy he wills sinners to be converted and live, but through justice he wills to punish those who have willed not to be converted; mercifully he does not save unless he who is willing, through justice he damns the unwilling. When therefore he is said to will to slay, the greatest and irremediable impiety of sinners is shown, which is voluntarily punished by the execution of divine justice. So surely we see the most pious judges of secular affairs act, who would wish that no one should delinquent, so that they themselves should have to punish no one; but while crimes are audaciously committed by the iniquitous, they voluntarily punish those whom they would more gladly have willed not to have committed things to be punished. On the contrary, that which is seen in this place is that he does not say: Because they willed not to hear the voice of the correcting father, but: They heard

not, because the Lord willed to slay them. But he who rightly considers the equity of the divine examination, thinks it matters nothing whether someone is slain, or is left in that crime in which he is destroyed by eternal reprobation. It is such as if he should say: So great was the magnitude of the fault, that they should both receive the monuments of conversion, and could in no way rise from the pit of their death; and those who had drunk the sea of the wrath of God, should have in the heap of their damnation not only the punishment of the committed crime, but also the added vengeance of the despised preaching. But why do we wonder about this in the past, which even now happens...

(Vers. 26.) But the child Samuel advanced and grew, and pleased both God and men.

21. He advanced, indeed, by the gain of preaching, he grew by the number of ministers. For the Apostle glories of his advancement, saying: From Jerusalem even unto Illyricum I have replenished the Gospel of Christ (Rom. XV, 19). Luke also mentions the manner of growing, saying: The number of the disciples increasing, there was made a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the ministry (Acts VI, 1). And a little after: They chose, he says, Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and Prochorus, and the rest (Ibid., 5). These they set before the sight of the apostles, and praying they imposed hands upon them. Likewise about this advancement of the new preachers it is written: Their sound hath gone

forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps. XVIII, 5).

22. But it is to be subtly intuited that which is said: He pleased both God and men. A teacher pleases men when he shows himself venerable to his subjects and adorned with good morals: but he pleases God when he refuses to glory vainly in his good conversation, and desires to merit the praise of God alone. Therefore he says: He pleased both God and men, because some preachers present a pretext of sanctity, which they do not have. These, therefore, because although they please men, they displease God, in the type of the new and elect preacher it is now said of Samuel: He pleased both God and men. They indeed show themselves venerable to their subjects, and offer to God the purity of intention. He had indeed studied to please men, who said: We are the good odor of Christ in every place (II Cor. II, 15), And likewise: I became all things to all men, that I might make all saved (I Cor. IX, 22). He also taught his hearers to please men, saying: Be without offense to the Jews and to the gentiles, even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking what is useful to me, but what is to many (I Cor. X, 32, 33). But he who had insinuated that he had pleased men, commends the purity of heart, saying: Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience (II Cor. I, 12). HE PLEASED both God and men. Which new order of preachers showed itself venerable to its hearers for imitation without, and within acceptable to God through the innocence of the will. It follows:

(Vers. 27.) There came a man of God to Heli.

23. What is expressed by this man of God, if not that venerable assembly of the holy apostles? Who certainly is called a man of God, for the excellence of sanctity, because he disposed the summit of the order, which he had ascended in the prelature of the whole world, with an equal sublimity of virtue. Who surely came to Heli then, when he approached its pontiffs to announce the repulsion of the Synagogue. It follows:

(Vers. 27, 28.) And he said to him: Did I not openly reveal myself to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in the house of Pharaoh, and I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, and burn incense to me, and to wear the ephod before me, and I gave to the house of thy father all of the sacrifices of the children of Israel?

24. Because Judea is repelled by divine judgment, the strictness of that judgment is demonstrated by how wonderful a disposition of equity it was brought on. For first the gifts conferred on Heli are numbered, so that while almighty God is shown to be so benign a giver, it may be known how justly he strikes his contemner. He asserted that he had revealed himself to the house of his father, so that he might not have the excuse of ignorance. Moreover, he teaches that he had exhibited the cognition of the same revelation to him in Egypt, so that Heli might by no means think that he had obtained it by his own merits. As if he should say openly: I offered myself to be known by him there, where he could forget me,

and did not know how to remember me. And lest those gifts of divine cognition should perhaps seem small to the reprobate, he is asserted to have been assumed from the other tribes of Israel to the summit of the priesthood. As if he should say: I preferred him to those to whom he was not superior, but equal.

25. It is to be noted, moreover, that in the office of that priesthood three things are denoted. To go up, he says, to my altar, and burn incense to me, and to wear the ephod before me. What is shown in this altar, indeed, if not that stone which the patriarch Jacob erected as a monument (Gen. XXVIII, 18)? And what else is this stone expressed as if not that which Paul praises in the praise of the faithful, saying: Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Ephes. II, 20)? The father of Heli, therefore, was chosen by the Lord for the priesthood, to go up to the altar, because the order of the ancient teachers presided over the people subject to it for this, that it might preach the reparation of the human race to come in the advent of the Redeemer. And he burned incense, because he joined the hearts of his hearers through desire to him whom he preaches as the future Redeemer. He also wore the ephod, because he presented the ornament of worthy conversation to the desire of so great an expectation. He would certainly burn incense, and not wear the ephod, if he should inflame the hearts of his hearers into the desire of the coming Redeemer, from whom he himself differed by

the inequality of foul conversation. And because almighty God sought the truth of religion, and not a pretext, before himself, and not before the people, he recorded that he had commanded him to wear the ephod. To wear the ephod before the Lord, indeed, is to seek the retribution of divine goodness alone from the innocence of life. But these things are said openly against Heli through reproach. For he did not go up to the altar who, in that priesthood which presided over the Synagogue at the time of the manifested truth, by no means preached to the subject peoples him who shone as the Redeemer of the human race by so great a magnitude of signs. And he did not burn incense to God, because he concited the people into his persecution, and not into his love. He also contemned wearing the ephod before the Lord, because he shone with no truth of religion. For even if that ornament of life presented some insignia of honesty, it was from a pretext of fallacy, not from an intention of charity. Whence also the Lord reprehended this very thing in them, saying: Woe to you...

(Vers. 29.) Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my gifts, which I have commanded to be offered in the temple?

26. For why does the judge say Why, if not he who discusses instantly? And he who is reprehended for having rejected with the heel the victim and gifts of God, is judged to have done injury to him without counsel of reason. It is to be noted, indeed, that he says in the plural number: Why have you rejected with the heel my victim,

so that what is said may seem to pertain not only to Heli, but to his sons. For wild animals are accustomed to repel with the heel things adhering to them. For what other victims were there for the faithful, than to insist on the praises of their Redeemer, to preach that Jesus Christ died unto death for the salvation of the world, and by rising repaired the life of the human race? And what were their other gifts, if not to offer incessantly thanksgivings to almighty God for so great benefits conferred upon them? Which surely the sons of Heli rejected with the heel, because in the rejection of the new preaching, they followed not the counsel of reason through the sacred oracles, but the impetus of ferocity. For from irrational savagery Truth desired to recall them to the intention of rational counsel, saying: Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and the same are they that give testimony of me (John V, 39). Whence also it is said here also: Which I commanded to be offered in the temple. For in the law, psalms, and prophets it had been written concerning the passion, resurrection of the Lord, and the state of the universal Church. Therefore the prelates of the Synagogue rejected with the heel the victim and gifts of the Lord commanded to be offered in the temple of the Lord, because surely they attempted to reprobate and cast away the preaching of the holy Church, not discussing by the authority of the holy Scripture, but by the sole impetus of their ferocity. For if they consulted the precepts of God in the sacred oracle with an illuminated mind, they would

have received the holy preachers, whom they ferociously rejected, as if sent to them divinely. But he who reprehended the sons of Heli, that is the ancient teachers of the lesser order, for irrational ferocity, also rebukes the father himself for negligence, saying:

(Vers. 29.) Thou hast honored thy sons more than me.

27. As if openly reprehending he should say: They rejected, and thou hast honored the rejectors. He honored his sons more than God, because while he contemned their open works shown, he provided temporal gains for them. Whence also he subjoins:

(Vers. 29.) That you might eat the firstfruits of every sacrifice of my people.

28. By which words, surely, he seems to rebuke the greater order of doctors, who for this reason consented in the death of the Redeemer, because they feared to lose the gains of the ancient oblations. Whence also having entered into counsel with the Pharisees, they said: What do we, for this man doth many signs? If we let him alone so, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation (John XI, 47, 48). And again: See that we prevail nothing; behold, the whole world is gone after him (Ibid. XII, 19). Therefore, he honored his sons that they might eat, because he was silent from the intention of preaching, lest while he asserted the truth of the new oblation, he should no longer be able to have the old ones for the luxury of his pleasure. Because therefore he exposed the magnitude and

quality of the guilt, let us see now by how great an equity of examination he may insinuate the manner of vengeance. For subjoining he says:

(Vers. 30.) Wherefore the Lord the God of Israel saith: Speaking I have spoken, that thy house and the house of thy father should minister in my sight, from henceforth and forever. But now far be this from me.

29. As if striking with an open and congruent sentence, he should say: Thou hast honored thy sons, that you might eat the firstfruits of every sacrifice; but therefore the rights of the firstfruits are taken away from you, because they were unworthily honored. For what is it to say: Far be it from me that thy house should minister in my sight, if not: I cast you down from that summit to which the rights of the firstfruits were due? Therefore he was comprehended by a wonderful execution of equity, who where he gapingly sought the eating of the firstfruits, from there he fasted from the perception of the firstfruits. For he bore that the Redeemer should die, lest he should lose the sacerdotal gains, but he received from the triumph of death, whence he destroyed the emoluments of the old sacrifice. Moreover he says: Speaking I have spoken, that thy house and the house of thy father should minister in my sight; but now far be this from me. As if in more open words he should say: That thou shouldst stand in so great a summit of dignity, I frequently admonished thee, but now thou art not such as I desired thee to be. Which because it is said in the

reprobation of the Jewish people, it is subjoined concerning the order of the new preachers:

(Vers. 30.) But whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify.

30. Indeed we now discern the glory of the glorifying one, because the preachers of the holy Church sing the praises of almighty God with great splendor of life, and congratulate in the universal prelature of the world. Behold now the whole of gentility is prostrated at the footsteps of the priests, and glories to possess in the heavens as patrons those to whom it rejoices to subject itself by obeying. Therefore the Lord glorifies the one glorifying him, because those from whom he receives devoted praises daily, he raises to the honor of the whole world. Or is not the glory of the glorified, to remain on earth, and to close heaven? For men to live life commonly, and to exhibit the supernal seats of the heavens to their subjects by the authority of power? For he glorified the Lord, who said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. XVI, 16). But the Lord glorified the one glorifying him, because he answered him, saying: I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven (Ibid., 19). But concerning the cast out reprobates of the Jews it is subjoined:

(Vers. 30.) But they that contemn me shall be ignoble.

They themselves indeed contemn, who by no means believe this one to be the Redeemer of the world: concerning whom surely Truth itself in the Gospel complains, saying: But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassage after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us (Luke XIX, 14). But we now discern their ignobility, because they are proscribed both by race and by condition. Indeed they are ignoble by race, because they heard from Truth itself: You are of your father the devil (John VIII, 44). They are also ignoble by condition, because liberty and kingdom having been lost, they are depressed by the perpetual servitude of the nations. But he shows the order of punishments more clearly, saying:

(Vers. 31.) Behold the days come, and I will cut off thy arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house.

32. Now indeed he is without an arm, because he who has lost the temple and the tabernacle does not extend his hand to the offering of the old sacrifice. And because he was speaking to Heli, that is, to the greater priests of the Synagogue, he threatens to cut off not only his arm, but also his house, so that he may indeed insinuate the universal destruction of the old rite, and that we may perceive that this which we now see done in the new time was disposed from of old. And therefore the Lord cut off both his arm and his house, because he removed both the high priests of Judea and the lesser priests entirely from the old immolation. Whence also it is fitly added: That there shall not be an old man in thy house.

For old men are to be understood as the priests, whose office, because it is expended with the gravity of great honesty, is not emptied of the weight of religion by any childish levity. Therefore his arm and the house of his father were so cut off, that there should not be an old man in his house, because the rite of the old priesthood so vanished, that altogether no one remained who could now immolate according to the old custom. For after the Redeemer of the human race offered himself for our sins according to the new custom of sacrifice, to be a priest according to the ancient custom ceased. But he who sustains the losses of the lost priesthood has the torment of a greater penalty from the grief of envy. Wherefore also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 32.) And thou shalt see thy rival in the temple, in all the prosperity of Israel.

33. Indeed he sees his rival within the temple, because he himself has now been cast out of doors. For who else is the rival of the old priesthood than the order of the new preachers? Who indeed while they strive to equal the studies of the ancient and elect fathers by living and teaching, certainly emulate the good of Heli in good. Hence Paul admonishes, saying: Be zealous for that which is good in all things (Gal. IV, 18). Moreover, what are the prosperities of Israel, if not the felicities of this passing time understood, in which Israel according to the flesh greatly rejoiced? In all the prosperities of Israel, therefore, he sees his rival, who beholds the preachers of truth happy in the holy Church, both in the opu-

lence of things and the loftiness of dignity. This also which is asserted to be seen in the temple is declared with a more perfect understanding. For in all prosperities the rival is in the temple, because the order of preachers disposes all that serves it of the felicity of time, in the contemplation of eternity. It follows:

(Vers. 33.) Nevertheless I will not entirely take away from thee a man from my altar.

34. For he would entirely take away a man from his altar, if he admitted no one to the unity of our faith. Therefore he did not entirely take them away, because although he rejected the reprobate priests of the Synagogue, he nevertheless mercifully led many of them to the knowledge of himself. Of whom indeed Luke makes mention in the Acts of the Apostles, saying: A great multitude of the priests was obedient to the faith (Acts VI, 7). For they were found worthy of so great and new a ministry, who were unwilling to remain in antiquity with the lost. But because the Jewish priesthood had for the torment of envy not only the elect preachers from the Gentiles, but also those who believed from Judea, it follows:

(Vers. 33.) But that thy eyes may fail, and thy soul may languish.

35. Or therefore he did not entirely take away from him a man from his altar, that the eyes of Heli might fail, and his soul might languish, because forsooth he was unwilling to assume the elect from Judea to the ministry of the new preaching, so that, they being removed, guilt

might hold the reprobate for punishment. For the eyes of Heli failed when the high priesthood had the truth of faith in hearing through the mouths of the preachers, and did not recognize it. His soul also languishes, because forsooth it withered through the penalty of its rejection, while it lost the grace of the Holy Spirit. It follows:

(Vers. 33.) And a great part of thy house shall die, when they shall have come to man's estate.

36. Man's estate is the time of the Lord's Incarnation, which indeed the Apostle insinuates, saying: When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. IV, 4, 5). What then were the precepts of Judea, if not certain eruditions of infancy? The same Apostle also insinuates the time of this childhood, saying: When we were children, we were serving under the elements of this world (Ibid., 3). Therefore in man's estate she died, because in the fullness of time she raged against the Redeemer of the world, and pierced herself with the sword of infidelity. Moreover, it is well that not the whole house, but a great part of his house is predicted to die, because some of them believed in the Redeemer. And adding the cause of greater grief, he says:

(Vers. 34.) And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, Ophni and Phinees. In one day they shall die both of them.

37. In the two sons of Heli we showed above that the twofold order of the old priesthood

is designated. Who certainly died in one day, because they met together in the death of the Redeemer. Moreover, the death of the priests is well mentioned as set for a sign of the house that is to die, because when the pastors perish, it is necessary that the flock follow to the same destruction. And because they were deceived by a false reason, they are said to die in the day. Of the falsity of which light blessed Job speaks, saying: They walk so in the dark as in the light (Job. XXIV, 17). But he who expelled the old, prepared a new priesthood. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 35.) And I will raise me up a faithful priest.

38. For the sons of Heli being dead, the Lord raised up for himself a faithful priest, because the prelates of the old people being extinguished in perfidy, he called the elect to exhibit the ministry of our redemption. Who indeed is said to be assumed as faithful, because the old, which he succeeded, was reproved through infidelity. And because that faith of his priest is ascribed to the praises which work through love, the works of love themselves are designated by the following words. For it follows:

(Vers. 35.) That shall do according to my heart and my soul.

39. For the ineffable divine substance willed this to be signaled through the parts of man, which in itself ought not to be understood according to the letter. And so he said: That shall do according to my heart and my soul. Not that the incorporeal and uncircumscribed substance

of God has a heart and a soul, but he speaks to man as man is wont to speak to man, so that through this which man, hearing from his word, recognizes, he may clearly know what God also wills. Which indeed could have been said more simply: That shall do my will. And he sets forth the rewards of the work, saying:

(Vers. 35.) And I will build him a faithful house.

40. For what other is that house understood to be, if not the eternal fatherland? Which house indeed the Lord commending, says: In my father's house there are many mansions (John XIV, 2). But this house is now said to be built, because it is prepared from the actions of a pious life. Nevertheless, for the meriting of it the work of man is unworthy, if the grace of the merciful God does not do this. Well, therefore, when the building of the house is set down, the Lord promises him that he will build it, because forsooth human strength fails from so great an operation, if it be not divinely helped. Hence Paul says: It is God who worketh in me both to will and to accomplish (Philip. II, 13). Hence again he says: It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy (Rom. IX, 16). He was promising that he would build this house, when he said: I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be (John XIV, 2, 3). But because he was devotedly to follow the grace calling him from the freedom of his will, it is added:

(Vers. 35.) And he shall walk before my Christ all days.

41. For to each of the elect to walk before Christ is always to behold himself in the sight of the Redeemer, and to work those things which he knows to be accepted by him. Or certainly he walks before Christ who in everything that he does always looks to him, and directs the rectitude of his life in him, whom he recognizes to have come through the assumed humanity to compose the beauty of the elect. But Judea is not always to be deserted in the darkness of her blindness, because it is said by the prophet: If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall be saved (Isai. X, 22). Hence Paul says: Blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should enter in, and so all Israel should be saved (Rom. XI, 25, 26). This visitation of Judea, therefore, he subsequently shows, because he says:

(Vers. 33.) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall remain in thy house, shall come that he may be prayed for.

BOOK III

1. We have run through these things of the sacred history with a typical explanation, so that in the same words of the sacred history we may seek for something of moral understanding. And so the child Samuel is asserted to be a minister in the sight of the Lord; which ministry, however, is mentioned to be exhibited to the Lord not absolutely, but before the face of Heli. By these

words, therefore, not the perfection of ministry is shown, but of humility. For the face of Heli is the reason of the will of each instructor. For he ministers to the Lord before the face of his preceptor, who in the exhibition of his ministry does not follow the reason of his own will, who walks in that path of work which is foreseen for him by the knowledge of his master. For all perfect men, and those taught of God (John VI, 45; Isai. LIV, 13), are indeed ministers in the sight of the Lord, but they are not his ministers before the face of man. This is because divinity itself instructs them within how they are to be disposed without even in life and manners and doctrine. Whence also it is promised to the precursor of the Redeemer in the praise of the paternal oracle: And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways (Luke I, 76). He indeed is described to go before the face of the Lord, who in his ministry was not to follow the will of a superior man, but the inspiration of divinity. Therefore Samuel is said to minister to the Lord before the face of Heli, that all subjects may be taught by his example, so that they may strive so to please the Creator by their ministry, that they do not presume to do anything besides the will of their prelates. For he who is asserted to be a minister of the Lord before the face of his instructor, if he despises to follow his face through pride, he does not exist as a minister in the sight of the Lord, because he is convicted of being ignorant of the Almighty, whom he despises to please through his will, to

whose command he subjected himself that he might please him. Whence both Heli and the sons of Belial are said to be, and not to know the Lord, and the office of the priests to the people. For they are sons who are subjected to spiritual fathers for erudition. Who indeed, when they despise following the counsels of the same fathers by being proud, are rightly named sons of Belial, because they become imitators of the apostate spirit who fell from heaven through pride. Who certainly know not the Lord so much the worse, as they more arrogantly ascribe the knowledge of him to themselves. For it is so brought about that they know more perilously what they ought to know, as they do not care to learn, being ignorant, that which they think they know. And because they cannot love the invisible Creator, whom they are ignorant of, in the appetite for visible things they dissipate those very ministries of God which they usurp for themselves. Whence also those who are reported as priests to be ignorant of the Lord, are also held to be ignorant of the office of priests to the people.

2. And that he may open the causes of his reprehension, the child of the ignorant priest is mentioned to come to every one immolating with a flesh-hook of three teeth, and violently to demand raw flesh. In which words indeed in the greediness of their rapacity three kinds of gluttony are noted. For he whose child, before the meats were boiled, came to bring violence for them, could not sustain the legitimate hour of refreshment; and he for whom the meats were

sought, did not know how to use simple foods; and because, refusing the boiled, he demanded raw flesh, he was fastidious of eating the same flesh in the common preparation. But when the perversity of the servants served the pleasure of the priests, what is it that not the sin of the priests themselves, but of the children, is mentioned to have been exceeding great, even before the Lord? But by the same words the greater fault of the priests is shown; for he who asserts the sin of the lesser to have been exceeding great before the Lord, recognized into what a heap of damnation the iniquity of the greater had grown. Which magnitude of guilt, however, is asserted, not only for the appetite of illicit eating, but also for the violence of rapacity.

3. But the divine word returns to the narration of the elect child, so that in him we may more attentively consider, not what is to be reproved, but what is to be imitated. And so he is held to be girded with a linen ephod, and to be in the sight of the Lord. What then is shown in the linen ephod if not the whiteness of continence? with which ephod indeed we are girded, when we are restrained on every side to the splendor of chastity, when no part of the soul and flesh is absolved from the law of severity, through which we might flow down to the darkness of luxury. Such a minister, therefore, is in the sight of the Lord, because he is not deceived concerning the hoped-for vision of almighty God, whom he serves with so great a splendor of his girding. To which child indeed the mother ascending with

her husband to immolate the solemn host is said to have brought a little coat. The mother indeed ascends with her husband when the mind of the preacher, through the foreknowledge of the internal spouse, raises itself to contemplate those sublime joys of eternity. For then he immolates the solemn host, because while through the ineffable sweetness of that love he is joined to the Creator, a festive devotion is presented at the supernal altars. And then indeed she brings a little coat, because, although through the great grace of internal visitation the soul of the pastor is raised to supernal things, nevertheless he ought to impose precepts of conversation upon the little one, not according to the measure of his own subtlety, but for their strength. Whence also Moses, returning from the mountain in the immense splendor of his countenance, veiled his face, so that the people might have been able to fix their sight upon him (Exod. XXXIV, 33). Therefore, let her who is a spiritual mother bring a little coat to her son, so that she may prescribe to the little ones as yet certain beginnings and plain things, and not impose the burden of her own fortitude. For often those collapse among great works, who could conquer the enemy through lesser ones. Whence also David, going forth to battle against the strongest of the Philistines, laid aside the breastplate, the shield, and all military instruments; and he who could not exercise himself against the enemy in their weight, prostrated him with one stone of a sling (I Kings XVII, 39, 40, seq.). That mother had ascended to immolate the

solemn host, who said: I know such a man, who was caught up into paradise (II Cor. XII, 4). But from so great a magnitude she did not bring a great garment to the little ones, because he says: He heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to speak (Ibid.). Likewise: I gave you milk to drink, not meat (I Cor. III, 2). Therefore, let the mother bring a little coat to the little son, and let the measure of the garment be extended according to the mode of the body, so that while he fights by the virtue of a tempered conversation, the enemy may not prostrate him by an unequal burden of arms.

4. And because from the discreet study of pastoral care God multiplies the gains of converts for the preacher, Anna is said to have been visited by the Lord, and to have merited the grace of fecundity in sons and daughters through the grace of the divine gift. She indeed brings forth sons when she gains them by the word through whom she bestows the seeds of preaching to others. But she brings forth daughters when she recalls to the service of almighty God those minds which, even if they are not fit for preaching, nevertheless diligently nourish the seed of the word of God received from the preachers, which afterwards the daughters, as if in labor, bring forth through good works for the example of their neighbors. But because Samuel is first asserted to be girded with a linen ephod, from this the fecundity of the mother in the plurality of children can be reasonably understood as that which we see happen daily, because forsooth from the good reputation

of the elect disciple the gains of converts grow for the master. Whence also after the birth of the brothers and sisters, Samuel is said to have been magnified before the Lord, because indeed those are already great before the Lord who through examples of pious conversation convert the hearts of their neighbors to the service of almighty God.

5. But a great fear is struck into us, because Heli is condemned for the fault of his sons, of whom no sins of his own are reported. For for good subjects to live well suffices for salvation, but for prelates their own life does not suffice. For he is very much an old man who always strives to live irreproachably. Whence also it is written: For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age (Wisd. IV, 8). But some preeminent in living well have no authority which prelacy requires. For although they busy themselves to excite their subjects to do good things, nevertheless they blush to go against the delinquent through the zeal of rectitude. Who indeed, even if they sometimes go forth to reprove them, harm rather than help by speaking, because they do not confound their obstinacy with worthy severity. For the same Heli heard of the crimes of his sons, and how they slept with women at the door of the tabernacle; who, as if beginning from a harsh invective of authority, asserted that he had heard the worst things from all the people. But he who ought to have followed up those faults which he exposed, smoothed them over by the subsequent

words, saying: Do not so, my sons. In which naming of kinship indeed it is clear how much he dissents from the will of the Lord, because he called those sons whom the divine word above asserted to be sons of Belial, that is, of a wicked spirit, saying: Now the sons of Heli were sons of Belial. To sleep with women indeed is to sin securely and without fear of future vengeance. For women are the harlot secular concupiscences. Which are well said to observe at the door of the tabernacle, because they lie in wait for those tending to the entrance of the celestial kingdom. But he who so follows the concupiscences of the world, that he is often terrified by the consideration of divine fear, is indeed polluted with women, but does not sleep, because although he falls by transgressing, nevertheless he by no means rests in security in the committed crimes. Therefore he who sleeps with women is not to be honored with the name of kinship, because those who, the fear of God being already cast away, are obstinate in their crimes, are not to be reproved with a lighter incrimination, lest they think that to be a light weight of sin in which they collapse, while that does not sound grave to them which is preached from authority. But remiss pastors are wont to proffer certain arguments of reason among the fomentations of words. Whence also it is said by the voice of Heli:

(Vers. 25.) If one man shall sin against another, God may be appeased in his behalf; but if a man shall sin against the Lord, who shall pray for him?

6. To sin man against man is for men to harm one another concerning falling things. But to sin against God is to take away from him those things which he created for eternity. Whosoever therefore draws either his own soul or that of another faithful man to sin, is convicted of sinning against God, because he strives to take away his own from him. Which indeed is shown to be a so much graver sin, as he who exists as a worthy intercessor for its absolution is more rarely found. For under the interrogation: Who shall pray for him? it is not said so that the remedies of penitence are denied even to such, but because the deeper wounds of sins are more difficultly cured.

7. Which, however, can be understood to be said for this reason, because the priests are argued. For a man sins against a man when he is delinquent whose fault to be corrected looks to the judgment of a superior man. Because therefore the sins of the subject people, which look to the priests, are blotted out by the prayers of the priests themselves, when the priest falls into fault, there is no superior person by whose prayers he may be expiated. Which also Truth itself insinuates through itself, saying: If the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned (Matth. V, 13)? Let him say therefore: Who shall pray for him? As if he should say, what intercessor remains for him, when he precipitates himself by transgressing, who was ordained to intercede for others? By which indeed the magnitude of the fault is shown, because many of them are cast by the Lord into the darkness of an

impenitent heart, and repent by no exhortation of man. Wherefore fitly it was subjoined:

(Vers. 25.) They heard not the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

8. But the child Samuel is mentioned both to profit and to grow, and to please both God and men, so that the study of the elect hearer may be designated, who directs his efforts to the supernal fatherland by the path of a right life, while he gathers strength for greater things. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist: They shall go from virtue to virtue, the God of gods shall be seen in Sion (Psal. LXXXIII, 8). The profit of conversation therefore is to grow in merits, to please God and men is of consummate perfection. And because conversation pertains to works, and merit proceeds from charity, those hearers profit, and do not grow, who exhibit good works for the study of vanity, and have not charity. We profit therefore, and grow, if with a more sublime conversation we are raised up through better works, and from the same sublimity of work we intend only the joys of eternity. Moreover, to please both God and men is of great virtue, because for the most part we offend our neighbors concerning our good work, if we do not do the same good works with great caution. Therefore he pleases both God and men, who is cautious in the good work which he expends in the services of almighty God; who so cares to please God, that he does not offend anyone concerning the ministry of God.

9. And because it is said concerning Samuel while yet a child and placed under the instruction

of another, the life of those living in common is instructed by this. For some living in common in sacred places desire to be at leisure for themselves with a novice fervor under the color of a great operation, who the less they are useful to their fellow brethren, the less they please them. The elect Samuel therefore is proposed as a form to those living in common, upon which they are impressed. Therefore each of them pleases God and men when he is useful to the brethren and devoted to God. So therefore let them take care of themselves, that they do not omit those things which are of their neighbor, so far as from benignity he may please those who are with him in the lowest place, but to the supernal eyes from devotion he may cautiously exhibit the strength of his fortitude, so that he may not crush the hearts of the infirm while he hastens to supernal things by the impetus of his fortitude.

10. Moreover, a man of God is described to have come to Heli, who indeed about to bring forth the severity of the divine sentence, diligently enumerated how great gifts he had conferred upon him. And because at length he denounces the penalty of the vengeance which he deserved, what does he give to be understood, if not that the faults of pastors are more subtly judged? and not only do sins aggravate for them the penalty of retribution, but also the gifts granted. Likewise because he repeats the same gifts one by one, he designates something graver, because the individual things come to torment, which are proved to have been poorly kept. For he

keeps the gifts of almighty God poorly in himself, who pollutes the splendor of the pastoral height through the stains of a depraved action. Whence also fitly the house of Heli is reproved for having cast away the gifts and victims of the Lord with the heel. The heel indeed is that part of the body by which we touch the earth. In this inferior part of the body therefore the affection of the soul is shown by which earthly things are lusted after.

11. And because, as it seemed to some, victims were wont to be offered for a victory obtained or to be obtained, and gifts to be given to friends, what is designated in the victims and gifts if not the vows of those still profiting and the devotions of the perfect in the praises of almighty God? For those of us who profit through the temptations of occult enemies, when we prepare virtue for their conflict, we certainly hold victims in the praises of almighty God. But those battles which are brought upon us being already conquered, when we give thanks to almighty God for the victory obtained, we indeed immolate victims to the same Lord. Moreover, those who offer him the affection of familiar love, bestow gifts as if to a friend. The gifts therefore are the affections of charity, by which the hearts of the elect are kindled in the desire of their Creator. And because when the rector follows earthly things, he harms many placed in spiritual conflict, and many also already beginning to pant for it, he indeed casts away the victims and gifts of God with the heel, because by the example of his own depravity he expels the studies of both of them. Therefore the

victims are cast away, because often the labor of spiritual battle is left by the novice soldiers of Christ, when the princes of the Christian expedition are seen to follow the leisure of the body in the rest of earthly blandishments. The gifts are cast away with the heel, because the affections of charity grow cold from the minds of many already diligent for supernal things, while they behold their prelates seeking the supernal fatherland through no desires of love, but lying in lowest delights constrained by the cold of the body. Some of whom indeed there are, who exhibit spiritual honors carnally, and attribute to kinship what is due to merits. Who indeed would dread the guilt of their presumption, if they would attentively weigh this, of which the Lord complains concerning Heli the priest.

(Vers. 29.) Thou hast honored, he says, thy sons more than me, that you might eat the firstfruits of every sacrifice of my people Israel.

12. He indeed honors his sons and kinsmen more than the Lord, who chooses persons for sacred orders not from the honesty of conversation, but from the love of kinship. Therefore the sons are reported as honored, that they might eat the firstfruits of the sacrifice, because carnal prelates therefore bestow the heights of spiritual honor upon carnal kinsmen, that they may be enriched with ecclesiastical faculties, and be heaped up with the abundance of fertility in the height of the order. Nor do they care what kind they are who come to the spiritual ministry, but only that they may prefer with temporal dignity

those whom they embrace with carnal affection. He complains therefore that he honored his sons, but wicked ones, who are by no means to be held as near even by carnal kinship, if they in no wise shine by the conversation of ecclesiastical doctrine. But those who promote the reprobate are designated to confound the order of promotion itself, since he therefore reports the sons honored, that they might eat the firstfruits of the sacrifice. For the priest does not preach that he may eat, but therefore he ought to eat, that he may preach. Which also Paul insinuates, saying: They who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel (I Cor. IX, 14). Hence again he says: Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn (I Cor. IX, 9; I Tim. V, 18; Deut. XXV, 4), so that forsooth the preacher of the holy Church should therefore supply eating to the body, that he may be able to bear the labor of preaching. Therefore they are proved to pervert the right order of promotion, who promote kinsmen, not to the intention of ministry, but to the purpose of dignity. Which indeed they would not do, if they did not carnally love themselves and them in the spiritual height. But if they understand the rejection of Heli, let them also greatly fear the judgments of their own guilt. For it is said by the divine voice: Thou hast honored thy sons more than me, that you might eat all the firstfruits of my people Israel.

(Vers. 30.) Wherefore the Lord the God of Israel saith: I said indeed that thy house, and the

house of thy father, should minister in my sight, for ever. But now far be this from me.

13. Behold Heli is deposed from the loftiness of his dignity by the divine sentence, who is convicted of having honored his wicked sons for the eating of the firstfruits, so that forsooth the preachers of the holy Church may understand that if they knowingly commit spiritual ministries to the reprobate from carnal love, they have fallen from that height in which they are seen to stand without by the equity of the internal judge. And because he subsequently added:

(Vers. 30.) But whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify.

14. He also covertly insinuates that he had been dishonored by their audacity. To whom indeed Paul also upbraiding that very thing says: The name of God is blasphemed through you among the Gentiles (Rom. II, 24). For because they stain the beauty of the received dignity through the filth of a miserable fame, they forsooth dishonor the Lord. For he is worthily repelled from the citadel of honor, who does injury to him by whom he is proved to have been honored. On the contrary he affirms by a general promise, saying: But he who shall glorify me, I will glorify him. For the pastor glorifies God who shines by the example of good works for the imitation of the faithful, who radiates from the sublimity of his governance with the immense light of a great conversation, who does not accept the persons of reprobate ministers for the mirror of sacred orders, but chooses those for the form

of the subject flock whom everyone who looks to imitation does not offend, because he follows the true light in them. To whom indeed Truth speaks through itself, saying: So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matth. V, 16). The Lord indeed glorifies those glorifying him, because what the elect pastors of the holy Church carry outwardly of the glory of the height, this they receive inwardly from the grace of divine goodness, and the honor by which they are sublime in the eyes of men, they merit by a worthy study in the interior from the largess of the internal majesty. On the contrary he complains that the glory of those dishonoring him was not bestowed upon them by him, saying: They have reigned, but not by me; they have been princes, and I knew it not (Hosea VIII, 4). For they reign from themselves, and not from the election of the highest ordination, because they are not called divinely to the glory of the ecclesiastical height, but are led through cupidity. Whom indeed the Lord knows not, because he reproves them through the judgment of internal equity. It is therefore as if he should say: And if the honor which they have seems to be mine, they did not merit it by obedience, but snatched it through cupidity. Whence also he subsequently adds.

(Vers. 30.) But they that despise me shall be ignoble.

15. As if he should speak openly, saying: Although they prefer the nobility of dignity under the pretext of religion, yet they are ignoble,

because they do not agree with the excellence of that glory which they have through the sublimity of life. But because all this is promised in the expression of future time, it can not inconveniently be referred to the merit of future retribution. Of which indeed John says: When he shall appear, we shall be like to him (I John III, 2). Hence the evangelist Mark asserting says: Then shall they see the Son of man with much power and glory (Mark XIII, 26). But when he asserts that he will glorify him that glorifies him, he forsooth repromises to him the glory of his likeness. For the Lord glorifies him that glorifies him, because he rewards with eternal sublimity those who now shine in the eyes of the elect within the holy Church through the examples of good works. But the despisers shall be ignoble, because they do not merit to be received into the glory of the elect. For because now through reprobate conversation they put on the image of the fallen angel, they shall then be ignoble with him, when they are associated with him in internal punishment. For the Prophet beholding the glorification of these and the ignobility of those, 88 says: The saints shall rejoice in glory, they shall be joyful in their beds. The high praises of God in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands. To execute vengeance upon the nations, chastisements among the people. To bind their kings in fetters, and their nobles in manacles of iron. For the Lord glorifies him that glorifies him, because the humble elect exult with him in eternal glory. Who indeed, because they receive the brightness of

glorification from the manner of their own conversation, are said to rejoice in their beds over the glory attained. But his despisers are struck with perpetual ignobility, because the kings and nobles of the nations are bound with iron, namely eternal, chains for punishment. But the kings of the nations, and the princes, are the proud and glorious prelates of the carnal. But they shall then be ignoble, when they are bound with iron chains, because they who now raise themselves temporally against the little ones, are restrained by eternal punishment from the brightness of honor and the daring of their tyranny. Whence also here it is added:

(Vers. 31.) Behold the days come, and I will cut off thy arm, and the arm of thy father's house.

16. For the arm of the despiser is temporal strength. And because he went out from the family of the highest father by transgressing, he has already begun to have the fallen angel as a father instead of heavenly glory. Therefore the house of his father is that society of subjects which favors him in evil. Of whom indeed he says above: Thou hast honored thy sons more than me. Therefore the arm of the despiser and the house of his father is cut off, when, through the intervening death of the flesh, the prelate and the subjects alike lose the violence of their tyranny. For then indeed he is without an arm, when he can by no means exercise violence in the oppression of the little ones. Whence also it is decreed by the equity of the eternal judge: Bind his hands and feet, he says, and cast him into the exterior darkness (Matth.

XXII, 13). In whose house also there shall not be an old man. For the house of the damned man is hell. But true old age is the maturity of wisdom. In his house therefore there shall not be an old man, because in hell no counsels of salvation can be found. Whence also the sacred Scripture excites to the works of true wisdom, saying: Whatsoever thy hand can do, do it instantly, for there is neither reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in hell, whither thou art hastening (Eccl. IX, 10). Hence Paul says: Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation (II Cor. VI, 2). In the house of the despiser therefore there shall not be an old man, because whosoever is rightly wise has prepared a mansion for himself not in hell, but in heaven. This despiser also, for the increase of his punishment, sees his rival in the temple in all the prosperity of Israel. For the temple of God is the supernal country, of which also it is said through the Prophet: The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's seat is in heaven (Psal. X, 4). But Israel, which is interpreted as seeing God, signifies that happy multitude of angels, of whom the Lord says in the Gospel: Their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven (Matth. XVIII, 10). But the prosperity of Israel is the everlasting joys of those blessed spirits. In the temple therefore the despiser shall behold his rival, because the reprobate preacher already damned recognizes that the order of the humble already rejoices in the heavenly places. To which rival indeed all the prosperity of Israel is given; for it is written: God shall be all in all (I Cor. XV, 28).

All the prosperity of Israel therefore designates all things which God is to those most blessed citizens. For since that eternal essence is indeed the highest and simple good in itself, yet because by the revelation of his Majesty 89 he satisfies all the desires of those blessed spirits, the eminent Doctor demonstrates this to be so. Whence also he cautiously preaches that God is not all in himself, but all in all, because he who in his nature ineffably exists as one and simple good, is as many goods to all the good as they all are filled with joys from the contemplation of glory. All the prosperity of Israel therefore is given to the rival, because the order of the humble elect is received among the choirs of angels, that it may be satisfied with the joys of divine contemplation by eternal perception. Who is rightly said to be the rival of the despiser, because the elect of God receive the exhortations of good admonition even from proud and negligent preachers. Whence also the Lord commands, saying: Whatsoever they shall say to you, do, but according to their works do ye not (Matth. XXIII, 3). Hence Paul says: Be zealous for that which is good in a good thing always (Gal. IV, 18). But since Scripture says: Let the impious be taken away, lest he see the glory of the Lord (Isai. XXVI, 10), it seems contrary that those who are damned in hell should be understood to see those who rejoice in heaven. But because to see also pertains to knowledge, he sees his rival in the temple, because although the impious man is held constrained by the punishments of hell, he does not doubt that the humble elect, whom he

does not see with his eyes, are present in heaven in the joys of the angels. And it is to be noted that it is said twice: There shall not be an old man in thy house, because he is not instructed unto salvation neither from the experience of punishments which the damned man has, nor from the knowledge of another's happiness, nor from the experience of punishments which he has not. But sometimes from reprobate pastors children are born to the elect through doctrine. Whom indeed the fault of the pastors does not hold bound, because they follow the exhortations of his good preaching which they hear, and not the perverse works which they see. Whence also it is added:

(Vers. 33.) Yet I will not altogether take away from thee a man from my altar.

17. For they are men who shine forth in the lofty citadel of a rigid conversation. As if he should say. Therefore I do not take them away from my altar, because they are men. For by the merit of their conversation, strength and loftiness of power are preserved to them. Whence also through the prophet the Lord promulgates the edicts of equity, saying: The soul that shall sin, the same shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father that of the son (Ezek. XVIII, 20). Therefore the Lord would justly take away a man from his altar from him, if the son bore the iniquity of the father. But from this very fact that the elect hearer is seen in glory, the punishment for the reprobate teacher is accumulated. Wherefore also it is added:

(Vers. 33.) But that thy eyes may fail, and thy soul may waste away.

18. For his eyes fail, because they are confounded by the life of him who completed his own exhortation. His soul also wastes away, because he is compelled to grieve more abundantly, while he knows that the good which he taught flourishes through the glory of retribution in his subjects, and he himself did not care to do this. In which words also it is to be noted that he who promises that he will not altogether take away from him a man from his altar, he whom he receives is found to be rare, because forsooth there are more hearers of a reprobate teacher who follow the evil things which they do, than the right things which they teach. Whence also here a great part of his house is said to be about to die in the manly age.

19. For the manly age is the time for administering the priesthood. Therefore the imitator of a reprobate teacher is led to the manly age when he is promoted to the loftiness of the sacred order. When indeed he shall have reached that age, he dies, because whosoever 90 shall have approached so great a ministry unworthily, or shall have lived unworthily in it, is condemned. Whence also Paul, making mention of the Lord's body and blood, says: He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself (I Cor. XI, 29). They die therefore in the manly age, because they perish from the presumption and daring of the more sublime ministry. Hence therefore, hence already forsooth

let them gather the precipices, and let them not aim for but dread undergoing the burdens of so great a ministry. For he who is foretold to die when he shall have reached the manly age, lives until he reaches it, because indeed all the weak, and those unequal to so great a ministry, if they consider the measure of their own smallness, have a place in the holy Church in which they may live guarding themselves. Whence also through Moses the Lord denounces, saying: The beast, if it shall touch the mountain, shall be stoned (Exod. XIX, 12; Heb. XII, 20). Hence it is also that when Lot went out from Sodom, he abstained from ascending the mountain, and turned aside into the little city of Segor (Gen. XIX, 20, seq.), lest while yet a little one he strives for higher things, he should die striking against the manly age. For we go out of Sodom when we decline the fires of burning concupiscence. We who do not immediately ascend to the sublime things, because we do not touch the heights of the superior ministry, while we consider by measuring our own infirmity, lest if we despise holding the measure of our weak age, we who lived as little ones, should die in the manly age. But as a sign of the house about to die, both of Heli's sons are foretold to die in one day. Which sons indeed we have said signify those who are promoted to sacred orders by carnal kinsmen, not with the intention of administering the order, but for the glory of worldly dignity. In one day therefore both die, because they perish in the appetite for worldly happiness. Secular glory, reverence of honor, power of the

height, brightness of dignity, frequency of those following, abundance of things secularly loved, is a day, but one which kills.

20. Let the sons of Heli therefore hear that they both die in one day. For they who love the happiness of a falling life from the accepted pastoral height, have indeed an intention of joy, but the fruit of lamentation, a purpose in the exultation of life, and an arrival in the sorrow of death. Therefore they hasten to death, as often as they vainly congratulate themselves on temporal happiness. Which also the Apostle proves, when he mentions the apostatizing widow, saying: But she that is in pleasures, living is dead (I Tim. V, 6). For he held that she died in this day, who showed that the cause of the widow's death was pleasures. But the death of the sons would be less worse, if it were not itself the cause of another's death. Whence also they are foretold to die not simply, but as a sign of the house about to die, because when those who closely imitate a reprobate teacher fall in the same precipice, the followers of those following are also accumulated in the ruin. Let those therefore who love temporal happiness from the office of the accepted height hear this, and let them greatly fear the magnitude of their guilt. They are worthy of so much the more grievous punishment, as they clearly perceive that from the vanity which they love they do not die alone, because while under the pretext of worldly gladness they drink in death, they transmit the pest of their drink to the multitude of those following them. By which words nevertheless

the brevity of the present life can be intimated to reprobate teachers. For they die in one day, because when they come to the end of this life, that which they lived is seen to have been altogether brief for them. Whence it is said by a certain wise man: The joy of the hypocrite is like a point (Job XX, 5). Hence again blessed Job speaks of the lovers of this world, saying: They lead their days in good things, 91 and in a point they go down to hell (Ibid. XXI, 13). But when the reprobate are snatched away to punishment, wise and elect pastors are excited to the care of the Lord's flock. Wherefore also he subsequently adds:

(Vers. 35.) And I will raise me up a faithful priest.

21. For the Lord raises up for himself a faithful priest, because namely the highest place requires him for its care who may not only rightly understand, but who may faithfully minister. But he will then be able to minister rightly, when he recognizes the manner of his ministry from the sacred eloquence. Whence also when a faithful priest is promised, he is said to be about to act according to the heart and soul of almighty God. For what do we take the heart and soul of God to be, but his sacred Scripture? For with the heart we think for deliberation, but with the soul we are affected for love. Because therefore in the sacred eloquence we recognize the counsels of almighty God, and there we find the love with which he loved the human race, the eloquence itself reasonably designates his heart and soul. Therefore almighty God chooses that priest for his ministry

who acts according to his heart and soul, because forsooth no other is worthy of so great an order, except him who has learned his will from the sacred eloquence, and bestows that which he has learned upon the utilities of neighbors through the study of charity. But it is still to be vigilantly considered what is said:

(Vers. 35.) According to my heart and my soul.

22. For certain precepts are found in sacred Scripture which were indeed commanded by the dispensation of God, and not by the love of God. Which forsooth if the priest who is promised to be raised up should fulfill, he would act according to the heart of God, and not according to his soul, while he would have rendered by his works the counsel of divine dispensation, and not the precept of love. Were not those mandates of his from the dispensation of God, of which he speaks, saying: I gave them statutes that were not good (Ezek. XX, 25)? And when the Pharisees disputed with Truth itself about giving a bill of divorce, they heard: Moses because of the hardness of your hearts gave you the law (Matth. XIX, 8). Because therefore those things were of the dispensation of his counsel, whosoever used those same precepts acted according to the heart of the Lord, and not according to his soul. For that precept of the heart and soul is that of which it is said: This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (John XV, 12). Because that which he commands through counsel, he apprehends through the embrace of charity. Hence also he says: Love your enemies, do good to them that

hate you (Luke VI, 27). Hence also he commands, saying: Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. These therefore and the like are the precepts of the heart and soul of God, because by revelation that is shown of his secret counsel which is received in his sight by the proof of charity. A faithful priest therefore is known by this sign. If namely he works according to his heart and soul, because forsooth he is then truly faithful, if he follows not the license of his dispensation, but the precepts of love. But because he is chosen not in vain, but for the gain of the subject people, he adds, and says:

(Vers. 35.) And I will build him a faithful house.

23. For the house of a priest is the amplitude in which the subject people dwell. Which house indeed is built for him as faithful by the Lord, because it is raised to the study of obedience by divine inspiration. For an unfaithful house is that society of subjects which daily receives the preaching of a good rector, yet does not intend to obey it through the study of good work. For it is known to be an unfaithful house, because the money of the word of God which is credited to it by the ministry of its preacher is dissipated through the negligence of a prodigal life, 92 and that which is committed to it for the gain of business is by no means found in the time of rendering an account. For a faithful house is constructed by the Lord for a good preacher when the hearts of the subject people are divinely prepared to obey his voice, so that he may not only

guard that which is laid up in it of the talent of the word, but may lead it back accumulated with manifold gain to the table of eternal reception. And it is to be noted that a faithful house is said to be built by the Lord, so that the preacher may by no means vainly glory in the good conversation of the subject people. It is to be noted also that the Lord raises up for himself a faithful priest, so that the hearts of the subjects may not presume to attribute this very fact, that they are governed by a most excellent rector, to their own merits. It is to be noted also that the priest whom the Lord raises up he calls faithful to himself, but the house which he builds for him he says will be faithful to the priest himself; because forsooth the preacher owes obedience to God, the subject to the prelate. But the prelate then rightly walks before the subject, if Truth itself is seen for the directing of all the journeys of his life. It follows therefore:

(Vers. 35.) And he shall walk before my Christ all days.

24. But the Christ of the Lord is the Redeemer of the human race. Who indeed, because he is already believed to have ascended to the heavens, is now seen by his faithful not with bodily eyes, but with the mind. He therefore walks before him all days who does nothing by sudden thought. For that he may place right steps without in work, he looks within to Christ, whom he carries in his heart through consideration. But because he still speaks to the reprobate pastor, subjoining, he says:

(Vers. 36.) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall remain of thy house shall come that he may be prayed for.

25. For someone is said to be about to remain of his house, because a great part of it is said to be about to die. For he remains of the house of the reprobate pastor whom the consciousness of sin does not extinguish from the hope of obtaining pardon. He remains therefore because the weight of conscience is lightened through the purpose of penance by the hope of obtaining life. Who indeed comes that he may be prayed for, and hastens to God by repenting, from whom he departed by sinning. He comes therefore that he may be prayed for, because he who made himself unworthy of God, requires a worthy intercessor, that he may be expiated by another's prayers, who is known not to be able to be cleansed by his own. Whence also James piously admonishes, saying: Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved (James V, 16). Hence again: The continual prayer of a just man availeth much. But prayer avails for him, who while he restrains himself from the uncleanness of sin, brings himself back to the likeness of God, of which he despoiled himself by sinning. Whence also here it is added:

(Vers. 36.) That he may offer a piece of silver.

26. On the coin, therefore, the image of the Lord is carved, that it may be known to be his by whom it is commanded to be formed. The coin, therefore, is taken as the likeness of God. Whence he speaks in Genesis, saying: Let us make

man to our image and likeness (Gen. I, 26). And because from the sacred eloquence we recognize the image and likeness of God to which we are to be brought back, it is said to be a silver coin. He therefore who comes from the way of sin that he may be prayed for, ought to offer a silver coin, because it profits him nothing that he is pricked by repenting, nor that he confesses by weeping, if, with the beauty of good will remaining unamended and uncorrected within, he is by no means known to radiate with the light of the image of God. For the image and likeness of God is to hate evil with a glorious hatred, and to love God with perfect love. Whence also the Prophet, beholding that the brightness of the divine likeness had perished from the human race, looks back to him 93 who came from heaven with the glorious light of our reparation, saying: Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity (Psal. XLIV, 8). Hence now considering himself renewed into the form of perfection from the contemplation of him, he says: I have hated the unjust, and have loved thy law (Psal. CXVIII, 113). He therefore who comes from the house of the reprobate through confession, who through humility asks the Lord to be prayed for on his behalf, must altogether take care that he offer a silver coin, so that, having taken up the splendor of good will, he may perfectly hate the evil which he did, and love the good with an integral love which he neglected. Whence also by the examination of the just judge the edicts of propitiation are promulgated. In whatsoever day, or hour, he says, the

sinner shall be converted, he shall live by life, and shall not die (Ezek. XVIII, 21, 27). But the conversion of a sinner is not in the humility of confession, but in the renovation of the interior man, when to the sinner, already corrected by divine inspiration, both the evil which he loved is displeasing, and the good which he hated is pleasing. For there are some who both accuse themselves of the wickedness of crime, and do not correct the perversity of will. Who indeed are not believed to be converted to the Lord, because true conversion is not received in the mouth, but in the heart. For to be converted is to be turned together. Therefore the conversion of a sinner is true then, when both our men are brought back to the good pleasure of our Creator, when both our flesh is restrained from the perpetration of a deed by the hatred of iniquity, and the mind extends itself to the intention of good operation through the love of justice. But because there are some within the Church, who only at the end of their life come to the satisfaction of penance, and it is said by the judgment of Truth: In whatsoever hour the sinner is converted, he lives, it is often much asked by some if they immediately find life after the death of the flesh who perpetrate sins for a long time of life, and only at the exit of life accuse themselves of having acted wickedly. To which it must be said that from the force of conversion the magnitude of the crime is deleted. But the force of conversion is the affection of charity infused into the heart by the visitation of the Holy Spirit. And it is written of the same

Spirit: That he himself is the remission of sins. For when he worthily visits the hearts of the elect, he powerfully purges them from all uncleanness of sins, because as soon as he has infused himself into the mind, he forthwith ineffably excites it to the hatred of sins and vices and to the love of virtues. He makes it immediately to hate what it loved, and to love ardently what it had hated, and to groan greatly in both, because it recalls that it loved damnably the evils which it hates, and hated the goods which it loves. For who would dare to say, although he be weighed down by every kind of burden of sins, that anyone visited by the grace of the Holy Spirit can perish? Because therefore a sinner is converted at no hour, except that in which he is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, what remains, except that as he deserts the death of sin by execrating it, so he may live by the life of justice to which he convertedly desires? Who is immediately received into life after death, if he receives so great a fire of love in conversion as can consume in the soul all the gathered rust of sin. Whence also it is said of the sinful woman: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much (Luke VII, 47). Hence it is said by the same Truth hanging on the cross: Amen I say to thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Ibid., XXIII, 43). At the exit of life, therefore, those only piously repent, who both through internal visitation perfectly love good things, and hate the evils which they had loved. Who nevertheless if they cannot sufficiently grieve for the iniquities committed, nevertheless even these live in the hour

in which they are converted. 94 For those who had the perfection of good will in the confession of sin, pass to life after death by the purgatorial punishment of sin, if they by no means had sufficient force of love for deleting sins. Whence also Paul says: So they shall be saved, yet as by fire (I Cor. III, 15). But let the sinner, who there merited to be saved through fire, fulfill here through the affliction of the flesh that which he knows to be wanting to him of the force of love.

(Vers. 36.) And a cake of bread.

27. For by the name of bread sometimes the refreshment of earthly delight is designated. Wherefore also the prophet Jeremiah, mentioning the people of a Judea corrupted in secular appetite, says: All her people sigh (Lam. I, 11), and seek bread. Therefore the converted sinner twists the bread when he tortures past delight through the affliction of penance. For to twist the bread is to afflict the flesh for the delight perpetrated. He therefore who desires to pass to salvation without the torment of fire, let him offer a cake of bread with the silver coin, so that he who deserts sins through good will, may forsooth altogether extinguish them by valid affliction of the flesh. For he was offering a silver coin, who, having already received the likeness of God, by confessing execrated what he had done, saying: My scars are putrefied because of my foolishness (Psal. XXXVII, 6). And again: I am bowed down, and humbled on every side. But he who feared that the silver coin would not suffice him for an oblation, took care to add a cake of bread. For he

confesses, and says: I roared from the groaning of my heart (Ibid., 9). For a roaring insinuates the weeping of great grief in the affliction of the penitent. Joining this twisted bread to the silver coin, the same one speaks, saying: For I will declare my iniquity, and I will think for my sin (Ibid., 19). For to think for sin is to propose a worthy affliction of the flesh for past delight. He therefore twisted the bread to be offered, who both pronouncing the outrages perpetrated, thought how he might be able to delete them. And because from the austerity of conversation the desire for praise sometimes creeps in upon the penitent, the intention of a truly converted sinner is insinuated through that which is added:

(Vers. 36.) And let him say: Dismiss me, I beseech thee, to one priestly part.

28. For the priestly part of each one is the retribution of the elect in eternal life. For all the elect of God are his priests, because they never cease to offer sacred gifts to him whom they incessantly serve through the oblation of their ministry. Whence also they, triumphing in the kingdom, say: Thou hast redeemed us to God in thy blood, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests (Apoc. V, 9, 10). Therefore to say to a converted sinner: Dismiss me, I beseech thee, to one priestly part, is to expect from the austerity of life and penance only the part of eternal beatitude, so that namely he may find security of delight, which he may both possess by perennial enjoyment, and never drag after him the twistings of penance. Wherefore also it is added:

(Vers. 36.) That I may eat a morsel of bread.

29. For if bread in the sacred eloquence is taken for delight, a morsel of bread is the unfailing delight of eternal life. Of which enjoyment indeed it is said through the prophet: Joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving, and the voice of praise (Isai. LI, 3). Hence also now beholding the guests invited to the table not of a cake of bread, but of a morsel, he says: Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and exultation (Ibid. XXXV, 10). Hence the Psalmist, pronouncing with the voice of a corrected penitent, says: Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, thou shalt fill 95 me with joy with thy countenance, delights in thy right hand even to the end (Psal. XV, 10). For the ways of life are the afflictions of penance, by which indeed from the abyss of his own damnation the sinner is led to the supernal country, while he is spontaneously tortured for the iniquities committed. Whence also when he insinuates that he is a corrected sinner, he presumes, saying: Thou art he, O Lord, who hast restored my inheritance to me (Psal. XV, 5). And again trusting, he says: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Ibid. 10). For the ways of life become known to the sinner when the afflictions of penance are divinely insinuated to him, when namely with an enlightened mind he considers what bitterness of life he should apply to each delight of past fault. Who indeed glories in being filled with pleasant gladness with the countenance of almighty God, because he is refreshed by the manifest satiety of

divine contemplation, and he who on the left of the present life is pricked for a time by repenting, on the right of eternal life is satisfied with delights even to the end. He therefore who offered a cake of bread, is led to the eating of a morsel, because he who for the love of the supernal life tortures noxious delights, prepares for himself a perpetual refreshment in the banquet of eternal joy. It follows:

CHAPTER IV.

(I Kings III, 1.) But the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Heli.

1. But that is shown to have been repeated in this place, which is mentioned above concerning the elect child, where it says: But the child Samuel was a minister in the sight of the Lord before the face of Heli. This indeed is to minister to the Lord before Heli, which is to be a minister of the Lord before the face of Heli. And because we have more fully explained that there, the Lord helping, we do not linger at all in repeating its exposition. But because it is the divine word which speaks this in this place, and in that, it is shown by no means to have done this without utility of reason. Therefore, to avoid the reader's tedium, we are silent as to the explanation, but we tell the cause of the repetition for his utility. For some who are subject to the magistery of the prelates of the holy Church obey as unpolished ones; but when they profit a little higher through conversation, they by no means persist in the same humility of obedience. Whom Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, well

designates spiritually, who when she saw that she had conceived from Abraham her husband, despised her mistress (Gen. XVI, 5). For Hagar conceives when the reprobate mind of a subject believes that it profits either through the instruction of knowledge, or through conversation of life. Who indeed being pregnant is said to have despised her mistress, because she already disdains to be subjected by obedience to the will of her superior presiding over her. But she who despises her mistress is said to be a handmaid, because proud subjects are also weak through elation, and do not reach the number of the children of God. But Samuel's progress is explained, because it was said above: But the child Samuel profited and grew and pleased both God and men (I Kings II, 18). Through what sublimity of conversation he ran through those three things, has been explained above. Because therefore even now he is mentioned to minister before his master, what is it, except that he offers a form to the elect hearers, that by how much they profit in a higher life, they may never forget to keep the good of obedience? For they then truly profit, if they strive for the height of merits both with fortitude of work, and with the virtue of humility.

2. In this place there is another thing that should be noted: that Samuel is shown to minister to the Lord before Heli at the very time when he is rebuked by the Lord for the negligence of his sons. For some subjects, while they consider the measure of their own fortitude, prefer to be severe judges of their prelates rather than

pious hearers. Who, indeed, because they are accustomed to exaggerate and discuss their lives, if they behold the stains of even a lighter fault in their conduct, refuse to be subjected to their command by obeying. But they would exist as truly strong if they humbly bore those things of their elders which they think weak. For before God he is known as great through merit who is subjected in a good command to him who in some part does not seem venerable. For behold, Heli is reproved by the open sentence of God for the fault of his negligence committed, but the child of the Lord, Samuel, is mentioned to minister to the Lord before him, so that indeed one may gather within himself what sort of person he is who despises a prelate for a lighter fault, if Samuel subjected himself by obeying him whom Almighty God reproved with such severity (districtione) of His examination. But because Heli is reproved for having honored sinning subjects not a little, the very dignities of the sacred orders are to be weighed. For a rector ought not to honor a sinning subject unless corrected, but a subject ought not even then to despise a prelate, when he has recognized himself as just and him as a sinner, because the eternal Judge has granted the judgment of subjects to the rectors of the holy Church, but He has reserved those same rectors to be discussed by His own examination. Yet this very thing is greatly to be feared by rectors, that they are kept for the examination of God, because they ought to prepare accounts of their life and doctrine all the more subtle, by how much wiser

is the Judge whom they sustain. Nor let them fear His future judgment in the future life only, as if placed far off, lest He who is everywhere present strike the unwary from nearby. For negligent pastors, to escape the penalty of future vengeance, think of long spaces of the present life for the penalty; but the Judge, who is everywhere, imposes penance from nearby, because first He withdraws from them the light of contemplation, and then He snatches them to torments through death. Whence also concerning the same Heli, who a little later dies with a broken neck, it is subjoined:

(Vers. 1.) In those days there was no manifest vision.

3. For while a rector despises the things to be done which he knows, it is dealt with him by a strict judgment, so that he may not see the things to be done, because he would not fulfill what he saw. For the manifest vision is not of a negligent pastor, but of a loving one. Whence also Truth itself says through itself: He who loves me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him (John XIV, 21). For the clarity of manifest vision is the revelation of loved truth. Which indeed truth, if it is shown by merit of love, is most worthily hidden from those who are sluggish in good work, because the sign of love is not in the affection of the mind, but in the zeal of good operation. Whence also in the Gospel the Lord sent before, saying: He who has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is who loves me (Ibid.). Because therefore the darkness

of internal vision is incurred from negligence of work, quite aptly, while the priest is reproved for contempt of the commandments, the hidden vision is mentioned. It follows:

(Vers. 1.) And the word of the Lord was precious.

4. As far as pertains to the truth of the sacred history, he put "precious" for "rare." Therefore the word was precious, because while there was rarely one who perceived the highest things by contemplating, there could not be a frequent one who preached good things by speaking. Which we see happening even now in the holy Church, because while most affect the glory of honor from the reverence of the summit, while they neglect the ministries of the sacred order, they cannot preach to the subject peoples the highest things which they cannot see; and in their family the word is known to be precious, because they rarely hear the exhortations of good preaching, whose prelates do not seek out of desire the celestial things which they may speak, but the earthly things which they may do. Whom indeed sacred Scripture notes, which says: Dumb dogs not able to bark (Isa. LVI, 10). It did not say "not willing," but "not able," because surely while they love the glory of the world with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind and strength, they would wish to speak sublime things to the people, so that even from the sublimity of the word they might have glory. Therefore dumb dogs, wishing to bark, are unable, because while they meditate on earthly

things with a depraved heart, they comprehend none of the hidden things of truth which they might bring forth by revelation. But because that which is precious is accustomed to be guarded with great diligence, this which is said: "There was no manifest vision," can be referred to the negligence of carnal prelates.

5. But that which is added: "And the word of the Lord was precious," pertains to the ardent zeal of good subjects, since faithful subjects, even if they do not have one who frequently preaches celestial things to them from the treasure of sacred eloquence, embrace with wonderful devotion only this which they were able to know at some time, and guard it as a thing ineffably precious, while through good works they lay it up in heaven, where thieves who might be able to take it away do not at all approach. Whence also in the Gospel it is said of the buyer of a good pearl: Having found one precious pearl, he gave all his own things and bought it (Matt. XIII, 46). Since therefore in the time of the hidden vision the word is described as precious for the elect, the praises of the subjects are announced, because they are to be preached with all the more sublime glory, by how much that good, which perished from a more eminent place, remained in the lower ones by the perfection of great charity. By whose good conversation, indeed, it often happens that the vision which had been hidden is made manifest, so that they who devotedly guard the least things, ought to know what they should do, and the greater things. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 2-4.) It happened therefore on a certain day, Heli was lying in his place, and his eyes had grown dim, nor could he see the lamp of God, before it was extinguished. But Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. And the Lord called Samuel.

6. For the child Samuel is called by the Lord as often as the secrets of the divine counsel are revealed to humble subjects, and by the merit of their humility they acquire the light of contemplation, which proud preachers lose by the retribution of their pride. But it should be noted that this is shown to have happened on a certain day, in which day Heli is said both to be lying in his place and to be unable to see. For he is called "in the day" who is raised up to know the secrets of celestial wisdom for his own and others' salvation. Contrariwise also Solomon perceived wisdom in the night, so that the darkness of the time might indicate that he would not receive the same wisdom while persevering (III Kings III, 5, 12). Which can also be understood otherwise, because indeed the blindness of Heli is mentioned. Therefore by the position of the day, the magnitude of his blindness is shown, because indeed he had great darkness who did not see in the day. Now also if we look to the state of the Church, there is a general grace of light. For He came who, scattering the rays of true clarity, said: I am the light of the world, he who follows me does not walk in darkness (John VIII, 12). And because the glory of His internal splendor is ineffable, it is not said of this day, or that, but of

"a certain day": of which day indeed there is no clarity [i.e., of its own]; but rather the magnitude of its clarity is unknown. Therefore the Pastor sustains great darkness, if he who is known to be the eye of the Church by office has no vision in the grace of so great a light. Wherefore Truth itself through itself shows the darkness of that same eye to be great, saying: How great will those darknesses be (Matt. VI, 23)? But now it insinuates whence so great a darkness arises for him, because it says: He was lying in his place. For the place of a preacher has the duty of standing, not of lying. Whence also the Lord offers the form of the same through Himself to preachers, saying: But I am in the midst of you as he who ministers (Luke XXII, 27). For to stand in the midst of the brethren is to offer oneself as an example to the lesser ones through laborious conversation. Therefore to stand pertains to the labor of work, and to the necessity of the fight. Whence also the master of the spiritual contest commands, saying: Stand therefore, having your loins girt in truth (Eph. VI, 14). And because to lie belongs to one resting, he is reproved who, in the place of battle and labor, follows the lukewarmness of rest, and is mentioned as lying in that place. To stand is also of the just. Whence also Paul says: For by faith you stand (II Cor. I, 23). Therefore to lie also pertains to the negligence of a more remiss life. Then therefore Heli lies in his place, when through the lapse of depravity a reprobate preacher rests in the seat of the just. Therefore the eyes of one lying in his place grow dim, because

they cannot see the highest things, who in the citadel of the pastoral summit do not follow out the works of virtue, but are immersed in the allurements of a more remiss life. Who indeed is called the "lamp of God" no longer by the truth of praise, but through the reproach of derision. For he who performs the function of the name "lamp of God," and is said to be unable to see, is rather derided by so great a name by which he is reckoned. For in the true praise of a just man it is said: He was a burning and shining lamp (John V, 35). For the radiance of true light which he had drawn in by loving, he poured out by speaking. A carnal preacher also is called a lamp by office, but blind by intention, because he performs the dignity of offering light, but fixes his mind in the darkness of vanity.

7. Whose consummate perversity is indeed designated, because it is not said that he "did not see," but that he "could not see." Wherefore also the Lord, making mention of the bad tree, says: A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruits (Matt. VII, 18). Therefore the lamp of God cannot be seen, when he who pre-eminently stands in pastoral dignity is pressed by so great a thickness of secular love, that he is raised up to the intuition of internal clarity by no inspiration of grace; when indeed already, cast out by the just indignation of God, he is left in the blindness of his own darkness, so that he may never further be visited by the infusion of celestial light. But it is well said: Before it was extinguished. For not to see is the punishment of a sinner still living in this world,

but to be unable to see is of the dead impious man already condemned to eternal punishment in the other world. Whence also by the judgment of the Creator he is commanded to be enclosed in exterior darkness, so that indeed he may never be brought back to the intuition of light. When therefore he is said to be unable to see before he was extinguished, a reprobate preacher living yet in this world is likened in his blindness to the impious man already condemned forever. But the lamp is extinguished when the pastor dies. Or certainly the lamp is extinguished because, when a reprobate preacher perishes through the death of the flesh, whatever seemed to shine in him, he loses from the glory of the summit, and remains as it were only the shell of the lamp without light, when the person is forced to be kept for the eternal judgment, who is spoiled of every luster of the world. Before therefore the lamp of God is extinguished, he cannot see, because he possesses even the merit of future damnation through the eternity of his blindness, and yet he still shines before men through the splendor of his accepted dignity.

(Vers. 3.) But Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

8. But it is well said that the reprobate prelate does not "sleep," but "lies," but the subject and elect child does not "lie," but "sleeps," because to sleep is sometimes taken in a good sense, but to lie almost always in a bad one. Whence also the Spouse in the Song of Songs says: I sleep, and my heart watches (Cant. V, 2). Therefore in the

sleep of the perfect child is designated the rest of each elect subject from depraved work. For he sleeps in the temple and where the ark is, who, occupied in celestial desire and in the meditation of sacred Scripture, does not intend those things which pertain to perversity. For some sleep in the temple, but do not sleep in the place where the ark of God is, because some simple ones rest through love in celestial contemplation, but do not know how to meditate on the hidden things of sacred eloquence. But Samuel, who is said to sleep not only in the temple, but before the ark of God, designates subjects equally learned and elect, because while they draw the flames of their love by meditating more frequently from sacred eloquence, they are assumed higher to the desire of the celestial fatherland, and choose as it were the inner parts of the temple for sleep, while they are separated all the further from the publicity of earthly work, by how much more secretly they are hidden through meditation in the sanctuary of internal vision.

(Vers. 4.) And the Lord called Samuel.

9. For the calling of God is to excite by the force of greater grace. For the Lord calls him who is sleeping, because He excites those resting from earthly intention to the increase of celestial knowledge. For while we watch through solicitude for those things which are without, we do not feel internal and spiritual things. Therefore the repulsion of earthly care is our preparation for the perception of celestial grace, because in the elect there is a more abundant infusion of

the divine gift, by how much the mind shall have been more pure through the custody of internal meditation. It follows:

(Vers. 4-9.) And the Lord, it says, called Samuel. Who responding, said: Behold, here I am; and he ran to Heli, and said: For you called me; who said: I did not call you, my son; return and sleep. And he went and slept. And the Lord added to call Samuel again. And rising up he went to Heli, and said: Behold, here I am, because you called me. Who responded: I did not call you, son; return and sleep. Furthermore, Samuel did not know the Lord, nor had the word of the Lord been revealed to him. And the Lord added, and called Samuel a third time. Who rising up went to Heli, and said: Behold, here I am, because you called me. Heli therefore understood that the Lord called the child, and said to Samuel: Go and sleep, and if He shall call you henceforth, you shall say: Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.

10. What is it therefore that Almighty God insinuates His calling with such art, that the mind of the called one is held back, lest he recognize the One calling him; that hearing God, he thinks this master to be a man; that He sends forth the calling, and is silent as to the cause; that He allows him to go to his master, to return so many times to the quiet of sleep, and yet does not permit him to rest while sleeping? For could not He who called whom He willed to the knowledge of His secrets have done so with a voice similar only to Heli's, and not with the voice He willed; and could not He who called when

He willed have immediately indicated the cause of the calling; and could not He who willed to excite him that he might hear, have taught him how he ought to have heard except through a master? But in this matter Almighty God uses a great dispensation, so that indeed the hearts of the elect may be taught by a double instruction, in as much as both in the surface of the history all subjects may see the good of obedience which they should follow, and the prelates may behold the hidden mysteries, which they may bring to the light of intelligence by discussing. But what I think should be said in the first place: the child who thought the Lord speaking to be his master heard a corporeal voice. Therefore God spoke to the child not through Himself, but through an angelic spirit, because He who is not bound by a corporeal form is not narrowed to the sound of a voice by the instrument of a body. Which indeed is appropriate for a childish hearing. For although the merits of a beginning subject are great, because nevertheless he is recognized not yet to be in perfection, but in the progress of conversation, he does not reach that locution by which Almighty God speaks through Himself. Through Himself indeed Almighty God, the highest and uncircumscribed Spirit, speaks spiritually to great and spiritual men, when by a spiritual locution He indicates to their minds both the things to be done which they should do, and the things to be spoken which they should know. Therefore He moved an exterior voice through an angelic spirit, but by the presence of His grace

the Creator Spirit indicated what He willed. Thus calling by a voice, while He was thought to be Heli, He lay hidden from cognition, so that the child might run to his master, and while he heard that he had not been called, being deceived he might show in how great a summit of virtue he stood. The child therefore humbly subject to a man, and raised up on the arduous citadel of obedience, when being called he approached, and being commanded he returned, what else does he offer us for an example, except the form of the highest obedience?

For true obedience neither discusses the intention of superiors (*praepositorum*), nor discerns the precepts, because he who has subjected every judgment of his life to a superior rejoices in this alone, if he performs what is commanded of him. For whoever has perfectly learned to obey does not know how to judge, because he considers only this to be good, if he obeys the precepts. But in such great glory of his perfect conversation our life is confounded. For behold, we have decreed to set out for the heavenly homeland under the leaders of the Christian army, yet if we are commanded to perform diverse works, even at diverse times, we murmur. For who would restrain himself from murmuring, who would temper himself from anger, if he heard himself called twice or thrice, and yet perceived from the response of the one calling that he had not been called at all? How great a darkness of our sloth indeed we suffer, because we do not see with what brightness of its reward the good of such

great virtue corresponds. For the only good for the recovery of life is if the fault of disobedience was an evil sufficient to perpetrate death. If, therefore, in the evil of disobedience death prevailed, as often as we obey, we are restored to life. Thus the child Samuel is not offended whether called or repulsed, because he did not wish to see the mind of the one calling or repelling him, who knew how to rejoice in this alone, that he obeyed. And because rising for labor, and returning to sleep pertains to rest, what does it insinuate, except that both prepare life for us, if the mind of the obedient one considers in what he does nothing but the good of obedience? For a precept must be considered in this alone, that it is the precept of a superior; and he who executes the good of obedience should not consider the work enjoined, but the fruit, because for the merit of the joys of eternal life the quality of the work is not sought, but the mortification of one's own will and the execution of another's. Whence also Paul says: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19). Now therefore before Almighty God neither those things which pertain to labor, nor those which pertain to rest are small, if they can prepare eternal life for the obedient. Whoever, therefore, is ruled by another's judgment, let him not attend to what happens to him, but let him consider this alone, that he may not depart from the precept of the superior.

Therefore, a strenuous operator of social life, and a pious emulator of those serving God together with him, if he desires to obtain a fuller retribution of eternal merit through the good of obedience, let him know himself to excel in this alone, if he has subjected his own will to the judgment of a superior before others. For neither the great gains of fasting, nor the studies of a harsh life are to be greatly weighed by the devoted soldiers of Christ against the precept of superiors. For it is of greater merit to have a meal enjoined by charity than a fast undertaken by one's own deliberation. For he who, being commanded, refreshes the flesh, has unwillingly merited the reward of fasting by devotion, and has acquired a fuller reward of obedience by eating. God therefore called the child, but with a voice similar to the master's, so that He might indeed indicate the mode of His locution. He was silent about the cause of the calling, so that the chosen child might show by what humility of obedience he was sublime. He endured going to the preceptor, that he might offer the gift of his devotion. He is allowed to return to the quiet of sleep, so that indeed we may not despise even those things which are smallest. He excites him repeatedly, that He might show him whom He wished to place in the form of the elect, because even the insistence of commands would not fatigue him. He learned from him who was to be rejected how he ought to have listened, so that indeed we may know that the commands of superiors are to be venerated even then, when they themselves do not have a

laudable life, because their doctrine, which can become vile to the proud through wicked operation, makes humble listeners arrive at the height of divine familiarity.

But because there follows: *Moreover Samuel did not yet know the Lord,* and above it is said that he ministered to the Lord, it seems very contrary what is said, because he could not be ignorant of Him whom he served. For who would serve him whom he does not know? But indeed, through that which is subjoined, it is clear what sounds contrary, by what agreement of reason it ought to be understood. *Neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him.* By which, to be sure, it is given to be understood that Him whom he knew by love and ministry, he did not know by the revelation of His word. For he had not yet heard Him calling in such a way, whom he testified that he had known both by the devotion of ministry and the virtue of love. But in the conversation of the faithful it is fittingly accepted; for most people profit well under another's institution, who in the time of their novelty pay ministries to Almighty God, and yet by the purity of contemplation do not reach the beauty of His internal beauty. Who, when with the merit of their subjection they also receive the gift of divine contemplation, understand by the experience of internal vision that they did not yet know Him whom they were ministering to. Which Jacob well designates, setting out to take a wife, who after the labor of the journey saw the Lord through the sleep of rest, but waking from

sleep, says: *Truly the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it* (Gen. 28:16). For neither could he doubt that the Lord was there before he slept, who felt that He was everywhere; but because he then learned Him more perfectly, he claimed that he had been ignorant of Him when he did not know Him more familiarly. For the way by which one goes to a wife is the intention of devoted obedience, by which the fecundity of internal charity is desired to be attained. Thus Jacob sleeps on the way, when the faithful subject, the supplanter of the malignant spirit, is received through the labor of obedience into the rest of internal vision. Who indeed will then confess that he has known the Lord, because while he marvels at that beauty of internal light to which he is newly assumed, he acknowledges how much he did not know before by the experience of revealed beauty. For by faith, as if by rumor, we know God, but by the love of contemplation He who was...

But because it is said separately: *He did not yet know the Lord, neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him,* it can be understood more subtly. For in one and the same internal contemplation of God, both a marvelous charity is infused into the contemplator from the fruit of such great glory, and a great stupor in the revelation of the secret word. Some therefore know the Lord, and perceive the revelation of His word, because they are both filled with a marvelous sweetness from that infusion of such great charity which they draw from custom, and they are instructed with great wisdom by the

revelation of the word. By some indeed the Lord is known, to whom the word of the Lord is by no means revealed; because simple people, but men perfected by great conversation, perceive from the glory of divine contemplation an ineffable sweetness of love in contemplating, but nevertheless do not reach the height of His revealed word, because they are assumed to the order of lovers, not to the height of preaching. The word is indeed revealed to him, that it may be loved; and lest it be preached, it is hidden. Well, however, is it said of him who is elevated to the ministry of preaching: *He did not yet know the Lord, neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him,* so that while he insinuates those things which he, as a novice, does not yet have, he may clearly show with what goods a preacher ought to be enriched. For he who has not yet perceived that virtue of intimate love, indeed does not know the Almighty Lord, whom he knew by faith as if by rumor, by the presence of that great charity. And if he loves ardently, and does not yet know how to discuss the secrets of mysteries through the Spirit, he already indeed knows the Lord, but has not arrived at the revelation of His word. *Samuel therefore went, and slept.*

Now indeed, having been instructed, the child is sent to the knowledge of the divine locution, when the chosen subject is prepared by the counsel of a superior for the knowledge of spiritual things. And to sleep is for him to rest in the desire for eternal life, when namely to the soul already thirsting for heavenly things alone, all

present things are in disdain, so that the more studiously every corporeal thing is repelled from its intention, it may be more abundantly filled with the love of invisible things. And it should be noted that he is already commanded to return to the rest of sleep four times, because while we use this world negligently around visible things, we are awake in work, speech, and thought. Three times, therefore, we are commanded to sleep, so that we may be prepared for the knowledge of heavenly things through the rest from work, the silence of the mouth, and the rejection of superfluous thoughts. In the fourth place, however, we are sent to sleep when by the permission of our superiors we are commanded to cease even from useful ministry, so that while we are impeded by no care of solicitude, the mind may collect itself entirely for the intuition of the heavenly vision.

And it should be noted that the Lord excites the resting child while Heli is ignorant, but nevertheless He by no means manifests the cause of His calling to the one excited, except when the same Heli commands it, because He raises chosen subjects by an occult inspiration to the desire for the heavenly homeland, but He does not permit calling them through rest to that homeland which they love without the permission of superiors. Because therefore as often as the child is called, so often is he allowed to go to the master, what else is this, except that those very divinely inspired desires of subjects are submitted to the judgment of superiors? For the work of a subject, divinely inspired, is then known to be pleasing

to God, if it is performed by the command or permission of a superior. Four times, therefore, the child is called by the Lord, four times the rest of sleep is commanded by the master, because for the tempering of work, the silence of the mouth, the rejection of internal solicitude, and the cessation of ministry, we are enkindled through divine inspiration for the love of a more secret life, and yet we are prohibited from fulfilling the desires of our love without the permission of our superiors. Thus the Lord calls, and is silent about the cause of the calling, so that He might insinuate Himself to the called subject with the permission of the master. For He who was silent about hearing after He called when not commanded, once the human teacher commanded, the calling God indicated the cause of the calling. *Samuel therefore went, and slept in his place.* *And the Lord came, and stood; and He called, as He had called the second time, Samuel.* *And Samuel said: Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* *And the Lord said to him.*

Concerning which words, indeed—because that which is known to pertain to the body is said of the incorporeal and invisible divine substance—it is necessary that it be rationally understood. For whither should He come who is everywhere? In what way is He said to stand and speak who is not formed by corporeal substance? But in that substance which dictates all things, words of our poverty are placed, through which we may be able to rise to the knowledge of the mysteries of His operation. For the Lord to come is to touch the hearts of the elect by the presence of

His grace; His standing is to retain, by the gift of His ungranted grace, those minds which He touches while the gift of His same grace remains. Moreover, His calling is to excite the chosen mind to the augment of greater grace. For the Lord comes, and does not stand, when the hearts of the negligent are touched through grace, and yet they by no means persevere in the affection and love of the touching grace. For He is as if present when coming, and not standing when receding, when from the present touch of divine grace they suddenly propose to do good things, and immediately being forsaken, they desert the intention of the same good purpose. But if it is referred to the power of contemplation, the Lord comes and stands when He both suddenly touches the hearts of the elect through grace, and does not suddenly desert them when touched, so that by coming He may visit, and by standing He may confirm; and He who is shown to the beloved mind for its joy, may not Himself recede before that mind is satiated by living. But because He is said to stand, He is designated as being about to depart at some time, because although He sometimes satiates chosen souls in His revelation through some little delay, He withdraws the sweetness of His presence, so that they may more ardently covet it when withdrawn. The Lord therefore comes visiting, stands sweetly showing Himself, calls to the love of His shown glory by exciting an most ardent desire. Whence also the child is excited so many times with his name repeated. He is called, because a calling

by name designates an affection of great charity and familiarity. Whence also He speaks to Moses, saying: *I have known thee by name* (Exod. 33:12, 17). The name of the one called is therefore repeated, when the mind of the seer is received into the great familiarity of the internal Majesty, and to the faithful bearing their desires the heavenly Majesty says: Behold, I am here.

Also, by God's authorship, when we say to the Lord *Speak,* we say it by His gift; but nevertheless we are not able to say with what affection the more perfect elect say it to Him, because that which belongs to ineffable desire is not expressed by the locution of reason. Which affection Peter indeed well insinuates, who, when he assisted the transformed Lord on the mountain, and discerned His refulgent face like the sun, and had beheld His garments whitening like snow, said: *It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias* (Matt. 17:4; Luke 9:33). For he who says: *It is good for us to be here,* if he were able, would never have wished to be deposed from that vision of such great glory. For while Peter says: *Lord, it is good for us to be here,* and Samuel says: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,* the voices indeed are diverse, but the affections are equal. For Peter signifies this on the mountain, with the Lord transfigured, what Samuel is called to by the one coming, and standing, and the Lord standing and calling a second time. But even if Peter is rebuked by the Evangelist as if not knowing what he said, it nevertheless

does not seem contrary to this sense. For the Evangelist rebuked not Peter's affection, but his reason, because having been taken up apart with the Lord in glory, he thus desired to be always, and for the common redemption he did not wish Him to descend to the ignominy of the cross. He knew not therefore what he said, but he ardently loved what he saw, because indeed he saw so great a good, which could in no way not be thus loved. Whence even if Peter is justly rebuked, he is nevertheless reasonably indulged, because he was overcome by the fruition of such great Majesty through enjoyment. Nevertheless, when Peter is argued with concerning his ignorance in speaking, the cause of the same ignorance is remembered. For subjoining, the Evangelist says: *For they were terrified with fear.* For that ineffable beauty of internal Majesty sometimes strikes the chosen mind to which it shows itself delightfully with a miraculous dread, lest it should leap forth to elation from the magnitude of the vision, if its own spirit of the one being advanced does not refrain it by the moderation of fear, whom bland contemplation carries away to such heights. And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold, I do a word in Israel, which whosoever heareth, both his ears shall tingle.

Indeed, among sublime gifts the chosen mind is restrained from elation all the more cautiously as it beholds even those repulsed through the justice of Almighty God, who seemed to be supported by more sublime gifts. For which reason also, concerning the word which the Lord threat-

ens He will do, the ears of those hearing are foretold to tingle. For indeed the ears of the body tingle when they are attacked by an intolerable sound. For when a clamor is infused into them beyond the capacity of hearing, that sound which the narrowness of the office rejects, it converts into a tingling, because while the voice hisses through the caves of the ears, which having been infused at the same time, does not enter to the interior. But to the ears of minds an intolerable clamor is the rejection (*repulsio*) of some great preacher. Therefore the magnitude of the diffused clamor is not grasped, because while the sublime gifts granted to the reprobate preacher are recollected, it is unknown by what examination of divine equity he is projected. Therefore the magnitude of the diffused voice is converted into a tingling of the ears, because although it is not grasped by the intention of the mind by what judgment of God it occurs, while it is weighed for a long time through consideration, hearts are consternated with fear by the consideration. For as if from the closed sound of a great voice the ears tingle, when the hearts of the just greatly fear concerning the long-considered reprobation of great men. But both ears are related to tingle, namely the right and the left. And because by the right ear eternal life, but by the left the present is designated, and by the ear we hear those things which are said, what do we accept by the left ear except the intention of pious operation, and what by the right ear except the intention of heavenly vision? Thus both ears of

the hearer shall tingle, because when the ruin of the highest men is shown, both intentions of the elect are disturbed, because with a trembling heart they both raise themselves to contemplate eternal things, and they do not dispose temporal things without great dread. For he had suffered this tingling of the ears who spoke to the Lord, saying: *Thy justice is like the mountains of God, thy judgments are a great deep* (Psalm 35:7). For the highest and chosen men are understood as the mountains of God. For I have foretold that I would judge his house forever because of iniquity, because he knew his sons did act unworthily, and he did not rebuke them. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims and gifts forever.

Because for the most part the sentence of just severity is tempered by clemency, this judgment is of great strictness (*districtio*), where the sentence of animadversion is asserted by being repeated. For He foretold it above to Heli, when through a man of God, with his name suppressed, He announced the sentence of his dejection. Because indeed even now He swears that He will act in the same way, He surely repeats the judgment of damnation. In which matter it is also to be noted that he who did not rebuke his sons acting iniquitously is rebuked for having committed iniquity which shall by no means be expiated with victims and gifts forever. What therefore will be the strictness concerning one's own iniquity, if the negligence of another's care is an irremedia-

ble fault? For if the uncorrected sins of subjects bind us with perennial guilt, with what punishments does the audacity of our own iniquity bind us? Deservedly therefore the ears of the hearer tingle, because surely the minds of the elect, which consider this attentively, tremble at such great strictness. Deservedly the ears of the hearer tingle at this, because indeed it has an immensity of clamor which chosen hearts can scarcely sustain. And the right ear of the hearer indeed tingles, because even if by the merit of his perfection each one raises himself to contemplate heavenly things, nevertheless he does not trust in the height of his life. The left ear also tingles, because even if he has by the gift of knowledge that he may perfectly ordain temporal things, nevertheless he has no confidence in the perfection of his ministry. Indeed, among sublime gifts they hear a word, from whose clamor each ear suffers a tingling, under which, as long as this life of uncertainty is led, he does not cease to fear. *Samuel slept until morning.*

For he sleeps until morning who, until the splendor of the coming Redeemer appears, rests in the conversation of begun good operation. He sleeps until morning who, through the whole night of the present life, waits by the purpose of begun justice, so that the clarity of the promised Redeemer may shine forth for him into the joy of merited retribution. For he heard the promised word in Israel, from which his ears do not cease to tingle, because from the beheld strictness of divine justice he drew the spirit of fear, under

whose weight he will not be able to awake to the love of the world. But perhaps he is said to sleep until morning for the tingling of the right ear. For the right ear tingles, because while the perfect lover of the interior life doubts concerning the perfection of contemplation, he desires more and more to profit in that sublimity of life which he began. But as long as we are in this mortal flesh, malignant spirits lie in wait for those tending to the highest things; and so that they may withdraw them from the vision of internal glory, they gather figments of inept thoughts, which they may propose to their internal eyes. Well therefore is it said: *Samuel slept until morning.* The temptation of impure spirits is night; but he who sleeps until morning does not open his eyes all night. He sleeps therefore in the night who disdains to look at the figments of demons in temptation. He also sleeps all night because he is not conquered by the darkness of temptation, but manfully endures, until he is visited by the light of heavenly clarity through the advent of grace. And then indeed he awakes as if in the morning, because he becomes cheerful by the delight of the light poured back upon him after the darkness. As if awaking, indeed, he then opens his eyes, because he joyfully beholds the light by which he is sprinkled, who did not care to behold the darkness brought upon him. From the tingling indeed of the right ear he obtains that he who leans upon heavenly things disdains to see reprobate things, and he insinuates the certainty of his progress, while that which he profits in peace he does not

lose through open and violent wars. *And he feared to tell the vision to Heli.*

22. For he feared to tell him that which the Lord had shown him, in order to restrain the temerity of human audacity with the vigor of discipline. For some are so headlong that they easily rush to the rebuke of their prelates, and do not fear to threaten future punishments for their errors. These, surely, because they do not know the custom of Holy Scripture, have by no means heard the Lord speaking to them. For those to whom almighty God, in speaking, hints at the punishments of their prelates, fear to tell them the things they have heard. Hence, therefore, let the rebukers of their provosts gather with how much inconsideration they cast themselves headlong, and let them fear deeply the depths of their fall. For if those to whom almighty God speaks fear to speak to their prelates, with how much terror ought those to whom God has by no means spoken hide themselves under the silence of their tongue? The fear of Samuel, therefore, does not hint at a servile dread, but at the reverence due to the pastoral height. For even if a negligent preacher deserves rebuke and threats from his own guilt, the loftiness of that order demands the fear of reverence. It follows:

(Verse 15.) And he opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

23. What is it that he who feared to speak, unlocked the doors of the house of the Lord, unless because he did not blush to obey who was terrified to indicate sad things? For it was said above:

Samuel slept in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. For the boy, who is said to have slept in the temple of the Lord and now to open its doors, is shown to have had an enjoined ministry, so that at congruent hours he might open and shut the doors. He, therefore, who was terrified to indicate the vision and opened the doors of the house of the Lord, rendered double reverence to his master, namely, by care for the ministry and by the custody of speech. How strictly indeed he held that custody of speaking is shown if the things that follow are subtly attended to. For it is suddenly added:

(Verses 16-18.) Heli therefore came to Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. Who answered: I am here. And he questioned him: What is the word that the Lord has spoken to thee: I pray thee, hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and so add, if thou shalt hide from me one word of all that have been said to thee. Samuel therefore told him all the words, and did not hide them from him.

24. For he who is asserted to have been compelled to speak by so much instance of imprecation, is declared to have been bound by a great severity of silence. And because some subjects are accustomed to be silent not so much for the custody of purity as for the obstinacy of protervity, Samuel shows the form of the elect subject, who reverently kept silence, but feared to keep silence when commanded to speak. And so he shone with a double light of conversation, while he who was silent by the virtue of filial fear, sought the utility of speaking by speaking. It follows:

(Verse 18.) And he answered: It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his eyes.

25. He who considers this response of Heli more simply than he ought, thinks that he answered as rightly as he did humbly. For as it is heard outwardly, what could he have answered more humbly who heard his reprobation, and to God threatening, or rather, promulgating the sentence of his reprobation, offered whatever he wished to do with him? But surely that humility of response, if it be subtly inspected, is not true humility. For that is known to be true which accompanies the good of obedience in following the commands of a superior. He would indeed be truly humble if he had offered himself to the amendment of the fault for which he was being argued. But perhaps he would more truly be humble if, being rebuked, he answered nothing, but applied the neglected correction to his wicked sons, if even then he insisted with pastoral zeal and vindicated the crimes of the flagitious priests with worthy vengeance. While, therefore, he says: It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his eyes, he is known to have brought forth the word of his election more clearly than a response of humility, because indeed he chose rather to incur the causes of God's threats than to condemn his sons for the iniquities they had committed. Oh, how many are there still as imitators of Heli, who, although they feel almighty God daily from the sacred eloquence threatening them, yet tremble to displease men, and do not fear to incur the threats of divine indignation,

and while they fear the enmities of men as if implacable, they trust in the mercy of God even while sinning!

26. But inordinate trust with almighty God can have a place for vengeance, but cannot obtain indulgence. For to an uncorrected sinner, and one persisting in the purpose of his fault, what is it to say to God threatening him: It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his eyes, unless to trust inordinately in the most orderly mercy of God? For he trusts orderly in the mercy of almighty God who corrects that in which he fails by sinning through penitence, and wipes it away by weeping. To sin, therefore, and to presume upon the clemency of God the Creator, is to be exposed to the sea of his justice. So indeed not to wipe away sins committed by repenting, and to presume upon God's mercy, is to offend against the judgment of his severity. While, therefore, the life of Heli is described in the form of reprobate preachers, not only the fall through guilt is shown, but also security in the precipitation of guilt. For he who could have appeased the magnitude of divine indignation by the fear of penitence, while he neglected what he heard, incurred what he deserved.

27. For almighty God, although he is just in equity, is yet believed to be more abundant in pious commiseration. Whence also it is said by the Prophet: His tender mercies are over all his works (Ps. 144, 9). Hence it is that through the prophet Jonah he brought forth threats of subversion to the Ninevites, and yet granted the punishment of

the city to be overturned to the penitents (Jon. 3, 1 ff.). Hence it is also that to king Hezekiah (2 Kings 20, 1 ff.) the punishment of death is promised by the oracle of the prophet (Isa. 38, 1 ff.), but because the king, fearing to die, afflicted himself before the Lord with the tears of penitence, he did not find with him whom he feared the death by which he would die. And above indeed the Lord asserted that he had spoken so that the house of Heli and of his father should minister in his sight forever, but he who had spoken good things of one doing good, changed the sentence concerning the house now made reprobate, saying: But now, be it far from me (1 Sam. 2, 30). If, therefore, almighty God revokes promised goods because those to whom he had promised are badly changed, how much more does he withdraw the effect of threats when he sees those well-converted to whom, for the iniquities they had admitted, he intimated the punishment of animadversion? What therefore do we say to these things, who daily fail, and are secure in the obligation of our guilt? This very thing, therefore, that we do not hold the severity of divine justice, is greatly to be feared by us, because behold he who is cast off by divine indignation for the fault of committed negligence is reported to have been solicitous with no fear. But because we know the repulse of the reprobate preacher for his fear, let us hear the progress of the elect. For it follows:

(Verse 19.) And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him.

28. Surely, if this is read according to the history, the boy Samuel is designated to have grown in the age of the body; but if, as with other things, we search these out with spiritual investigation, the Lord is described as being with him who is recorded to have grown. For he grows who profits toward the perfect man in the age of the mind. Whence also it is said by the Prophet concerning the proficient elect: They shall go from virtue to virtue, the God of gods shall be seen in Zion (Ps. 83, 8). Hence Paul says: Until we all meet in a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4, 13). But there are some who, while they grow in virtues, fall by elation. These indeed seem to grow, but yet the Lord is not with them, because they cast him out from themselves by thinking high things of themselves, whom they were able to have with them through humility when placed in the profit of virtues. Or if he is understood to have grown through exterior dignity, the Lord is recorded as being with him, because indeed very many are religious in a humbler order; but when they have suddenly reached the height of dignity, they abandon their first works along with their humility. Samuel, therefore, both profited, and profiting had the Lord with him, so that indeed he might present the custom of elect preachers, who, when they attain the gifts and dignities by which they may benefit others, do not neglect to please God concerning themselves, and from that multiply those gifts which they received for others, whence they show in themselves the good which they desire

to propagate in others by speaking. Wherefore it is also added:

(Verse 19.) And not one of his words fell to the ground.

29. To the ground indeed the word of the preacher falls, when it becomes vile from the reprobate conversation of the preacher. Whence also it is said by the voice of Truth: It is good for nothing more, but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men (Matt. 5, 13). And it is to be noted that it is said that from all his words not one fell to the ground, so that indeed it might not be lawful for a preacher to do anything which it is lawful to reprobate. For whatever he forbids to be done, if he indeed does it, the word falls to the ground, because while it is contemned by the speaker, those hearing by no means venerate it. For the Lord forbade any word to fall to the ground when he exposed the word of their negligence to negligent preachers, saying: Whosoever shall loose one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Ibid. 5, 19). For a preacher looses no commandment, not even the least, whose word from all his words does not fall to the ground. But when it is said that from all the words of Samuel the word did not fall to the ground, whose manners does Samuel hint at, unless his who by the merit of both preaching and great work is in the kingdom of heaven? And so from all his words it does not fall to the ground, because everything high which

the perfect preacher of holy Church speaks, is also preached by him with sublime conversation, when, placed as if on a high watchtower, he both instructs the wise with the word, and shows to the simple by works the way through which they ought to enter the eternal country. Wherefore it is also added:

(Verse 20.) And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.

30. For what is designated by Dan unless the simple, and what by Beersheba unless the wise? From Dan even to Beersheba Samuel is recognized as a faithful prophet of the Lord, when the life of the elect preacher is proposed to the simple as an example of salvation, and the secrets of Holy Scripture are revealed to the wise through his doctrine. Because indeed Beersheba is interpreted 'the seventh well,' there can be designated by Beersheba not only the wise, but also the just. For what is the seventh well, unless the grace of the sevenfold Spirit? Through Dan the life of sinners is shown, because it is said by the ancient prophet: Let Dan be a snake in the way, a serpent in the path, biting the horse's heels, that his rider may fall backward (Gen. 49, 17). From Dan therefore even to Beersheba Samuel is known as the prophet of the Lord, while the life and doctrine of the elect preacher is venerable to sinners, and to the just, so that in him indeed the fallen may see the good in which they may correct themselves by repenting, and the good may admire the

height of life to which they may convalesce by profiting daily. It follows:

(Verse 21.) And the Lord added to appear in Shiloh.

31. Above it is said of the time of the reprobate pastor: In those days there was no manifest vision. When therefore an excellent preacher is shown from the sacred eloquence, the Lord is reported to appear again, because indeed the knowledge of the divine counsel, which is hidden from the reprobate, is revealed to the elect by the merit of purity. For if even the counsels of men are not trusted except to familiars, is almighty God to be thought to lay open the secrets of his disposition to his enemies? First, therefore, the life of the just doctor is preached, then the Lord is said to have added to appear, because indeed the showing of divine light flees the reprobate and the feigned, and opens itself to the elect and to the clean of heart. Whence also the true light, speaking through itself, illuminates us, saying: Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5, 8). Therefore, he added to appear, the Lord, because he saw the clean eye of his preacher. But when he added To appear in Shiloh, it is designated that he had appeared in the same place at another time. But because he said where he appeared, lest it be believed that he had appeared to Heli, subsequently he also showed the person of him to whom he appeared, saying:

(Verse 21.) For the Lord was revealed to Samuel in Shiloh, according to the word of the Lord.

32. For then he revealed himself to him, when he opened to him the secret of his counsel concerning the rejection of the reprobate preacher. Which indeed is asserted to have been done according to the word of the Lord, so that this which had been said to Heli by the man of God not very long above, might be felt to be fulfilled also according to the history: And I will raise me up a faithful priest, who shall do according to my heart, and my soul, and he shall walk before my Christ all days (1 Sam. 2, 35). And likewise: Thou shalt see thy rival in the temple, in all the prosperities of Israel (Ibid. 2, 32). Which if we search out according to spiritual intelligence, how does the Lord add to appear to the elect, unless because he who wonderfully terrifies his elect from the contemplation of his justice, also ineffably soothes them from the showing of glory? For he who appearing as just, shakes the hearts of the saints with terror, adds to appear when sweetness of his piety is poured back into the terrified heart. Hence it is indeed that he did not always appear to Moses in the fire, but sometimes in the fire, sometimes in the cloud. In the fire indeed is the terror of judgment. Whence also it is said of the second advent of our Redeemer by the Psalmist: Fire shall go before him, and a mighty tempest round about him (Ps. 49, 3). But in the cloud the protection of commiseration is expressed, because promising the blandishment of his same protection to his elect, the Lord says: Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud (Mark 13, 26; Luke 21, 27). In the

fire therefore and the cloud the Lord appears to those walking through the deserts, because he both terrifies the minds of those contemplating him in this pilgrimage of exile sometimes from justice, and raises them up when cast down by dread with the blandishment of protection. The Lord therefore appeared to Samuel, and added to appear, because he who is seen in the fire of terror by the minds of the elect, is also exhibited in the cloud of sweetness. For he had seen the vision of fire within, who announced it without, saying: Holy and terrible is his name (Ps. 110, 10). Desiring likewise to show him seen in the fire, he said: Come and see the works of the Lord, terrible in counsels over the sons of men (Ps. 65, 5). But he who appeared to him in the fire, added to appear, because he also gave him to drink the smoothness of glory, and of his sweetness, from the cloud. Wherefore, being exhilarated who had been terrified, he said: How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee (Ps. 30, 20). Hence likewise admiring the added apparition, he said: How good is the God of Israel to them that are of a right heart (Ps. 72, 1).

33. But it must be attentively considered what is subjoined: According to the word of the Lord. For the word of the Lord must be known before we merit to arrive at the apparition of the Lord, lest an unjust and indiscreet vision of fire and cloud not only not show us the perfection of the heavenly journey, but impel us to the submersion of error. Origen indeed, while he wished to

see the Lord appearing without the word of the Lord, inordinately beheld the vision of the cloud, because he dreaded the apparition of the fire. For while, denying or mincing the justice of God, he preached his superfluous clemency, he asserted that he would not only spare all damned men, but would even at some time deliver the reprobate angels from eternal punishment. Novatus, however, loved more to look at the vision of the fire, who while he said that the severe justice of almighty God was implacable, took away from sinners every remedy of obtaining pardon and of penitence. Neither to Novatus, therefore, nor to that other did the Lord appear, because each of them, according to what is discerned by the truth of the sacred eloquence, did not behold the almighty Lord. Then indeed the Lord appears according to the word, when he reveals himself to the mind with that showing which the faith of Holy Scripture does not reprobate. Wherefore also it is aptly subjoined:

(Verse 21.) And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

34. This indeed is said that it may be believed that the historical Samuel was made a prophet before all Israel; but if we search it out spiritually, who is the faithful priest, unless our Redeemer? Wherefore also above it is said by the man of God to Heli: And I will raise me up a faithful priest, who shall do according to my heart and my soul, and he shall walk before my Christ all days. This faithful priest is our Redeemer, of whom it is said that he shall walk before his Christ

all days, because indeed the humanity of Christ walks before his divinity all days. For the word of Samuel comes to all Israel when the preaching of our Redeemer, through the faith of the Church, is extended to all who believe. For Christ is the word of Samuel, because Samuel is interpreted 'name of God,' or 'his name is God.' And who is the name of God, or whose name is God, unless he of whom it is said: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God, Strong, Father of the world to come, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6)? The word, therefore, of this Samuel came to all Israel, because the word of our Redeemer, through the preaching of the apostles, ran through the whole world for the salvation of those who believe.

BOOK SECOND

CHAPTER I (1 Sam. 4:1-11)

1. And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight. In those days, namely, in which the priests of the Lord, the sons of Heli, served the Lord with a reprobate heart. By the Philistines, who are interpreted 'those who fall from drinking,' are designated the demons. These gather together to fight when they see that the life of the pastors is reprobate. For when the pastors of the Church give themselves up to carnal desires and become drunk with the love of the world, the invisible enemies, who always lie in wait, gather together to fight against the people of God. For the negligence of the pastors is the opportunity of the enemies.

2. And Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle, and encamped by the Stone of Help (Eben-ezer). And the Philistines came to Aphek, and set their troop in order against Israel. And when the battle was joined, Israel turned their backs to the Philistines, and there were slain in that fight throughout the fields about four thousand men.

3. And when the people were come back to the camp, the ancients of Israel said: Why hath the Lord struck us today before the Philistines? Behold the ancients of Israel, seeing the defeat of the people, do not ask for what cause they have been struck, but why the Lord has struck them. For he who asks why, seems to complain of the justice of God, as if there were no cause for the blow. But surely there was a most grave cause, namely, the sins of the sons of Heli, which contaminated the sacrifice of the Lord. Therefore they ought not to have asked why, but to have recognized their faults and those of their priests. For the people are often struck because of the wickedness of the pastors.

4. Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh, and let it come into the midst of us, that it may save us from the hand of our enemies. Behold the elders of Israel, not recognizing their faults, seek exterior help. They think that the ark of the covenant, which is the sign of the presence of God, will save them, although the Lord of the ark is far from their hearts because of their iniquities.

5. The people therefore sent to Shiloh, and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who sitteth upon the cherubims: and the two sons of Heli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord was come into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, and the earth rang.

6. And the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and said: What is this noise of a great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, saying: God is come into the camp. And they groaned, saying: Woe to us!

7. For there was not such joy yesterday nor the day before. Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these high Gods? These are the Gods that struck Egypt with all the plagues in the desert. The Philistines indeed, by whom the demons are designated, fear when they see the people of God recurring to divine aids. But let us note that they call the Lord 'high Gods,' because the demons, although they know the power of God, do not confess his unity through faith, but imagine him according to the multitude of their errors.

8. Take courage, and quit yourselves like men, O Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have served you: take courage and fight. Thus the demons, when they fear to be conquered by the conversion of men, incite one another to fight with greater strength. For the

more they fear to lose their dominion over souls, the more fiercely they attack them with various temptations.

9. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was struck, and every man fled to his tent: and there was made a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken: and the two sons of Heli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

10. But it must be considered why God permitted his ark to be taken and his priests killed. Surely, because Israel trusted in the exterior sign and neglected interior purity. They thought that the wood of the ark would save them, while they persisted in the iniquities which the Lord abominates. Therefore the ark was taken so that they might learn that it is not the place nor the sign that saves, but the faith and obedience of the heart.

11. The ark of the covenant represents the form of religion and the sacraments of the Church. When the interior virtue of religion is lost through the wickedness of those who profess it, the exterior sign not only does not save, but is delivered into the hands of the enemies. For the demons triumph over those who have the appearance of piety, but have denied its virtue by their works. The loss of the ark therefore signifies the loss of grace and the delivery of the mind to the enemy powers.

12. And a man of Benjamin ran out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with dust upon his head. Behold

a messenger of the tribe of Benjamin, which is interpreted 'son of the right hand,' brings the news of the defeat. The rent clothes and the dust upon the head are signs of great mourning and penitence. Spiritually, this represents the faithful confessor who, grieving for the losses of the Church, shows outwardly the affliction of his spirit by the confession of sins and the memory of human fragility.

13. And when he came, Heli sat upon a seat by the wayside, watching. For his heart was trembling for the ark of God. Heli, the aged prelate, waits with anxiety. His heart trembles not for his sons, but for the ark of God. This shows that, although Heli was a negligent father, he yet retained a reverent love for the things of God.

14. And when the man entered into the city, he told the news: and all the city cried out. And Heli heard the noise of the cry, and said: What meaneth the noise of this tumult? But that man made haste, and came, and told Heli.

15. Now Heli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, and he could not see. The age of Heli and his blindness are not only historical facts, but they designate the lack of spiritual discernment in negligent pastors. For when the pastor reaches the end of his life without having corrected the errors of his subjects, his spiritual sight is darkened and he cannot foresee the dangers that threaten the Church.

16. And he said to Heli: I am he that came from the battle, and I am he that fled today out of the battle. To whom he said: What is done, my son?

17. And the messenger answering said: Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people: and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead: and the ark of God is taken. Let us note the order of the news: first the flight of the people, then the great slaughter, then the death of his sons, and finally the capture of the ark. This last announcement is the most grave and the one that strikes the heart of the old man with the greatest force.

18. And when he had named the ark of God, he fell from his seat backward by the side of the gate, and, his neck being broken, he died. For he was an old man, and heavy: and he judged Israel forty years.

19. The man of Benjamin represents the faithful messenger who announces the truth, however painful it may be. The renting of the clothes signifies the breaking with carnal desires, and the dust on the head the humility of recognizing that we are earth and unto earth we shall return. The negligent prelate hears these things, but it is already late for amendment.

Heli sitting by the wayside represents the pastors who, although they are in the way of religion, are sitting in inaction and negligence. His dimmed eyes are the loss of the light of contemplation. Nevertheless, his heart trembles for the ark, which signifies that even in negligent pastors there may remain a spark of zeal for the honor of God, although it was not sufficient to act with rigor when it was necessary.

Heli dies when he hears that the ark has been taken. This signifies that for the religious soul, the loss of the glory of God and of his presence is a blow more mortal than the loss of the life of sons or of one's own safety. He fell backward, because those who neglect the things of God in this life, fall toward the invisible things of eternal punishment. The broken neck signifies the loss of pride or of the strength of the mind, which can no longer sustain itself when the presence of God is withdrawn.

34. For the word of heretics does not come. For it was the word of Novatus that the just God in no way spares the faithful who have once fallen. It was the word of Origen that the merciful Lord allows no rational creature to perish through eternal damnation. But because sinners who turn to the Lord in no way perish, and the angels who once fell and the sinners who died in their sin are never saved, the word of heretics surely does not come. Therefore, the word of Samuel came to all Israel, because the preaching of the Catholic man is fulfilled, which is rightly recognized in the truth of the sacred word. And it should be noted that his word is said to have come, to whom the Lord is held to have added His vision, because his preaching is undoubtedly true, to whom the terror of divine justice is so shown that the abundant grace of His kindness is not hidden; namely, so that the truth beheld may so terrify the mind of the one who sees, that the shown kindness also does not permit the terrified mind to fall into despair; so that he may so presume upon

kindness that he does not rush into the daring of transgression.

Let these things discussed in the second book of the present work suffice, so that while we prepare to begin what follows with a new beginning, the zeal for speaking may also be renewed through devotion.

BOOK THREE.

111 CHAPTER ONE.

1. While we were studiously seeking how the sense of sacred history might agree with the character of the elect, we deferred repeating the order of allegory in our exposition. Therefore, so that we may supply those things which we are seen to have omitted, it is asked: What is it that while Samuel is remembered to minister to the Lord before Eli, the word of the Lord is described as being precious? But, as was said above, through Samuel the preachers of the holy Church are designated, and through Eli also the elect fathers of the Old Testament. Therefore, the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli, when the new order of teachers was preaching the faith of the Redeemer. Of which ministry Paul undoubtedly speaks, saying: As long as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I will honor my ministry (Rom. 11:13). Hence again he says: They are Hebrews, and I; they are Israelites, and I; they are ministers of Christ, and I (2 Cor. 11:22). 112 To minister to the Lord, therefore, is to go forth into the labor of preaching. Which ministry Samuel is said to have

truly rendered to the Lord before Eli, because whatever the new order of preachers asserted concerning the religion of the new faith, this it strengthened by the authority of the ancient Fathers. Indeed, Samuel was ministering to the Lord when the new preacher asserted, saying: For I say that Christ Jesus was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, but that the Gentiles honor God for His mercy (Rom. 15:8). And in order that he might also render before Eli the ministry which he was exhibiting to the Lord, he added, saying: As it is written: Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and praise Him together, all you people (Psalm 116:1). And that he might restrain himself more closely before Eli in the ministry of the Lord, he added: For Isaiah says: There shall be a root of Jesse, who shall rise to rule the Gentiles; in Him the Gentiles shall hope (Rom. 15:12; from Isa. 11:10). The child Samuel was ministering to the Lord when 113 Peter asserted the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, saying: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God among you by signs and wonders, being delivered up, you have put to death by the hands of the wicked; Him God has raised from the dead by a preordained counsel on the third day, as it was impossible for Him to be held by the pains of hell (Acts 2:22, seq.).

2. But this ministry, which he exhibited to the Lord, he also exhibited before Eli, because he added, saying: For David says: For You will not leave my soul in hell, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27; Psalm 15:10). Thus Samuel is aptly said to minister to the Lord

before Eli, because the elect preachers of the holy Church, while they were establishing the state of the new faith by preaching, strengthened by the authority of the ancient Fathers what they endeavored to assert by reason.

3. And then indeed the word of the Lord is held to have been precious. For a precious thing cannot be bought at a small price. But the price by which the word of God is bought is the labor of holy activity. For just as we buy at a price the thing we wish to have, so we exhibit the labor of works through the word of preaching which we receive. At that time the word was precious, when it was not given for just any labor of works, when everyone who killed a buyer of the word thought he was offering an obeisance to God. Therefore, at that time the buyer of the word needed a great price, because he could not keep the word of faith without great labor, he who for that which he believed came to torments. For it was the time then in which the word that was being bought was urged not by the figure of a typified morality, but by the precept of open speech, saying: If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me (Matt. 16:24). Hence again He says: But he who loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me (Ibid. 10:37). And: He who has not renounced all things which he possesses, cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:33). Therefore, when the ministry of Samuel is asserted, the word of the Lord is held to be precious, because certainly in the beginnings of the faith, those who believed the teachers of eternal

life as they preached, must be believed to have expended works of great labor for the received word of faith.

And because the Jewish people had already lost the light of divine knowledge, there follows: (1 Sam. 3:1.) In those days there was no manifest vision.

4. For its vision would be manifest if it had believed in the Redeemer, whom it had heard had come for its visitation. Concerning which blindness of its indeed it is added: (Verse 2.) And it came to pass, Eli was lying in his place, and he could not see the lamp of God, before it was extinguished. For the vision of Eli is not manifest, because the priesthood of the Jews is buried in the blindness of its perfidy. Therefore Eli lies in his place, because he both has the letter of the law, and in the law and the prophets he has not the state of light, but the lapse of blindness. For the place of Eli, namely of the Jewish preacher, is the holy law. Because, therefore, the Jewish priesthood still has the sacred Scripture, it is in its place. And because, not knowing the power of the holy Scripture, it is not raised to the state of faith, it is certainly held not to stand in its place, but to lie down. Because likewise it is cast out until the end of the world, it is remembered that it cannot see the lamp of God. Whence also when daily they receive so many exhortations of preaching from the holy Church, when the Jews, conquered by so many assertions of the holy faith, do not believe, what else is it but this which we read 114 about them in the holy Scripture, and even hold

by experience, that they are cast out, not only so that they may not see, but even so that they may not be able to see? Whence also the apostles, considering the labor of those who could not see to be superfluous, say in their Acts: Since you have made yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). But that which was reported to be unable to see is called the lamp of God. For the ministry of the Synagogue was the lamp of God, when it shone in the elect Fathers both through the light of true preaching and through the promise of the coming Redeemer. Which lamp indeed, while Samuel was ministering, could not be seen, because in the time of the new preaching, the magisterium of the Synagogue incurred the punishment of perpetual rejection.

5. And it should be noted that it is not said, it could not shine, because truly it still carries for us the light of the holy Scripture, but it is ignorant of what it carries. Whence also it is said that he could not see before it was extinguished. For it is not yet extinguished, and he cannot see, because certainly, as I have already said, he bears the light which he does not heed; for before it is extinguished, it exists as long as it shines. And because the sacred Scripture is not taken away from him until the end of the world, if he does not see before it is extinguished, he is extended in blindness with the end of the world. But if its burning refers to the zeal of perfidy, for that reason he cannot see, because it is not extinguished. For if he would extinguish the fire of perfidy from

his mind, having taken away the zeal of impiety, he would open the eyes of his mind to the light of the true faith as it pleases God. But while it is said that he cannot see, the lamp is held to be unworthy, and someone worthy to see those things is sought. For he adds, saying: (Verse 3.) But Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of the Lord was, and the Lord called Samuel.

6. Eli's blindness having been confirmed, the Lord called Samuel, because, having condemned the priesthood of the Jews, He assumed a new order of preachers to a greater grace. But He who set forth whom He called, also showed whence He called him; because He related that Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord, where the ark was. For the temple of God is the place where God dwells. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist: The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord, His throne is in heaven (Psalm 10:5). Which place indeed Paul suggests, saying: The temple of God is holy, which you are (1 Cor. 3:17). The temple of God, therefore, is the soul of each one of the elect. The temple where the ark of God is hidden is the mind, in which the mysteries of the divine word are reserved through understanding. What else then is it for him to sleep in the temple, but to persist in his own circumspection through the custody of intention? Samuel therefore was sleeping in the temple of God, because each preacher of the new grace, while he perfectly despised all things which are of the world, rested in the inward circumspection of his elect mind. And because he was learned in the mysteries of the

divine Scripture, he was sleeping in the temple, where the ark was.

7. And it should be noted that it is not said he slept, but he was sleeping, because he undoubtedly studied to preserve that same circumspection of his mind not in passing, but in the duration of perseverance. Thus the sleep of Samuel designates the perfect contempt of the world in the mind of the teacher. Therefore the preacher sleeps in the temple while, having utterly repelled from himself worldly anxiety, he hides himself through the consideration of spiritual things in his mind. For Peter had chosen the quiet of this sleep when he said: It is not good for us to leave 115 the word of God and serve tables (Acts 6:2). Hence Jethro the Midianite rightly rebuked his kinsman Moses, saying: You are consumed with foolish labor; but hear my words, and the Lord will be with you. Be you for the people in those things which pertain to God, that you may refer what is said to Him (Exod. 18:18, 19). Hence Paul recalls the Corinthians to the sleep of the temple, saying: Already indeed it is a fault in you that you have judgments among yourselves. Why do you not rather suffer fraud? (1 Cor. 6:7). For he had perceived that those whom the occupation of judgments withdrew from spiritual meditation could not sleep in the temple of God. Therefore he who is sleeping in the temple is said to be called by the Lord, because that teacher was then assumed to the knowledge of divine secrets, who stayed not in exterior things but in interior things through the intention of the heart.

There follows: (Verses 4, 5.) Who answering, said: Here I am. And he ran to Eli and said: For you called me. Who said: I did not call you, my son; return and sleep.

8. Why did he who heard the Lord calling him run to Eli, except because he thought he was called by Eli? And because we hold the order of typical explanation, how is it thought to be Eli when God speaks to the called boy? But whatever our ancient Fathers have spoken in the holy Scriptures are referred to the speech of Eli. Who indeed, because they did not speak of themselves, while God spoke through them what He willed, that which is heard in the holy Scriptures is recognized as the voice of God which is brought forth through Eli. But the boy, because he ran to Eli when God was speaking, truly God brought forth a voice similar to Eli's. What is it then that the voice of the divine speech does not differ from Eli's voice, except because He Himself brings forth the speech even through the ancient Fathers? For the voice of Eli is recognized as being of God, since the elect Fathers received whatever they spoke through the sacred words not from themselves but from the Lord. Whence also in the prophets it is repeated in almost every speech: Thus says the Lord, so that we may feel that those things which the voice resounds by the oracle of the prophet are not of the man speaking, but of God commanding.

9. But sometimes God speaks through Scripture, sometimes through hidden inspiration. And He speaks by hidden revelation when to an elect

mind through the Spirit things to be done or things to be taught are opened. Samuel therefore, when he heard the Lord calling him, ran to Eli, because the elect order of preachers of the holy Church sought in the sacred word of what kind that was which he had known by God's revelation. For the rule of right understanding is expressed in the books of the sacred Scripture, because the divine counsels are there explained through our venerable Fathers who had the Holy Spirit. Therefore Samuel, called so often by the Lord, ran to Eli, because the order of preachers consulted the sayings of the ancient Fathers in everything it learned by spiritual revelation, so that it might then at last believe that it had been revealed to it by the Lord, when it had recognized that it in no way differed from that which it read in the sacred Scripture. For he is easily deceived who does not know how to discuss in the brilliant truth of the holy Scripture the nature of that which he gathers in hidden contemplation. Whence also the Apostle denounces, saying: Satan transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). But how are false things discerned in the clarity of true light? Therefore Samuel runs to Eli as often as he is called by the Lord, because holy preachers, lest they be deceived by the image of false light in inward contemplation, discuss the manner of hidden revelation in 116 the open truth of the holy Scripture.

13. Therefore Samuel was called three times by the Lord, because while the order of preachers of the still inexperienced Church extends itself

to heavenly studies, it sought truth from the reason of counsel, and goodness from the choice of the will, and true joy from the intention of affection. Three times also, being called, he went to Eli, because in every desire of his he consulted the holy Scripture with the haste of meditation. Three times likewise, he heard that he was not called by him, because by meditating he learned that our Fathers delivered to us the sacred words (eloquia) written for our instruction; however, they are by no means able to give us spiritual gifts. What then is it to say 'I did not call you,' except that I did not give the desire for spiritual gifts? For if holy Scripture, or any of the writers conferred spiritual gifts, as many as read the sacred words, as many as heard the treatisers of the holy Scripture, would be adorned with spiritual gifts. But now, since many read the holy Scripture, and hear the preachers treating it, and after the study of reading, and the exhortation of preaching, some remain in the former coldness of their vices, others through grace burn in the love of holy virtues; it is clearly evident that 117 the order of venerable Fathers shows us the gifts of virtues through the published Scriptures, but the creator alone bestows upon us the love of the virtues which he suggests. Wherefore also James piously admonishes, saying: Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (James 1:17). Hence Paul says: Neither is he who plants anything, but God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7). What else then is it to say: 'I did not call you,' except to

show by open instruction that this, that a faithful soul is raised to heavenly desires, is generated from the infusion of divine grace alone? Because therefore he is called three times by the Lord, and is commanded three times by his master to return to sleep, he suggests how three degrees of love are acquired. For because we have fitted counsel to the heart, and counsel indeed desires to find the truth, a great sleep is surely necessary, lest the lover wake up before the sought-for truth is found. Therefore let the boy return and sleep, so that he who desires to find the light of truth may beware through quiet, so that he does not admit into himself the darkness of errors. Let him also sleep a second time, that he may bestow the service of love upon almighty God with his whole mind, so that the good things which he loves may be cloaked with pure simplicity and with no veil of evils. Because this indeed is not known except by great subtlety of discretion, the boy, called by the Lord, is commanded by Eli to return so that he may sleep. For if he neglects to sleep for the sake of ascending this degree of love, he does not acquire that which he desires concerning virtue, because even if we can now love good things, God inspiring us, unless by great quiet of mind, we do not discern of what kind are those very good things which we will. Therefore Samuel is sent a third time to sleep, because indeed the new order of preachers is admonished to love with all strength. And because we have referred strength to affection, and the affection of the mind is perfected from spiritual joy, Samuel had a great quiet

of sleep; and while the order of preachers certainly learned spiritual things through quiet, it did not receive a foreign joy under the appearance of true joy. For as with the other virtues, so also concerning the progress of contemplation, the mind of the contemplator often rejoices in vain. Therefore Samuel slept again, because indeed unless the order of teachers circumspectly looked around itself in contemplation, sometimes by rejoicing vainly it would think that it rejoiced with true joy. First therefore he slept, because while he intended his mind to the truth to be known, by great subtlety of counsel he rejected all erroneous things. Secondly he slept, because when he learned to love the creator with his whole mind, he disposed with great quiet in himself that he should not mix any reprobate things with the good things which he desired. Thirdly also he slept, so that while he perceived the supreme joy from divine contemplation, he might have been able to reject vain gladness with a consulted mind.

(Verse 7.) Moreover Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither had the word of the Lord been revealed to him.

14. For the order of preachers did not then know the Lord with that perfection in which it afterwards progressed. Or perhaps he is said not to know the Lord for this reason, because he did not yet open the high and deep things which he knew to weak and inexperienced listeners. Whence also to those wishing to know the day of the Lord's advent, those things which he knew

all, and was unwilling to indicate, the Truth says: But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone (Mark 13:32). What is it that the Son, knowing all things, does not know the day of judgment, 118 except that among all the things which he knew, knowing the day, he did not know it so as to speak of it, but he knew its time and quality? Hence John the Baptist, who had known the Lord perfectly, sent disciples to him as if not knowing, saying: Are you he who is to come, or do we look for another (Luke 7:20)? For Samuel preached as if not knowing the Lord, when the evangelist Matthew, passing over the divinity of the Redeemer, began from his humanity alone, saying: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1, seq.). But he surely knew the Lord, and the word of the Lord had been revealed to him, when John, undertaking to expound his divinity on high, said: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word (John 1:1). He did not know the Lord, when Paul spoke, saying: I have become all things to all men, that I might save all (1 Cor. 9:22). For he who became weak for the weak, and a little one for the little ones, and all things to all, surely also did not know with those who were ignorant. For so that he might use the word of the same ignorance, speaking to the Corinthians, he said: I judged myself to know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified (Ibid., 2:2). For with the wise he both knew the Lord, and had his word

revealed. Whence also he says: But we, beholding the glory of the Lord with revealed face, are transformed into the same image, as if by the spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). Hence likewise he speaks, saying: We speak wisdom among the perfect, not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this age, but we speak the wisdom of God, which is hidden in mystery (Ibid., 6, 7).

(Verse 9.) Eli therefore understood that the Lord was calling the boy.

15. For if he did not understand, he would by no means have administered the counsels of salvation to him through the sacred words. For he understood, because he foresaw. For whatever almighty God disposed to do in the construction of the future Church, he revealed this to the ancient Fathers through the holy spirit of prophecy. For through the prophet Amos it is said: The Lord God will not do a word, which he has not revealed to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). For what else had he understood than the calling of the new preachers, who said: For your fathers, sons are born to you, you shall constitute them princes over all the earth (Psalm 44:17). But to him whom he understood was to be called, he also supplied counsel, saying:

(Verse 9.) Go and sleep, and if henceforth he calls you, you shall say: Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

Now indeed enough has been shown, as I think, concerning the sleep of Samuel, that it designates the quiet of internal meditation. Which sleep indeed is commanded by Eli to Samuel,

because the teacher is taught through the sacred word (eloquium) to be free for contemplating internal mysteries. But what is it that as often as Samuel is called, so often he is sent back to sleep, and yet he is not yet commanded to say to God: Speak, Lord, for your servant hears. For there he is commanded to sleep, but not however to speak; here however even with the permission of sleep being enjoined, the license of speaking is also joined. 119 There also to him being sent to sleep, it is not said: Go (Vade), but: Return (Revertere); here also it is by no means said Return, but Go. For what does such a variety of commanding mean? Which variety indeed we recognize more clearly if we attend to that which the sleep of Samuel signifies in this place. And because we have referred the superior modes of sleep to the proof of the gifts of holy love (Above, num. 11, 12), what is it to sleep in this place for Samuel, that is for the new preacher, except to possess those same gifts already proved and known with the quiet of security? Merely therefore it was not said to him before Go, but Return; but now not Return, but Go. For he who was still examining was commanded to return, so that with tranquility of mind he might discuss another gift, who had already known another by the same quiet of mind. But to him, because he had already proved all things by examining, it is said Go, because he was sent to possess known things with a now secure intention. Why then is sleep first commanded without speech, but now sleep with speech, except because it was not permitted

to say Speak, except to him who existed certain by true cognition because he who spoke to the affections of his mind was God? Therefore it is not said to him while examining, because unless he perfectly judges the one speaking within, he ought not yet to desire spiritual speech which is uncertain to him, and receive it as if certain. For to say Speak to the mind of God is to securely receive His internal aspiration. Therefore this belongs to one perfectly knowing, not to one proving, because before the judgment of internal examination, just as divine speech is not proved, so that which is unknown to us concerning God is not received as for certain and known. For it was said to Samuel: Go and sleep, because when the order of holy preachers learned spiritual gifts through the proof of the sacred word, it knew them by the instruction of the same holy scripture, so that it might rest in its gifts so much more securely through love, as it had known their virtue by more open reason. It was also commanded to him that to God calling he should say Speak, Lord. Because he was taught by the study of sacred speech, not only to devotedly hear the Lord speaking through the grace of internal visitation, but even while silent, that He might deign to speak, to implore with great desires.

(Verse 9.) Samuel therefore went, and slept in his place.

17. The preacher of the holy Church has as many places as he has progresses of life. Whence also consecrating the places of his progress with divine praises, blessed Job says: Through each of

my steps I will pronounce him (Job 31:37). For he is not now placed in the place of examination, but of certain cognition, when he is raised to higher things. For the place of the preacher is the certain cognition of things to be known. For concerning reprobate preachers the Lord says: Holding my law, they knew me not (Jer. 2:8). Therefore Samuel slept in his place, when the order of teachers retained the cognition of spiritual things with the certainty of truth. But into what degree he progresses is shown, because it is suddenly subjoined.

(Verse 10.) Therefore the Lord came, and stood.

Because the Lord is said not to return, but to come, the destitution of Judea and the visitation of the holy Church is designated. Whence he is presented not only as coming, but as standing. He suggests that he had come to the visitation of Judea, saying: I am not sent except to the sheep of the house of Israel which have perished (Matt. 15:24). But coming he did not stand, because he deserted the one contemning the good of her salvation. Whence also he threatens the princes of the Synagogue, saying: Your house shall be left to you deserted (Ibid., 23:38). Hence likewise denouncing, he says: Amen I say to you that the kingdom 120 shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation doing the fruits thereof. Therefore he came to Samuel, and stood, because he once assumed the preachers of the holy Church, from whom through the custody of his grace he does not further recede. For he had come to

Samuel when, bringing forth new preachers to the world, he said: Go into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned (Mark 16:15, seq.). But if he who came as Lord ought to stand, let him say: Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:20). Therefore the Lord had come, not that he might recede, but that he might stand, because he chose new ministers of the faith, whom he protects succeeding him through the patrimony of holy virtues even unto the end of the world. But let us hear what he who comes visiting through grace, who stands persevering through the immutability of his election, subjoins.

(Verse 10.) And he called, as he had called a second time, Samuel, Samuel.

He called indeed a second time, because he provided a double office for him in the ministry of preaching, namely that by repelling the pride of the Synagogue he might crush it, and by calling the humility of the Gentiles he might raise it to the end. Or certainly he is called a second time, because he is excited into the destruction of the old man and into the building of the new. He was called therefore once when he was instructed through the spirit how he might have been able to delete sins and vices in the hearts of sinners; called a second time, when God instructed him by the document of internal mastery, so that, the building of impiety in the mind of the converts being destroyed, he ought to erect a new fabric of

holy virtues. Which mastery indeed, because the order of holy preachers both learned willingly, and devotedly offered itself for obeying, is subjoined:

(Verse 10.) Samuel therefore said: Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

To hear God speaking is to fulfill his precepts in works. Which on the contrary the Truth says through itself in the Gospel to the reprobate: He who is from God hears the words of God; therefore you do not hear, because you are not from God (John 8:47). But to the one hearing he subjoins what he desires to suggest; for there follows:

(Verse 11.) And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold I do a word in Israel, which whoever hears, both his ears shall tingle (tinnient). And opening the same word, he says:

(Verses 13 and 14.) For I have foretold to him that I was about to judge his house forever for iniquity, because he knew that his sons acted unworthily, and he did not correct them. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated by victims and gifts forever.

21. For what else is designated by these words than the already so often explained rejection of the Jews? For the house of a preacher is the multitude of the subject people, which he inhabits as if by possessing, while he preserves it through the care of his solicitude. Therefore the house of Eli, that is of the ancient priesthood, was Judea, which while he cultivated through reprobate conversation, he made unclean with the stains

of his depravity. Who indeed saw his sons acting unworthily, because the highest priesthood saw the priests of the lesser order raging against the Redeemer, and did not correct them, nor by any authority revoke them from the effusion of so much blood. Therefore it is promised to him by divine threat that his house should be judged forever. For to judge for God is to damn. Therefore it is 121 judged forever, because it is decreed to perish by eternal punishment.

(Verse 15.) Samuel slept until morning.

22. What else is designated by the name of morning than the light of the Gospel, which dissipated the shadow of the law? For Samuel slept until morning, because the order of preachers rested in the quiet of internal meditation, until the clarity of the Redeemer arose in the world. But rising in the morning, he is said to have opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

(Verse 15.) And he opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

23. To open the doors of the house of the Lord is to open the access to the heavenly kingdom to faithful peoples. For because he says: I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he shall be saved (John 10:9); he indeed opens the doors of the house of the Lord, who shows the entrance of the heavenly kingdom to those coming to the faith. Whence also to the first of the preachers it is said: I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19). For he had received the keys of the doors which he was to open to others.

But because Samuel is said to have feared to tell the vision to Eli, it is subjoined:

(Verse 15.) And Samuel feared to tell the vision to Eli.

24. For the vision of Samuel was the severe rejection of Eli. Because therefore the new preachers saw that the ancient people were to be rejected for their iniquity, they at first feared to show them the severity of the rejection. For they wished rather to find them such as they might be able to console with the mercy of the Redeemer, than such as they were compelled to terrify with the severity of the judge. But let us hear how Eli calls the boy to himself, so that he may learn the word of the divine visitation.

(Verse 16.) Eli therefore called Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. Who answering, said: Here I am.

25. He calls him son, whom he knew was to be preferred to himself. For because he had known by the spirit of prophecy that the new order of preachers was to be raised, he loved as a son him whom he already served as a Lord. To whom also he added, saying:

(Verse 17.) What is the word which the Lord has spoken to you? I beseech you, do not hide it from me. May God do these things to you, and add these, if you hide from me a word of all the words which have been said to you.

26. Why does Eli so strongly insist that nothing of the divine speech be hidden from him, except because the ancient Fathers desired to know the order of the future Church even with

their own rejection? For they knew that they were to pass away, but they wished to know the clarity of the one coming after. To whom Samuel, being compelled, told everything.

(Verse 18.) Samuel therefore told him all the words, and did not hide them from him.

27. He tells all the words and hides nothing, who shows to the ancient people both the grace of the coming Redeemer and the severity of their own rejection. Whose words Eli receiving, said:

(Verse 18.) It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his eyes.

28. Which voice is of one consenting to the divine judgment. For the ancient people, though it fell into the darkness of its perfidy, yet in its Fathers it knew that it was justly rejected, and therefore it did not contradict the divine sentence, because it knew that he who judged was the Lord.

22. Why is it that the sleep of Samuel is described so attentively by the sacred eloquence? And because it is said that he has already repeated sleep for the fourth time, he is very foolish who does not believe that this was spoken spiritually by the Spirit of God. For although he is correctly understood to have slept so many times according to the truth of the history, it is written for this purpose: that in the truth of the letter the understandings of allegory may be brought forth. What, therefore, does this fifth sleep of Samuel designate? But because we referred the first sleep to the seeking of truth, the second to the proof of true work, the third to the explo-

ration of true joy, the fourth to the full enjoyment of the perfection found, proved, and known; the fifth kind of sleep is referred to the study of disposing speech. Samuel, therefore, slept with the fifth repetition, because the order of preachers, although it learned the truth through the counsel of the heart, chose good things through the will of the mind, received true joy through the affection of virtue, and rested in the security of sublime virtues through the certainty of the found and known beatitude; yet, this same thing which it knew in itself it could not preach to its subjects without the dispensation of a great counsel. For frequently the teacher has within himself what he should preach, but yet he cannot preach those things which he has as he ought, because if he has already learned through the Lord's revelation what he should say, he does not know the manner in which they are to be brought forth to the people. Samuel, therefore, slept again, because the order of preachers disposed within itself with a great intention of quietness lest by preaching it should uselessly scatter the seed of the word of God, which it had collected by useful contemplation. For while the preacher is compelled to consider what and how much, or when, he speaks; what he says to all at once, how he warns some privately; because he uses a great quiet of holy meditation, it is subjoined very aptly in the type of the new preacher that Samuel is said to sleep again. To sleep, indeed, is for him then to dispose the manner of speaking with a tranquil mind. And to wake is for him to go forth from the quiet

of meditation to speak. And because he does not reasonably wake before he disposes what is to be said, it follows: Until morning. For morning is the perfect knowledge of pronouncing the word.

(Verse 15.) And he feared to tell the vision to Eli.

23. What was it that he feared, except what he had learned by sleeping? For he who by meditating orders the word, establishes by reason when he should also speak the word. Samuel indeed saw the vision, and feared to tell it to Eli, because the order of teachers of the holy Church perceived the due rejection of Judea, and feared to cast it against her before the times of her rejection. Whence also he exhorts her rather to the remedy of penance, saying: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you (Acts 2:38). Wherefore it is also subjoined:

(Verse 15.) He opened the doors of the house of the Lord.

24. What other is the house of the Lord than the holy Church? And what are the doors of this house, if not the spiritual virtues? For Samuel opened the doors of the house of the Lord when the order of preachers laid open the gifts of spiritual virtues to those flocking to the unity of the true faith. For the doors of the house were as if closed when the virtues of the holy Church were unknown. But it is aptly remembered that Samuel opened the doors of the house of the Lord when he feared to show the vision to Eli, because before the order of preachers indicated the open rejection of Judea, while it warned to penance, it

unlocked the hidden things of spiritual virtues to the elect running to the faith. For he who in the time of mercy feared to say what he had seen, in the time of demanding justice indicated the vision of justice, saying: Because you have made yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the gentiles (Acts 13:46). From which reason indeed a question arises, because namely the vision of Samuel is said to have been indicated to Eli more by his prayer and imprecation.

(Verses 16-18.) Eli therefore came to Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. Who answered: I am here. And he asked him: What is the word that the Lord has spoken to you? I pray, do not hide it from me. May God do these things to you, and add these, if you hide from me a word of all that has been said to you. Samuel therefore told him all the words, and did not hide them from him.

For how did he learn the vision of his own rejection from the executor of the divine sentence, who heard this not so much from one threatening as from him who was rather compelled by prayers? But let those who ask this first understand that we discuss these things not according to the letter, but according to the spiritual and typical significance. For in this place, the coming of Eli refers neither to the movement of the body of the Jewish priesthood, nor to the affection of the mind, but yet to come for him was this very thing: that he appears to the preachers as a rational creature of God. He came, therefore, when he was seen in human nature, and moved the hearts of the teachers to pity him. Therefore, Eli's

coming is not an access of mind or body in the ancient people, but an appearance of the human condition. Or perhaps to come for him was from the fact that he was chosen from all peoples for the worship of God. He also called him son who is looked upon by him who in the elect Fathers is remembered to have been the institutor of the holy Church. He calls him son, therefore, not by affection of the name, but by the showing of the lost dignity. And because he is seen in the darkness of blindness, he is said to have asked that the vision be told to him. For to beseech for him is, in respect of the common nature, to provoke the minds of the preachers to mercy. Who also added an imprecation to his prayers, because the order of preachers, while it considered the priesthood of the Jews placed in such misery, feared that the almighty Lord would be angry with it if it did not help him with the word. Whence it is aptly subjoined: Samuel told him all the words, and did not hide them from him. He indeed indicated to him all the things seen, so that, having heard what he deserved, the magnitude of fear might turn him to the anxiety of obtaining divine mercy. He told him all the words of the Lord, so that while he recognized himself cast off in his old age, he might hasten through the tears of penance to the renewal of the true faith. Who indeed answered, saying:

(Verse 18.) It is the Lord, let him do what is good in his eyes.

26. By which words, indeed, what else is more clearly recognized than the perfidy of the Jewish

people? For he who calls the almighty God Lord, still thinks that he serves him. Therefore, when their rejection is insinuated to the Jewish people by the teachers of the holy Church, they say: It is the Lord, let him do what is good in his eyes. Because while they believe they please God through the ancient institution, they are by no means terrified by the threats of the holy Church. As if with a more open voice Jewish perfidy asserted, and said to the preachers of the holy Church threatening them: By your threats you strike no terror into us, in that we believe we minister in faith to him from whose grace you preach that we have fallen. Therefore, when he adds: Let him do what is good in his eyes, he mocks the teachers of the holy Church rather than offering himself to the divine sentence. As if he spoke with another intention, and said: He does not do such a thing to us, in that that one is our Lord whom you propose to us for vengeance.

It follows:

(Verse 19.) And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him.

Why is it that after he set forth the vision to Eli, Samuel is said to have grown, unless because the order of our teachers, after it rejected the sons of the Synagogue by the word, found the glory of greater reverence among the gentiles? He grew, therefore, because he who through the ministry of the word first confined himself in one nation, afterwards spread the fame of his holiness and teaching in the whole world. Whence also it is said through the Psalmist: Their sound went

forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps. 18:5). Hence again speaking to the holy Church, he says: In place of your fathers sons are born to you, you shall constitute them princes over all the earth (Ps. 44:17). He grew, therefore, when he radiated in the whole world. With whom also the Lord is said to be, because everything that smelled of the fame of holiness, everything that shone clear through the word, he received from the presence of the Redeemer, whom he had with him. For although Paul by the word penetrates not only weak and earthly things, but also high and heavenly things, he obtains this virtue of speaking from him whom he affirms to be with him, saying: Do you seek a proof of him who dwells in me, Christ? (2 Cor. 13:3). For he who spoke in him was with him. He is fragrant to the whole world through his life, but from him he draws the odor of life which he shows, saying: We are a good odor of Christ in every place (2 Cor. 2:15). John insinuates that all things are from the presence of the Redeemer, because he says: From his fullness we have all received (John 1:16). Samuel, therefore, when he is said to have grown, the Lord is remembered to be with him, because the order of teachers, when it shone to the whole world with the grace of great holiness and doctrine, was able to appear so great from him who did not leave him placed in the world.

It follows:

(Verse 20.) And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.

By which names of the land, indeed, the university of Judea is designated. What, therefore, is designated in the whole of Judea but the whole Church? Therefore, the university of Israel recognizes that Samuel is a prophet of the Lord, because indeed everyone who is faithful believes that the order of holy preachers speaks the truth about future things. For the office of a prophet is both to predict future things and to reveal hidden things. But the preachers of the holy Church, while they detect any latent vices in the mind, while they open the secrets of spiritual virtues, while they bring forth the latent understandings of the holy Scriptures to common knowledge, while they promise the future joys of the heavenly country to the faithful elect, they use the ministry of a prophet. By all Israel, therefore, faithful Samuel is known to be the prophet of the Lord, because he cannot see the almighty Lord by faith who does not yield faith to the teachers of the holy Church. And because the same glory of divine knowledge remained in the holy Church, which opened itself to the first teachers, it is subjoined:

(Verse 21.) And the Lord added to appear in Shiloh.

29. Shiloh, indeed, is interpreted as sent. And because he sends into the ministry of preaching until the end of the world, the Lord appears in Shiloh, because he shows himself more clearly

to them through whom he opens the glory of his light to others. But it is well said: He added to appear, because they are incessantly chosen into whom the clarity of divine light is infused. Whence also he subjoins the cause why he asserts that the vision was heard, saying:

(Verse 21.) Because the Lord had been revealed to Samuel.

For this reason he adds that he might appear, since the Lord who had been revealed reveals himself again and again, and by no means withdraws the gift of his manifestation from the holy Church, which he has not ceased to exhibit to her from her beginning. But of him who is asserted to have been revealed to Samuel, it is not related how many times he added to appear, because namely the holy Church is led even to the end of the world, over which preachers preside, who for this reason preach from the lowest parts the high joys of eternity, in that they see in the high manifestation of God the highest things which they preach. Which appearance indeed is mentioned to have been made according to the word of the Lord. But what is the word of the Lord, if not the promise of the Redeemer? He added therefore to appear according to the word of the Lord, because he does not cease to exhibit the truth of his promise. For the word of the Lord in the addition of the appearance is: Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. 28:20). It follows:

(Verse 21.) And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

For the word is known to come when the promise of our preachers is fulfilled. For the promise of the word is joy to remain without end. Therefore, to all Israel the word of Samuel came, because the whole multitude of the holy Church attains to the joy of eternal beatitude, and what is now promised in the faith of the word by his holy preachers, is exhibited to the same by the truth of the thing in the heavenly kingdoms. For the word of the teachers in the promise of the faithful is: Everyone who believes in him does not perish, but shall have eternal life (John 3:15). Or certainly the word of the teachers in the promise of gifts is: What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ascended into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him (Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9). The word of Samuel, therefore, came to all Israel, because whoever believes the holy preachers both persuading to the religious conversation of the present life and promising eternal joys to the just, has passed by the death of the flesh to the eternal joys which he expected by living piously. Whence also he in whose faith he had promised affirms, saying: Amen I say to you, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Mark 13:31). Or certainly the word of Samuel has already come to all Israel, because through the effect of divine punishment the general rejection of the Jews is known to be fulfilled. Whence also more widely setting forth the order by which the same word came to all Israel, he says:

CHAPTER II.

(1 Kings 4:1-3.) For Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle, and encamped near the Stone of Help. Moreover, the Philistines came into Aphek, and set their army in array against Israel. And when the battle was joined, Israel turned their backs, and there were slain in that battle here and there through the fields four thousand men. And Israel returned to the camp.

1. The blessed Apostle shows that there are spiritual battles, while he exhorts the camps of the holy Church to victory, saying: Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against princes and powers, and against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). Concerning which battles also giving counsel for obtaining victory, he says: And take the shield of faith, in which you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:16, 17). Hence Peter exhorting says: Be solicitous, and watch in prayers, because your adversary the devil goes about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, strong in faith (1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8). While therefore battles are related to the Israelites according to the letter, internal and spiritual ones are designated. For Philistines are interpreted as falling by the cup; by which name indeed the reprobate angels are expressed, because through the over-abundant drink of pride they lost the state of eternal life. For to them to fall as if by a cup was to take the drink of pride

without any delay of withdrawal. For what is drunk is easily taken. Concerning whose prince indeed, as of one drinking, the Lord says: Because he stood not in the truth (John 8:44). For he fell as if by a drink, who, drunk with the velocity of his pride, did not stand even for a moment in that truth in which he had been created.

2. But it must be greatly asked how Israel according to the flesh is understood to go out to battle against those falling by the cup (cadentes poculo). For no one fights with one who is subject to him. How, therefore, is the Jewish people, who are subject to evil spirits through infidelity, said to go out to battle against them? Yet they are asserted to fight not by the truth of fortitude, but by the fallacy of estimation. For by the truth of fortitude they were conquered by evil spirits, but yet while they preserve the traditions of the ancient Fathers, they think they have a struggle with the evil spirits. Whence they are bound so much more strictly under the bonds of their captivity, as the confidence of that very liberty which they do not have is suggested to them by their craftiness. For the crafty adversaries, by occult suggestions, preach to them the fortitude of a false liberty, so that they may not attend to that darkness by which they are oppressed, and they may possess them already deceived more securely as they do not care to be loosed from the bonds of infidelity by which they are held, by believing in our Redeemer. And it is to be noted that it is said of the rejected people: Israel went out. 126 Then they rightly went out when

they abandoned the monuments of the sacred faith. Whence also of those who had strayed by wandering from the mysteries of Holy Scripture, John says: They went out from us, but they were not of us (1 John 2:19). To go out, therefore, for Israel according to the flesh is to pass beyond the boundaries of the right faith by wandering. But because they do not cease to expect another Christ, they pitch their camp near the Stone of Help (Lapis adjutorii). Deservedly, therefore, Israel is said to have turned their backs, because they are also reported to have gone out. For if they remained within, they could by no means have been conquered, because if they kept themselves within the fortifications of faith, they would have vanquished the armed spirits of error. And because they are overcome by fraud, the Philistines are reported to have drawn up their battle line in Aphek. For for evil spirits to draw up a battle line is to arrange the arguments of deception in the incautious hearts of the Jews. But when the contest had begun, Israel turned their backs, because while they fear to die, they do not resist the evil spirits. For therefore fugitives from battle turn their backs to the enemies, lest by resisting they should die. But because, if the Jews believe in the Redeemer, they tremble to die, for that reason they do not resist, so that they may live, because they do not believe in the Redeemer, that they may be saved in the old circumcision. For they would indeed resist the evil spirits, if they had held the arms of their fortitude in the faith of our Redeemer. But they flee for this reason, lest they

should die, and they die for this reason, because they flee. For the following enemy kills the fugitive so much more easily, as he who is struck by fleeing does not resist the sword of his imminent victor. Whence also in that same contest four thousand of the Jews are recorded to have been slain. For what are these four thousand, except those who refused to receive the truth of the four Gospels? Why also are they reported to have died in the fields, because they dwell in the latitude of their errors? And because they by no means yet abandon the hiding places of their error, Israel is asserted to have returned to the camp. For, as I have already said, they think they still have a struggle with evil spirits when they rather obey their will than resist it.

3. But because the cup is also taken in a good sense, those falling by the cup (cadentes poculo) can be understood as the preachers of the Holy Church. Concerning which cup indeed the Prophet glories, saying: You have anointed my head with oil, and my inebriating cup, how excellent it is (Psalm 22:5)! For the inebriating cup is the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit, which is aptly called a cup, because by its fullness the hearts of the elect are inebriated in a moment. Whence also of the first pastors of the Holy Church it is said: Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2). By which cup indeed the preachers fall, because while they receive the grace of the Holy Spirit abundantly, they entirely abandon the

state of carnal life. For daily they fall through this cup as if drinking to excess, because even if carnal motions sometimes rouse them to commit faults, yet by the power of the inebriated spirit they are not found in the state of sin. With whom indeed, because the Jewish people has a contest of faith against those Philistines, carnal Israel daily goes out to the field of war.

4. Moreover, the preachers of the Holy Church can be understood by the name of the Philistines for this reason, because they were led from the error of the Gentiles to the grace of faith by the mercy of God. With whom indeed Israel battling turns its back, because it does not resist the spirit speaking through the mouths of the preachers. For Israel had gone out to battle against the Philistines when the Jews opposed Stephen preaching, and disputed concerning the reason of our faith. But battling it turned its back, because it could not resist by disputing. For of those turning their backs it is said in the Acts of the Apostles: They could not resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke (Acts 6:10). But for the Israelites to be slain is to be separated from the life of infidelity. Well also are they reported to die in the fields; for the fields of the contest are the green understandings of the sacred word. In the fields, therefore, the slain thousands of the Israelite fighters are assigned, because those who were converted from Judea by the ministry of the holy preachers believed in the Redeemer of the human race through the documents of the Holy Scriptures. But four thousand are recorded

to have been slain, because they vowed the same authority of the sacred word from the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and from the Gospel. But while some are blind, others return to the camp, because some from Judea were led to the knowledge of the Redeemer by the ministry of the preachers, but the fullness of the same nation opposes the assertions of the Holy Church so much more boldly, as, cast deeper into the darkness of its infidelity, it is not led to the light of truth. For to return to the camp is for them not to cease to oppose. And because they accuse those who had believed as if foolish, and overcome by no sufficient reason, there follows:

(Verse 3) And the elders of Israel said: Why has the Lord struck us today before the Philistines?

5. For Why in this place is not an interrogation of inquiry, but a complaint of wonder. Under wonder, therefore, they ask concerning the striking, because they were not able to reach that reason by which they had seen men of their religion receive the faith of the Redeemer. And it is to be noted that those who ask wonderingly are recorded to have been the elders of Israel, because indeed all the proud, glorying in their own wisdom, were by no means able to reach the knowledge of the divine mysteries. Whence also in the Gospel the Lord speaks to the Father, saying: I confess to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little ones (Matthew 11:25). Who indeed complain that they have been struck, because

while they saw the old custom of the Law being loosed through those who believed, they thought certain wounds of striking were inflicted on them by the incomprehensible judgment of God, which they would proclaim with common grief. But those who complain that others have fallen, in order to prepare themselves for resisting by what counsel, they add:

(Verse 3) Let us bring to us from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and let it come into the midst of us, and save us from the hand of our enemies. And of the affection of the same counsel it is immediately added:

(Verse 4) So the people sent to Shiloh, and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts sitting upon the cherubim.

6. This is certainly the counsel, this is the work of Israel against the contest of those falling by the cup (cadentes poculo), but indeed a counsel and a work unheard of, because it is not of Israel according to the spirit, but of Israel according to the flesh, namely, not of one seeing who sees God, but of one thinking he sees God whom he despises. For what is it to send to Shiloh, except to recur to the law of Moses, to whom it is said by the Lord: Come, I will send you to Pharaoh (Exodus 3:10)? What is it to bring the ark of the Lord, except to bring forward by recalling the sacraments of the old law for rejecting the truth of the new faith? And because they allow none of their own to be ignorant of that same knowledge of the law, the ark is commanded to be brought into their midst. 128 What is it likewise that

they say: And let it save us from the hand of our enemies, except that while they pertinaciously defend old things, they reject new things, and they have this in confidence of salvation, if they cannot be drawn to the reason of the true faith by the study of good preachers? Because, therefore, they boast that they have the truth of divine knowledge through the old law, they confirm that same ark, which they command to be carried for their salvation, to be of the Lord of hosts. And because they think they excel by the incomparable knowledge of that same law, while the ark is said to be carried, it is reported to be of the Lord of hosts sitting upon the cherubim.

(Verse 5) And when the ark had come, all Israel shouted with a great shout.

7. Because indeed concerning the fact that they receive the knowledge of the law carnally, they chatter in reproach of the Holy Church, without showing reason. For those who are said to have shouted, and to have said nothing, indeed express by this what they do, because while they busy themselves to speak spiritual things carnally, they indeed have a shout in their chatter, but they do not have the reason of truth. By voice indeed they say many things, but, speaking without reason, they in no way obstruct the elect of the Holy Church, and the Synagogue speaking in itself is shaken with vain devotion, because the Holy Church is not moved by its words. Whence appropriately enough the earth is related to have only resounded. For the land of Judea is now called earth, not because it bears fruit to God, but

on account of carnality, because indeed, since it refused to receive the faith of the Redeemer, it entirely lost celestial conversation. But while it is shaken by its own shouting, it exults in that estimation by which it considers itself to be terrible to the preachers of the Holy Church.

(Verse 6) And the Philistines heard the voice of the shout, and they said: What is this shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?

8. For the Philistines hear the sound of the earth and the shouting of the camp, because those who have been refreshed in the Holy Church by the cup of the Holy Spirit know both the chatter and the vain devotion of the perfidy of Judea. And because they have their estimation in contempt of derision, there is added:

(Verses 6, 7) And they knew that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, and the Philistines were afraid, saying: God has come into the camp, and they groaned.

That the ark had come into the camp of the Hebrews, and those falling by the cup had feared, and had groaned, is said by irony, because for the conflict of the Holy Church the sacraments of the old law are expounded carnally by the carnal defenders of the Synagogue. For they dispute concerning that which, if they were wise according to the spirit of God, they could have been in truth terrible to their enemies, if they had any. While, therefore, those falling by the cup are said to have feared and groaned, the Scripture does not show the passions of the minds in the holy preachers, but the mockings of the Jewish disputation;

which is known as so much more contemptible and more worthy of laughter, as the Jewish people received a spiritual law from the Lord for spiritual conversation, and that which they had received by the gift of the Spirit, they did not attend to in the spirit. Why also adding the words of the same Jewish derision they say:

(Verse 8) Woe to us, there was not such great exultation yesterday, and the day before.

And because they are more abundantly to be derided, adding they say: (Verse 8) Who will deliver us from the hand of these sublime gods?

129 9. And it is to be noted that by the name of gods those are derided who, receding from the faith of the ancient Fathers, trust that they exist in the truth of faith, and in the number of the sons of God. They indeed assert those heraldings of divine praise to have been brought forth in themselves, which the Lord pronounces through the Prophet, saying: I said, you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High (Psalm 81:6). If therefore by a mendacious estimation all Israelites according to the flesh are by name gods, the sublime gods of that same Jewish estimation's lie are the wise men of the Jews. And because the skilled men of the Synagogue come to the conflict of the Holy Church, they themselves are derided by the voice of the holy preachers, who glory in that power of doctrine which they do not have. And because they are proud of the ancient conversation of the ancient Fathers, the words of mockings are subjoined.

(Verse 8) These are the gods who struck Egypt with every plague in the desert.

10. For they would be the ones, if they illustrated the nobility which they draw from the origin of the flesh by the virtues of the right faith. Now however, because through the propagation of the flesh they are the sons of those whose virtues they do not have, they are derided concerning the lost succession of those same virtues by contrary words: These are the gods, they say. As if by open derision the order of our teachers should reprove the wise men of the Jews, saying: By the flesh indeed they glory that they are the sons of great men, but they do not follow the nobility of faith of those of whose generation they are proud. They are therefore the gods by the following of the race, but because they themselves are not by the imitation of virtue, when they are said to be the ones who were bright in virtue, they are derided rather than praised. And because the teachers of the Holy Church consider their assertions as nothing, there follows:

(Verse 9) Take courage, and be men, Philistines, lest you serve the Hebrews, as they have served you.

11. Against the vain assertions of the Jews, indeed, the teachers of the Holy Church prepare nothing more strongly anew, for they weigh as nothing whatever is falsely asserted by the Jews concerning the contempt of the Redeemer. Against their encounter they would indeed take courage, and struggle as if with manly fortitude, if they had feared that the fortifications of their

assertion would be broken as if by wiser and reasonably disputing men. As if he should say: Against their objections, we do not need to seek out anything robust and sharp, as they by no means object subtle and to be feared things, but weak and to be despised things. But, as I said, even if the preachers of the Holy Church prepare nothing anew against the empty talk of the Jews, yet they vanquish the impetus of the defenders of the Synagogue by the plain and humble reason of our true faith in whatever way. Whence also he adds:

(Verses 10, 11) So the Philistines fought, and Israel was turned away, every man into his own tabernacle, and there was made an exceeding great slaughter, and the ark of God was taken. Also the two sons of Eli died, Hophni and Phinehas.

12. The Philistines, that is, those falling by the cup, fight when the teachers of the Holy Church meet the attacking Jews with the banner of the Catholic faith. But Israel is turned away, because in every dispute the craftiness of the Jews is overcome. For to be turned away for them is not to be able to oppose with equal virtue. But he who is turned away by fighting is indeed in the battle, but fleeing, although failing in virtue, yet not losing the desire of harming. For such is every rejected Israel. For they flee, because they do not suffice to answer the teachers of the Holy Church; but fleeing they would wish to resist, because conquered and confused they would desire to have means available to them whence

they could have resisted the truth by which they are conquered. Well therefore when Israel is said to be turned away; it is cautiously added: Every man into his own tabernacle. For the tabernacle of each Israelite is a heart surrounded by the enclosure of perfidy. Because therefore, conquered by the preachers of the Holy Church, they seek again the hiding places of their error, they return each fleeing from the battle into his own tabernacle. And because all this is said concerning the fulfillment of the word of Samuel, namely, concerning the threat of the primitive Church, it is reported that an exceeding great slaughter was made, which slaughter indeed, according to the judgment of the reader, can be taken appropriately both according to a spiritual striking and according to a material one.

13. For concerning their spiritual slaughter the Lord says to the disciples sent out in preaching: Whosoever shall not receive you, going forth out of the house, or the city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you: it shall be more tolerable for the land of the Sodomites and Gomorrheans in the day of judgment, than for that city (Matthew 10:14). Hence again He says: He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not, shall be condemned (Mark 16:16). According to the material striking also He intimates a great slaughter, when He speaks to Jerusalem, saying: The days shall come upon you, and your enemies shall surround you with a trench, and enclose you on every side and your children, and beat you flat to the ground,

and there shall not be left in you a stone upon a stone (Luke 19:43, 44). Hence to the women suffering with Him and mourning, as He went to the worthiness of His passion, He speaks, saying: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep over yourselves, and over your children, for behold the days shall come in you in which they shall say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have not given suck. Then they shall begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if they do these things in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry (Luke 23:28, seq.)? By which words indeed both the death and captivity which was brought upon the people of the Jews by the Roman princes Vespasian and Titus is designated. For then indeed a great slaughter was made, when with the destruction of the people the city of the Jews was both taken and overturned, when for the vengeance of the divine blood, the people fell by the hostile sword, and he who could escape the iron sustained the punishment of eternal captivity. Which immensity of the slaughter indeed is reported to an already turned Israel, because the Jewish people was first both conquered and rejected by the teachers of the Holy Church before being fought, destroyed, and led into captivity by the Roman army. For they could be fought, killed, and led into captivity temporally for this reason, because they did not receive the security of eternal liberty offered to them by the teachers of the Holy Church. But also that same slaughter in old Israel is decreed by a

high dispensation of divine goodness, so that the ark of God should be taken by the Gentiles, and the faithful of the Holy Church might perceive the understanding of the divine sacraments so much more securely under spiritual explanation, as they would see nothing remaining in Judea which might be exhibited carnally. For by the will of God, the old people lost the city, the temple, the ark of the covenant, so that the new people of the Holy Church may recognize so much more fully the mystery of the true and new sacrifice, as among the Jews, new things appearing, they consider the old things to have entirely failed. The ark of God, therefore, is asserted to be taken by the Philistines, because, the custom of the old Scripture being destroyed, the sacraments are faithfully received by the Gentiles according to the truth of the spirit. For he takes the ark of God who comprehends the mysteries of divine knowledge in the sacred word through the truth 131 of understanding, by the devotion of the mind. But the ark being taken, immediately the two sons of Eli die, because indeed both priests of the higher order, and of the lower, live nowhere in the office of the old immolation. For they are reported to die, who have entirely ceased to offer sacred things. There follows:

(Verses 12, 13) And a man of Benjamin running out of the battle line, came into Shiloh on that day, with his garment rent, and his head sprinkled with dust. And when he had come, Eli sat upon a stool, watching over against the way. But

that man, after he entered, told the city, and all the city howled.

14. What is expressed by this man, who flees from the battle line, except that part of the Jewish people which abandoned Jewish perfidy by coming to the knowledge of the Redeemer? For to run was for him to desist from the depravity of his error by the velocity of devotion. But because he disposed to act strongly in the profession of the Redeemer, he was a man. Who indeed runs from the battle on that day on which he was conquered, because by that illumination of faith by which he deserted the darkness of perfidy, he approached to preach the truth which he knew. Whence also he is reported to have come to Shiloh, because he is sent to preaching. He rent his garment, because he put off the old man; he sprinkled his head with dust, because he by no means became proud of the splendor of the new man with which he clothed himself. For the rent garment pertains to the beauty of holy conversation, the sprinkling of dust to the estimation of humility. Since therefore for holy preachers, neither the purity of life without humility, nor humility suffices without holy conversation, the man who came in the type of teachers to announce the destruction of Israel, both rent his garment and sprinkled his head with dust. For was he not carrying his head sprinkled with this dust, who, speaking to the Lord, said: I will speak to my Lord, since I am dust and ashes (Genesis 18:27)? Likewise the Prophet spoke with his head sprinkled when he supplicated, saying: Remem-

ber, Lord, that we are dust (Psalm 102:15). He also had rent his garment, who confessing, said: You have rent my sackcloth, and have girded me with gladness (Psalm 29:12).

15. But when the humility of the ecclesiastical preacher is commended, likewise also the pride of the Jewish teacher is expressed, because forsooth Eli is reported to sit upon a stool. In that place indeed Eli intimates not the high priests, but the lawyers of the Synagogue. But what is it that he sits upon a stool, except that he is proudly extolled concerning doctrine? And what is it that he watches over against the way, except that while he receives the Scriptures proudly, he contradicts Him through whom he ought to go to the eternal fatherland? For that is the way of salvation which asserts itself, saying: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). He does not therefore look at the way, but over against the way, because he does not know the Redeemer, whom he contradicts. And well is the father said to sit upon a stool when his sons are dead, because the Synagogue does not have those who may sacrifice in the old manner, and yet it still has those who may teach in the old manner. And because they were erudite for the ministry through wise teachers, while he who might sacrifice ceased, and he who might teach still remained, the sons are appropriately reported dead, and the father to sit upon a stool; but concerning that announcement of the Redeemer which it heard, the multitude of the Synagogue had not joy, but sorrow. Whence also after the man came from

the battle, and announced the capture of the ark, all the city is said to have howled. Which sadness indeed, because it reached even to the teachers, there follows:

(Verse 14) And Eli heard the sound of the shout, and he said: What is this sound of this tumult?

132 16. Tumult is the shouting of the people, but confused, when namely without discipline of hearing, many speaking at once, there becomes a magnitude of murmur without showing reason. Eli therefore when he heard the howling of the city, said: What is the sound of this tumult? Because forsooth the mastership of the Synagogue, with the perfidious subject to it grieving concerning the preaching of Jesus Christ, while it wished to hear the cause of the grief, did not perceive a reasonable response, but the confusion of a complaint. But that he might not be able to have an excuse of ignorance, he who from the circumcision had approached the ministry of ecclesiastical preaching, opened to him the truth of the matter. Whence also it is added:

(Verse 14) But he made haste, and came, and told Eli.

But because that same Eli received the announcement of the coming man as immediately dead, what kind of hearer he was is subsequently made known:

(Verse 15) Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim, and he could not see.

17. For he would have been of perfect old age if he had completed the hundredfold number

of years in living. To which number, because two years are seen to be missing, what else is it except that he would have existed in perfect maturity if he had known the twofold sacrament in the incarnation of our Redeemer, namely, true divinity in His humanity, and true humanity in His divinity? But now, because he rightly understands many things concerning the old law, and very many things concerning the celestial mandates, he is ninety and eight years old. And while he believes God could be born of a Virgin through the flesh, and yet denies that the nature of His humanity was taken up in divinity, he is not a hundred years old. Whence also, having heard the report of the man, he justly dies, because without the faith of the Redeemer the good things which he knows and others by no means profit him. And because by the high and incomprehensible judgment of God the blindness of ignorance is struck into his mind, he is recorded to have been dim and not able to see. There follows:

(Verse 16) And he said to Eli: I am he who came from the battle, I who fled from the battle line today.

18. He was recording that he had been as if in battle who said: You have heard of my conversation sometime in Judaism; how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it, and profited in Judaism above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly an emulator of my paternal traditions (Galatians 1:13, 14). But he comes from the battle who says: Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor;

but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly (1 Timothy 1:13). To flee therefore from the battle line for a Jew, what else is it than to be separated from the error of the perfidious? and to come from the battle what is it, except to announce the good of the right faith to others? For to flee is of one fearing; to come, of one willing. In which place, because he is first said to come from the battle than to flee from the battle line, since perfidy is first deserted than truth is preached, it is no wonder. For this, that he says afterwards that he fled from the battle line, is not said according to the order in which it was done, but for the certainty of the word which he sent before. Which is also demonstrated according to the order of the history, because unless he had first fled from the battle line, he could by no means have come from the battle.

19. But we who inquire after spiritual things according to the spirit, even in the things of the Jews carnaly performed, let us attend to that man whom we introduced speaking a little above. For it was heard by the Church that he who formerly persecuted was evangelizing, as it is already written of him evangelizing: But when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted 133 to join himself to the disciples, and they all feared him, not believing that he was a disciple (Acts 9:26). Hence likewise to the disciple Ananias the Lord appearing at Damascus, said: Arising go into the street that is called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus, and lay hand upon him, that he may receive his

sight (Ibid., 11 and 12). Who indeed immediately answered the Lord, saying: Lord, I have heard from many how great evils he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, and he has power from the princes of the priests to bind all who invoke your name (Ibid., 13 and 14). When therefore he preached Him to the Jews, whom he was accustomed to attack with threats and slaughters, he indeed was coming from the battle. But while all the disciples feared to join themselves to him preaching, they doubted that he had fled from the battle line. For he was coming from the battle when it had been said by the calling Lord to him prostrate on the ground: Arise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you ought to do (Ibid., 7). But Ananias did not believe that he had fled from the battle line, who intimated to the commanding Lord those evils which he had done to the saints in Jerusalem, and the power which he had received. That therefore He might truly demonstrate that he had come from the battle and fled from the battle line, the Lord commands the same Ananias, saying: Go, for this man is a vessel of election to me, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). And it is to be noted, that on that day on which he announced these things, he asserted that he had come from the battle and fled from the battle line. For they flee in the day: because, Truth attesting: He that is in darkness, knows not whither he goes (John 12:35). Hence also it is written: They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunk, are drunk in the night (1

Thessalonians 5:7). And because in the example of the blessed apostle Paul, we have begun to see the man fleeing from the battle line, let us attend to this that he flees in the day. For it was night when he was constructing the battle line against the Holy Church, when having received letters from the princes of the priests to Damascus, breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples, he made haste (Acts 9:1, 2). But he who prepared war in the night, fled in the day; because on the journey a light from heaven suddenly shone round about him, and prostrated him on the ground, and terrified him with ineffable fear, so that he might acknowledge the darkness of his immense error, and for that Church which he was attacking by night, he might fight in the light of day. In the day therefore he fled, whom, that he might desert the night of perfidy, the brightness of the Redeemer shown from heaven shone round about. What is it therefore that on that day he confesses he comes from the battle on which he fled from the battle line, except that the intention of right preaching is designated? For some flee from the battle line on that day, but on another they come from the battle: because they abandon their former errors for the love of eternal life, but, when they are taken up to the ministry of preaching, they desire temporal retributions from the eloquence of their preaching. On another day therefore than that on which they had fled they come: because indeed they are right in conversation, but perverse in the intention of preaching. The holy preachers therefore,

who through the grace of our Redeemer believed from the circumcision, did not come from the battle on another day, but on that on which they had fled from the battle line: because indeed they obtained both gifts in the splendor of supernal love, namely the truth of conversation, with the preaching of the word. And because the Jewish mastership, even if not with the intention of knowing the truth, yet with the solicitude of curiosity wished to hear the assertions of the holy preachers, there follows:

(Verse 16) To whom he said: What is done, my son?

20. For under the description of one he speaks to all, because he saw the men of his nation, whom the doctrine of the Law sometime instructed. Or perhaps he called him son, not with the affection of love, but with the flattery of craftiness: 134 so that he might take him more easily through deception, as he would demonstrate that he loved him with paternal affection. He therefore calls him son, from whom he desires to know what has been done: so that forsooth he, for the bestowed honor of flattery, might pervert the series of truth. The honor of the name therefore is not referred to love, but to craftiness. But he who rejected the favor of the offered praise, constantly laid open the truth. Whence also it is added:

(Verse 17) And he who brought the news answered: Israel, said he, has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great ruin among the people. Moreover also your two sons

are dead, Hophni and Phinehas. And the ark of God is taken.

21. For the fleeing man announced this, which he learned by experience. What is it therefore that he asserts Israel to have fled, except that he constantly affirms that, while the Jewish people retains the sense of the Law carnally, they cannot resist the spiritual teachers of the Holy Church by disputing? And what is it that he preaches that a great ruin has been made among the people, except that he confirms that all who rejected the word of faith from the Jewish people have perished by eternal death? And what is it that the two sons of Eli are reported dead, except that both orders of the ancient priesthood are asserted to have failed? And what is it that he says the ark of God was taken, except that he asserts the knowledge of the divine sacraments to be taken away from the Jews, and faithfully apprehended by the Gentiles? because the divine mysteries are now known by the faithful Gentiles, the grace of God calling. There follows:

(Verse 18) And when he had named the ark of God, Eli fell from his stool backward by the door, and his neck was broken, and he died.

22. Why is it that Eli, having heard the flight of Israel, the ruin of the people reported to him, the death of his sons intimated, by no means falls from his stool: but knowing the capture of the ark, he both falls from his stool, and loses his life? But because we said that the wise men and lawyers of the Jews are designated in Eli, having heard the flight of Israel, he did not fall

from his stool: because he considers it as a small thing that the simple sons of the Synagogue are overcome by the teachers of the Holy Church in preaching. He does not fall when the ruin of the people is reported to him: because, while he hears that those perish who die in Judaism, he is by no means terrified. He does not fall when the death of his sons is intimated: because, even with the cessation of both priesthoods objected to him, he does not cease to be proud. But he falls when the capture of the ark is brought to him: because, while he sees the sacraments of his Scripture deeply and spiritually known by the preachers and faithful of the Holy Church, he does not dare to be proud concerning the erudition of the sacred word, which he understands only carnally. He falls from the stool therefore, because, having known the spiritual, he does not presume to be proud concerning the carnal mastership. But, because he hears true things preached sublimely and by no means believes, while he is confounded and not saved, he falls and dies. He indeed falls from the stool, because he ceases to be extolled concerning doctrine. But falling he dies, because if he is conquered by reason, yet by the judgment of the same reason, he does not deserve to reach eternal joys.

23. In which matter it is to be noted, that he who dying falls, falls by the door. For what is it that he falls by the door, except that, while he wanders blind, he strikes against the Redeemer? Who indeed asserts concerning himself, saying: Whosoever shall fall upon this stone, shall be

broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder (Matthew 21:44). He also says of himself: I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in, and go out, and find pasture (John 10:9). By the door therefore Eli died, because the mastership of the Synagogue 135 perished for this reason, because it offended against the Redeemer. For there he fell, where he sinned. Who also falling, broke his neck. In the neck the swelling of temporal power is designated. With his neck broken therefore he dies, who by the magnitude of perfidy, having lost the power of the kingdom, is condemned.

24. The letter of Holy Scripture can also be designated by the door. For as through a door we are led to the courts of the eternal temple, while through the letter of the sacred word we are raised to allegorical and spiritual understanding. Within also the King is seen: because the promised Redeemer of the human race is found in the spiritual understanding of Holy Scripture. Eli therefore fell dead by the door: because indeed the mastership of the Synagogue perished for this reason, because through the spiritual Scripture it sought not spiritually, but carnally, Him who had been promised in the spirit as the Redeemer of the human race. For he died by the door: because he perished concerning this, that he understood the spiritual promise of the Redeemer, not according to spiritual understanding, but according to the simple speech of history. And because through the study of his doctrine he presided over Judea for a long time,

which worked good not from love, but declined from evil through fear, there follows:

(Verse 18) For he was an old man, and far advanced in years: and he judged Israel forty years.

25. For he was an old man, and far advanced in years by the long duration of times. But he presided forty years, through the fear of the legal mandates. For the number forty pertains to sinners. Whence also the time of Lent (Quadragesima) in the Holy Church is consecrated by the same number of days, so that forsooth we may study to wipe away those sins which we commit by repenting. For the number forty is completed from ten and four. And because, by sinning, we transgress the Decalogue of the divine Law, and we contract the very faculty of sinning from that compaction of the four elements by which we consist; we are contained under the number forty as long as we exist in sin. Eli therefore judged Israel for forty years, because he exhibited the mastership of the Synagogue and the austere discipline of the Law for the fear of the subject people: so that he might retain the matter of the human condition, fragile through concupiscence, in the state of justice through fear. But Eli is now dead, he now lies by the door with his neck broken; but yet the poison of his perverse doctrine remains in the seed. For already, he who does not believe among the wise men of the Jews, is judged; but because in his instruction minds conceive the seeds of depravity, those who are born as sons by his doctrine do not relinquish the madness of his perfidy. Why also it is added:

(Verses 19, 20) And his daughter-in-law the wife of Phinehas was big with child, and near her time: and hearing the news that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and fell in labor. For sudden pains came upon her. And in the very moment of her death, they that stood about her said to her: Fear not, for you have borne a son. She answered them not, nor did she heed it.

26. And who was the daughter-in-law of Eli, if not the Jewish people, subjected to wicked priests? Because she had received the seeds of perfidy in her mind through their preaching, she was pregnant. And because she herself also thought to pour out the malice she had conceived, she is said not only to have been pregnant, but also near to giving birth. But what does it mean that, having heard of the capture of the ark and the death of her father-in-law and her husband, she is said to have given birth, unless that the remnant of the Jewish people, while it recognizes that the spiritual sacraments of the Scriptures have passed to the instruction of the Gentiles, while it beholds that the wise of the Synagogue have already perished along with both orders of priesthood, does not cease to pour out by speaking the seeds of its heresy which it conceived? For to give birth, for her, is to open to others by speaking the depravity she conceived. And because she preaches wicked things, while she is asserted to give birth, she is remembered as bowed down. For those who speak heavenly things give birth as it were not

bowing themselves down: because in the state of faith they raise the hearts of their hearers to the pursuit of good work. Therefore she who asserts depraved things, gives birth bowed down: because certainly this is done for her in speaking, that the more attentively she speaks, the more deeply she is cast down into the pit of her damnation. Rightly therefore, while she is bowed down for the birth, she is said to die. For giving birth she dies, because she is condemned in the merit of her blasphemy. And because she does not foresee the torments of her death, sudden pains are said to rush upon her. For sudden pains are the unexpected afflictions of death coming without foresight. For pains rush upon her suddenly, when the retributions of everlasting punishments meet the Jewish people: which now placed in contempt of the truth, does not fear. For because for the sake of the observation of paternal traditions, it estimates that by dying it passes to eternal life, it then falls into sudden pains, when it begins to endure torments which it did not hope for. And it is to be noted, that it is said of the dying woman: 'Sudden pains rushed upon her': because namely while she is forced to the end of life through the troubles of the flesh, then the scourges of pains begin to rush upon her temporally, by which her impiety may be punished with eternal vengeance; and because at the near end of the wicked their minds are sentenced to eternal punishments, before they breathe out their spirit, they already feel the pains of hell.

(Verses 21, 22) And she called the boy Ichabod, saying: The glory of the Lord is translated, because the ark of God is taken.

27. The ark is indeed captured: because now, by God's authority, the sacraments of Holy Scripture are held by true believers with the capacity of true understanding. And the glory of Israel is translated: because, after it fell from true religion, it ceased to be fragrant through the reputation of good fame. But well is the glory of Israel said not to perish, but to be translated: because the fame of religion, which it lost, passed to Gentility. For the glory is translated: because in the Holy Church the fragrance of true religion is redolent, which being placed in the faith of the Redeemer, for the certainty of the eternal splendor which it expects, holds the gift of the Holy Spirit as a pledge. Therefore she refuses to rejoice over the born son: because certainly, while she beholds that the past glory has passed to the Gentiles, she groans that she gives birth to captivity. From the translation also of the glory she names the son: because certainly she perpetually represents the impiety in which she remains, as if by a preferred name. But by this, that the name is imposed on him by the mother, what we see can be openly understood. For from her he received the name, from whom the merit of impiety came to him. It follows:

CHAPTER III.

(I Kings 5:1-3) And the Philistines took the ark, and carried it from the Stone of Help into Azotus.

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the temple of Dagon, and the Azotians rose early the next day, and found Dagon lying before the ark, face down on the ground.

1. What is it that the ark is carried away from the Stone of Help, unless because the heralds of truth take away the mysteries of the Scriptures from him whom the Jews expect in false opinion, Christ? For while they convert the testimonies of Holy Scripture to the knowledge of the true Redeemer, they surely take the ark from him in whom the Jews had placed the hope of their help. And because the mysteries of faith are entrusted to the Gentiles, the ark of God is led into Azotus. Which ark indeed is brought into the temple. What then was the temple of Dagon, if not each infidel soul, formerly polluted by the superstition of idolatry? What does the image of Dagon designate, if not the superstition of all idolatry? What then was it other, to intimate the mysteries of faith to the hearts of the Gentiles, than for the ark of God to be brought into the temple of Dagon? For the ark was placed as it were next to Dagon, while the preachers of the Holy Church admonished the Gentiles that, to prove the truth of faith, they should discuss both the preaching which they heard and the errors of idolatry which they held. Well therefore on the next day the Azotians found Dagon lying face down on the ground before the ark. For Azotus had one day in hearing the preaching of the truth, another in the knowledge of faith. For on the first day the ark of God is placed next to Dagon, because in hearing the

preaching of the Redeemer, they detect the darkness of the old error. But on the next day rising, they found Dagon lying face down on the ground before the ark: because also in the knowledge of the truth idolatry lost its standing. Wherefore also well, when the fall of Dagon is asserted, he is remembered to lie face down on the ground. He falls indeed before the ark, because he becomes known from the knowledge of the divine mysteries. But he lies face down on the ground, because, God being now the author, he has no image of simulated reason to the sight of the faithful. For he who lies face down on the ground, presses his face to the ground. But by the face of the image, the simulation of reason is expressed. To lie face down on the ground, therefore, is for those who now know the true things, to be by no means able to be mocked by the frauds of its simulation. But yet, that the Gentiles might know the true things more certainly, they again discuss with more subtle deliberation the same heard reason of our faith and the vain figments of their superstition. Wherefore also it is said:

(Verse 3) They took Dagon, and restored him to his place.

2. That is, in the temple, where the ark of God had been placed. What is it then to restore Dagon to his place, if not to investigate the state of idolatry by subtle consideration next to the already known truth of the spiritual sacraments? And because the more subtly the error of idolatry is looked at, the more truly it is condemned, it is added:

(Verse 4) And rising again at dawn, they found Dagon lying on his face before the ark of the Lord.

3. For what is the head of Dagon, that is, of idolatry, other than the very beginning of all iniquity, the devil? And what are the palms of his hands, if not all the works of idolatry? Therefore he lost the head of Dagon: because through the worship of idols evil spirits cease to reign in the heart of the Gentiles. The palms of his hands also were cut off, because sacrifices are nowhere offered to vain idols. And because his deformity is everywhere beheld by all the faithful, the trunk of Dagon is remembered to have remained in his place. But the head and the hands are remembered to have been cut off and placed upon the threshold: because surely whoever enters into the true faith is commanded to repel the principles of diabolical persuasion, and to renounce all the works of the same Satan. These therefore were placed on the threshold, so that they might be trampled upon by those entering: because he truly cannot be faithful, who does not propose both to oppose the depraved counsels of the evil spirit and to renounce wicked works. For he who avoids crushing the head and hands of Dagon, although he seems to be contained in the number of the faithful, is convinced in a certain way to be an idolater. For in the delight of demons not only outward sacrifices, but also wicked desires are offered by their worshipers. Therefore he who has been received into the knowledge of the true faith, and is not removed from unclean desires and depraved works, because he despises to col-

lide with the head and hands of Dagon, makes an offering to the evil spirit, whom he despises in the offering of ceremonies, through the uncleanness of internal concupiscence and of external life. Wherefore also it is added:

(Verse 5) Therefore the priests of Dagon do not step on the threshold even to this day.

4. Indeed they intimate that they are priests of Dagon, who do not step on the threshold. In which words it is to be carefully inspected, because he did not say, the threshold, but *upon* the threshold, so that the head and hands of Dagon might be taught to be trampled upon, which are reported to have been cut off upon the threshold. For this reason the priests do not step on the threshold, because they avoid treading under foot his cut-off hands and head. For the priests of Dagon remain even to this day: because those who sacrifice to the ancient enemy through unclean desires, are still here. Who surely refuse to step on the threshold of the temple: because they resist neither unclean suggestions nor evil works. Therefore they are priests of Dagon, because although they do not humble themselves to man-made idols, yet they bow themselves to the simulacra of concupiscences through nefarious works. It follows:

(Verse 6) The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians.

5. The hand of the Lord is the power of divine majesty. And because in the Azotians the beginnings of gentility are designated, what is it that the hand of the Lord is said to be heavy upon the

Azotians? But He made the hand heavy upon Azotus, when He moved the hearts of the Gentiles to conversion by the power of His majesty. For while through internal aspiration He made known to them the force of eternal death, He struck the minds of the Gentiles with marvelous terror concerning the iniquities they had committed. Because therefore while the hand of the Lord is said to be heavy, the Azotians are said to be killed, this heaviness of the hand is understood in the multiplication of converts. For to die to the Gentiles was to be separated from infidelity. To be killed also by the hand of the Lord, is to merit the same knowledge of true faith, not by the ministry of men, but by divine power. Therefore the hand of the Lord was light upon Azotus, when as yet through few ministers of faith few deserted the error of gentility. Wherefore also as if to pray for the heaviness of the hand, the Lord admonishes the ministers of the word, saying: 'The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few: pray the Lord of the harvest, that He send laborers into His harvest' (Matt. 9:38). As if He says otherwise: You who through few ministers, as if with a light hand, separate few from infidelity, pray that He may multiply the ministers, so that He may weigh down His hand as it were in the multitude of converts. But also the manner of the killing is explained: because whoever is said to die by this killing, when he went out to purge the belly, is reported to be bitten by mice in the more secret part of the buttocks. Literally one stroke is shown here, but in the typical exposition it is doubled.

For through the meaning of the letter, both the weighing down of the hand of the Lord and the biting of mice belong to the effect of the same death: because for this it is said that the hand of the Lord is heavy upon the Azotians that they are killed by the biting of mice.

6. But because through the spiritual meaning we have recognized two deaths: one namely by which the sinners of justice die by sinning, the other by which the just rise from the sins in which they had lived by repenting; one which enters into human hearts, at the persuasion of the devil, the other which the power of almighty God works: it is necessary therefore that we attend to both deaths in this place spiritually. The death indeed, by which sinners rise from sins by repenting, is designated, because it says: 'The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians.' But that death by which the Gentiles exhibited themselves as servants of uncleanness and iniquity, is designated when they are said to be bitten by mice and killed. For the mouse is an unclean animal, and forbidden by the Law to be eaten (Lev. 11:29). What then is designated by mice, if not demons? And what is it to be bitten by mice, if not to be torn by the punishment of sin? But they were bitten by mice, when they went out to purge the belly. What then is it to purge the belly, if not by the fulfillment of sin, to bring forth the stench of wretched fame? Therefore he who goes out to purge the belly, is destroyed by the bite of mice: because he who by sinning is extended to the notice of others through the example of depravity,

is also held to eternal death by the heavy obligation of demons. For they are reported to be struck in the more secret part of the buttocks: because each sinner receives a wound of the soul from that part which he bows down to the delight of sin. When therefore the hand of the Lord is heavy upon Azotus, he is asserted to be struck by mice: because while the Gentiles were converted from infidelity by the doctors of eternal life preaching, they recognized by what death of sins they had been bound by the persuasion of demons. Therefore for the Azotians to be bitten after the hand of the Lord was heavy, is after the knowledge of the true faith, not to be subjected to demons, but to behold through the illumination of faith with what stenches of sin they had offered themselves to the punishment of death. For they were as if then bitten, when they recognized the bites of their sins. It follows:

(Verse 7) But the men of Azotus seeing this kind of plague, said: Let not the ark of God stay with us, for His hand is hard upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

(Verse 8) And sending, they gathered together all the satraps of the Philistines, and the Gathites answered: Let the ark of God be carried about.

8. Because it is said they gathered together the satraps of the Philistines, why they gathered them is not said. But because the satraps are said to have answered, and to have given counsel for carrying about the ark, it is clearly recognized that they had been called to give counsel for the same ark. Who then are the satraps of the

Philistines, if not the elect preachers of the Gentiles? Satraps indeed are called princes. Concerning which princes it is said by the Psalmist: 'The princes of the people are gathered together with the God of Abraham' (Ps. 46:10). For by the name of 'peoples', the Gentiles are designated. Therefore he who placed the name of peoples and of princes, undoubtedly designated those of whom he speaks as the satraps of the Philistines. Which princes of the peoples surely met with the God of Abraham, when for the salvation of the Gentiles to be converted, the preachers sounded this in word, which almighty God inspired in them by internal desire. For as it were in the hearts of the Gentile hearers there was a marvelous agreement of God and the princes, when they simultaneously received the reason of right preaching from the holy preachers, and from the Lord the fruit of good will. And because they are recognized to be adversaries, who had said: 'Let not the ark of God stay with us': how do they gather the princes by sending? But to send, and to gather the princes, is to provoke the minds of the holy preachers to the urgency of preaching: because there it was to be more attentively preached, where the hearts of the Gentiles were more deeply merged in error. Hence it is that the eminent doctor glories that he chose for himself a more noble victory over untamed enemies, saying: 'From Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum, I have replenished the Gospel of Christ: and so I have preached this Gospel, not where it had been announced, lest I should build upon another man's founda-

tion' (Rom. 15:19, 20). Therefore the princes were provoked not by the desire, but by the error of the infidels, when they thought to make greater gain for God from there, whence the darkness of errors was carried higher by the breath of pride. Wherefore also the urgency of holy preaching is designated, when it is added: 'And the Gathites answered: Let the ark of God be carried about.'

(Verse 9) And while they were carrying it about, the hand of the Lord came upon every city with a very great slaughter, and He struck the men of every city from the least to the greatest, and their protruding secret parts rotted.

9. For the ark is carried about, when the mysteries of faith are preached openly and without fear. And because in the beginnings of faith countless numbers were converted, a very great slaughter is reported to have occurred through every city. Likewise because not only the simple, but also the wise were converted: the same slaughter is asserted to have been made from the least to the greatest. But through the same stroke the secret parts are reported to have rotted. For the rotting of the secret parts is for the passages of sin to perish utterly from the pouring out of the accustomed stench. For he is well struck, whose protruding secret parts rot: because indeed there are some who, after the cleanness of conversion, are involved in the former filth of wickedness. The protruding secret parts of these surely do not rot: because they are turned back to the accustomed flow of sins through wicked works. Surely those who are poorly healed from an imperfect

stroke are rebuked by him who intimates those returned to their former stenches: 'The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire' (Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet. 2:22). For as if to rot the secret parts he struck, who bringing in the sword of the word, says: 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its concupiscences' (Rom. 6:12).

10. But by this, that the Azotians say: 'Let not the ark stay with us,' the perversity of those can be designated, who from the same Gentiles both heard the word of faith and, being by no means predestined to eternal life, refused to believe. Therefore to carry about the ark of God was for the satraps, the holy preachers, to withdraw the word of truth from them and reveal the mysteries of faith to those who were worthy. Therefore the ark was carried about: because the sacraments of our faith were taken from the notice of some and revealed to others. Whence also when it was carried about, a very great slaughter is reported to occur through every city: because wherever they led the word of faith, the grace of conversion was multiplied. And because wherever they preached, among those who believed there were those who were not predestined to eternal life, it follows:

(Verses 10, 11) They sent the ark of God into Ekron. And when the ark of God had come into Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, saying: They have sent the ark of God to us, to kill us and our people. They sent therefore and gathered together all the

satraps of the Philistines, who said: Send away the ark of the Lord into its place.

11. The satraps, as we have said, are understood as holy preachers. The Ekronites, which is interpreted as 'sterile', designate inconvertible Gentiles. Which preachers surely gave counsel for sending away the ark, so that if they refused their salvation from the divine preaching, they might not obstruct the faithful tending toward the eternal fatherland with the sacraments of faith. For the place of the ark, namely of the divine sacraments, is recognized to be there, where whatever is now said concerning almighty God through the mystery of the Scriptures, is afterwards revealed to us by open knowledge. For he had known the proper place of the ark, who said: 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as I am known' (1 Cor. 13:12). Therefore the counsel of the satraps was that they should permit the ark of God to return to its place: so that namely, those who bore no fruit of faith from the preaching of the word, should at least leave it to those who would prepare fruit for themselves from it in eternity. Well therefore are they named Ekronites, who receive the counsel for sending back the ark. For Ekronites is interpreted as 'sterile'. For because they had given no fruit of belief or of good work from the heard truth of faith, they were sterile. Therefore the princes gave counsel for taking away the ark, but from the sterile; so that namely the seed of the word of God, which could not germinate in the

worst soil, might be preserved for the best soil, which from this labor of winter, would bring forth a hundredfold fruit of summer in perennial life. And they immediately show the cause for releasing the ark, when the preachers add:

(Verse 11) Lest it kill us with our people.

12. The Ekronites cried out: 'They have sent the ark of God to us, to kill us and our people.' The satraps give counsel, saying: 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, that it may not kill us with our people.' Who is the people, of whom the satraps, that is the princes, say: 'that it may not kill us with our people'? Who is the people, if not the Christian people? Therefore the princes say: 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, that it may return to its place.' As if he says this: From where you fear to die, do not prohibit us from exercising ourselves for the merit of eternal life. But what they add: 'That it may not kill us with our people,' the hearts of the wicked Gentiles are surely confounded in their error by this response, while these affirmed that they escaped death from where those trembled to die. The holy preachers also take away the ark of God: because while spiritual things are opened to despisers, it leads to the damnation of the indiscreet preacher, if the same divine mysteries are left to be not imitated by the perfidious, but mocked and concluded. For as it were for the transferring of the ark not so much the satraps, but the Lord of the satraps placed the precept, saying: 'Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they turn and trample them

under their feet' (Matt. 7:6). Hence again He says: 'If they shall persecute you in one city, flee into another' (Matt. 10:23). Therefore they take away the ark, lest they die: because they hide spiritual things from despisers for this reason, lest those who rashly bring them forth be punished for their indiscretion because of their contempt. But because the ark is commanded to be sent away to the Ekronites, this surely insinuates what I promised: that in the time of persecution the exhortation of holy preachers was made that they themselves should believe; but sometimes, that if they themselves did not receive the word of life, they should not obstruct those receiving it: and if they themselves, through fear of torments, did not seize the way of salvation, they should not be an impediment to those who had not ceased to hasten to the heavenly kingdoms either by threats or by punishments. It follows:

(Verse 12) For there was a fear of death in every city, and the hand of the Lord was exceeding heavy.

(Verse 12) Also the men that did not die, were struck in the more secret part of the buttocks: and the wailing of every city went up to heaven.

13. Concerning the striking of the buttocks, because we have spoken above, it would not be to be said here, if here nothing other than there were said. What then is it, that he says: 'Also the men that did not die, were struck'? Did those, forsooth, who had died, have to be bitten again for the punishment of the ark? But also when the cry of the struck ones is said to have ascended

to heaven, it could be sufficiently shown that it was said of the living, and not of the dead. For the cry of dead men could not ascend to heaven. But because we have referred the striking of the buttocks above to the knowledge of sins, there are surely men who are not dead. For they are men, who for the sake of the eternal life which they desire, have decreed to do brave things. But they are men as yet not dead, who deliberate to do great things, and yet by no means weigh their past evils for the pain of compunction. Therefore they are bitten by mice, that they may die: because they recall in what things they wickedly fell, and for their past acts they believe they merit the loss of eternal life. Because therefore they are men, they do not despair of God's mercy: and because they are bitten, that they may die, they do not exalt themselves concerning that which they begin to be great in.

14. Whose cry surely ascends to heaven because almighty God mercifully receives the groans of the converted. And because in the time of the conversion of the Gentiles there was a great gathering to the faith, the cry is reported to have ascended not from any one, but from many cities. Whence also in the person of the universal Church the prophet prays, saying: 'Hear my prayer, from the ends of the earth I have cried to you' (Ps. 60:2, 3). And showing that the cry of him crying from the ends of the earth has ascended to heaven, he says: 'He heard my voice from His holy temple, and my cry in His sight entered into His ears' (Ps. 17:7). When therefore each city is said to

have cried to heaven, the universal penitence of conversion is commended.

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biting mice and the cry of the cities, saying: 'Let all the earth be moved before His face, say among the Gentiles, that the Lord has reigned' (Ps. 95:9, 10). For he had sent before: 'Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all the earth' (Ibid. 1). For the motion of the earth pertains to the pain of penitence: to sing to the Lord, or to announce among the Gentiles that the Lord has reigned, to the pursuit of preaching, and to the devotion of divine praise. The cry of every city ascends to heaven: because in the whole world both the truth of preaching and the praises of devotions are declaimed by the faithful of the Holy Church.

CHAPTER IV.

(I Kings 6:1) And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

1. What are these seven months, if not designating the whole length of the present life? Although the Azotians and Ekronites cried out: 'Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about,' and 'Let not the ark of God stay with us': yet by the truth of holy history it is said, which we recognize in the type of the Holy Church, that the ark of God was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. Therefore not the will of evil and impious men, but the dispensation of God in the salvation of the Gentiles was fulfilled. Indeed the impious have already been taken from gentility, those who persecuted the confessors of Christ are already dead, and yet the ark of God is not taken from the country of the Philistines: because the divine sacraments are reserved through studious

solicitude among the Gentiles, intoxicated with the cup of the Holy Spirit. But it is well said 'seven months', because the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures will endure with the faithful of Christ until the end of the world. But whoever apprehends the mysteries of the same Holy Scripture through the grace of internal charity, was solicitous not about the place in which the ark is temporally left, but about that in which it is eternally placed. Wherefore also it is added:

(Verse 2) And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying: What shall we do with the ark of God? Tell us. And how shall we send it back to its place.

3. What is an empty ark, if not divine knowledge without good work? For to send back an empty ark is to bear no fruit of good work from the knowledge of spiritual sacraments. Therefore, an empty ark is sent back when the mind of one coming to faith already desires to pass over to the eternal contemplation of God, and yet in this life does not care at all to labor in good works. Therefore, by the voice of the preachers it is commanded that when the ark is released, it should not be let go empty, so that if any faithful person does not multiply good works, he may not presume to trust that he is about to pass over to the eternal knowledge of Almighty God.Â 145Â

But the ark is not let go empty if that which is owed is returned to it for sin. What is it that is owed to the ark for sin, if not the affliction of devout penance? In which place it must be noted that he speaks to those who have been

bitten by mice (*muribus*). For who are bitten by mice, if not those who, having been placed in the illumination of the Catholic faith, remember that they have done evil things, whether before or after the knowledge of the same faith? For he who admitted no crimes before the grace of regeneration, and retained the gift of regeneration with a worthy conversation, owes indeed to the ark, but does not owe to it for sin. By the knowledge indeed of the divine word, he is compelled to return the fruit of good work, but he is not urged to the satisfaction of penance from the debt of crimes which he rejected. Let those, therefore, who are still bitten, return the debt of the ark for sin; that for the memory of their crimes, they may restore a humble offering of penance to Almighty God. And then indeed they are cured; because then the wound of conscience is covered over, when the afflicted mind is raised up through penance to the security of hoped-for pardon. Then they also know why the hand of the Lord does not recede from them: because then they understand the utility of compunction, or the good of the afflicted flesh, when they rejoice ineffably in the trust of divine indulgence. For what is the pain of penance, if not the trouble of a blow from the striking of demons? For as if in the pain of a blow still sharply piercing, that convert sighed when he said:Â *I am turned in my anguish, while the thorn is fastened*Â (Psal. XXXI, 4). For what does anguish insinuate, if not the affliction of penance? But he asserts that he is turned in the same anguish, while he feels the

fastening of the thorn. As if he were to say: While I am bitten by the record of my disgrace, I do not cease to return the debt of the ark. For the thorn is fastened when, through the dispensation of Almighty God, the soul of converts is inflamed to tears by the record of their crimes. And the debt of the ark is paid when the measure of lamentation is extended according to the quality of the crime: when after long-lasting tears, the light of internal solace is infused into the mind long afflicted, and it is lightened by the divine gift from the weight of the inward striking: when Almighty God now approaches the purged mind through the grace of His inspiration, and cheers it from the trust of obtained indulgence, which He administers to it from the grace of His presence. For it is then cured, as it were, from the striking, when the greatness of the pain is removed from the afflicted mind of the penitent through the grace of the poured-back indulgence.

4. Whence also he who was being converted in his anguish while the thorn was being fastened, in the same psalm joyfully addresses Almighty God, the author of his healing, saying:Â *You are my refuge from the pressure which has surrounded me, my exultation*Â (Psalm. XXXI, 7). Indeed, he calls the very heavy hand of the Lord "pressure." Paul also speaks of this striking of the very heavy hand, saying:Â *For the Spirit Himself asks for us with unspeakable groanings*Â (Rom. VIII, 26). He, therefore, who insinuates that he has found a refuge of the Lord from pressure, and exultation, manifests that he has been cured

from the striking of internal pain by the joy of divine indulgence. Hence, likewise, still grieving, he confesses, saying:Â *To You alone have I sinned, and done evil before You*Â (Psal. L, 6). But because he presumes concerning the healing, insinuating, he says:Â *To my hearing You shall give joy and gladness, and the humbled bones shall exult*Â Â (Ibid., 7). Therefore, the debt of the ark is returned for sin when sinners are afflicted from the knowledge of sacred Scripture, and strive to cleanse with torture the faults which they drew by the delight of the flesh. But they are cured when, the measure of affliction now being fulfilled, they are raised to the trust of divine indulgenceÂ 146Â through the help of internal solace. Whence also the Psalmist speaks, saying:Â *You will feed us with the bread of tears, and You will give us drink in tears in measure*Â (Psal. LXXIX, 6). Indeed, He gives the drink of tears unto measure: because surely the sinner, although he is struck with compunction for his fault from the internal inspiration of God, is raised up by the consolation of the same One from the affliction of that same compunction. Whence also through Moses the Lord says:Â *I will kill, and I will make to live: I will strike, and I will heal*Â (Deut. XXXII, 39). For He strikes and heals: because those whom He wounds through compunction, He cures through the security of indulgence. Well, therefore, is it said to those already cured:Â *And you shall know why His hand does not recede from you.* For before He cures, they cannot know why the hand of the Lord does not recede from

them: because they then understand the good of penance when they recognize the grace of the Holy Spirit in a heart already purified, and they desire the gifts of divine indulgence, for which they give thanks with ineffable exultation. For he had seen that those who were already being cured knew the cause of the hand of the Lord, by which it had not receded from affliction, who expresses the exultations of those struck, speaking to God and saying:Â *We were filled in the morning with Your mercy, we exulted and were delighted for the days in which You humbled us, the years in which we saw evils*Â (Psal. LXXXIX, 14, 15). For as if in the night of penance they had received mourning, they who in the morning, namely, the clarity of divine worthiness appearing, rejoiced that they were filled with mercy, and asserted that they were delighted for the days in which they had been humbled: through the gift of healing, they are shown to know the gravity of the hand of the Lord, why it had not receded from them. But because it is still said by the princes through counsel that what is owed for sin should be returned to the ark; and what that is which is owed is not explained, it is added:

(Vers. 4, 5.)Â Who answering said: What is it that we ought to return for the trespass? They answered them: According to the number of the provinces of the Philistines, you shall make five golden tumors (*anos*), and five mice: because there was one plague on you and your lords. And you shall make likenesses of your tumors, and likenesses of the mice, which have destroyed the

land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel, if perhaps He may lighten His hand from you, and from your gods, and from your land.

5. What is it that five likenesses of anuses (*anorum*), and as many likenesses of mice, are commanded to be made according to the number of the provinces, and thus the debt of the ark is paid? These things, indeed, if they are weighed according to Jewish custom according to the vileness of the letter, are not only to be despised, but are not even worthy of being heard. He, indeed, receives them worthily who, the more vile they sound through the sound of the letter, the more he understands them to be more useful through their spiritual significance. For the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration all this sacred history is written, would never bring forth such vile things if He did not signify in the secret of this vileness certain great and very precious mysteries. Whence the excellent teacher confesses, saying:Â *All things happened to them in figure; but they are written for us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*Â (I Cor. X, 11). Therefore, they are to be sought more deeply through the Spirit, the more vile that which they speak appears in the exposed flesh, as it were, of the letter. What, then, are the likenesses of anuses, what the images of mice? And because we have referred these above as much to the tempting demons as to the members of sinners exposed to stenches, by what significance are the likenesses of anuses and mice gilded? But indeed, the debt of the ark for sin is

well paid then, if the likenesses of anuses and mice are fabricated from gold.

For in the likeness of the anus (*ani*) is seen the member for emittingÂ 147Â stench:Â Â and yet, because it is a likeness, not the truth, it is now defiled by no stench. And because it is made of gold, this indeed insinuates: that the appearance of deformity is changed from the splendor of beauty. Therefore, the converted sinner makes a likeness of an anus when he brings to memory with what stenches of sin he had laid down his members. Therefore, to fabricate a likeness of an anus is to recollect with a penitent heart the foulness of one's lately sinning members. Thus he does not fabricate the anus, but a likeness of the anus, who both washes his members from the stenches of sin, and does not neglect to recollect those same members which he had subjected to sins. And indeed, the likeness of the anus is seen to be made from gold, because the foulnesses of sins are worn away unto the price of eternal salvation. Or perhaps by remembering the likenesses of anuses are made, and by weeping they are gilded: because both by recollecting what we have done, we fashion them; and while we more attentively mourn the things committed, we gild the members into the splendor of justice. Therefore, a likeness of anuses, not the truth, is seen, because then the sinner looks back upon the ignominy of his deformity when he not only does not exercise depraved works by committing them, but also vehemently grieves that he committed them in the past.

Moreover, five anuses are commanded to be made, because the universal satisfaction of all Gentiles is commanded. Whence also it is carefully noted:Â *According to the number of the provinces of the Philistines.* For why are there five provinces of the Philistines, if not because the carnal life of the Gentiles is designated? For because he contributed the five senses of the body not to the praise of the Creator, but to the carnal life, the provinces of the Philistines are expressed by the number five. Five golden anuses are commanded that they should make, so that they may be struck with compunction concerning all the senses: and because all have sinned, therefore they may reduce all the members to the clarity of supernal life, which they polluted with every kind of filth of disgrace through the delights of the flesh. Indeed, in gold is shown the brightness of supernal conversation, because it is said by John concerning the supernal city:Â *The city itself was pure gold, like unto clear glass*Â (Apoc. XXI, 18). Therefore, the members are gilded when the body, deformed by the earthly and muddy foulness of concupiscences, is changed into the splendor of eternal life: when, namely, through the beauty of holy conversation, that which was filthy with the stench of sins in the appetite for worldly delight radiates. For unto that gilding the blessed Paul was admonishing his hearers, saying:Â *AsÂ Â you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity, so yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification*Â (Rom. VI, 19). And as if compelling

them to look back at the likenesses of anuses, he brought in, saying:Â *What fruit, therefore, had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death.* Therefore, likenesses of anuses are made for blushing: because surely we bring to memory the stains of our foulness, so that we may be confounded by those same stains. But they are gilded for security: because surely while we cover our deformity with the clarity of supernal life, we await the discussion of the divine examination with a certain security.

6. Mice also, which have destroyed the land, are commanded to be made of gold: because also the unclean spirits, which suggest to our flesh the delights of corruption, are remembered unto our justification. For what is it to make likenesses of mice, if not to remember those victories which the malignant spirits have had over us? But the likenesses of mice are also gilded, when we sigh that we have been crushed by their strengths. For while we mourn that we have been conquered by their frauds,Â 148Â we indeed hold golden likenesses of mice, while we do not have the past counsels of the demons in the enticement of the work, but in the contempt of reprobation. Therefore, the likenesses of mice are made of gold, because the past frauds of the demons profit us unto the brightness of a good life. For we are so much the humbler, the more our members radiate through the brightness of supernal conversation; and we ourselves, who now by the help of Almighty God act strongly, see that we have been

prostrated by the frauds of the unclean spirits. Which counsel, indeed, because they attribute it to many, they also show the reason for the same, because they say:Â *Because there was one plague on you and your lords.* As if they were to say openly: Because you have all been subject to sin, it is necessary that you equally prepare your hearts for the study of a better life.

Whence also Paul says:Â *All have sinned, and do need the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace*Â (Rom. III, 23).

7. And that they may more attentively commend the purpose of an improved life, they repeat by inculcating, saying:Â *You shall make likenesses of your anuses, and of the mice, which have destroyed the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel, if perhaps He may lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land.* To give glory to God, the aforementioned likenesses having been made, is to not glory in vain in oneself concerning the study of good work and concerning the estimation of humility; but to spend all that is done in the praises of Almighty God. And because they say:Â *If perhaps He may lighten His hand from you*Â (I Kings VI, 5): what else is understood in this word of doubt, if not that the reconciliation of criminals is shown to be difficult? Whence also it is said through Jonah:Â *Who knows if God will turn and forgive*Â (Jonah III, 2)? Because, therefore, it is said "if perhaps He may lighten His hand," we ought to be moved to the tears of penance with great fortitude: because if even those who perform

austere penance scarcely find the confidence of salvation, what of the negligent who fail to be saved when they can? Which difficulty of reconciliation indeed, if it is held in the estimation of the penitent, is by no means found with Almighty God: because even while the Ninevites cast themselves down in grave penance as if for a difficult reconciliation, they easily merited the mercy of Almighty God. And when by the voice of the prophet Joel the people prostrated themselves to God with sharp lamentation, they indeed acted so that He who seemed difficult to appease might lighten His wrath. For immediately it is written in that place:Â *The Lord was jealous for His land, and spared His people*Â (Joel II, 18). Thus the hand is lightened when the mind, strongly struck in penance, is raised up by divine inspiration to the gift of obtained mercy. And because, as I said, in the beginning of the nascent Church, as there was a general conversion of sinners, so also there was a general reconciliation of converts: the hand of God,Â Â which is asserted to be lightened, is said to be lightened both from the hearers, and from their gods, and from the land. For by "gods" sublime and wise men are designated. For also to Moses the Lord says:Â *I have set thee as the god of Pharaoh*Â (Exod. VII, 1). And in the mandate of the Law it is also commanded:Â *Thou shalt not speak evil of the gods*Â (Exod. XXII, 28). But by "the land," the life of the simple is expressed: because while they receive the preaching of their superiors, like the rain of heaven falling upon them, they bring forth the fruit of good operation

from the irrigation of the word. Therefore, the hand of the Lord is lightened from the gods and from the land when both the wise and the simple are reduced to the certainty of divine indulgence either by secret and spiritual solace, or by the judgment of the preachers. Whence also he who a little above had advised that the members be gilded,Â Â saying:Â *Yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification*Â(Rom. VI, 19), as if bringing forth the judgment of the lightened handÂ 149Â of the Lord, says:Â *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting*Â (Ibid., 22). Hence again he marveled at the complete brightness of gold in those converted from the deformity of a more wicked life, saying:Â *You were once darkness, but now light in the Lord*Â (Eph. V, 8). Hence the same one, praising his own, says:Â *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*Â (Phil. II, 15). Therefore, the likenesses of anuses and mice having been made of gold, and glory given to God, the hand of the Lord is lightened: because after the mourning of penance, after the improvement of life, and the humility of estimation, sinners are reduced to the full mercy of Almighty God. And because all those things are still commanded by counsel; but some devoutly fulfill the counsel of the preachers, while others indeed despise it, they who extol the good with praises for the splendor of a good life are kindled against the proud by the in-throwing of rebuke. For there fol-

lows: (Vers. 6.)Â Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharaoh?

8. For he hardens his heart like Egypt and Pharaoh, who, already through the knowledge of the sacred word, understands the wounds of his sins, and yet through the improvement of life, through the bitterness of penance, does not direct his mind to the true joys of the future life. Well, therefore, is he likened to the Egyptians in the weight of the heart. For Egypt is said to be "darkness." What, then, is understood by the name of Egypt, if not the multitude of angels fallen from the heavenly seats? And what in Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, if not the very author of darkness, the devil, is designated? Well, therefore, are the dissemblers of penance likened to Egypt and Pharaoh in the hardening of the heart. For the reprobate angels, having once fallen from the heavenly realms, just as they do not receive the love of lost beatitude, so also they can never perform penance for the pride they committed. While, therefore, the holy preachers attack impudent sinners with sharp rebuke, they bring forward the likeness of Egypt and Pharaoh; so that their hearers may rush all the more easily to satisfaction, the more they are not ignorant that by the fact that they are unwilling to perform penance, they are similar to the damned angels. Whence also they instantly urge them to the study of fulfilling the counsel, while adding:

(Vers. 7-9.) Therefore take and make a new cart, and two kine that have calved, on which there hath come no yoke, tie them to the cart,

and shut up their calves at home: and you shall take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart, and the vessels of gold, which you have paid him for sin, you shall put into a little box by the side thereof, and send it away that it may go. And you shall look: and if indeed it go up by the way of his own coasts towards Bethsames, he hath done us this great evil. But if not, we shall know that it was not his hand that touched us, but it hath happened by chance.

9. For what is designated by the name of the cart, if not either the universal holy Church all together, or the individual soul of each of the faithful? The wheels of this cart are indeed both Testaments. For while the holy Church, or any chosen mind instructed by the Old and New Testaments, leans toward eternal life, it is carried to the proposed place through the heights, as if by sublime wheels set before it. But it is commanded that the cart be made new, so that, evidently, he who desires to reach eternal joys may be clothed with the splendor of the new man through the precept of love. The Lord commanded that this cart be renewed, saying: *This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you* (John 15:12). Hence Paul commands, saying: *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who according to God is created* (Ephes. 4:23). Hence addressing the Romans, he says: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in contention and envying, not in chambering and impurities, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 13:13). He, therefore, makes a new cart

who both rightly understands both Testaments, and clothed in the splendor of holy conversation, extends himself to supernal desires.

10. The wheels, by which this cart goes, can also designate the double desire of each of the elect: because whoever already, with God helping, holds the present life as the misery of pilgrimage, therefore desires to reach future beatitude; that he may become impassible and immortal: so that, evidently, through one, he may leave the misery which he dreads; through the other, he may never lose the beatitude which he merits. But the kine are the holy preachers. Who, because they are distinguished by the double precept of charity, and bring forth the souls of converts in a new conversation, are rightly designated both by the number two and by the feminine gender. But the calves are earthly desires. Therefore, when the kine draw the cart, they shut up the calves at home: because while they provide guidance to the elect faithful to the supernal fatherland, they prohibit those desires which suggest a reprobate life to them from going forth into effect. For they shut up the calves when they crush proud desires in the very beginning of their suggestion, within the conscience, and do not permit them to advance to the effect of the work. Whence also the kine, upon which no yoke has been laid, are said to be sought out to draw the cart: because preachers are to be provided for the elect faithful, who are subject to the empire of diabolical power by no burdens of crime. Of which yoke indeed it is said through the prophet:

The yoke shall putrefy at the presence of the oil (Isa. 10:27). But well does the process of the senses agree with the order of the words: because although they are free from adverse domination, it is necessary that they be always suspicious of their future conversation. Therefore the kine are both without a yoke, and yet their calves are shut up at home: because the holy preachers dominate the adverse spirits by virtue: but they do not take their intention away from taming wicked desires, for they cannot have perpetual security in this life concerning the holiness with which they see themselves adorned. And because to such the grace of divine knowledge is opened more widely, the Ark of the Lord is aptly commanded to be taken and placed upon the cart. But that the Ark is commanded to be laid upon the cart by the hearers, this indeed insinuates, evidently, that in the holy Church we find many orders of prelates: because while some are more worthy than others by prerogative, they also obtain the authority of commanding in the height of a higher order. When, therefore, the Ark of the Lord is commanded to be brought back, it is said to be placed upon a new cart: because indeed he rightly goes toward the eternal fatherland with the knowledge of spiritual sacraments, who does not leave behind that which he learned from holy Scripture through the beauty of a new conversation.

11. But by the side of the same Ark the golden vessels, which were restored to Him for sin, are commanded to be placed. For he calls "golden

vessels" those which he mentioned above, saying: *You shall make likenesses of your anuses and mice.* In which vessels indeed we had said that the memory of sins and temptations is designated. Why is it, then, that above he asserted they were likenesses of anuses and mice, and now he has called them golden vessels? But there the treatment was concerning that which ought to be paid to the Ark for sin, but here concerning the remission of the Ark. What is it, then, that these same things are expressed by a more honorable name, if not because sins, which have not been wiped away by the weepings of penance, are to be more attentively seen and mourned in their deformity: but those which have already been washed by great weepings, are not to be looked at more attentively, nor in their deformity, but are sometimes to be thought of with the estimation of humility? For as if in the mind of the penitent, and one bitterly grieving, there is the likeness of an anus and of mice: when, in order that he may more attentively mourn it, he sees the mass of sin gathered together before the eyes of his mind. But when, already by great and long-lasting weepings, as if secure concerning the remission of his sins, he has begun to hasten with the course of a great conversation toward the supernal fatherland, he beholds them as if already golden vessels: because he sees the sins, not those to which he had seen himself bound, but those which he may expend for the praises of Almighty God. But well are those same vessels stored in a little box by the side of the Ark. For if the Ark

insinuates the secret of divine knowledge, the vessels hang at the side: because while the height of divine knowledge elevates the mind, our past infirmities are to be brought back to memory for the virtue of humility. Therefore they are not to be placed before the Ark; lest, while we behold our infirmities too immoderately, we be unable to be raised to supernal things. It stands, therefore, that they hang from the side: that we may both behold supernal things freely, and, when it is expedient, recall the eyes of the mind to our infirmities.

12. But what is it that they are commanded: *And send it away, that it may go*? But the Ark is sent away when the learned minds of subjects are permitted by their rectors to live freely: so that, evidently, they may hasten to the eternal fatherland, no longer by the command of a superior, but by the choice of their own reason. It is therefore to be held, that it may be placed upon the cart; once placed, it is also sent away: because surely the license of disposing their own life is not to be given by prelates to the elect subjects before they receive the instruction of spiritual doctrine and a firm custom of good operation. For neither to simple subjects living well, nor to the learned and weak, is the liberty of living rightly granted. For those indeed can be deceived all the more easily by the crafty adversary, when they have by no means learned to detect his snares through spiritual erudition: but these indeed preserve the good of erudition all the more difficultly, in that being learned they behold the snares of the

tempter, and being learned they cannot avoid their bonds. Then, therefore, is the Ark competently sent away, when the cart upon which it ought to be placed is first constructed, and when the golden vessels, which are owed for sin, hang from its side: because surely then the life of a subject living freely will be able to be secure, when he has learned by long use to guard the renovation of the interior man; when from the purity of life he apprehends the loftiness of divine erudition, and among the sublime gifts, he does not neglect to recall those things which he remembers to have sometimes done wickedly, for the sake of humility. Which liberty of living indeed, because it is expended upon good subjects for the sole study of supernal love, aptly also adds the cause for which the same Ark is sent away: *that it may go*, he says. For as if he were saying in other words: For this alone are they to be permitted to live more freely, that they may proceed more swiftly to the heavenly fatherland. But because some subjects are perfect in human judgment, both in conversation and in knowledge, not in divine; provision is to be made by the study of good rectors, that they neither entirely pass over their care then, when those same subjects think themselves dismissed from their care, but by a pious craftiness they explore how those already free may live, the goodness of whose subjection they had more fully known. Wherefore also is subjoined: *And you shall look, and if indeed it go up by the way of his own coasts towards Bethsames, he hath done us this great evil.* But if not, we shall know that

it was not his hand that touched us, but it hath happened by chance.

13. Bethsames, as we have already said, is interpreted as the "house of the sun." But the preachers watch the Ark that has been sent away, whether it goes by the straight journey toward Bethsames: because also when subjects are dismissed by their own judgment, the prelates ought to explore whether they convert the good of liberty to the progress of the heavenly journey. But it is also to be cautiously noted: because then the Ark rightly goes up toward Bethsames, when it does not desert the way of the borders in its journeying. For our borders are the prior elect: for they are "neighbors" (borders) who have their possessions disposed next to each other. Therefore the borders of the elect are the perpetual co-heirs of the eternal kingdom. For they dwell as if with possessions disposed next to each other, who, called into the same society of the eternal fatherland, have obtained by lot the rights of eternal inheritance from one and the same majesty of the Creator. Or for this reason are they called borders: because since the elect reach the joys of perennial life through a good conversation, they who live rightly in this world are neighbors to the heavenly citizens. What, then, is the way of the borders, if not temporal affliction? The Lord Himself demonstrates this way to Bethsames through Himself, saying: *Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life* (Matth. 7:14). This same one He commends, when rebuking the disciples, he says: *O foolish, and slow of

heart to believe, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?* (Luke 24:25.) Hence Paul says: *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God* (Acts 14:21). Toward Bethsames, therefore, is the Ark then directed, when it is seen to go up by the way of the borders: because in the supernal conversation he more truly profits, who seeks to reach eternal joys not through mundane delights, but through the afflictions of the flesh and the adversities of the world. But because the Ark that has been sent away is said not to go, but to go up, a higher way is indicated to the subjects dismissed in liberty: because they do not rightly walk through the way of Bethsames, if they do not daily profit from good things to better. For to go up by the merits of virtues is to daily profit to better things. But when the Ark is rightly led toward Bethsames, they ascribe the great evil which they had endured to the works of Almighty God. For they call a "great evil" that percussion of which is read above: *The hand of the Lord was made upon each of the cities with a very great slaughter.* And because we have referred the same slaughter both to the conversion of the Gentiles, and to the salutary compunction of delinquent faithful, when the Ark rightly goes toward Bethsames, that great evil which had happened is indicated to be from God: because surely the end of each of the elect indicates how the mind of the preacher recognizes their first works.

14. For if they fail in the end, it is openly known that their good beginnings were not from the Lord. Whence also is subjoined: *But if not, we shall know that it was not his hand that touched us, but it hath happened by chance.* What is the "hand of the Lord," if not the Only-begotten of the eternal Father? By the "hand of the Lord" those are not touched who are separated from their former conversation not by the inspiration of the divine word, but by a sudden deliberation of their own heart. Who certainly fail from their begun goodness all the more swiftly, the more they did not know how to pre-meditate with what fortitude that which they had proposed to enter through the narrow way to the eternal fatherland was to be followed out. Wherefore it was aptly said: *It happened by chance.* For that which happens by chance, occurs suddenly and without counsel and provision. When, therefore, these who seemed to have departed from the love of the world, or who from infidelity seemed to have been converted, return to the wickedness of their former life, it is openly known that they were not, as they seemed, struck by the hand of the Lord, but were separated from their former conversation by a happening chance. There follows:

(Vers. 10, 11.) *They did in that manner: and taking two kine, that had calves, they yoked them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home, and they laid the ark of God upon the cart, and the little box that had in it the golden mice and the likenesses of the anuses.*

Since these things have been set forth more widely above, let us see what the departure itself of the Ark already contains in itself concerning spiritual erudition. For there follows:

(Vers. 12.) *And the kine took the straight way that leadeth to Bethsames, and they went along the way, lowing as they went: and they turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.*

15. To go straight along the way that leads to Bethshemesh is, in the pursuit of heavenly perfection, to maintain the affliction of the flesh through the virtue of discretion. For the kine by no means walk straight if discretion is not observed in the affliction of the flesh. Finally, while the flesh is afflicted beyond measure, that same flesh, being entirely exhausted, does not suffice to bring aid to the spirit. And if it is not worthily afflicted, while it grows proud, like one untamed, it disdains to serve the mind as if it were free. Therefore, while the kine are reported to go straight through the way of Bethshemesh, it is well added: *For they turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.* Indeed, to turn to the right is to persist immoderately in the virtue of abstinence: because through a good that is seen, we desert the way, while we so follow the necessary virtue of abstinence that we withdraw other aids from the flesh. To turn to the left also is to indulge the flesh more abundantly. For through the vice of open remission, we are deflected from the way of Bethshemesh, while we lead the flesh through delights, we who had known the way of paradise disposed in affliction.

16. And because there is no sincerity in a more sparing life if the simplicity of intention does not agree with the purity of a good work, it is cautiously expressed: *And they went along by one way.* For he walks by one way who preserves the virtue which he puts forward in a good work in a right intention. On the contrary, it is said of every reprobate: *Woe to the sinner that goeth upon the earth by two ways* (Ecclus. 2:14). Indeed, a sinner enters the earth by two ways when what he does seems to be of God, but from everything religious that he exhibits outwardly, he holds within a worldly intention. But the Lord suggests that His elect walk by one way, saying: *If thy eye be simple, thy whole body shall be lightsome* (Matt. 6:22). Hence Paul says: *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience* (2 Cor. 1:12). Hence David: *All the glory of that daughter of the king is from within* (Ps. 44:14). Therefore, the kine walk by one way against Bethshemesh, because the elect, hastening to the eternal fatherland, do good things outwardly, but from those same good works they do not seek the rewards of the world.

17. But what is it that is said of the same kine, that *they went along, lowing as they went*? They are said to go along because holy men do good things incessantly: but they low because they cannot extinguish carnal desires in themselves without great daily tribulation. For to low pertains to the labor of taming the flesh; but to go along pertains to the perseverance of a good will. For while the flesh is compelled against nature to

compress carnal movements, it lows, as it were, while it walks, because it is prohibited from fulfilling its own desires. Well indeed are these two described in the departure of the saints, namely, to go along and to low. Because even if there is great persistence of desire in them as they hasten to the heavenly fatherland, there is nonetheless invincible patience of labor. For concerning these kine going along, it is said through Ezekiel: *They turned not back when they went* (Ezek. 1:12). Paul also expresses the lowing of the kine and its cause, saying: *I see another law fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7:23, 24.) Therefore the kine low, but they go along: because holy men, even if the temptations they endure are great, nevertheless do not leave the way of the heavenly fatherland. They go along likewise, but they low: because even if they hasten to heavenly things with great desires, nevertheless they do not obtain the progress of the heavenly journey from the quiet of peace, but from the triumph of temptation. There follows:

(Vers. 12.) *And the lords of the Philistines followed them as far as the borders of Bethsames.* 18. What are the borders as far as which it is necessary for those in charge to follow the departing Ark of God, and beyond which it is not fitting to proceed in the company of the Ark of God? Indeed, if we take these borders to be in the instruction of sacred eloquence and in good work, it does not seem contrary. But these

borders of Bethshemesh are surely the borders of the following princes, when each one is perfect over his subjects according to his measure in the doctrine of sacred eloquence and in the practice of good work. For by this the pastor is already made secure concerning that person, in that he already cautiously perceives spiritual things and apprehends those things which he has discovered by reason with the strength of good work. Which borders, indeed, are said to be the borders of Bethshemesh: because surely, while they worthily receive the learned workers of God, they introduce them to the contemplation of the heavenly fatherland. For they are borders: because they both receive the worthy to contemplation and expel the unworthy. For the unlearned, if they presume to lift themselves up to contemplate heavenly things too subtly, rather deviate by erring than apprehend the light of truth. And unless one sends good works before, he surely does this: that he never finds that clarity of internal vision which he seeks. Whence also the Lord in the Gospel, as if sending the lovers of the contemplative life to the borders of Bethshemesh, says: *He that hath my words and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father: and I will love him and will manifest myself to him* (John 14:21). For He who says that He will not manifest Himself except to those who love Him, but openly teaches that they love Him who keep His commandments, shows that He does not grant the light of His hidden

vision except as a reward for good work. There follows:

(Vers. 13.) *Moreover the Bethsamites were reaping wheat in the valley.*

For who can be more rightly understood as Bethsamites than those who are already perfect men in the loftiness of contemplation? For they are as it were of the house of the sun, who, having despised all earthly things, are illustrated by the splendors of the true light. They are indeed of the house of the sun, who, already buried to all the world, burn with a wondrous flame of love to see the clarity of their Creator. Who ascend to their city in two ways: those who are led to the clarity of the heavenly fatherland, both now through contemplation and at the end through the truth of glory, now fly out to the house of the sun by contemplating; but what they now behold by the purity of the mind, they then apprehend the truth of eternal retribution through present joy. Therefore the Ark of God is brought to Bethshemesh when the elect mind is sublimated to eternal joys, either through the height of contemplation or through the assumption of retribution. We, therefore, who cannot know that eternal and ineffable location of the Ark, let us hear those things which are said concerning this one which we know. What is it, then, that the Bethsamites reap wheat in the valley, except that those devoted to the contemplative life collect the delights of internal refreshment in the virtue of humility? For a valley in sacred eloquence designates the estimation of the humble,

as the Psalmist testifies, who, speaking of the Lord, says: *Who sendest forth springs in the valleys* (Ps. 103:10). For He pours the infusion of heavenly grace into minds disposed through humility. Therefore the Bethsamites reap wheat in the valley: because while they are vacant for contemplation, through the merit of humility they behold heavenly things more clearly, they bind the sheaves of joys for the sweeter refreshment of their minds. For wheaten bread, as it is whiter in appearance, so also it is more delightful in taste.

20. But perhaps being yet placed in this life we do not take the bread, but we reap the ears; in that heavenly life of beatitude, however, we do not eat the ears, but the bread. For in this life, when we are lifted up to contemplate eternal things, we strive to take the likenesses of heavenly things from these lowest and visible things: so that according to the voice of the eminent teacher, *we may know the invisible things of the world from the creature, through those things which have been made visible* (Rom. 1:20). Wherefore also that true Bethsamite, and domestic of the sun of justice exulting, says: *Thou hast delighted me, O Lord, in thy creation: and I will exult in the works of thy hands. How magnified are thy works, O Lord! thy thoughts are made exceeding deep* (Ps. 91:5, 6). But while we receive the joys of invisible things in visible things, we as it were still hold the wheat within the chaff. Then, however, there will be for us pure wheat, or bread from the wheat. For when, death having been swallowed up, in eternal life, with revealed face, we shall more clearly

see the Redeemer, we shall not need the cases of likenesses for His cognition. Well therefore is it said of the Bethsamites that they reaped wheat in the valley: because perfect men, although they receive the loftiness of heavenly contemplation through the merit of humility, nevertheless cannot reach that pure substance of Almighty God to contemplate it in such a way that they still reap the refreshment of their mind as if among the chaff. The good of which humility is indeed designated when it is added:

(Vers. 13.) *And lifting up their eyes, they saw the Ark of God.*

Indeed they lift up their eyes: because while they do not think high things of themselves, they are as it were on a level in their own estimation. They lift up their eyes: because they contemplate those whom they behold worthy of divine grace, placed on the high summit of merits. But lifting up their eyes they see the Ark: because the more humbly they cast themselves down by estimation, the better they can know the goods of their neighbors. For that truth, which by itself deserts the hearts of the proud, also hides from them those gifts which it confers on the humble; so that as if entirely blinded, they see neither the sun already diffused on the earth, they who have ceased to see the rays of its clarity in heaven. But because we have referred the return of the Ark of God to the purpose of the contemplative life, the lifting up also of the eyes can be referred not inconveniently to the study of discerning spirits. For the Bethsamites lift their eyes when, with

the purpose of a more secret life, they consider with subtle inspection the gifts of those flocking to them; when with intent mind they discuss whether they follow the purpose of a higher life, which they seek by approaching, with a right and valid intention. To lift the eyes, therefore, is for them to consider more deeply the spirit of the novices. But lifting up their eyes they look back at the Ark of God: because while they discuss its conversions more subtly, they catch that they shine with the grace of spiritual virtues. And because through the affect of love, they grow cheerful concerning their known goods, it is aptly subjoined: (Vers. 13.) *And they rejoiced when they had come.* There follows:

(Vers. 14.) *And the cart came into the field of Josue the Bethsamite, and stood there.* If Bethshemesh is interpreted as the house of the sun, the house of the sun is the heavenly city. Here Joshua the Bethsamite signifies the Redeemer of the human race not so much by type as by the name itself and dignity. For Joshua, in our eloquence, is called savior. And of Himself the Lord says: *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:10). Hence it is also that in sleep it is promised to Joseph through the angel: *He shall save his people from their sins* (Matt. 1:21). He also manifests Himself to be a Bethsamite through Himself, saying: *I am the living bread which came down from heaven* (John 6:41). Hence John the Baptist says: *He that cometh from heaven is above all* (John 3:31). What is, therefore, the field of Joshua

the Bethsamite, except the pleasantness of the contemplative life? For there both the greenness of herbs, and the odors of spices, and the diverse beauty of flowers are discerned; because surely the more clearly that heavenly society is beheld, what blooms incorruptibly for the angels, what is green unfadingly for the saints, what smells inviolably in the virgins, is exhibited more gratefully to the eyes of the contemplatives. But well is the same field asserted to be the Savior's; because the lovers of the contemplative life, the more secretly they converse, the more grateful and familiar they are to our Redeemer. The cart also comes into the field of Joshua the Bethsamite when the elect mind, divided from the intention of the world, intends only for heavenly things, when it already enjoys the pleasantness of the heavenly vision; because it disdains through love to look back at earthly things. And it is to be noted that this cart was new, as was not much above related; because surely a mind dissolved by the oldness of crimes does not deserve to be received to such great glory.

23. But the more secret life has delights in the pleasantness of vision, it has huge labor in the vigor of the struggle; because surely as we follow after divine rewards as from a triumph, so also we keep them by fighting vigorously. Well therefore is it subjoined concerning the cart coming into the field of Jesus: *And it stood there.* For to stand pertains to the guard of battle, not to the quiet of peace. The cart indeed stood in the field; because even if the mind inhabits by seeing and

loving that pleasant, and always green heavenly fatherland; nevertheless what it delectably possesses of the love of the vision, it by no means keeps without the solicitude of incessant care. But surely the human mind placed in so great an agony would fail, if He who strengthened human infirmity in His divinity did not provide for it the aid of His presence. Wherefore also, exposing the cause by which the cart could stand in the field, he added, saying:

(Vers. 14.) *For there was a great stone there.* Indeed the great stone is understood as the Redeemer of the human race. Concerning which stone it is said through the Psalmist: *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner* (Ps. 117:22). Hence the eminent teacher commending, says: *Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone* (Eph. 2:20), *in whom you also as living stones are built up* (1 Pet. 2:5). And indeed it is called a great stone: because it is preached with incomparable strength. When therefore the cart is said to have come and to have stood in the field, it is added: *For there was a great stone there:* so that he might designate by latent mysteries: because those devoted to the contemplative life are able to keep so great gifts for this reason, because through grace they are near to Him from whom they received the same gifts. There follows:

(Vers. 14.) *And they cut the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a holocaust to the Lord.* 25. What are the woods of the cart of the Ark of God,

except the sentences of holy Scripture, and the examples of the just? Indeed the Bethsamites cut the wood, when those set over the more secret life open more subtly to the minds of their subjects the senses of the Scriptures, when they bring forward the more excellent examples of the Fathers for their imitation; so that the flame of heavenly love may burn the more fervently in their hearts, by as much as they more quickly minister the fuel of the fire, like cut wood. Indeed they are the woods of the cart, because the mind renewed through the grace of God retains them through memory. Concerning which woods, indeed, the holy legislator decrees, saying: *The fire upon my altar ought always to be: which the priest shall nourish, suggesting wood in the morning for each day* (Lev. 6:12). But because the woods are mentioned to be cut, they indicate more openly that for those seeking the purity of the contemplative life, not common things from sacred eloquence, but all the higher and excellent things are to be opened; so that they may lift themselves up in seeing high things the more strongly, by as much as the nobler goods which they hear please them more. Whence also it is well subjoined: *Because they offered the kine upon them as a holocaust to the Lord.* For a holocaust is said to be something burnt. When therefore the woods are cut, holocausts are made from the kine placed upon them: because they who receive eminent things from the Scriptures with a devoted mind, the more they extend themselves into heavenly desires, the more nothing is left in them which

the flame of divine love does not consume. And then indeed it is necessary for the teacher to take care that the religious subjects consider high things, and nevertheless do not hold high things of themselves through estimation; lest, by as much as they profit by seeing the highest things more loftily, falling through elation, they be dashed down more dangerously. Whence also here too it is subjoined:

(Vers. 15.) *But the Levites took down the Ark of God, and the little box that was at its side, in which were the golden vessels, and laid them upon a great stone.* Levites are interpreted as "assumed." Who then are the Levites, except those who are so confirmed by divine grace that they can never be deserted by the holy Spirit? Indeed the Levites take down the Ark when perfect preachers admonish their subjects that spiritual science should by no means puff them up. They also take down the little box with the golden vessels when they also convene them concerning the splendor of life, so that they may feel the more humbly of themselves, by as much as each of them has already learned that our Redeemer has reached the reward of His exaltation, because He did not vainly feel high things of Himself. Well therefore are the Ark having been taken down, and the golden vessels placed upon the great stone, mentioned: because those who have more truly learned to recollect the magnitude and humility of the Redeemer can taste of themselves humbly among sublime gifts. For he wished to take down the Ark of God and place it upon a

great stone, who said: *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man; he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross* (Philip. 2:5). But those who immolate to God from the hearts of their subjects the host of love by the ministry of preaching, represent from their own minds also very excellent gifts of offerings. Whence also it is subjoined: *But the men of Bethsames offered holocausts and immolated victims that day to the Lord.*

27. On what day, except on that in which they placed the kine upon the wood of the cart as a holocaust to the Lord? What then is that day, if not the illumination of divine preaching? For on that day the Bethsamites offer holocausts to the Lord, on that day they immolate victims, on which they cut the wood, on which they place the kine upon them as a holocaust to the Lord; because holy preachers, by that light of the word with which they shine upon their subjects, also administer to themselves the office of vision for the rectitude of the heavenly journey, and having despised the lowest things, through the power of love they exhibit themselves the more freely to almighty God, by as much as they also see their hearers already joined to Him with great familiarity. But because the men of Bethsames are reported not only to have offered holocausts, but to have immolated victims, the spiritual

offering of perfect men is designated. For they offer holocausts when through the ascent of contemplation they join themselves to almighty God with ineffable affection. But they associate victims with the holocausts: because surely they refer the good of such great delight not to their own merits, but to divine goodness. He indeed offers a holocaust without victims who is already joined to heavenly things in great delight; and as the motions of hidden elation arise, he by no means masters them through the virtue of humility. Therefore in the offerings of the perfect, holocausts and victims are described as having met together: because they are both worthy to enjoy divine sweetness, and in everything that they now make themselves entirely heavenly, they are ignorant of elation.

(Vers. 16.) And the five lords of the Philistines saw, and they returned to Ekron that day. 28. The lords of the Philistines, as I have already said above, are the chosen preachers of the Gentiles. Who indeed are contained in the number of five; because they preside either over the still rude faithful or over the carnal for the refraining of the five senses of the body. These indeed accompany the cart with the Ark of God; because they follow with the care of their solicitude the already learned disciples passing over to the study of the spiritual life. But when the cart arrives in the field of Joshua, and the kine are immolated, they return to Ekron: because when they have already considered their perfection, they do not further explore the paths of their conversation. But they

return to Ekron, because they turn themselves to converting others. For Ekron is said to be "sterile" in our speech. They also are sterile who either lack faith or a good conversation. But when the princes are said to have returned, it is well added: On that day: because unless they recognized in them the clarity of such great perfection, they would not return from their solicitude with the certainty of security. It follows:

(Vers. 17, 18.) These are the golden emerods which the Philistines rendered for sin: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, and for Ekron one. And the golden mice according to the number of the cities of the Philistines, of the five provinces, from the walled city to the village which was without a wall, and even to the great Abel, upon which they set the Ark of the Lord, which was until that day in the field of Joshua of Bethsames.

29. What all these things designate has been extensively explained above. But what is it that when the debt is commanded to be rendered to the Ark for sin, five golden emerods and five mice are named together; but when what was owed is asserted to have been rendered, each city is reported to have rendered one separately? But they are named together above because the ornament of all the members was being shown together in the exchange of good works; but here, when the debt rendered to the Ark is described, it is cautiously shown that each city offered single golden emerods and mice: so that indeed it may be insinuated to the converted sinner that he

should once and for all desert his sins, which he should not further seek through habitual depravity. For each city renders single emerods and single mice when converted sinners do not repeat sins once wiped away by the tears of penance. Whence also the sacred Scripture admonishes, saying: *Do not repeat a word in prayer* (Ecclus. 7:15). For he repeats a word in prayer who has endeavored to purge sins with prayers; but nevertheless does not omit to commit others for which he may pray. Such a one indeed does not offer to God one emerod and one mouse for his offense: because even if he is pricked by repenting, he multiplies foulnesses, which he represents to God while confessing to Him. When therefore single cities or provinces of the Philistines are described to have rendered one emerod and one mouse, what else does it designate if not the perfection of true conversion? For he is perfectly converted who, when he once bewails what he had done wickedly, does not further repeat what he should bewail again. Therefore he offers one emerod and one mouse for sin who so mourns past things committed as to perfectly beware of future ones. And because this form of conversion is to be observed in the holy Church by both the wise and the unlearned, the strong and the weak, this payment of the debt is well said to have been extended from the walled city even to the village without a wall. For it is free to no one established within the holy Church to sin, to no one harmless to commit wicked things. Wherefore the Lord threatens through the prophet, saying: *The soul

that sinneth, the same shall die* (Ezek. 18:4). Walled cities indeed are minds surrounded by the erudition of the holy Scriptures. But villages without a wall are simple minds. Therefore not only single cities render one golden emerod, but also villages; so that whoever is converted to the religious life, with God as the author, should not be further defiled after the foulnesses have already been washed away. And because no one is so holy that he does not have in himself something of foulness which he may mourn, the payment of this debt is extended even to the Great Abel, upon which they had placed the Ark of God. For Abel is interpreted as "mourning." By which name indeed the stone on which they had placed the Ark of God was called. But this name indeed fits our Redeemer: because, although He had no things of His own for which He should weep, nevertheless He purged our sins with daily prayers and weepings. There are also in the holy Church perfect men, and those joined to that highest Stone by the consummation of charity. For to this Stone was he united who said: *Who shall separate me from the charity of Christ?* (Rom. 8:35); let us hear whether he pays the debt of the Ark: *I was first*, he says, *a blasphemer, and a persecutor* (1 Tim. 1:13). Hence again confessing, he says: *I am not worthy to be called an apostle: because I persecuted the Church of God* (1 Cor. 15:9). It is also to be noted that the debt of the Ark is read to have run out even to the stone which is mentioned to remain even unto that day in the field of Joshua, and on which the Ark of God was

placed. In which matter what else do we hold, except what we see in the holy Church: because those also satisfy God for fault who were not only snatched from sins through the grace of God, but also were assumed into His tabernacle through the great heights of holy virtues? It follows:

(Vers. 19.) But the Lord struck of the men of Bethsames, because they had seen the Ark of the Lord, and He struck of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people.

30. Who are the stricken Bethsamites, if not heretics deceived by false contemplation? For they were Bethsamites not in truth, but in presumption. While therefore they presumed to see the Ark on the stone, they were struck: because while they, being unworthy, discussed the sacraments of our Lord and Redeemer, they were cast down by the snares of eternal damnation through the fallacy of their own error. But what is it that of the people seventy men were struck, and of the common people fifty thousand? But because by the name of "people" the nobles of the cities are also contained, while the "common people" is the remaining multitude without the nobles, this can be gathered: that some among the heretics stood out as nobles, as it were, among others, who perished in the cleanness of works by error alone; but the others, following the rusticity of the common people, as it were, were obscured with the filth of wicked operation along with the error of faith. Whence also some are expressed by the number fifty, others by seventy: because those indeed perfected the crimes

conceived through the five senses of the body; while those, while they falsely ascribed to themselves the gifts of the sevenfold Spirit, were overwhelmed by the eternal darkness of blindness. And because the true faithful were saddened by their striking, it follows:

(Vers. 20.) And the men of Bethsames said: Who shall be able to stand in the sight of the Lord, this holy God? For as it were the true faithful, but simple, say: If those so wise and philosophers are deceived in the cognition of the highest truth, when can the unlearned and simple come to the knowledge of Him? But even if they distrust their own measure, nevertheless they do not distrust that the gift of divine cognition is present to the Church. Wherefore it is also subjoined: (Vers. 20.) And to whom shall He go up from us?

31. Indeed the Lord goes up from us when that which is hidden from us concerning His cognition is preached through the voice of the chosen faithful. For as it were His "going up from us" is to reveal to hearts sublime through humility what He had concealed from the simpler or weaker ones concerning eternal contemplation. What then is it to say: To whom shall He go up from us, if not to seek a worthy teacher who may so preach divine things as not to err from the way of truth? In which words also, if we require the historical sense, we openly recognize: because those who died for this reason, that they saw the Ark of the Lord, we understand indeed that they were not worthy of the same vision. Meritedly therefore, those who behold the stricken ones

say: Who shall be able to stand in the sight of the Lord, this holy God? For if these who are unworthy die by seeing, those handling it, how do they live? The Bethsamites indeed are the dead priests in the holy Church, and the reprobate ministers of the sacred altar; because they are of the house of the Sun of justice indeed by the dignity of the ministry, not by the virtue and grace of holiness. They are indeed Bethsamites: because they converse in the house of God through the office of the sacred offering; but they are to be struck with a so much sharper damnation, as they not only dare to see the sacred mysteries, but to handle them, as they no longer look back at the Ark of the Old Testament, but, what surpasses all things, they unworthily obtrude themselves into the body and blood of the Redeemer: whom Paul insinuates to be struck, saying: *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself* (1 Cor. 11:29). For the true faithful say: Who shall be able to stand in the sight of the Lord, this holy God? Indeed they consider the height of such great administration, and dread the dignity of so great a sacrament. But while they fear to undergo the office of so great a thing, they seek worthier ones who may be able to exhibit it. Whence it also follows: And to whom shall He go up from us. As if therefore humbly fleeing the sacred mysteries, they say: Because we are struck by a weak conversation, ministers are to be sought from a higher life, whom while a sublime conversation raises into the highest sanctification of virtues, they may be able to as-

sist God through the office of so great an offering. It follows:

(Vers. 21.) They sent therefore messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying: The Philistines have sent back the Ark of the Lord, come down and fetch it back to you.

32. Kiriath-jearim is called their city. What is the city of the saints, if not that Jerusalem which is above? Who then are its inhabitants, if not perfect men separated from the love of the world by a high conversation? Of whom indeed one more efficacious than the rest says: *Our conversation is in heaven* (Philip. 3:20). To these indeed messengers are to be sent, that they may receive the Ark of God: because for the election of priests, holy men are not only to be received, but also to be invited. And it is to be noted that it is said to the more sublime men through messengers: *Come down and fetch it back.* They come down indeed, because they obey: for they would by no means come down if they refused with a proud mind to bestow that which brotherly love expects from them. Then indeed they are truly sublime when they do not take themselves away from Christ; when they do not repel that which is imposed on them by brotherly judgment. Whence it is aptly subjoined:

CHAPTER V.

(1 Sam. 7:1.) And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the Ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in Gibeah:

and they sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Lord.

1. Abinadab is interpreted as "my spontaneous people"; Gibeah as "sublime." And indeed the Ark of God is to be committed to such as these. For a "spontaneous people" is one whom good will alone draws to exercise the works of virtues, whom necessity does not compel to fulfill the commands of God. Whom indeed the blessed Paul preaches under the description of one, saying: *God loveth a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. 9:7). What is the house of a spontaneous people, if not the fortification of holy delight? For one could not be spontaneous in the ministry of virtues if he did not build for himself a mansion of delight. Which house indeed is recognized to be situated in Gibeah, that is, in a sublime place: because by the height of charity we are raised up to heavenly things. Or certainly the house is in a sublime place because charity is preferred before all virtues. For Paul, insinuating the height of this sublimity, says: *And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.* *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal* (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:1). But what is it that they sanctify Eleazar to keep the Ark of God? But this indeed we know from the use of the holy Church, that a chosen minister first receives the blessing of consecration from the highest men before he bestows the ministry of offering. But because Eleazar is called "helper of God," it is indeed shown that the ministers of God should not only be sanctified,

but also it should be inspected what kind they are who are to be promoted to the order of the same consecration. For who are the "help of God," if not those who meet with divine grace by ministering, and whom the dignation of almighty God visits within, which they themselves confirm through the external ministry by living well and teaching? Whence also they say with Paul, not vainly glorying: *For we are God's helpers* (1 Cor. 3:9). Who indeed, very strong in conversation, erudite in knowledge, fervent in love, robust in constancy, not only do not need the help of another, but wherever they betake themselves, are able to help others. Well therefore is it said: *They sanctified Eleazar to keep the Ark.* Because those for whom the helps of others are still necessary are not to be promoted to helping others. Well also is the same Eleazar said to be the son of Abinadab: because certainly he who is chosen for the ministry of preaching, being placed in the imitation of the saints, all the help which he exhibits ought to be out of delight.

2. Because we have said above that the cart is the sacred Scripture, the Ark indeed its spiritual science, the kine also the chosen souls, the fear of the Bethsamites, which we showed to be in the chosen in the offering of the sacrament, can be referred also to the burden of prelacy. For no less holiness is fit for instructing souls than for offering the sacred mysteries. And therefore the Bethsamites are reported to be struck: because many live as subjects who die as prelates. For the Ark of God also has beauty on the outside, which

if a weak minister looks upon not for spiritual veneration, but for secular concupiscence, he by no means lives. Well therefore is the cause of their striking declared when it is said: *Because they saw the Ark of God.* For what is "they saw," if not that they lusted after its glory by seeing it? But now, with God as the author, the glory of the holy Church is copious throughout the whole world. Which glory indeed, because it is sought secularly by reprobate priests, the men of Bethsames die by seeing the Ark of God on the outside. For they do not seek its spiritual honor for the internal glory of virtues, but that they may seize the splendor of the Ark of God, and carry the radiance of ecclesiastical prelacy in their own cultivations in the flower of the world. The Ark of God also is badly looked upon from without unto striking when flagitious superiors, overcome by the external appearance of subject persons, are drawn away to carnal concupiscence. The men, beholding with fear the huge multitude prostrated by the weapon of concupiscence, say: *Who shall be able to stand in the sight of the Lord, this holy God?* Indeed he stands in the sight of God who is strong in the order of the divine ministry. For to stand is of fortitude, to minister of obedience. Therefore he is said to stand in the sight of God who disposes the order of the heavenly office in the height of a worthy conversation; who in the ministry which he performs is deceived by no appetite for ecclesiastical honor, overcome by no carnal concupiscence. Because indeed such fit ministers are rarely found, they meritedly say:

Who shall be able to stand in the sight of the Lord, this holy God? And because the little ones of Christ desert such a great burden to stronger men, they subjoin: *And to whom shall He go up from us?* But how they sent to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, how they brought the Ark of God into the house of Abinadab, how they sanctified Eleazar, as has been explained above, we do not change.

(Vers. 2.) And it came to pass while the Ark of God remained in Kiriath-jearim, the days were multiplied. If we look at history, the days of the Ark's stay were multiplied because it was there for a long time. Whence also it is subjoined: (Vers. 2.) For it was the twentieth year. And to what end it introduced that multiplication of days, subjoining, it says: (Vers. 2.) And all Israel rested after the Lord. Which rest indeed in that old people is to be understood not of good works, but of good devotion. For it follows:

(Vers. 3.) But Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying: If you return to the Lord with all your heart, take away the strange gods from the midst of you, Baalim and Ashtaroth; and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him alone, and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines. 3. How were those who had not taken away the strange gods from their midst resting after the Lord, except by good will? All which things indeed, if they be inquired into spiritually, the days of the Ark's stay are multiplied. But when it remains in Gibeah; when it remains in the custody of Eleazar; because when the care of

faithful souls is hidden with religious preachers, the perfection of religion, which is bestowed by sublime doctrine, is fulfilled by the study of good works. Whence also the twentieth year was then reported to be at hand. For if the number ten designates the perfection of the ancient Law, what does twenty signify, if not the more splendid religion of the new life? For the number twenty is the number ten doubled. Which number indeed is perfected in the conversation of the chosen, when through love they avoid the prohibitions of the Law and fulfill the sublime commands of the Gospel.

4. Because we have referred the journey of the Ark to the perfection of the contemplative life, the Ark of God remains in Kiriath-jearim when the erudite minds of contemplatives perfect the gift of their own erudition in the delight of the heavenly clarity revealed to them. Indeed the Ark of God remains there now for twenty years because chosen souls, raised up to the summit of intimate exaltation, have the number ten in the perfection of science, but the number twenty in heavenly delight. The multiplication of days can also be referred to the increments of spiritual virtues. When therefore the cause for which the days are multiplied is more expressly stated, it is reported to be the twentieth year: because evidently the chosen minds of contemplatives, the more abundantly they are fed by heavenly contemplation, the more fully they are illustrated by the splendors of spiritual virtues.

5. But what is it that in the twentieth year all Israel is said to rest after the Lord, if not because the sublimity of the perfection of the chosen consists not in the fortitude of good work, but in the virtue of contemplation? For to rest after the Lord is to retain the imitation of our Redeemer with invincible charity. And whoever has not learned to love strongly by contemplating those ineffable joys of the heavenly city, because he can more often be cast down to the love of the world, by no means rests after the Lord. When therefore the Ark remains in Kiriath-jearim and the days are multiplied, all Israel rests after the Lord: because indeed while the science of the chosen mind is raised up into the experience of heavenly delight, while the clarities of spiritual virtues are gathered to it by the light of the reflected glory, it can hold the Dominican imitation the more perseveringly by as much as, illustrated by immense clarities, it cannot feel those darknesses by which it may be divided from the true light. Whence also he who is said to rest after the Lord is well reported to be Israel, that is to say, "seeing God": because the higher the contemplator is snatched into divine things, the less is he overcome by the human things which he powerfully restrains.

6. But because, with God as the author, we have led His journeying Ark even to the site of its sublimity, let us see with what study the preacher watches over the correction of his subjects. For it follows: *And Samuel said to all the house of Israel: If you return to the Lord with all your heart, take away the strange gods from the

midst of you.* But whom has the sacred Scripture been accustomed to call "strange gods," if not the demons who dwell in man-made idols? We have said that in Samuel the new preachers of the holy Church are designated. Rightly therefore did he command them to take away the strange gods from their midst into all the house of Israel: because in the Gentiles coming to the faith, the order of preachers sought not only the truth of right progress, but also the damnation of the ancient superstition. For it would profit them nothing to worship the truth by professing or by obeying it, unless they had first left the false things that were to be detested. Whoever even now is placed within the holy Church through faith, but is rebellious to God through iniquitous operation, is to be admonished to take away the strange gods from his midst. For even if he detests man-made idols, nevertheless he is submitted to the commands of demons by wicked action. But he casts away strange gods from his midst who is so converted to God that he never venerates unclean spirits through evil works.

7. The study of a more cautious life can also be designated through these words of exhortation. For what is in our midst, if not our heart? There are, however, some who are defiled by the use of wicked thought, though clean in the operation of the world, yet through the weakness of the heart. They indeed do good things incessantly, but they never cease to think reprobate things. Because, in truth, as many demons rest in their hearts as there are unclean desires, they are urgently

admonished to take away strange gods from their midst: so that they may pay to Almighty God not only the rectitude of work, but also the glory of internal purity. Whence it is aptly added: And prepare your hearts for the Lord. For he prepares his heart for the Lord who not only separates his mind from unclean thought, but also illustrates it with the splendors of holy thoughts and virtues: so that, as if idols were cast away and broken to pieces, he may make himself a temple of God; while he erects there the seat of divine grace, where he did not permit reprobate spirits to remain through the wicked desires subjected to them. Well, therefore, does he first admonish the Israelites to take away strange gods from their midst, then to prepare their hearts for God; because the right order of beginning religion is that each one first reproves wicked things, then approaches Almighty God with the study of good intention. But finally, it is necessary that he who has already offered to God the purpose of a good will and the cleanliness of a pure heart, should set forth in the rectitude of good work that which he deliberates within by living well. Wherefore it is also added: And serve God alone.

8. For he serves the Lord alone who does not insert wicked things into good works. For he who so acts well as not to desert evil things, by no means serves God alone: because he exhibits obedience to the evil spirit, whose will he does not fear to fulfill. Whence it happens that even while acting well he does not serve God: because He who is believed to have created the whole

man, does not deign to have him in common with the adversary. For hence it is that Truth itself denounces through itself, saying: No man can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). Hence Paul, inquiring, says: What participation has justice with iniquity, or what society has light with darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial? or what part has the faithful with the unfaithful, or what consensus has the temple of God with idols? (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Therefore we are commanded to serve the Lord alone, so that we who have already begun to do good things by the inspiration of God to obtain the remission of our sins, may mix no wicked things with the same good works. For we are then loosed from the obligation of our sins, when the good things which we pay for their absolution are not mixed with evil things. For the preacher, speaking to devoted penitents, says: If you return to the Lord with all your heart, take away the strange gods from your midst, and serve God alone. As if to say: Then you can be loosed from sins, when you do not defile the good things of heart and work, which you pay to God for your absolution, with other crimes supervening. Wherefore also promising, he says: And he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

9. Who in this place are designated by the Philistines other than malignant spirits? Who, indeed, while they were in a moment inebriated by the cup of their own pride, fell by swelling from the state of glory. What, therefore, is the hand of the Philistines, if not that power of demons by which they lead souls dead in sin

to eternal torments? From that hand of the Philistines he alone had been free who said: The prince of this world comes, and in me he has nothing (John 14:30). Hence Paul says: All have sinned, and need the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Hence again he says: We also were children of wrath, even as the rest (Eph. 2:3). Oh, how great a gift is that promise by which it is said: He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines. For he alone stood forth free of this hand who did no sin. From it, indeed, we are all delivered against merit. Whence also Paul says: Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption of His justice, on account of the redemption of preceding sins, in the sustenance of God for the showing of His justice in this time, that He may be just, and justifying him who is from the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-26). Hence likewise he says: By grace you have been delivered (Eph. 2:8). It is as if he said: He will deliver you from the power of malignant spirits, so that, as if cruel enemies were put to flight from the journey, while the death of the flesh intervenes, you may more securely approach those eternal joys which you desire. He therefore promised great things who taught by commanding great things, so that the magnitude of the gift might incite to the fortitude of labor. For it is a great thing to serve the Lord alone, namely, to do good things incessantly, not to mix reprobate things with good acts. But oh, how very great it is, in the passage of this life, not to run into the power of bloodthirsty spirits, to see no horrors in the way, to find no contrarieties

of objections, to escape eternal punishments, to feel the protections of our Deliverer, to lose the momentary light of the world, but suddenly to find the ineffable clarity of eternity. Let them hear, therefore, let them hear, who desire to be delivered from the hand of the Philistines: Prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him alone.

(Verse 4.) The children of Israel therefore took away Baalim and Ashtaroth from their midst, and served the Lord alone.

10. For it is the custom of the elect that when they receive the exhortations of divine preaching, they are kindled to the study of the good operation they have heard. For the reprobate frequently hear the words of God, and yet they propose no good works with those same words. Sluggish, they remain in their actions: because, cast away from the divine light, they do not see with internal contemplation the glory of Almighty God whose words they hear. Rightly, therefore, those who obey are called the children of Israel: because as they behold the majesty with a more open manifestation, they are recognized to obey His precepts more devotedly. But because he speaks to the converted, let us hear what he sees still lacking in them: for there follows:

(Verse 5, 6.) And Samuel said: Gather all Israel to Mizpah (Masphath), that I may pray for you to the Lord. And they gathered to Mizpah.

11. Mizpah is said to be "observation" or "contemplation." Which indeed observation the blessed Paul explains, saying: We see now

through a glass in an enigma (1 Cor. 13:12). For to observe for us is to contemplate eternal goods from the height of the Scriptures. For we observe, as it were, what we already know by the truth of faith, and do not yet see with revealed face. But for converted sinners to assemble in Mizpah is to trust in the mercy of Almighty God through the intention of the mind. But let them so presume on the mercy of God that they do not neglect to delete through penance that which they recall having acted wickedly. Whence also it is suddenly subjoined there:

(Verse 6.) And they drew water, and poured it out in the sight of the Lord.

12. For what is it to draw water, if not to produce floods of tears from the profound confusion of a penitent soul? For we draw water, as it were, when, considering the profound iniquity into which we have fallen, we weep. Which water indeed we pour out in the sight of the Lord, if when we are pricked by repenting, we do not seek the favor of the world from the weeping of that same compunction, but only the fruit of divine placation. But while the mind is pricked by weeping, it is necessary that the flesh also, which was subject to delights, be afflicted. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Verse 6.) And they fasted on that day.

13. The "day" of the sinful soul is the hope of obtaining indulgence in the promise of the divine word. Whence also the Lord promises through the prophet, saying: I will not the death of the sinner: but rather that he be converted and live

(Ezek. 18:32, 33; 33:11). On that day, therefore, they fast who for that reason wear down the flesh by repenting: because in the light of hope they believe indubitably that they will arrive at indulgence. Which affliction of penance, however, is then finally suitable for deleting sins when it has been commanded by the judgment of the priest, when by him, the acts of those confessing having been discussed, according to the measure of the crime, the burden of affliction is decreed for them. Well, therefore, follows:

(Verse 6.) And they said: We have sinned against Thee, O Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah (Masphath).

For in Mizpah the priest judges when he does not follow human judgment, but divine; when in everything that is to be disposed he raises himself in high contemplation, and disposes this in the judgment of his subjects: what he knows to be equitable in the supernal vision. For hence it is that in almost every business Moses consults the Lord in the tabernacle of the covenant (Exod. 33:8): because, indeed, the preacher of the holy Church ought to behold in the intimate contemplation of truth, so that he may be able to order the life of his subjects without reprehension. For then he can more truly both retain and remit sins, when in the secret of observation, as the Lord speaks, he hears what he says. Whence also, rising from the dead, the Lord first breathed into the face of the disciples, and afterwards gave the authority of remitting and retaining sins (John 20:21, 23): so that he might show, indeed, that he who does

not have that observation of the mind ought not to be a judge of souls. To breathe into the face of the elect preachers is for the Lord to reveal to them, through the Holy Spirit, the intimate and secret ways of spiritual examination. Hence Paul says: The spiritual man judges all things (1 Cor. 2:15). Hence likewise, commending the largesse of divine grace, he says: We have not the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is from God, that we may know the things that are given to us by God (Ibid., 12). He, however, who has the spirit of this world, cannot judge his subjects in Mizpah, that is, in observation: because while he does not penetrate the interior things through the spirit, in the causes of examination which he seeks, he wanders outside with a mundane spirit. Rightly, therefore, is Samuel said to have judged the children of Israel in Mizpah: because, indeed, the holy preachers define nothing else outside in the judgments of their subjects except what is revealed to them inside by divine inspiration. But while good subjects subject themselves to the judgment of their elders, they kindle more strongly the angers of spiritual enemies against themselves. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Verse 7.) And the satraps of the Philistines went up against Israel.

15. For after the strange gods have been taken away, the fast completed, the censure of the examiner's trial exhibited by the preacher, the princes of the Philistines go up against Israel: because when we profit in a higher life, the malignant spirits, who always envy those who act

well, are more hostile to us. And because they desire to depose us from the sublimity of an innocent life, they are said to go up. For to go up, for malignant spirits, is to raise themselves to expugn the hearts high through celestial desire. Because even against the more perfect soldiers of Christ the battles of not just any evil spirits, but of stronger demons are excited; not simply the Philistines, but the "satraps of the Philistines" are said to go up against Israel. Princes also preside over more. Through this, therefore, that the satraps are said to go up against Israel, it can be reasonably gathered that for the proving of the patience of the elect, not one evil spirit is deputed to each of the elect, but innumerable ones; so that from the consequent victory of these, the glory of the faithful may be so much more copious as the battles inflicted on them were more grave. Nevertheless, among these same battles, those recently converted are wont to fear vehemently: for suddenly they find themselves in the field of labor, beyond the experience of custom. On one side they see desires armed against them, which a short while ago served them in peace: on the other side supernal love invites them not to desert the good things they have begun. On this side the spirit raises the mind, on that side the flesh weighs it down; and while they cannot know the measure of their end, they fear vehemently from the uncertainty of their election. Whence also here it is aptly subjoined:

(Verse 7.) Which the children of Israel hearing, they were afraid of the face of the Philistines.

16. For they fear of the face of the Philistines, so that they may not fear their hinder parts (posteriora). For what is the face of the evil spirits, if not secular concupiscence? For in this species whoever is composed is conformed to their image. But because it is said that Israel feared not the face of the Philistines, but "of the face" (a facie); he so insinuates the minds of the elect that he also reproves the folly of the reprobate by latent reason. For they feared not the face, but "of the face": because, namely, for holy men, it is one thing which they behold outside, another which they fear inside. For even if they sometimes consider the flourishing world by human reason, suddenly they raise the eyes of the mind back to those evils which follow the joys of the world, and they tremble as if of the face, who by following punishments avoid present delights. But on the contrary, the reprobate, who by no means fear this face of the Philistines, do not escape the following impetus of their ferocity. For while they receive the vain joys of the world with all their strength, they capture perpetual afflictions by the power of demons. Whom indeed Truth threatens, saying: Woe to you, rich, for you have received your consolation in your life (Luke 6:24). Hence likewise denouncing, it says: Woe to you who laugh, for you shall weep (Ibid., 25). As if he said otherwise: Because you by no means tremble of the face of the Philistines, when their following forces rush in, you cannot find a refuge of salvation. Then indeed fear is present, but he who may help is not present. Vengeance is given

for the crime without hope of deliverance; and they feel how horrible are the hinder parts of the Philistines, who wanted the blandishments of their face in the love of the world. Well, therefore, of the Israelites, in the type of the elect, it is said: They feared of the face of the Philistines: because, namely, while they skillfully order their way of life, they do not dispose themselves to fear eternal evils when they come; but they tremble of temporal concupiscence, by whose merit they are inflicted. And because they believe they can obtain this not so much by their own merits as by the intercession of their elders, there follows:

(Verse 8.) And they said to Samuel: Cease not to cry for us to the Lord our God of Israel, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.

17. But to subjects under trial good pastors confer not only the protections of prayers, but also of sacrifices. Whence is subjoined:

(Verse 9.) And Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it a whole burnt offering (holocaustum integrum) to the Lord; and Samuel cried.

What is the cry of Samuel, if not the great power of desire in the supplication of the pontiff? Whence to Moses, silent with his lips but desiring the salvation of the subject people with fervent devotion, it is said by the Lord: Why do you cry to me? (Exod. 14:15). But who is the suckling lamb, if not He whom his precursor pointed out, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)? And He is called suckling because in His innocence true humanity is preached. But one lamb is offered

because, besides Him, one who may take away the sins of the world is by no means found. Which lamb indeed he offered whole (integrum). For the integrity of the lamb pertains to the solidity of the Catholic profession. For he divides the lamb, as it were, who is separated from the canon of faith by the sword of error. The lamb therefore is named for innocence, suckling for the assumption of nature, one for the singularity of power, whole for the most firm solidity of our faith.

18. Which if anyone should wish to refer not to Him, but to His imitator, he can. For we offer a lamb when through the good of chastity and innocence we are conformed to our Redemptor; and when we are fed by the doctrine of our innocent Fathers, we suck the breasts, as it were, by which we are nourished for eternal life. We also offer one lamb if, after the beginnings of religious conversation, we are polluted by no defilement of depravity. For he offers one lamb who by no means flows down from the purpose of innocence to the stains of a polluted life, from which he might return through the iteration of good operation. To offer a whole lamb, also, is to prepare for eternal life not only the continence of the flesh, but the integrity of the mind. He by no means offers a whole lamb to the Lord who consecrates the flesh to God through continence, but does not restrain the secrets of his mind from the lasciviousness of unclean thoughts. For he steals a part of the lamb from the sacrifice, as it were, who does not join the purity of the heart to the continence of the body. Whence also the

Lamb Himself, commanding the disciples to offer a whole lamb, says: You have heard that it was said to the ancients: Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you, that whosoever shall see a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart (Matt. 5:27, 28). Hence also the foolish virgins are noted in the Gospel, who prepared lamps, and did not prepare oil (Matt. 25:3). For those have lamps prepared who keep the good of modesty (pudicitiae) in the body: they also have oil who hold the brightness of purity in the circumspection of their mind. Let it be said therefore of Samuel: He offered a whole lamb to the Lord: because that the good of modesty may suffice for divine placation, it ought to be kept not only in the whiteness of the body, but in the splendor of internal purity. Meritedly therefore is subjoined:

(Verse 9.) ---And the Lord heard him.

19. For he can be heard by the Lord praying for others who is not in some part hateful to the Lord to whom he supplicates. For if he is still depressed by his own infirmity, he is by no means heard for obtaining the fortitude of his neighbors: and he does not raise his desire to the citadel of divine height in the degree that he himself by no means cares to ascend from the depth where he lies through lapse, by the effort of more fervent study. But also the manner of the hearing is explained when there is subjoined:

(Verse 10, 11.) And it came to pass, while Samuel was offering the whole burnt offering, the Philistines began the battle against Israel. But

the Lord thundered with a great crash on that day upon the Philistines, and terrified them, and they were smitten by the children of Israel. And the children of Israel went out of Mizpah (Masphath), and pursued the Philistines, and smote them as far as the place which was under Bethcar (Bethchar).

20. While Samuel was offering the burnt offering, the Philistines began the battle against Israel: because the evil spirits then stir up heavier temptations against the faithful subjects, when they see the Pastors standing more urgently against them. But the Lord thunders upon the Philistines: because to the praying teachers and faithful subjects, divine grace administers strength. For thunders are accustomed to happen through clouds. But sublime clouds are understood through the heavenly desire of the soul. Whence also the prophet, admiring the minds of the elect elevated in the love of heavenly things, said: Who are these, who fly as clouds (Isa. 60:8)? But what are the thunders of the clouds, if not those fervent and supernal desires of the elect: by which, while their mind is set on fire through divine grace, they utterly expel from it everything that the evil spirits suggest by deceiving? Well, therefore, is it said: The Lord thundered upon the Philistines, and terrified them. For while through His grace He pours supernal desires into the elect minds, because He also makes them despise all earthly things, the wicked spirit turns into flight even those who suggest to them to desire those things. For they flee terrified as if by thunder,

while in the elect minds, which they had beaten by tempting, they dread the enormous sound of divine virtue. But because the Lord is said to have thundered with a great crash, what else is it, except that the imperfect desires of Christians are not terrible to demons? For the great crash of thunder is the perfect desire of each elect one. When, therefore, the Lord thunders upon the Philistines with a great crash, then they are smitten by the children of Israel: because while perfect devotion raises the mind of the elect to supernal joys, it utterly cuts off from itself everything that fights for the adverse part. Well also are the Philistines first mentioned as terrified, and then smitten by the children of Israel: for they are terrified by the devotion of the elect, they are smitten by the work. And because devotion is prior to work, they are rightly held to be terrified first, but afterwards smitten. For we first receive the gift of good will from the Lord, so that we may afterwards be able to confute the counsels of the evil spirits. Well also is the Lord said to thunder upon the Philistines and to terrify them, while the children of Israel are held to smite them: because good desires are administered to us through divine grace, but we promote the gifts of grace through the effort of free will to the victories of virtues. The order, therefore, of the heavenly warfare is that God is heard thundering with a great crash first, and afterwards the soldier advances to smite the ranks of the enemies: so that he may indeed see the gifts of grace in himself first, then break out more strongly to the

field of battle, and hope secure for the outcome of victory, who is supported by the strengths by which he may be crowned before the times of the engagement.

21. Well also, those who smite the Philistines are held to have gone out from Mizpah (Masphath). For in Mizpah, which is named "watchtower" (speculatio), they tarry who persist in the contemplation of divine things. But they go out to smite the Philistines when, coming as consultants from the secret of internal meditation, they compress the strengths of the adverse domination. For inside they secretly arrange how they may break into the wedges of the enemies outside in the prepared work. They exhibit battles that are much heavier to those proceeding in the degree that, while they think on internal things, they lie more quiet within themselves. And because evil spirits must always be compressed by the elect of God, the Philistines are mentioned as having been smitten as far as the place under Beth-car (Bethchar). For Beth-car is interpreted as "house of the lamb." Isaiah, pointing out this lamb to us, says: He shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer, he is without voice (Isa. 53:7). What therefore was the house of the lamb, if not that sublime and singularly fortified conversation of the Redemptor, which, while it lacked fault, stood inaccessible to all wicked spirits? No one can arrive at Beth-car, that is, the house of the lamb: because whoever profits much is inferior to the holiness of the Redemptor. Whence also the excellent preacher,

insisting on the praises of the same Redemptor, says: For such a high priest became us, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who hath no necessity, as the priests, first to offer up sacrifices for his own sins (Heb. 7:26, 27). What therefore is the place under Beth-car, to which even we ought to smite and pursue the Philistines? But if Beth-car signs the perfection of the Lord's conversation, the place under Beth-car expresses the common sum of the holiness of the Saints. Who also humiliate themselves by obeying the same Redemptor, and approach His glory through the study of an innocent life. For the place which is shown situated under Beth-car is known both to be inferior to the same place to which it is subject, and to be near it: because holy men, in the degree that they are near to God through the height of life, in that degree are they subject in humbler thought. While, therefore, the triumph of the novice faithful is shown under the deeds of the Israelites, the foreigners are said to be smitten as far as the place under the house of the lamb: because indeed through the unceasing effort of battle, we ought to contend for the citadel of perfection: where we may now be so much more terrible to our enemies, in the degree that we are nearer to our Redemptor. For there there is now a certain security, which cannot be disturbed by the fear of enemies. For the Lord, pointing out the gifts of granted virtue to such ones, says: Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy

(Luke 10:19). Whence also he who had arrived at the place near to the house of the lamb says: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine (Rom. 8:35), or other such things? The house of the lamb can also designate the heavenly fatherland. Whence also John says: I saw upon Mount Sion a lamb standing, and with him a hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his father, written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1). What therefore is the place which is under the house of the lamb, if not the boundary of temporal life, from which the elect are taken up to the joys of the supernal fatherland? For we who are led to the boundary appointed for us, which we cannot pass by living, come as it were to the place from which we may be transferred elsewhere. But the boundary of the life of an elect man is shown situated under the house of the lamb: because from where he is submerged through the straits of mortality, from there he is raised to the joys of unfailing life. For even the lamb himself, who joyfully inhabits his house in the midst of the harpists harping and singing, was under the house before he was led to the joy of this house. For hence it is that at the time of his immolation he says: My soul is sorrowful even unto death (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34). Therefore, while the end of each of the elect is shown by the place, it is mentioned to be under Beth-car, that is, the house of the lamb; because holy men, when they leave temporal things through the punishment of death, ascend from the nearby place to the

supernal fatherland that stands above them. For Paul, confidently asserting, says: We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1). Therefore, we smite the Philistines as far as the place which is under the house of the lamb, if as long as we are in this life, we triumph over the evil spirits.

(Verse 12.) But Samuel took a stone, and laid it between Mizpah (Masphath) and Shen (Sen); and he called the name thereof "The Stone of Help" (Lapis Adjutorii), and said: Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.

22. In sacred speech, "Stone" signifies the Lord and our Redemptor. Indeed, one stone is taken by Samuel, since the strength of the Redemptor is singularly preached by the preacher of the holy Church. Which stone is indeed set between Mizpah and Shen: because at the end of life he protects the elect and crushes the reprobate. For Shen is named "shaking off" (excussio). But the reprobate are the shaken off, that is, separated from the society of the faithful. Therefore, while the Philistines are held to be smitten as far as the place under Beth-car, the stone is asserted to be set between Shen and Mizpah: because while the elect of God perceive the title of their victory at the end, they are separated from the society of the evil by the judgment of the Redemptor. Now indeed, we are together like wheat and chaff on the threshing floor, but while we are led to the boundary of life, the elect are divided from the reprobate by the Lord's power, and have the

stone as a medium between them, as it were, while those sustain the weight of the Redemptor in the judgment of their damnation, and these hold the palms of eternal glory in his strength. By Shen also the evil spirits can be designated. For they are the shaken off, because they were cast out from the heavenly secret through pride. And because they now battle with us in this life, well is the stone mentioned as set between us and them when the time of our victory is asserted: because when we receive the rewards of our warfare, their battles are by no means renewed for us further. But Samuel places this stone in the middle: because the doctor of the holy Church shows us the goodness of our Redemptor. And because everything prosperous that is done by us in all our life is ascribed to divine grace, that stone which is set in the middle is aptly called "The Stone of Help." For He is the Stone of Help, who, if He should not wish to subvene us, we can be conquered, and we cannot conquer. Of which stone now placed in the middle it is said: Hitherto the Lord hath helped us; because his protections pursue his elect even to the times of eternal retribution. And because, as we have said, no battles are then moved by the depressed enemies when we have been received into eternal rest, there follows:

(Verse 13.) And the Philistines were humbled, and they did not set themselves to come any more into the borders of Israel.

23. These things indeed express the deeds of individual elect ones in such a way that they also intimate the readiness of battle and the joys of re-

muneration for the holy Catholic Church. For the blessed Paul showed this victory of the universal Church, which is to be after the glory of our resurrection; who, as if present at the future incorruption, insulted death, saying: Death is swallowed up in victory? O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? (1 Cor. 15:54, 55). He also saw the Philistines humbled: because, remembering the apostate angels, he enkindled the elect to the love of future dignity, saying: Know you not that we shall judge angels? (1 Cor. 6:3). For then the Philistines are humbled, when the demons are sent into the fires of eternal fire prepared for them from the origin of the world. And they do not set themselves to come any more into the borders of Israel: because they do not go out to tempt the hearts of the elect. But what are the borders of Israel, if not the heavens? But how shall the evil spirits come into the borders of Israel, who are so damned in the depth of hell that they never rise from the submersion of punishments? Because, therefore, they are cast down by eternal oppression, there is aptly subjoined: (Verse 13.) The hand of the Lord, he says, was upon the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

24. For what are the days of a good doctor, if not those vernal rays of shining eternity? Which are aptly referred to as being Samuel's: because although they are common to all the elect, they shine with a certain special grace for the joys of preachers. Or certainly they belong to the preachers because they shine more specially in the minds of those by whose preaching they are

now shown to the holy Church. But the hand of the Lord is held to have been upon the Philistines all the days of Samuel, because divine power always oppresses the evil spirits, and it never ceases to exhilarate even the elect in the glory of eternal clarity. Then indeed the losses of the angels are repaired, when whatever had been taken away from beatitude by their pride from the order of created spirits is filled up from the elect humans. Wherefore there follows: (Verse 14.) And the cities which the Philistines had taken were restored to Israel.

25. The cities taken away are those lost multitudes of angels. But they are restored then, when it is assumed from the elect human nature that from which what perished from the angels may be supplied. Which also can be conveniently understood in the conversion of flagitious men. For the Philistines take cities when the unity of the faithful deceive minds by tempting, and subject them to themselves by immersing them in sins. But the taken cities are restored to Israel: because those repenting in this life so satisfy that they are exhibited splendid for the joy of the elect in perennial glory. But because not only those who neglect to do good things, but also those who abundantly do iniquity are saved by repenting, there is subjoined: (Verse 14.) From Ekron (Accaron) even unto Gath (Geth).

26. Ekron is named "sterile," Gath "winepress." Sterile indeed are those who do not do good works. But in the winepress the grape is pressed, and wine is brought forth. But what is

secular concupiscence if not the grape of a reprobate mind? But what is the fervor of sinning if not the liquor of wine, which makes the mind of the sinner unmindful of eternal goods? For while sin is generated from the concupiscence of the heart, wine is produced from the grape as if in a winepress. From Ekron even unto Gath, therefore, the taken cities are restored to Israel: because the minds of those neglecting to do good and of those boldly perpetrating evil, which now return to the Lord by repenting, are then demonstrated splendid in the common glory of the elect. For their evils by no means come into the memory of God, which they themselves have not forgotten to delete by the affliction of penance. There follows: (Verse 14.) And there was peace between Israel and the Amorite (Amorrhaeum).

27. What is this peace, if not that which the prophet Micah asserts, saying: And this man shall be the peace in the land when he shall come (Mic. 5:5). Hence Paul says: He is our peace, who hath made both one (Eph. 2:14). But what is it that peace is shown between Israel and the Amorite? But what is designated by the Amorite, if not the reprobate part of men? But who are figured by Israel, if not the elect? And because the elect shall be on the right hand of God, but the reprobate on the left (Matt. 25:33), while it is asserted that there is peace between both, the illustrious beatitude of the saints is demonstrated; who agree with such equity with the justice of the Creator that they are moved by no compassion for the seen punishment of the reprobate. Therefore,

while peace is shown to be between Israel and the Amorite, it is not demonstrated as a good which the reprobate have in common with the saints, but by which the elect are fortified. Whence also under the species of Israel it is promised back to the holy Church through the prophet: Who hath placed peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the fat of corn (Ps. 147:14). For he places peace in the borders of the Church: because while the power of the Redemptor raises her into the height of intimate equity, the misery of the lost does not afflict her through the pain of compassion. But to how great a beatitude the good subjects are promoted by the study of the pastors, he explains, saying: (Verse 15.) Samuel also judged Israel all the days of his life.

28. What are the days of the life of each doctor, if not the clarities of spiritual virtues? For he judges Israel all the days of his life who represents the light of justice, which he asserts by speaking, in the perfection of good conversation as an example to the faithful subjects. But he who does not have the light of spiritual virtues, because he assumes the good things of an extraneous conversation for teaching, truly judges in the days of another's life. Of whom indeed the Lord says through the prophet: Behold, I am against the prophets, who steal my words every one from his neighbor (Jer. 23:30). For they steal words who do not follow by working the good that they preach by teaching: because they take as if secretly from what belongs to another that which they by no means make their own by giv-

ing the price of their own labor. After the future beatitude had been announced, therefore, what kind of pastor of the faithful there ought to be in the meantime is shown: because Samuel is held to have judged Israel all the days of his life. For he poorly insinuates the way of perfection if, wishing to open the way of light with his voice, he is darkened in action. For he who had contributed all the days of his life to judging Israel says: I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ worketh not by me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed (Rom. 15:18). Therefore, let the doctor judge, but he who has the illustrious days of his life: so that he may indeed foster the rays of spiritual virtues in himself first by living well, which he administers by speaking for providing the journeys of the subjects: because a lamp also is then usefully shown to those who are in the house if it itself is previously well filled with the light that it is about to spread.

(Verse 16.) And he went every year about to Bethel, and to Gilgal (Galgal), and to Mizpah (Masphath), and he judged Israel in all those places.

29. Bethel is called "house of God"; Gilgal, "wheel"; Mizpah, as has already been replicated above, is interpreted as "watchtower" (speculatio). What therefore does Bethel signify, if not the men deputed to the office of the sacred altar; who, while they inhere in spiritual studies, are as it were the familiar domestics of Almighty God? And what does Gilgal, which is called "wheel,"

designate, if not the order of the married? For they go about as if in a wheel while they cannot entirely lack the cares of the revolving world. And what are expressed through Mizpah, which is interpreted as "watchtower," if not those who, vacating to divine contemplation, are on fire with supernal joys alone? What is it, therefore, that Samuel is said to go about Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah, and to judge Israel in the same places, if not because the elect preacher follows the examples of all the orders of the elect, so that he may be a learned censor of the faithful subjects? For he will not be able to be of an equal examination if he disdains to assume from the examples of preceding elect that which he decrees.

But also let him go about these things every year, so that the provident doctor may look at the perfection of each order individually: so that the more subtly he sees the good things of the preceding ones, the more decently he may be able to dispose the present things.

There, therefore, there let him judge Israel, so that he may correct the subject faithful, whom he instructs for the vision of God, by the rectitude of those whom he indubitably believes to have pleased God. The universal Church of the elect can also be designated through Bethel, which is called the house of God: through Gilgal, which is interpreted as "wheel," the sacred Scripture. For whatever the doctor exhibits in the profit of the subjects, he either receives from the example of the elect, or from the magisterium of sacred

speech, or from the revelation of internal and secret contemplation.

30. Samuel therefore goes about Bethel, when the preacher of the Church seeks the authority for disposing works from the examples of the elders. He goes about Gilgal (Galgal), that is, the wheel, when he comprehends the authority of his doctrine from the magisterium of sacred Scripture. He also goes about Mizpah (Masphath), when through the meditation of secret contemplation, he deserves to receive the revelation of truth. For there he judges Israel: because whatever he proposes to the subjects as a norm of rectitude, he either receives from the examples of the elect, or from the doctrine of sacred speech, or from the revelation of internal contemplation. By which words it is indeed shown, not only what the perfect doctor should do, but also that he would not be perfect if he could not do these things. For if he only knew the examples of the good, or if someone were even learned in sacred Scripture and lacked the revelation of contemplation, he would not be a perfect man in the order of preaching. For contemplation is the virtue through which not only is Scripture itself recognized as established, but through which that which was not yet established would be established: and through which that which is established may be daily disposed according to the will of God. Well therefore is it said: And he judged Israel in all those places. For not only in Bethel and Gilgal, but also in Mizpah: so that he who strives for the perfection of preaching, while he follows the examples of

the elders through humility, and while he is supported by erudition through the study of sacred speech, must by all means take care that by purity of mind he may know through contemplating those things which are to be disposed. For he ought to be teachable by God who, having undertaken the office of preaching, desires to teach men. Yet let him so presume of him who is instructed by the erudition of secret contemplation, that he neither loathes the Scriptures published through the Holy Spirit, nor disdains to follow the examples of the elect. For Samuel is described as going about Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; so that one may by no means be divided from the other through discord: so that he may indeed receive the examples which sacred Scripture approves; and recognize those sacred Scriptures which elect men had written: and also that he may refer those revelations of contemplation to the rule of the same Scriptures.

(Verse 17.) And he returned to Ramah (Ramatha): for there was his house, and there he judged Israel.

31. As we have already said long above, Ramah (Ramatha) is interpreted as consummate vision: and it signifies that blessed and perfect society of the supernal citizens: to which Samuel returns, lest he be weighed down by the burden of his labor. For Samuel returns to Ramah when the mind of the preacher is relieved through the love of celestial things. For he would collapse among such immense burdens of his office if he did not return to the love of celestial things through the

desire of his hope. For to return, for preachers, is to reduce the intention of their mind to the joys of the celestial fatherland. And there they judge Israel: because they study to make the faithful subjects conformable by preaching to the beauty of the supernal fatherland, which they retain in the mind. There they judge Israel: because from that already perfect city they draw the form which they see, which they impress by speaking upon the minds of the sons: and whatever they behold unworthy of that beauty, they strive to cut off from their minds. And because they rest with whole affection in the glory of that blessed fatherland, there his house is held to be. For his house is known to be that in which he converses by loving. Whence also that eminent preacher glories, saying: Our conversation is in heaven. For he goes about Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and in any of them he does not have a house, but in Ramah (Ramatha) he has a house: because the doctors of holy Church, whatever they now receive from the examples of the elect, whatever from the erudition of the sacred volumes, whatever they transitory examine from the height of supernal revelation, they have for the help of the journey, not for the love of remuneration. But that which they love in the supernal city is not for the profit of the journey, but for the sufficient, even for the abundant bounty of the reward. And because all good things are gathered there, it follows:

(Verse 17). He built there also an altar to the Lord.

32. For what is the altar of the Lord, if not the heart of the just? Moreover, by the judgment of Truth it is said: Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also (Matt. 6:21). But he who does good things for the love of the supernal fatherland, while he ardently desires to arrive at those things which he gathers above, indeed builds an altar, upon which he may burn the victims of daily desire. Well, however, is it said: He built there an altar to the Lord: because from the increase of celestial study, just as the flame grows in the heart of good desire, so also as if by added stones, the altar is constructed upward, where holocausts of love may be offered to God. Which also can conveniently be referred to the gain of souls. For the doctor builds an altar to the Lord in Ramah (Ramatha), when he places the merits of the subjects in heaven, and while through his daily study elect souls ascend to the celestial kingdoms, as if stones are sent to the structure of the supernal altar. Let it be said of Samuel, let it be said: He built there an altar to the Lord: because undoubtedly the study of the doctor is very idle if by this, which is done by him on earth, the celestial building is not increased.

BOOK FOUR.

CHAPTER ONE.

1. The deeds of the holy men who have gone before are often the consolations of the chosen who follow. For by a wonderful dispensation of the divine counsel, they were so uplifted to

the citadel of the highest life that they might perform strong deeds for themselves and provide right things for their subjects; yet they were sometimes so left to themselves that the things they disposed with a right intention were not right according to the providence of God, so that their weakness might become the strength of the chosen who follow. For although as men they can be deceived in disposing the affairs of the holy Church, the ecclesiastical dispositions themselves are not to be abandoned. For behold, it is said:

(I Sam. 8:1-3) And it came to pass when Samuel was old, that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah, judges in Beersheba. And his sons did not walk in his ways.

2. Behold, he who had been full of the spirit of prophecy did not know that those whom he was appointing as judges over Israel would afterwards turn aside after avarice, and take bribes, and pervert judgment. What wonder then if those who do not receive the grace of prophecy can be deceived in disposing orders, if those who have the spirit of prophecy do not have that same spirit for disposing all things? But who would doubt of so great a man that if he had foreknown the future perversity of his sons, he would certainly not have preferred them to public honors? Those, therefore, who knowingly promote the reprobate can by no means flatter themselves with this example of the prophet;

for then alone is one's action blameless when in those who are promoted, at the time of their promotion, no signs of the following iniquity were apparent. Wherefore also they who were appointed judges over Israel by Samuel are aptly called his sons when they were appointed, so that they may be believed to be generated not only by the flesh, but also adorned with the splendors of his life. Wherefore their names are also carefully assigned, so that from the title of the name, the form of virtue that was in them at that time may be known. The name of one, he says, was Joel, of the other Abijah, judges in Beersheba. But of those who are said to have turned aside to avarice after receiving the dignity, it is clearly shown that before they reached the height of the same dignity, no signs of future depravity were seen in them. But behold, while we attend to the consolations of the shepherds, we behold no small dangers of the Lord's flock. For the subjects stood firm, but the sons of the prophet, placed at the height of prelature (praelatio), fell; so that if for us, placed under the care of our elders, an unceasing study of a holy life or the security of a great life should smile upon us, we should not have the desire to preside over others in the appetite of longing, but in the magnitude of fear. But carnal men, while they attend only to visible things, do not deserve to know the spiritual life of the saints. They look upon the height of the shepherds of the holy Church, but they know not how unwillingly those within bear the beauty which they hold outwardly in the splendor of the height, how they

sustain the sublimity of honor as the oppression of a great burden, which they flee with great desire, but pursue by outward ministry. For as we have learned from the testimony of the excellent teacher, the animal man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Whence also he errs more insanely following carnal things, the more he no longer penetrates any spiritual things through the virtue of discretion. And some such persons advance into such an evil of madness that they do not fear to disturb even the state of the ecclesiastical height itself. Whence also follows:

(Verses 4, 5) Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Ramah, and they said to him: Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways. Appoint for us a king to judge us, as all nations have.

(Verses 4, 5.) Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah (Ramatha), and said unto him: Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

3. But to seek a king, for these who were living under spiritual rule, what else is it than to manage to transfer the same spiritual prelacy into secular domination? But when holy men behold themselves despised by the subjects, they are not so much displeased that they are despised, as that their contemners do not please God. For by their contempt, they behold increments being given to their internal glory, but they groan that

their merits are increased by the defects of the subjects, whom they would wish so to profit in merits that in the eternal retribution of merits, they might have been able to have with them those over whom they preside. Wherefore also it is added:

(Verse 6.) But the word displeased Samuel, when they said: Give us a king to judge us.

4. For this displeased him, through which he thought that those who were speaking displeased God. Because it is not simply said: 'the word displeased Samuel,' but 'in the eyes of Samuel,' and immediately it is added:

(Verse 6.) And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

We ought to consider these things a little more subtly. Holy men, who greatly fear to displease Almighty God, are not easy in their judgments, but first reasonably order all things within, so that they may irreproachably dispose them without in work. For they receive no election of judgment if it is not proved by the contemplation of reason. The Lord wished indeed to open these eyes of the prophet when He said: See with thy eyes, and hear with thy ears (Ezek. 40:4). Hence in the Gospel He said to the disciples: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see (Luke 10:23). For the eyes of the saints are the understandings of reason, unlocked through the grace of the Holy Spirit. And therefore they are said to be Samuel's: because all carnal men, even if they seem to be rational through human wisdom, are so much the blinder from this light of reason as they see with those eyes alone which the serpent

opened. For if they beheld the radiance of spiritual virtues, they would indeed desire to have it in the ornament of their mind. For so great is their beauty that the sight can never not be coveted by the desire of the beholder. Wise men of the world, therefore, when they think they have the eyes of reason, can know from this how dementedly they are insane: because not to be enticed by the beauty of holy virtues is indeed not only not to perceive their glory, but not even to dream of it. Holy men, therefore, who are already bound in the love of internal things by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, have the eyes of their mind so much clearer for seeing the glory of internal clarity, as they have nothing of desire for the darkness of the world; and they can discern carnal things so much more rightly as, assumed far from carnal things, they have profited more deeply in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Whence also the apostle Paul brought forth a sentence from the experience of so great a vision, saying: 'The spiritual man judgeth all things' (1 Cor. 2:15). Well therefore is it said: 'The word displeased in the eyes of Samuel.' Because nothing is first despised by spiritual men before it is judged that it is to be despised through the spiritual intuition of the mind. And because as they are full of the more abundant grace of the Holy Spirit, from the...

(Verses 7, 8.) And the Lord said unto Samuel: Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which

they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day.

5. Because it is said to the praying prophet: Appoint for them a king; it is clearly shown that he asked that it be revealed to him whether this should be done. And because adding, he says: They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them, it is aptly shown how much the speech displeases him, which is said to have displeased in the eyes of Samuel. This agreement of judgment in the saints arises from the virtue of charity: because while they love the Creator with their whole mind, and devotedly strive to obey his will, they receive as a reward of heavenly retribution that they do not differ by feeling otherwise from the same will of Almighty God, which they always hold in good works. For it is written: He who adheres to God, is one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). For he adheres to the Lord who always strives to do the precepts of his will. But he becomes one spirit with him: because from the long devotion of a pious work he is assumed into such grace of divine knowledge that he can no longer dissent from the equity of his internal judgment through the error of a worldly spirit. But it is very difficult to answer if it is asked why Almighty God both complains that he is rejected in the petition for a king, and yet decrees that that which was asked be done: and again, if the royal dignity was to be ordained, why it was permitted as if the majesty of God were indignant; and when the provided king is decreed to be chosen, why he who is to be reprobated is

chosen? What else can we answer to these things but that which the Apostle Paul answered to those daring to search into the ineffable abyss of the judgments of God: O man, he says, who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. 9:20). But if we cannot define this effectively, we can touch it by inquiring. Does he perhaps complain that he is rejected in the petition for a king? For the reprobate will of the people asking wrongly, the asked king is granted for vengeance. Which if it is said reasonably, while he put both, he showed both the fault and the vengeance alike. For from a reprobate will he is convinced to have asked unjust things, who is shown to have rejected the Creator by asking. Therefore the punishment of strict equity followed the fault of a bad petition. For it is a great vengeance which proceeds from the strictness of the internal examination, when a reprobate mind is so cast away that it is permitted to do what it badly deliberates. They therefore who were convicted of having rejected the Lord in asking for a king, while it was permitted to them to do that by which they might reject the Lord from themselves, there was no heavier punishment by which they ought to have been struck here.

179 6. In this place it should be noted that the Lord makes the rejection of the prophet His own. For He does not simply say: They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; but they have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them. So that He may indeed show that in the person of the chosen prelate He Himself is

pre-eminent over His subjects; and when a carnal ruler is assumed to the spiritual height of the chosen, He Himself seems to be rejected, whose precepts are dissipated. Therefore it is clear how to be revered are the best pastors of the holy church. For behold, while they serve God faithfully, they are joined to Him by such a bond of love that whatever is inflicted upon them is ascribed to divine injury. Whence also in the Gospel He says to the first pastors of the Church: He who despises you, despises me (Luke 10:16). Where also something more serious is discerned: because when He complains of the rejected pastor, all the sins of those rejecting him, and even the evils of their parents are remembered. According to all, He says, their works, which they did from the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt. For the highest crime is recognized, for the discussion of which all past sins are brought back into the memory of God. And so the Lord complains that He is rejected, and yet He grants to ordain that in which He is rejected: because when He executes the virtue of His strict equity, the desires of the carnal are by no means prohibited by His mercy from being fulfilled by Him. But also the dignity which could be granted for vengeance ought not to have been granted with the tranquil majesty of divinity, but as if indignant. Indeed, we do not assert that the majesty of God is indignant in itself, which is not subject to passion: but because while He discusses faults, He speaks words of indignation through the Scriptures. Likewise, because he is assumed as a type of

carnal prelates, a king to be reproved is chosen, not a chosen one. Or perhaps a reprobate king is chosen for this reason, that his chosen successor, King David, might recognize in him what he ought to have avoided. So indeed we read of that court of angels, because it is written of the first apostate angel: He is the beginning of the ways of God (Job 40:14): but he who was created before all things, fell through pride, and in his ruin the holy angels learned by what virtue they could have stood. Which indeed, he who can gaze upon with the open eyes of right faith, equally attends: because Almighty God even then bestows gifts of great mercy when He inflicts vengeance; because while He punishes the reprobate, He instructs the saints: so that from whence those fail, these may be helped in their progress.

7. Indeed, by a strict judgment He permits evils to be done, but mercifully He provides from these evils, which He inflicts through judgment, what good things He may dispose to do. For what greater fault than that by which we all die? And what greater goodness than that through which we are liberated from death? And indeed, unless Adam had sinned, it would not have been necessary for our Redeemer to take our flesh. For He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17). If therefore He came for sinners, if sins were lacking, it would not have been necessary for Him to come. If sins, for the destruction of which He is believed to have come, are felt to have been permitted through the justice of God: while for sinners God was to be born

as man, from that evil by which they were to die, Almighty God had provided that He would make a good that should overcome that evil. The magnitude of which good, indeed, what faithful person does not see how wonderfully it excels? For great are the evils which we suffer through the merit of the first fault, but what chosen person would not wish to suffer worse things than not to have so great a Redeemer? Let a king therefore be chosen; but one to be reproved: let him be chosen 180 as if with indignation, not by the will of God: let a king according to the heart of God follow; so that from the strictness of His judgment the evil of vengeance may proceed upon the reprobate; and the good, which He was to make out of evil, may redound into the pious through the bounty of divine grace, while those are permitted to fall into the evil which they desire. But from whence those precipitate themselves, it is brought about that others by no means fall. But because by these words the judgment of divine strictness is asserted, let us see now what dispensation He uses, lest those deliberating ill should do that from which they may be punished. For there follows:

(Verse 9.) Now therefore hearken to their voice: but yet testify to them, and foretell them the right of the king that shall reign over them.

8. As if by an open showing of clemency He should say: So hear their voices, that yet they themselves first hear concerning the right of the king whom they seek what they may dread; and as if then they might desert their evil undertak-

ings when it is known how burdensome a thing it is which they were seeking. There follows:

(Vers. 10-17.) Samuel therefore told all the words of the Lord to the people who had sought a king from him, and said: This will be the right of the king who is to command over you. He will take your sons and place them in his chariots, and he will make for himself horsemen and forerunners of his four-horse chariots: and he will appoint for himself tribunes, and centurions, and plowers of his fields, and reapers of his harvests, and smiths of his weapons and of his chariots: your daughters also he will make for himself unguent-makers, and cooks, and bakers. Your fields also, and your vineyards, and your best olive groves he will take and give to his servants. Moreover, he will tithe your harvests and the revenues of your vineyards, to give to his eunuchs and his attendants. Your servants also, and handmaids, your best young men, and your asses he will take away and place in his work. He will also tithe your flocks, and you yourselves shall be his servants.

9. When subjection is sought from the carnal, indeed whatever is commanded of them is heavy, even if it is not difficult: because since from the swelling of pride they have it that they follow the judgment of their own will, whatever meets their deliberation they weigh as most heavy. But now when hard and contrary things are ordered, what mass of burden is it to them? what swelling of the heart? Since they could scarcely bear even mild and light things being unwilling, which if they

willed, they would have borne most easily. Let us see therefore how worthily the pious dispensation of the Creator responds to the foolish audacity of man. The rights of men are proposed to those contemning the rights of God; and to those who had despised the mild and salutary counsels of divinity, hard and unbearable burdens of human servitude are foretold: so that from these they might make a reckoning with themselves how intolerable the commands of man would be to those who had been unwilling to obey the counsels of God, not so much commanding as warning them lest they should seek it. But the hearts of the carnal have temerity from the increase of audacity; they have hardness from the reason of simulation. Indeed, from temerity they easily deliberate things to be done; but because they do not understand what they ill propose, they cannot be helped by the counsels of better men. Wherefore here also it is added:

(Vers. 19.) But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel. And they said: Nay: for there shall be a king over us, and we also shall be like all the nations, and our king shall judge us, and he shall go out before us, and he shall fight our battles for us.

10. It stood as a matter of great temerity to seek a king against the will of God; of great hardness, to not be able to be overcome by the counsels of the prophet. It was a matter of great temerity 181 to propose reasons to him whom they knew, by the Lord revealing it, to know beforehand all things that were to be done. Of

great hardness, to not acquiesce to him whom they knew to command only those things which he had learned by the Lord revealing them. For what is it that, answering, they say: Nay, but there shall be a king over us? But those who say, Nay, indeed deny that which they hear. Clearly therefore in this word it is shown that for this purpose the prophet set forth the heavy right of the king, that he might by no means be sought. Indeed they hear the right of the king, and they detest that for the sake of which it is set forth; so that the progress of reprobate hearts may be expressed, in which there is the consummation of an evil purpose and the unchangeableness of the will.

But we reprehend ancient times, we who do not care to see our own. Which times indeed, by how much they are older as the world grows old, by so much they are more remiss in many things through the vice of time and negligence. For so much more audaciously do we now propose evils, by how much now, with the robust youth of the age, the strength of the human condition has withered: so much more difficultly do we revoke that which is ill proposed, by how much from the relaxed vigor of the spirit, our mind is made carnal. For such are human lapses, that what fails in spiritual virtue is strengthened in carnal life. All these things indeed according to the voice of the eminent teacher: Now all these things happened to them in figure: but they are written for us (1 Cor. 10:11). Now indeed we clearly recognize the audacity of these Israelites, which the judgments

of divine indignation followed: and yet we do not fear to propose things to be done against the will of God, against the counsel of the prelates of the holy Church. Being reprehended in an evil purpose we resist, and we strive to overcome the salutary counsels of the elders by the insuperable evil of obstinate perversity. We see how great an increase of evil it is to behold those perishing, and not to fear to follow their footsteps to perdition: to discern those running into the penal snares of death, and by no means to fear to be entangled in the same snares. And those indeed sought a king against the will of the Lord; but from the royal dignity it was afterwards brought about that the people, who had rejected God, should worship idols and adore images.

How revered therefore the counsels of the elders are we discern, if we solicitously consider this: because those who dared to despise them did not foresee that they were doing that from which they could have been submerged in so deep an abyss of error. Deservedly therefore the Lord complains that He is rejected in the petition for a king, deservedly being indignant He grants the royal dignity. So great indeed was the iniquity of those asking, that since they sought that through which they might recede from God, it could be permitted by the judgment of God, it could not be prohibited. But because we have said these things according to the letter, let us see also what those things which are contained in the royal right designate spiritually.

CHAPTER II.

1. For with Samuel being rejected, a king is sought: when the reprobate multitude of the people despises the spiritual pastor, and seeks a carnal one to be over them. With whom it is often dealt by the strictness of divine equity, that by the very fact that they despise the chosen preacher, they are permitted to be under a reprobate: from whose imitation they perish so much the worse, by how much with greater pride they more audaciously contemned that from which they could have lived forever. Therefore when the right of the king is foretold, indeed in the conversation of one carnal superior it is shown what the other carnal ones are to do out of tyranny, not what the chosen ought to imitate. For in the same history of the Kings it is read: that when King Ahab took away the vineyard of Naboth, he incurred the wrath of Almighty God 182 (3 Kings 21:2 seq.). But here when the right of the king is foretold, it is mentioned that fields, vineyards, and the best olive groves are to be taken. Since therefore it is here foretold what was there punished when committed: it shows that it is not commanded by divine judgment. Wherefore also the chosen King David, when he sought the floor of Ornan the Jebusite for building an altar to the Lord, would not use that royal right of tyrants (1 Chron. 21:24): since he by no means acquiesced to receive it, unless he had first given a worthy price for it.

Since therefore those things which are contained in the royal right are preached to be

avoided rather than imitated, they are to be considered so much the more subtly, as they cannot be avoided if they are unknown. He says therefore: He will take your sons, and place them in his chariots. The sons of the chosen are those who imitate their virtues. Chariots also are the pride of worldly elation of carnal prelates. For while they glory that they are more sublime than others, as if carried in chariots, they walk through high places. In the chariots therefore the sons of the faithful are placed, when they follow reprobate pastors through the appetite for worldly glory: when with spiritual studies left behind, they seek the comforts of carnal life: and with that sublime intention of heavenly things laid aside, they strive to attain the high things of the age. Well therefore are the sons of the Israelites said to be placed not in a chariot, but in chariots: because from everything that is prominent in the height of carnal prelates, they profit in elation: and as if in so many sublime chariots they elevate themselves into high things, as many high things as they behold, by which they think themselves superior to others. The sons of the good therefore the king places in chariots, when a carnal ruler draws the imitators of the chosen by the example of his own depravity to the vices of elation; so that they postpone heavenly things, seek earthly things, and rejoice in this alone, if from that which is turned high temporally, they are preferred to others.

31. And because against lesser ones they are not only upright, but also strong, there follows:

And he will make for himself horsemen. For as if on horses they rage, who are both sublime in dignity and fierce in power. They are also horsemen, because while they direct the fierce movements of their heart against the powerless, they are swift to everything which they desire to exercise through tyranny. Indeed they pant with impetus, foam with rage, and those whom they attack in the course of tyranny, they crush. But while in reprobate pastors some emulate the pride of worldly elation, others by their example oppress those whom they can: there are also some who, for exercising the evils which they cannot bring upon the good through themselves, introduce others more wicked than themselves. Whence also follows: And the forerunners of his four-horse chariots.

4. For what are the king's four-horse chariots, except the perverse minds of evil subjects, in whose counsels the reprobate prelate rests? For they are chariots which carry kings: while through the iniquitous counsels of the wicked the acts of the rulers are aided. Indeed in them, as if through a sublime place, the king is led, while through those who favor them for temporal honors, carnal superiors execute whatever they want from the height of the age in desire. Who are rightly designated by the name of chariots. For a chariot stands from whence it is turned: because the reprobate mind has the changeability of the age as the end of its intention. Indeed it rests there, where through innumerable cares of the mind it does not cease to ventilate the business of

the rotating world. Therefore they are the chariots of kings, while through everything that they think by turning high things, they carry in themselves the commands of carnal superiors. But those who have a place of familiarity near carnal prelates, have lesser ones whom they command. They therefore are as if the chariots of the king, those others 183 the forerunners of the chariots; because in that manner in which they carry the carnal superior to oppress the humble, they themselves also are led to harming those whom they can, through the ministry of others. For he is as it were a forerunner of the chariots, who by the iniquitous craftiness of his mind thinks of an art through which he may introduce that one to bringing evils upon the mild. If indeed, as many codices have, we read not forerunners, but persecutors of the chariots, indeed they are those who imitate the reprobate running to evil. A chariot is also accustomed to be carried for kings for the sake of honor. As if therefore in a chariot the king is placed, when a carnal ruler glories in the adulations of the great who are seen near him. Indeed he who precedes or follows those in their praises, is a forerunner or persecutor of the chariots, because these proffer adulations either after or before, which those scattered in the ears of the people by going before or following after.

5. There follows: And he will appoint for himself tribunes and centurions. They become tribunes and centurions when they come to such a progress of evil that for executing the commands of the tyrant, they rule over impious attendants,

when they order the lines of worldly forces, which they may bring forth to the battles of the innocent. Indeed they are tribunes who through many favorers lie in wait for those living rightly. Truly they are centurions who omit no kinds of harming. For from this they obtain the perfection of iniquity, that they always study to bring many and huge evils which they can. Indeed from the number of a hundred a centurion is named. And because the number of a hundred signifies perfection, it is perfected in the evil part when the summit of wickedness is reached by the impious. Who indeed are mild in cunning, violent in terror. Indeed they blandly flatter others, that by their help they may fiercely be able to terrify others. Well therefore is it added: And the plowers of his fields, and the reapers of his harvests.

6. The fields of the carnal superior are the minds of the subjects: indeed the plowers of these fields are those who by the art of secular genius persuade them to acts of depravity. For as if they open the solidity of the fields by speaking, who corrupt the hearts of the simple through reprobate counsels. And they reap the harvests when the hearts of the lesser ones, deceived by the seed of evil counsel, return the fruit of evil operation. Which works indeed are designated by the appellation of harvests: because the perversity of the reprobate subject, while it is joyfully received by carnal rulers, is as it were their chosen food of the mind. In which perversity certainly, because they profit by degrees, there follows: And the smiths of his weapons and of his chariots. What are the

weapons and chariots of tyrants, except all those instruments of harming which are prepared for overturning the hearts of the lesser ones? But because by a chariot one arrives where one may strike with weapons, they become smiths of the weapons and chariots of the king when by the most wicked machination of their hearts they find both the evils which they may do, and in what way they may inflict those same found evils. Indeed to fabricate weapons is to collect kinds of harming with a reprobate mind. And to fabricate chariots is to find the art by which they may approach to inflicting those same evils.

7. There follows: He will also make your daughters unguent-makers, and cooks, and bread-makers. By the name of daughters, the minds of the weak placed within the holy Church are designated. They become the king's unguent-makers because while they behold carnal superiors in the loftiness of passing glory, they strive to soothe them with flattery. The Psalmist, reproving the use of these ointments, says: Let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head (Psalm 140:5). Therefore, the daughters become unguent-makers because while the weak fear to displease carnal superiors, they soften with blandishment their ferocity, to which they are subject through fear. And it should be noted that the sons are said to be taken first by the king, and thus to become horsemen, and centurions, or smiths of weapons: but the daughters are said not to be taken, but simply to become unguent-makers and bread-makers. For to be taken is an act of violence.

Therefore, the sons are taken because the robust are overturned with difficulty. While therefore the daughters are presented not as being taken, but as becoming unguent-makers, what is this other than that those who are weak in good are easily dissipated through the examples of the wicked? They also become the king's cooks and bread-makers because those who serve tyrants by flattering, while they please by favoring, provide as it were foods. For cooks are those who cook at the hearths what kings eat. Therefore, they are cooks who through the services of favor kindle the swelling of the heart in a carnal superior: so that they may receive favors the more audaciously, as they prepare for themselves as it were more delicate foods by the fire of excited devotion. They also become bread-makers because while they praise a reprobate life, they strengthen the carnal mind of the tyrant for exercising depravity.

8. There follows: He will also take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. What are the fields of the good, except the devoted minds of subjects? which while they listen willingly to their words, return a fertile fruit of good works. And what are their vineyards, except the minds of those who so profit by imitation that they also provide the word of life to others, and whom by speaking they kindle in the love of the Creator, as it were making them drunk by drinking? And what indeed are the olive groves, except the hearts of the listeners, who by the example and exhortation of the good

profit in the work of mercy? But while a king is appointed, the fields are taken: because while carnal men arrive at the summit of governance, many listeners of the good receive examples of depravity. Therefore, the fields are taken when recently devoted hearts are seduced, when from the seed of wickedness they return fruit in a malignant conversation. The olive groves and vineyards are taken when by the example of an evil superior the works of mercy and the words of holy preaching to be shown and spoken are deserted. Moreover, the taken fields, and vineyards, and olive groves are well remembered to be given to the servants of the king. For servants are those who, always subject to the right of masters, are unable to escape the yokes of domination. Thus they are the servants of the king, who through abundant iniquity so bind themselves to the wills of tyrants that they do not further recede from them. Therefore, the servants receive the taken fields, and vineyards, and olive groves: because the reprobate favorers of carnal prelates, while they transfer the deceived hearts into the purpose of a depraved work, as it were impose the title of tyrannical power upon the fields, vineyards, and olive groves of the chosen. There follows: But also he will tithe your harvests, and the returns of your vineyards, to give to his eunuchs and servants. When evil men are in charge, it is very difficult that he who is subjected to them suffers no damages of religion. For the minds of some altogether perish: but those whom they are unable to pervert entirely, while they incessantly behold

both their words and their depraved works, are stained by some sort of filth. Well therefore is it said: He will tithe your harvests, and the returns of your vineyards. As if he were to say: Under a reprobate pastor even the good things of the chosen are not whole.

9. There follows: He will also tithe your flocks, and you shall be his servants. As if he were to say: While a carnal superior is placed over you, the spoils of virtues are brought not only upon your things, but even upon your very selves. For the flocks of the chosen are the crowds of spiritual virtues. Because truly these spiritual virtues themselves are dissipated by the example of the wicked, the king takes the tithes of the flock when he who carnaly pre-eminently destroys some virtues in the hearts of the saints. He takes the tithes because while he dissipates the integrity of the mind, he leaves the number of virtues imperfect. For the number of ten designates perfection. Whence also when the Lord showed the damages of our fallen humanity by an open comparison, he brings into the midst the woman who had lost one of the ten drachmas (Luke 15:4 seq.); so that through this, that the number of ten is shown to have perished, that celestial society, which remained in the number of nine among the angels, may be taught to be imperfect without the reparation of our condition. And because tithes are exacted through each single year, those who do not cease to offer tithes are aptly presented as being servants of the king. Indeed they serve them through each single year, by whose example they

often become worse. By this also, that after the tithes have been given this servitude is asserted, the evil progresses can be shown. For those who fail by degrees act daily whence they may be led to the depths of iniquity. He says therefore: He will tithe your flocks, and you shall be his servants. As if he were to say: By the example of the wicked you shall fall away by degrees, but by falling you act so that you may never recede from their imitation. For it is written: By whom anyone is conquered, of him he is made a servant (2 Pet. 2:19). Because indeed through the imitation of a reprobate pastor they fall into the servitude of sin, they also cannot be loosed from his yoke when they want. Whence also is it added: (Verse 18.) And you shall cry out in that day from the face of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day: because you have asked for yourselves a king. 10. As if he were to say, you flow away by degrees into the knowledge of his depraved imitation: but you can by no means spontaneously leave the examples of his depravity to which you spontaneously submit yourselves. For everyone who commits sin is a servant of sin (John 8:34). Therefore, those whom sins dominate cannot be liberated from their yoke by themselves. For often they come to the Lord with prayers, they ask to be liberated, but they cannot be heard. Indeed it is dealt with them by divine judgment so that those who did not want to avoid evils when they could, may not be able to avoid them when they want: and those who spontaneously run

into pre-cognized evils, may not be able to flee them when experienced. Wherefore also insinuating the cause by which they are prohibited from being heard, he says: Because you have asked for yourselves a king. As if he were to say openly: Because you requested that that be given to you in which you recognized all these future things, with me preaching them. These things, as I said above, are preached in the type of carnal prelates concerning the future conversation of the king: so that they might rest from his petition, in whom they had recognized such great evils. But the hearts of the reprobate have it such that they quickly propose evil, and do not more quickly repent from an evil proposal. Wherefore also is it added: (Verses 19, 20.) But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, but they said: By no means. For a king shall be over us, and we also shall be like all the nations, and our king shall judge us, and he shall go out before us, and he shall fight our battles for us.

11. By which words truly the morals of carnal subjects are openly described: because while they desire exterior things, they do not attend to interior damages even when exposed. But those who are carnaly in charge, by the very show of temporal power give great hope of protection to the lesser ones subjected to them. While therefore they say: A king shall be over us, and he shall fight our battles for us, what else do they insinuate than the morals of reprobate subjects, who despise humble and spiritual preachers, so that they may be temporally aided by carnal men?

Which certainly they would by no means do, unless they had first lost the light of the heart. For if they despise the humility of spiritual men from without, but what sublimity of power they eminence within, they do not deserve to discern; in those others also they see the external tyranny of power, but by what infirmity it is depressed within, they do not see. These, because they adhere to God, when they want, are powerful even in exterior things: those, who recede from the Lord, cannot exhibit the hope which they promise concerning secular power with the fortitude of operation. For, to take examples from near at hand, Saul is chosen to fight the battles of those asking for a king, strong and powerful: so that, this sacred history being witness (1 Sam. 9:2), he should eminence above all the people from the shoulder and upward. Chosen therefore by God for the governance of the kingdom, when he was good, and there was no one better than him from the sons of Israel, yet, when such and so great a man is left to carnal fortitude, he lost the battles which he had received to be fought, and likewise lost his life (1 Sam. 31:1). Samuel, however, who did not exist as sublime in the power of the age, who humbly served not only God but also men, powerfully exhibited trophies even from exterior battles. For not much above it was said of him: Samuel took one sucking lamb, and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord, and Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him. And it happened, while Samuel was offering the burnt offering to the

Lord, the Philistines entered into battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a great crash in that day over the Philistines, and terrified them (1 Sam. 7:9, 10). (Verse 21.) And Samuel heard all the words of the people.

12. This Samuel truly heard, which the people spoke, but the people did not hear him. For to the reprobate people to speak and not to hear, was to proffer words against the will of God, but by no means to foresee the punishment of the depraved speech. Samuel, however, heard the words of the people: because spiritual men, while they hear the voices of proud speech, recognize the future merit of divine vengeance in them. Let him say therefore: Samuel heard all the words of the people, because holy and spiritual men, whatever the carnal sound forth proudly without, they weigh within what sort it is in the divine judgment. But because, while they find the damnable life of carnal subjects, they intercede for the deletion of their crimes: There follows: (Verse 21.) And he spoke them in the ears of the Lord.

We speak in their ears, with whom we have the grace of great familiarity. Holy men, however, because they are joined to almighty God in the bond of great love, speak to him in the ears: because they demand the hearing of his divine propitiation the more faithfully, as they have received a more sublime place of obtaining it before his mercy. They speak of the sins of the people for the humility of confession, but they speak in the ears of the Lord: because with great affection of prayer they knock at the door of the Lord's

propitiation. But perhaps he is said to speak in the ears of the Lord because while holy men beseech for sinners, they do not reveal to men the prayers which they offer to God for them. Whence also in the Gospel the Lord prohibits the disciples, saying: When you pray, do not be like the sad hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men (Matt. 6:5). They speak the words or works of the people, therefore, when they expose to the Lord the delicts of speech and work to be deleted by prayers. They speak them indeed in the ears of the Lord, so that while praying they flee the testimonies of men, they may be heard more quickly by him who regards hidden things. While therefore Samuel is presented as speaking in the ears of the Lord, he truly insinuates the manner by which anyone may deserve the hearing of divine dignation. For a prayer can by no means arrive at God which is proffered from the intention that it may be recognized by men. Whence also he who is asserted to have spoken in the ears of the Lord, is presented as having also perceived his responses. For there follows: (Verse 22.) And the Lord said to Samuel: Hear the voice of the people, and appoint a king over them.

13. In which matter it should be noted that Samuel spoke the words of the people, by which they had asked for a king, in the ears of the Lord: and the Lord asserts himself to be rejected in that which the people ask for a king. While therefore he responds to the one praying, and commands

the one praying to make a king, what else does he insinuate than that the devoted prayer of an elect man is never fruitless? For if he did not obtain the correction of the people, he obtained the good of his own instruction, when he recognized the rejected people for their evil petition, 188 but also nevertheless knew what he himself ought to have done for those cast away. The prophet therefore could be heard, and not heard: because by praying he knew of what sort he ought to be, but he did not take away the hardness of heart from the people requesting reprobate things. But he who spoke in the ears of the Lord was able to obtain this: because holy men by that very thing, that they devotedly beseech the Lord for sinners, are fortified by the help of divine propitiation, so that they may by no means be polluted by the crimes of those whose filth they cannot delete by prayers. What indeed is it that the Lord says: Hear their voices, when it was said above: Samuel heard all the words of the people. But he had heard the words of the people so that he might know what things were being said, not so that he might concede what things were being asked. While therefore it is said to him by the Lord: Hear the voice of the people, and appoint a king over them, he commanded the prophet to favor the will of the people. And behold, as is openly discerned, the prophet praying is not heard: the people rejecting God, and asking for a king, is heard. What shall we say this is, except that by a wondrous and tremendous judgment of divine incomprehensibility holy men praying

for the reprobate cannot be heard: but in fulfilling their own depravities, those same reprobate delinquents can themselves be heard: so that for those ones free iniquity may increase the merit of eternal vengeance, and for these ones from the affection of compassion the reward of perpetual retribution may increase? And immediately beginning to show that order by which it came to the constitution of that same king, he says: (Verse 22.) And Samuel said to all the sons of Israel: Let each one go into his own city.

14. When we wish to discuss spiritual things, it is necessary that we remove carnal things from our intention: because the internal mind does not penetrate what the dust of exterior acts blinds. While therefore the prophet of the Lord commands all the people to go away to their own places, he repels from himself the tumult of carnal things: so that he may see the spiritual things which are to be disposed the more clearly, as the intention of earthly acts does not obscure the sharpness of his mind. But insinuating what sort he is who is foreseen by divine judgment, he says:

CHAPTER III.

(1 Sam. 9:1, 2.) There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a man of Benjamin, a man of great strength. And he had a son whose name was Saul, choice and goodly, and there was not a man among the children of Israel better than he: from

his shoulder upward he was taller than any of the people.

1. When the person of the king to be ordained is set forth, why are the names of his fathers described, unless that his kingdom might not be felt to be durable? For concerning the kingdom which Moses had foreseen would be in the future, he says: The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a ruler from his thigh, until he comes who is to be sent: and he shall be the expectation of the nations (Gen. 49:10). Since therefore the tribe of Judah had been foreseen for the longevity of the kingdom, the generation of Kish is mentioned; so that the royal dignity, which was being established in the son, might be openly known to be dispensational, not permanent. But he who begets a carnal king, Kish, is called hard in our language, and he is proclaimed as strong in might. Even now there are many carnal men within the holy Church who seem to do great things: but they are carnal because they do not have the grace of the Holy Spirit. They are strong in might, therefore, because everything they seem to do that is great is corporal. For also Kish, the father of Saul, is said to be strong in might for this reason, that he might be felt to have had great physical strength. Strong in might, therefore, is hard: because he who exhibits great things carnally does not have a heart softened through compassion in fraternal charity. He acts powerfully in things which men outside cannot imitate, but he does not know how to be joined within to fraternal minds through the affection of

love. He does strong things which God reproves; and he does not care to exhibit the affection of charity which He approves. He is hard, therefore, because while he performs corporal things with a proud heart, the grace of the Holy Spirit does not soften his mind. On the contrary, the holy man glories, saying: God has softened my heart, and the Almighty has troubled me (Job 23:16). And often, those who imitate the manners of such men become rulers by the judgment of God. Whence also Saul is aptly remembered to have been the son of Kish.

2. But it must be asked why this same Saul is said to be choice and good, who is presented as the son of a hard man? But he is called choice not according to grace, but according to judgment. He is also called good, so that the disposition of divine equity may be commended. For even the evils which we often suffer for our sins, because they are imposed on us through divine justice, are good. Truly whatever is just is good. For through the justice of God reprobate pastors are permitted to ascend to the government of the holy Church; but those who are evil through iniquity are good by divine disposition; and those who are to be reproved in the final universal judgment are now chosen by the hidden ordination of God. Let the reprobate pastor, therefore, because his existence is decreed by the indignation of God, be called choice: and because he is justly permitted, let him be called good. Likewise, because he is provided as more useful than others for executing divine judgments, no one is said to be better

than he among the children of Israel. He is also remembered to tower from his shoulder upward above all the people: because he who follows the manners of carnal men in living strives greatly to do those things which another may not be able to do. For the carnal rector towers above the whole people from the shoulder upward, since in exterior things he is strong beyond comparison.

3. All these words of praise can also be understood as words by which, while the person of the king to be ordained is being proclaimed, the intention of those asking for a king may be confounded. For they say: There shall be a king over us, and he shall judge us, and he shall fight our battles for us (1 Sam. 8). He is called choice and good, and because there is no one better than he among the children of Israel, so that all good things may excel in the person of the requested king: but while he is not sufficient for those things which the people had proposed, human presumption may be confounded, so that, being conquered, it may waste away. And indeed, as I said above, the king who is chosen to go before the people to fight their battles, when he is deserted by divine help, died overwhelmed in war, and was then the cause of death, not of safety, for the people whom he preceded to those same battles. Finally, the people would ascribe it to God if he who had been chosen king by the judgment of God had not been so suitable for doing the things which the people wanted. He can also be understood as choice and good while it is asserted, not as he was foreseen to be in the future. He is

called choice and good, therefore, so that he may be felt to be such a one chosen by the Lord who was afterwards reproved through disobedience. Wherefore reason itself also requires that we should feel in a good sense those things which are said concerning him as choice and good up until the times of his reproof.

CHAPTER IV.

1. Summarizing everything briefly, let us see what edification they contain within themselves, according to another significance. Since we said that in Samuel the new priesthood is designated, what is meant by his becoming old, except that while the holy Church is led through the spaces of running times, the beauty of life in some priests grows old? But Samuel grew old because the vigor of authority withered. For Samuel was as it were a youth when the order of priests, gasping only for heavenly desires, while it sought no earthly things, could the more effectively preach heavenly things, and thereby inflamed the minds of subjects no less by words than by examples. For he prevailed in strength and radiated with youthful beauty, while he showed the power of the heavenly word in the splendor of a holy life: because whatever he could preach as valid by speaking, he also strove to show by living sublimely. For he also vivified dead souls by the word; but shining with the wonderful flower of youth, he raised dead bodies by command. When he also granted sight to the blind, walking to the lame, and a remedy to all sicknesses, and so

radiated with the beauty of a most holy life that it was of greater virtue to be able to live in this way than to help others in that way. Samuel, therefore, as it were flourished in youth when in the order of priests there shone forth together both a wonderful virtue of work and such an immense beauty of holy life. But it is already a long time since Samuel grew old. For many times have slipped away in which many of them follow the love of the world, whose virtue ought to have driven away the joys of the world from the hearts of others. Which, however, we do not say for this reason, that the holy Church has no religious men: but that they are few who in the height of preaching have perfectly known how to despise the world and to adhere to the highest desires. Wherefore Samuel is aptly said both to be old and to prophesy. He is indeed old because he has lost the rigor of harsh life in many: yet he does not cease to prophesy, because while he has some spiritual strength, he valiantly exhibits the virtue of a provident spirit. Which can be conveniently understood in one and the same preacher. They are indeed old and prophesy who are so loosened through negligence that they teach well but live badly. Who appoint their sons judges when they constitute those in the dignity of the priesthood who contemplate the times of their more remiss life. From the old, however, the young are ordained: because those who come to be promoted promise strong things. For they promise a most strong profession of priestly life, whose virtue they do not have in their future conduct. There-

fore the young are promoted: because those who ordain them, before they receive from them the profession of virtue, do not assume them to the height of so great an order. For first they insinuate to them both how sublimely they should live and how subtly they should teach: that they ought therefore to live sublimely that they may be able to preach usefully, that they may always direct the purpose of their life to heavenly things, that they may not seek temporal rewards for the labor of preaching, that they may not accept persons in judgment, but dispose all things by the just scale of equity: that they may hear the difficulties of the ways of God, and say whether they wish to undergo their labors.

2. Many, while they seek sacred orders, profess that they are walking these difficult ways: but when they arrive at that which they seek, they omit to hold the fortitude of their promise. Whence also the sons of Samuel are aptly reported not to have walked in his ways, but to have received bribes and perverted judgment. For they are the ways of Samuel, because they are set forth by the office of a preacher. The sons, therefore, do not walk in the ways of their father when those who reach sacred orders ambitiously desert the arduous paths of religion shown to them by their elders, and are more deeply immersed in the appetite for earthly things by a perverted intention. Whence they are openly presented as declining after avarice, receiving bribes, and perverting judgment. For those who neglect to labor for heavenly things must of necessity be more tightly

inserted into the appetite for earthly ones. To decline after avarice is indeed to flow away with the whole intention in the ambition for earthly things. For there are some who seek earthly gains through avarice, but yet do not decline after avarice: because they seek temporal things, but avoid incurring a crime in the appetite for them. They decline after avarice, therefore, who by no means fear to incur a crime for the sake of earthly things which they ardently seek. For they estimate their own soul to be inferior to everything which they can covet. For hence is violent rapine, hence latent thefts occur: because they violently oppress those over whom they prevail by avarice, and against those whose things they cannot bring violence, they strive to bring thefts. Often also against those whom they do not prevail by theft of hands, they lie in wait by the falsehood of words. Whence also the sons of Samuel, by an ordained process, are denoted in the inordinate confusion of avarice when it is said: (1 Sam. 8:3.) They declined after avarice, they took bribes, they perverted judgment.

3. For those who perverted judgment in order to receive bribes, for the purpose of bringing about the theft of the coveted thing, did not seek the obscurity of night, but the darkness of reason. And it should be noted that the ardor of avarice is the cause of receiving bribes, and the receiving of bribes is the cause of perverting judgment: so that by the prophet's narration the depravity of this vice may be shown, not only how it profits in the hearts of the reprobate, but how it can be

fundamentally extirpated from the minds of the holy. For if this perversity of judgment is born from the receiving of bribes, he who does not receive bribes does not pervert judgment; and he lightly rejects offered bribes who has thoroughly extirpated the root of avarice from his heart. But we gather this fault of the sons of Samuel more fully by seeing than by speaking. For if we look at the destitute places of the Churches, where the father grows old, the sons incur the mark of avarice, of receiving a bribe, and of perverted judgment: because where the person of the rector is dissolved through shameful gains, the hearts of the subject flock are easily dissipated, so that they live wickedly in themselves and provide examples of depravity to others. But in these things it is pleasing to admire greatly the judgments of almighty God. For the sons of Samuel, while they decline after avarice, while for the sake of perverting judgment they receive bribes, expend examples of depravity upon the people over whom they preside. The people themselves, however, while they ask for a king, cast down the sons of the prophet from the height of power. Almighty God indeed both receives the prayers of those asking for a king, and is angry that he is asked. By which things indeed we can be troubled, if we do not subtly see the reason for them. For what is more just than that he should fall by the judgment of the people who so studied by the reprobate judgment of his own mind that the people following him should perish? But yet when priests live badly, they are not to be judged

by the laity. Worthily, therefore, they receive a more unworthy one, who presumed unworthily to cast out an unworthy one. For concerning the sons of Samuel it is said: They received bribes, and they perverted judgments. But concerning that king whom the children of Israel ask for, very terrible threats are brought forth, because it is said: He will take your fields and oliveyards, and give them to his servants (1 Sam... [truncated]

(1 Sam. 10:25.) Samuel spoke to the people the law of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord.

4. What is it that the sons of the Israelites are said to be placed in the king's chariots? But the chariots of the prelates of the holy Church are their devoted desires. For while they fervently seek heavenly joys, they are carried, as it were, in chariots through the heights. Hence it is that Elijah is asserted to have been lifted up into heaven in a fiery chariot (4 Kings 2:1): because surely he who does not seek them through high and fervent desires will not be able to be lifted up to heavenly joys. When therefore good hearers begin through the examples of preachers to despise earthly things and to love eternal ones, truly the sons of the Israelites are placed in the chariots of kings. And it should be noted that they are said both to be taken and to be placed in chariots: because they ought first to be abstracted from carnal desires, so that they may well be able to be inflamed by the fires of heavenly love. Which earthly desires indeed, because they are not easily deserted, the sons are presented as being

taken. For it must be done through great violence that the elect hearer thoroughly deserts earthly desires and lifts himself up sublimely in heavenly things. Concerning this violence indeed the Lord says: The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force (Matt. 11:12). Concerning this Paul says: No one shall be crowned except he who has striven lawfully (2 Tim. 2:5). Which also is latently shown by these words, because the sons who are taken are presented as being placed not in seats, but in chariots. In a chariot indeed the ancients were accustomed to fight. But also he who is led by a chariot is carried sublime and terrible against the enemy. For elect men are the more sublime and terrible to hidden enemies as they have profited more deeply in the loftiness of internal love. They are sublime indeed because the suggestion of malignant spirits does not reach as far as their intention. They are also terrible because they can reprobate their counsels the more easily as they consist in the contemplation of heavenly joy through the vigor of internal affection. This indeed as often as it is said to those who are still carnal, the goodness of pious threats is exhibited to them. Which is such as if he were to say: Because you ask for a person of virtue, under his discipline you cannot be free for the leisure of life. Wherefore also knights r... [truncated]

(1 Sam. 8:12.) And he will appoint for himself tribunes and centurions.

5. They are tribunes when they begin: centurions when they are perfected in spiritual magis-

tery. For, as we said above, a centurion is named from the number hundred. Tribunes can also be understood as spiritual men, simple in knowledge, but inflamed by the love of God and neighbor. Who, although they know not how to speak deep and spiritual things, nevertheless through the examples of the elect, which they know, strive to kindle whom they can to the love of the Creator. A tribe indeed is called a kindred or a court. If therefore they are called tribunes from a tribe, those who bring forth examples of the saints for the profit of neighbors are named tribunes. To destroy our rusticity indeed, they come as it were a court, when they propose to us those things by which holy men pleased almighty God. And when they set forth the proper virtues of many saints, they open to us as it were the nobility of spiritual kindreds. Centurions therefore can be understood as more perfect men, who while they profit well by the magistery of preachers, become their hearers and cooperators. Concerning whom indeed the Lord says in the Gospel: Every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matt. 13:52). For such are not only principal in operation, but also learned in the knowledge of the word of God. Whence also they can the more usefully exhort neighbors to the conflict of spiritual warfare, as they show also the deep things, which they know how to preach, in the work of virtue. They have words in instruction, they have works for the examples of the simple: so that the wise may understand the deep

things they speak; and those who do not see the secrets of words in internal things, may imitate the works which they see outside. Centurions therefore are appointed when, by the perfection of virtue, they obtain the height of dignity: so that they may live sublimely, and the more loftily they live, the more usefully they may teach.

6. But those who are centurions, while they ordain times of war, ought to profit: so that they may be known to bear also the fruits of peace. After tribunes, therefore, and centurions, they become plowers of fields and reapers of harvests; so that they may open the hearts of the conquered now with the plowshare of exhortation, from which they may more abundantly reap the wheat of good works. They plow as it were in peace now indeed, who excite those hearts, which had conquered spiritual assaults, to exercising works of piety. And they reap harvests when they congratulate that elect works have burst forth from the seed of the divine word which they had scattered in the hearts of hearers. For they reap wheat from the field with sickles as it were, when by the embrace of charity they receive that from heavenly conversation by which they may be satiated with internal devotion.

7. But as long as we live in this life, we possess nothing in peace. For since the ancient enemy always opposes those who act well, it is necessary that we always defend those things which we do well. Wherefore also rightly after the plowers of the fields and the reapers of the harvests, the makers of arms and of the king's chariots are said

to be made. They fashion arms and chariots so that they may defend the very fields which they cultivate and those harvests which they reap. They fashion a chariot indeed so that they may be swift in meeting adversaries; but arms, so that they may be powerful. They mount the chariot indeed so that they may wear down the camps of demons with great impetus; and they carry arms so that they may extinguish those whom they attack. It was in this sublimity of the chariot indeed that he stood who said: Our conversation is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Whence also now secure, he who appeared superior to all his enemies, affirming said: No creature shall be able to separate us from the charity of Christ (Rom. 8:39). But he who had mounted the chariot held arms; whence also he explains, saying: But I so run, not as at an uncertainty: so I fight, not as one beating the air, but I chastise my body and bring it into servitude (1 Cor. 9:26, 27).

What therefore is more rightly expressed in this chariot than the sublimity of right intention? To fashion a chariot, therefore, is to raise the height of right intention in the minds of hearers. For those who through the examples of the better sort obtain the ministry of preaching, fashion chariots after the study of plowing and reaping, when they teach well-acting subjects to await only the eternal rewards of retribution from all the good works which they do. Indeed, to despise earthly things, to desire nothing transitory, to love eternal things, and to hasten to them with great desires, is now indeed to preside over a sub-

lime chariot. Concerning which chariots indeed it is said through the Psalmist: The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice: the Lord is among them (Ps. 67:18). Their arms indeed are sharp counsels, by which they strike enemies the more strongly as they the more quickly detect their astuteness. Whence also that powerful one spoke as it were armed: We are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). He also fashioned arms when he said: And take the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:16, 17).

Placed in those chariots and arms indeed, the elect are swift and powerful. Swift indeed: because while they desire spiritual things, they detect spiritual wickednesses in a moment. But they are powerful: because while they more ardently desire the highest things, whatever is suggested to them from the lowest love of the world they weigh as nothing: and as if carried by the weight of a chariot, they have a great impetus against enemies, who, full of holy virtues and sharp counsels, destroy in a moment all the temptations which are brought in. Nor is it devoid of this sense that a chariot, while it is rolled through the earth, both lifts the lower part upward and depresses the upper part downward. Thus indeed the right intention of holy men, while from the earthly things which it does it expects heavenly things, directs as it were the

part which it draws through the earth toward the highest things. And because it humbles itself in the sight of the Creator as much for the good work as for the expectation of eternal retribution, it sinks as it were toward the earth the part which it lifts upward. In its wheels indeed our chariot is incessantly rolled, if from a good work we always intend eternal things, and from all the height of our progress we take care to be humble.

Which arms and chariots are indeed then the king's, when they are seen to differ not at all from the form and doctrine of the preachers of Holy Church. Elect preachers therefore fashion chariots and arms when they teach their hearers to hasten to the heavenly country, both by rectitude of intention and by the fortification of virtue.

But all these things which we have shown in the progress of one person, nothing prevents us from perceiving as distributed by themselves in many. We have shown that the elect, proceeding through the degrees of virtues, are first placed in chariots; then ordered as horsemen and precursors of the royal four-horse chariots; appointed as tribunes, centurions, plowers, and reapers; and finally made makers of arms. But because Holy Church employs various ministries of the elect, whoever wishes can attribute individual gifts of graces to individual orders, so that each of them may be proper to those who are more strictly inserted into their affections.

8. What then is it that he adds: that he will take the daughters of the Israelites to be perfumers, and cooks, and bakers?

But by the name of daughters, sometimes infirmity, sometimes fecundity is designated.

Who therefore are the daughters of the Israelites, but elect minds prepared for the conception of the divine word? Who become perfumers of the king, because while they profit by the instruction of their preacher, they perceive in themselves the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit, through which they can wholesomely heal contrite hearts. They also become cooks, because while they are full of the fervor of the Holy Spirit, they kindle by their example the hearts of neighbors to the love of the Creator. They become bakers when they refresh elect minds with the nourishment of the word of God. The daughters, therefore, become perfumers when they cure the wounds of sins. Cooks, when by the example of their virtue they inflame hearts, purged from the filth of sins, to the study of a good work. But they are bakers when they no longer propose examples to those profiting through examples, but bring forth words of deep knowledge; so that, fed as it were with solid food, they may act the more strongly as they, now spiritually instructed, the more fervently desire eternal things.

It follows: (Verse 14.) He will take also your fields, and vineyards, and the best olive groves, and will give them to his servants. Who are the fields, what are the vineyards, what are the olive groves, which are taken from us by the right of prelates? But holy preachers, when they speak for the correction of sins, rebuke the delights of the flesh, the concupiscences of the mind, and the

simulations of good works. For if the delights of the flesh were not fields of iniquitous possession, the Apostle would by no means say: He that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh shall reap corruption (Gal. 6:8). To sow in the flesh indeed is to bury the purpose of the mind in the delights of the body. Who indeed reap corruption from the flesh, because in the resurrection of the elect they by no means receive the renovation of eternal incorruption. By the name of vineyards also, the concupiscences of the mind are rightly figured, because they inebriate the hearts of the reprobate and alienate them from the knowledge of the truth. Moses, censuring the fruit of this vineyard, says: Their vineyard is of the vineyard of the Sodomites, and of the suburbs of Gomorrah: their grape is a grape of gall, and the cluster most bitter (Deut. 32:32). Indeed, he leads a vine from the vineyard of the Sodomites, a branch from Gomorrah, who fills his mind with most wicked concupiscences. For he makes as it were a vineyard who forgets eternal things from that whence he is also inebriated through concupiscences; and he who refreshes himself as if under the shadow of a vineyard and the amenity of a depraved delight, prepares for himself the retribution of eternal fire. Whence too aptly explaining the fruit of the same vineyard, he said it was a grape of gall and a cluster of bitterness. For the grape is in the sight, the gall in the taste: delighting the sight, embittering the taste; because indeed it greatly pleases a reprobate mind what it covets, but in eternal punishment what is now sweet to it becomes

bitter. The king therefore takes fields from us when an elect preacher, by speaking, withdraws the movements of our flesh which were joyful in delight. He takes away vineyards when he thoroughly cuts off inebriating concupiscences from our heart. He also takes away olive groves when he rebukes works of false mercy, when by rightly exhorting he suggests that there is no merit in a work unless it proceeds from the purpose of a good intention.

10. But it must be greatly asked why they are asserted to be given to the servants of the king. For if these things are taken from us by right, who will they be to whom they are not unworthily bestowed? But if we seek this subtly, we find our holy preachers great in their commands. Who then are these servants, but those concerning whose head the Lord says to blessed Job: Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever (Job 40:23)? For the malignant spirits are servants of holy men; but in this life they are perpetual servants, and in that life indeed they are servants for ever. For they daily bring in that from which holy men may be crowned. For since from the battle of this life the victory of eternal glory is offered to us, they who renew against us those wars by which we are led to eternal rest, indeed perform great services for us. They are also servants of the conquered, truth testifying: By whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave (2 Pet. 2:19). For while they stir up battles against those who are about to conquer, they serve those who are crowned from that source whence they

powerfully receive their battles for a time. But because that which profits for the glory of the saints increases for the malignant spirits in the augmentation of damnation, the removed fields, and vineyards, and olive groves are bestowed upon the servants. Indeed, for all their malice the demons shall be punished in eternal pain. Indeed, in the meeting of the occult contest, when the elect conquer, the evils which they repel they bestow upon their enemies; because the former, like gold in the furnace (Wis. 3:6), are proved, while the latter are punished for the reprobate suggestion. The servants therefore receive the fields, vineyards, and olive groves: because when sinners return to life, the doctors preaching, this also profits for the heap of damnation for the demons, that the penitents in past guilt were held for so long by their fraud. These are also given to the servants when sinners converted to the Lord by the office of the preacher recognize that in the love of past crimes they were held by the fraud of the demons.

11. But what is it that the harvests and the returns of the vineyards are asserted to be tithed, and given to the eunuchs and servants of the king? But the harvests of the elect are tithed when we collect their more excellent works, so that we may produce them for the example of the faithful. Finally, there was only one who had in himself the fullness of all virtues, into whom all the fullness of the divinity infused itself corporally (Col. 1:19). But we, because we have all received of his fullness, possess the gifts of graces

divided by parts. Hence Paul says: To one indeed, by the spirit, is given the word of wisdom: and to another, the word of knowledge... to another, kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches... to another, faith in the same spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:8). But by the denary number, because it is perfect, we tithe the virtues when we collect the gifts of individual elect, which the lesser may imitate. For of Moses it is written: That he was the meekest above all men that dwelt upon earth (Num. 12:3). Of Abraham also it is said: Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice (Gen. 15:6). When therefore we wish to imitate meekness with faith, it is necessary that from the example of Moses and Abraham foods be tithed for the refreshment of our mind, as if of elect harvests. Thus indeed the chastity of Joseph (Gen 39:8), thus the patience of Job (Job 1:21), thus the zeal of Phinehas (Num 25:7), preachers bring forth for our example: because while they show the virtues of the perfect, they gather as it were the tithes of elect harvests, which they may set before those profiting well. Whence also rightly the same tithes of fruits are foretold to be given to eunuchs and servants. For they are eunuchs who, by the virtue of the mind, have crushed in themselves all the kindlings of lust. Concerning whom indeed the Lord says in the Gospel: There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:12). They are servants who still serve under

another's care in the studies of the active life, and cannot yet go out free to the height of charity. Who also are found in Moses to owe service to their masters for six years (Exod. 21:2), so that in the seventh they may go out free: because indeed they ought first to be perfect in work, so that they may be able to go out orderly into the height of contemplation. To the eunuchs and servants, therefore, the doctor bestows the tithes of harvests when those who obey him in the brightness of chastity follow the elect works of their elders. He also bestows the tithes of vineyards when he shows to them with what wonderful charity our Fathers loved God and neighbor; so that they also may study to be filled with the abundance of the same charity, and as it were inebriated and forgetting past things, may love only future things and not omit to run fervently toward them.

12. But after all these things, the servants of the Israelites and handmaids and the best young men are foretold to be taken and placed in the king's work. Who are the servants of the carnal but those who, by the example of the wicked, have been so depraved by long custom that they seem to have perpetually submitted the necks of their minds under the yoke of most wicked imitation? Their servants therefore are taken when, by the study of elect preachers, those also desert sins who seemed vehemently subjected to the reprobate imitation of the carnal. Who also are called the best young men. They are young men indeed because they are strong in evil; they are also called best because they are more wicked

than other sinners. To whom indeed it is said by the prophet: Woe to you that are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness (Isai. 5:22). Finally, they drink wine who, by the deliberation of the mind, precipitately receive the fervor of concupiscence and mix drunkenness; because while they are inflamed with the ardors of concupiscences, having lost reason, they know not how to return to the ways of rectitude. But they are mighty and strong both to drink and to mix drunkenness, so that for the fervent purpose of evil they are taught to be as it were the best servants. This divine word likewise demonstrates these best young men when it explains the greed of the devil, saying: His meat is elect (Habac. 1:16). For the ancient enemy is greatly refreshed in the wickedness of those who are more wicked than the most wicked.

13. But by the name of handmaids is designated that most wicked condition of sinners who are very bad through iniquity and provide examples of depravity to others. For as handmaids they bring forth servants, while they are not only workers of great iniquity but also mothers. But because by the preaching of the saints such as these are also converted, who afterward bestow great services upon almighty God, rightly servants and handmaids are said to be taken away and placed in the work of the king. Did not the King of kings then take a handmaid when he said of that great sinner: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much (Luke 7:47)? And he placed her in his work when he entered into a

castle and she received him into her house (Luke 10:38). He also placed her in his work because, rising from the dead, he enjoined upon her the preaching of his resurrection (Mark 16:7). He also took a servant when he called Matthew from the profit of the tax office to follow him. In his work he also placed him, because he provided him a feast in his house and made him a preacher of Ethiopia, an Evangelist of the converted world (Matt 9:9; Mark 1:14; Luke 5:27). Because therefore by the ministry of preachers these also return to the Lord, concerning whose salvation human thought could have despaired, rightly servants and handmaids and the best young men are described as to be placed in the king's work.

14. By the name of servants and handmaids, the movements of the heart and the affections can be understood. For when they suggest to us reprobate things, they are servants; when the affections of the mind desire to be subjected to the suggestions of depraved movements, they are handmaids. Then indeed it is necessary that we dominate both by the rigor of our purpose. Preachers take away our servants and handmaids when they instruct the movements of our hearts and our affections how they may be directed to the service of God. They place them in the king's work when we now exercise the same service of almighty God which we have learned by their magistery. Wherefore also in donkeys what is more aptly figured than the lascivious movements of the soul? But they are placed in the king's work when that mind, which used to be

moved to lasciviousness by depraved thoughts, profits by the preaching of the doctor and places its affections in the desire of imitating chastity. They can be designated by the name of servants and handmaids and donkeys who strongly bestow corporal obsequies upon secular men. But they are placed in the king's work because, converted to the service of almighty God, they tolerate spiritual things the more devoutly for the sake of eternal retribution as they more clearly recognize that they were tolerating great things without fruit. The king is also said to tithe the flocks: because whoever desires to please almighty God must be clean through innocence and intent upon the study of a good work. Through the former indeed the tree is good, and through the latter it also bears fruit. But because we employ many things so that we may be able to keep innocence and exhibit good works, the very crowds of innocent thoughts are our flocks. What then is it that they are tithed, but because the subtlety of thoughts is not easily seen? For often we think we think good things which, subtly discussed, are not good. The flocks therefore ought to be tithed, so that only that may be of the king's right which is contained in the denary number. Which is then well done in us when by the magistery of our preachers we learn to be perfect not only in the exhibition of work but also in the searching out of thought. But at the last it is said: (Verse 17.) And you shall be his servants.

15. That they may know themselves subject to his right in such a way, namely, that they may not

dare to pass over his mandates. The Lord indeed wished to establish this royal domination when he said: Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven (Matt. 16:19). He also required this power from subjects who said: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which I have preached to you, let him be anathema (Gal. 1:8). Hence likewise the Lord, sending the disciples into preaching, says: He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me (Luke 10:16). Hence concerning the preachers of Judea the Lord says to the same disciples: Whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do (Matt. 23:3). We are therefore servants of our kings when we are so subjected to the command of our prelates that we presume to do nothing besides their authority. Because therefore they preside over those who strengthen their virtues in the virtue of obedience, at the end of the royal right it is said: And you shall be his servants: so that faithful subjects may then also recognize that they ought to be subject to the precept of preachers when, through the progress of virtues, they are led to the summits of perfection. Which also the Truth itself, teaching the disciples in the same words, says: When you shall have done all these things... say: We are unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10).

Nevertheless, because he was speaking these things to carnal people, he added, saying: (Verse 18.) And you shall cry out in that day from the

face of your king... and the Lord will not hear you in that day, because you have desired unto yourselves a king.

16. Those who had asked for a king cry out from the face of the king when those who had vowed to lead a spiritual life under a good ruler attempt to leave the labors of the same life. By the face indeed all are recognized. The face of the king, therefore, is the known conversation and erudition of a good preacher. Who indeed, because they lead a hard and rough life for eternal life and command hard things, carnal subjects endeavor not to imitate their life and doctrine, but to flee. Indeed, those who had asked for a king then see the face of the king whose appearance they were ignorant of; because they consider in their prelate how laborious is the restriction of the heavenly journey, which they were desiring as if an easy thing before they knew it. Then those who asked for a king cry out from the face of the king; because while they do not wish to desert the custom of a carnal life, they strive to escape the laudable imitation of their best pastor whom they wished to preside over them. And because with a blind heart they cannot see the light, they cry to the Lord, that is, they beseech the Lord that they may be able to escape the spiritual yoke of God. But the Lord does not hear them in that day. What is that day in which reprobate subjects beseech the Lord, but the intention of vain prosperity? They are not heard because indeed, by divine grace, it never happens that a subjection once promised to good rulers can go out free

to the delights of the world. Wherefore also he added the cause, saying: (Verse 18.) Because you have desired unto yourselves a king.

17. As if he were to say: The subjection promised to spiritual pastors is indissoluble. You ask for a king for yourselves easily indeed; but because the royal dignity is heavy, you cannot easily escape their power. Because we say this regarding the history, we think it must be noted that almighty God, while he foretells the right of the king, bestows a form of institution upon religious superiors. Why? So that they who command the narrowest way of conversation may not easily grant entrance to those newly approaching. Wherefore also the best master of the same narrowest life, the learned disciple of the supreme truth, commands, saying: Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God (1 John 4:1). And likewise: Let the hard and rough things be announced to him, through which one goes to God, so that he may know to what he enters. The Lord therefore preaches the right of the king, let him say, let him know all things, what kind the carnal are to be in his observation; and so that the weak may not easily approach the life of virtue, let strong superiors by no means easily receive the weak. Indeed, the speed of conversion mostly arises from the precipitation of counsel, not from the increase of devotion. For when the infirm promise strong things, it is not an experienced strength of mind, but a confusion of discretion. All of whom the wise man admonishes under one denotation, who says: Lift not up a burden above

thee. They therefore who preside over others in the strong purpose of a regular life ought to receive those converted to the same life the more discreetly, as it is also the more useful to foreknow whether the petition of those approaching be from the virtue of the mind or from the precipitation of the will. For they who are easy in their acts are wont instantly to desire the asperity of the spiritual life, so that they may seem to desire with great virtue of mind what they seek.

(Verses 19, 20.) But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, and they said: Nay: but there shall be a king over us, and we also will be like all nations: and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles for us. Because this has been widely explained above, we are idly detained in its searching. It follows: (Verse 21.) And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and spoke them in the ears of the Lord.

To hear the voice of the people is to recognize what those seeking the habit of holy conversation say outwardly. For we hear as it were only the voice of those approaching when we know what they assert outwardly; but what they are to be among the assertions of their promise, we do not see. We ought therefore to speak them in the ears of the Lord, so that he himself may receive the words of the promise; who, while he hears the words, discusses the hearts, and from the context of progress, searches out the usuries of a robust work. For let the minds of our novices hear this and be terrified: because namely what they say to us, we speak in the ears of the Lord. For what they

promise before us, we offer to God, so that he may now hold from our hands what he may search out. Which liberty of the ruler is indeed the obligation of the subject; because he is subjected to the more rigorous sentence the more clearly he can know that concerning that which he answers, he must render an account to almighty God. When therefore we offer to God those things which novices promise, we give him as it were the chirograph which they make to us. And because this is done secretly, Samuel is said to have spoken in the ears of the Lord those things which the people had said. Indeed we speak in the ears of friends when we conceal what we say from strangers. It follows: (Verse 21.) And the Lord said to Samuel: Hearken to their voice, and make them a king.

19. Above, the prophet, looking forward to future things, says: You shall cry out to the Lord, and he will not hear you, because you have desired unto yourselves a king. But now the Lord says: Hearken to their voice, and make them a king (1 Sam. 8:18, 22). What is shown to us by this, but that it is often divinely inspired to good rulers of Holy Church that they should subject those to the studies of the heavenly life who afterward are not devoted under the discipline of the same profession? Who indeed are afterward to cry out from the face of the king, and yet by divine precept they receive a king: because they are divinely inspired to approach the service of God devotedly, whom the solicitude of pastors, with great labor, ought to restrain under the bond of the same service for the increase of the

eternal reward. They are said to cry out to the Lord from the face of their king: but let the kings themselves hear what the prophet sent from the Lord answers, so that they may know what they ought to do among those cries. He will not, he says, hear you. Therefore neither ought they themselves to hear. For those who are lukewarm in holy monasteries are to be healed as if sick; they are not to be cast out as if dead. For if they are sent from the Lord, they will recover among the kindlings of spiritual ointments. Let the Lord therefore say: Make them a king: because indeed some come devotedly to the service of God who are also permitted to grow cold, but by the study of the pastors, to whose precept they had subjected themselves by divine inspiration, they grow warm again to the love of the heavenly country.

But now he explains what kind of pastor is suitable for these things, saying: (1 Sam. 9:1, 2.) There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a man of Jemini, valiant in strength. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a chosen and as yet goodly man: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he appeared above all the people.

20. Why is it that when the king to be appointed is shown, the names of the fathers are proclaimed: unless because he is unworthily assumed to the primacy of Holy Church who does not hold the nobility of the holy Fathers in his

morals? But six names of fathers are assigned, so that the perfection of their holy conversation in good action may be designated. For in six days the world was founded, and in six ages it is consumed. There are therefore six fathers who are named in the genealogical order of the elect pastors of Holy Church: because indeed they are sons by imitation of those who obtain the summit of perfection in the form of those following. But the father of the king, Kish, is called hard: because indeed those whose imitators holy preachers are, are not remiss in life and zeal. For they are hard, because they do not speak soft things to sinners: they are also hard, because so that they may correctly amend others, they demonstrate in their own conversation the hard things which they command to them. For he appeared hard who rebuked the Jews, saying: Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance (Matt. 3:7). But he who was hard to others was not remiss to himself. For so that the Evangelist might show him to hold the hardness of penance which he preached, he says: He had his garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6). To Ezekiel also it is said: Behold I have made thy face harder than their faces, and thy forehead harder than their foreheads: I have made thy face like an adamant and like flint (Ezek. 3:8). But he who came so hard against those hard in evil, so that he might show by speaking the hard things which were

to come, for seven days in the midst of them, before he spoke, he wept. For thus he says: And I sat where they sat, and remained there seven days mourning in the midst of them. Because therefore holy preachers are not gentle and meek to obstinate sinners, and they perform what they preach as rough, Saul is rightly said to be the son of a hard man. For an elect preacher ought to imitate those who both preach sharp things and observe what they speak. Whence also concerning the same father of the king it is added: Valiant in strength. There are some within Holy Church who are strong by elation and arrogance. For they do great things; but when men cease to praise the things which they do, they themselves omit to do those same great things. He therefore is valiant in strength who has from the Holy Spirit the virtue which he shows in a good work. Concerning which strength indeed Anna vaticinated above in her song, saying: The weak are girt with strength. Concerning this the Lord promises again to the disciples, saying: Stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). In this strength he walked strongly of whom it is written: And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee (Luke 4:14). He therefore who is called hard is asserted to be valiant in strength: because elect men, while they preach the highest things, demonstrate immense things: and everything high that they command, and everything great that they do, they work in the power of the Holy Spirit. Concerning whom it is worthily added: And he had a son whose name was Saul,

chosen and good. For he who is an imitator of such is not only useful for the labor of ministry, but apt for the fruit of the inheritance. For indeed even Judas was chosen for ministry: but because he was not good, he lost the right of succession. Who therefore are signified in Saul as yet chosen and good, but the elect imitators of the holy Fathers, who are useful to others through doctrine and to themselves through conversation: who can so rule others that they by no means cease to provide for themselves? For they are elect and good because they so seek the gains of others that they suffer no losses of their own. For they are full in themselves, flowing out to others, and from their abundance they so bestow upon others that they do not lose anything of their own fullness. They have what they may offer to others, but having what may suffice for themselves, they offer to no one. They so strive to offer oil to others that the kindlings of light are not taken from themselves: so that while they illuminate others, they do not extinguish themselves. Rightly therefore is he called chosen and good: because certainly he who undertakes the government of Holy Church ought to be rich, both adorned with spiritual gifts and with the fullness of merits. And because from the common order those who excel are to be chosen, it follows: And there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he. Whose excellence is indeed commended when it is added: From his shoulders and upward he appeared above all the people. By this species of the body indeed, in the person of the prelate to be

ordained, the acts of virtue are pre-signified. For what is designated in the shoulder but fortitude? But he who appeared above all the people from the shoulder and upward was of such sublime stature that he who was taller among the people would reach with his head only to the shoulder of the king: but the future king would surpass the height of all by his neck and head. But what are the heads but the minds of the subject people? Which when they are greatly stretched out, reach up to the shoulder of the king to be ordained: because he who is sought for the summit of ruling Holy Church ought to be of such perfection that whatever the people wish to propose to themselves of a good work, he ought to demonstrate in his conversation. For the heads of the people touch the king's shoulder as it were when their hearts find whatever of virtue they seek in their pastor. But the king excels by the neck, he excels also by the head. For what is designated in the neck but speech: what in the head but the contemplation of the mind? By head and neck therefore he exceeds the heads of all subjects, if he is wonderful by the height of contemplation and by the sublimity of doctrine. For he is as it were sublime in head when he contemplates those things of heavenly secrets which others cannot contemplate. He also has a neck above others who, wonderful by the height of his speech, is not to be equaled by others. For he had as it were lifted up his head on high who said: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether

in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth) (2 Cor. 12:1, 2). But as a chosen and good king, so that he might show himself also to hold a neck above all heads, he said: He heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter (Ibid., 4). But why do we wonder as it were at his eminent neck in those things which he kept silent? Let us equal him, if we can, in those things which he said. From the neck of the apostle Paul proceeded his epistles, and although from that time wise men have begun to explain them, they still strive to know better the things which he said. And while they daily profit in his erudition, leaning as it were toward the summit of the neck, they can by no means reach it. Let the king therefore excel in neck, excel in head, let him be sublime in shoulder; so that he may be perfect in conversation, wonderful in eloquence, arduously above others in the citadel of contemplation. But he who is great in conversation, principal in eloquence, suspended in contemplation above all, before he arrives at the summit of government, ought to have signs of fraternal charity outwardly: so that namely he may have such solicitude for neighbors that he may seek the gains of souls for eternal life. Rightly therefore in their type it is added:

(Verses 3, 4.) Now the she-asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost: and Kish said to Saul his son: Take one of the servants with thee, and arise, go, and seek the she-asses. And when they had passed through mount Ephraim, and through the land of Shalisha, and had not found them, they

passed also through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there: and through the land of Jemini, and found them not.

21. Kish, who is called hard, signifies not only his elect, but also the Redeemer himself. For no one stood more hard to himself than he. For the prophet, insinuating the asperity of this hardness, says: Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows (Isa. 53:4). For to die is not to suffer for mortals, who are passible of a damned nature. He therefore stood vehemently hard to himself, who had not in himself that from which he might suffer; but that he might deliver us by suffering, he worthily assumed that in which he might be hard to himself and be able to suffer. The she-asses of Kish are sinful souls (1 Sam. 10). Because they have also been regenerated in the faith of the Redeemer, they are called hard; but lost she-asses, because through uncleanness they have been separated from his service. For hence it is that, tending to his passion, he sat upon a freed she-ass and a colt (Matt. 21:7), so that he might patently show that he had come to suffer for this, that he might succor sinners. For he was confessing that he sought the perishing she-asses when he said: The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). These she-asses he both sought through himself, and still sends preachers to seek. Kish therefore says to his son that he should seek the she-asses when by spiritual inspiration the Redeemer commands the hearts of the elect that they should go forth into the min-

istry of preaching. But going forth into the office of preaching, because they ought to lead only the spiritual sense with them, they are commanded to take one of the servants. For he takes one servant who, while he goes forth to provide a form of living to others, is spiritual in all that he does. For he took one of the servants of whom it was foretold: He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias (Luke 1:17). He had taken one servant with him who says: We have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God (1 Cor. 2:12). Hence again he says: We have the mind of Christ (Ibid., 16). Hence through Ezekiel it is said of the holy animals: Whither the impulse of the spirit was to go, thither they went (Ezek. 1:12). Seeking therefore the she-asses, he takes one of the servants: when he who newly begins to seek the gains of souls disposes to do all things spiritually which he thinks to do. But to find the she-asses is to behold sinners converted in the light of holiness. For as the lost she-asses they are not found when reprobate hearts bury themselves in the darkness of sins.

22. And because they fall into those same darknesses of sins through the five senses of the body, they are sought through five regions without being found, namely, mount Ephraim, the land of Shalisha, and Shaalim, and of the man of Jemini, and Zuph. For everyone is hidden there where he is cast forth through sin; and as one lost, it is not known where he is, when he leaves the light of justice in which God placed him. Hence it is that in paradise, after sin, He seeks the first

man, saying: Adam, where art thou? (Gen. 3:9). As if He should say: Because I find thee not in the light in which I placed thee, show where thou hast placed thyself. Hence He inquires concerning the dead Lazarus, saying: Where have you laid him? (John 11:34). But him whom He was seeking as one lost, He was commanding to go forth that He might find him, saying: Lazarus, come forth. Man therefore is lost when he sins; he is found when he now pronounces the sin against himself by repenting. For because it is commanded to the sinner through the sacred oracles: Tell thou first thy iniquities, that thou mayest be justified (Isa. 43:26, according to the LXX): while he who has sinned begins to be justified by confessing, he is already discerned in the light, where he is already found placed.

But Saul, who seeking the she-asses found them not, designates the person of a learned preacher indeed, but one newly beginning. Whom indeed Almighty God does not allow to bring forth the fruit of preaching, lest he should esteem the conversion of sinners as a vile thing while he can lightly convert them to the Lord. Conversion is therefore deferred so that the converted may be loved; and the preacher may love them so much the more, the more clearly he sees that he does not prevail to gain them quickly. But while holy men are not able to convert others by their preaching, they begin to fear vehemently concerning themselves, lest they should displease Almighty God therein, whence they were thinking they would vehemently please Him; and

it is often so done that the hearts of new preachers are so terrified that they already propose to desert the office of that same preaching, and to be at leisure for God through silence. Wherefore also it is added:

(Verse 5.) But when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant: Come, let us return, lest my father forget the she-asses, and be solicitous for us.

23. He deliberates to return to his father, who, having postponed the intention of preaching, desires to be at leisure for God in the secret of silence. He indeed is said to return who is shown to have been sent before. For the sons are as it were in the presence of the father when the elect men dwell in the secret contemplation of the Redeemer. They return therefore when they come from the public of holy preaching to search out the joys of eternal brightness. But because holy men do nothing unadvised, Saul consulted the servant concerning the return to his father. For then we consult the servant when with an intent mind we provide that what we dispose to attempt ought not to differ from the spiritual sense. He had indeed disposed to return to his father who was saying: I said: I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against me (Psalm 38:1, 2). The sinner stands against preachers when, at their preaching, he does not desert the state of his iniquity. And because the preacher then proposes to be silent to him and to be at leisure for God, so that he

may return to his father, he becomes mute. But because through silence he learned the will of God better, his heart grew hot, and while the fire of internal meditation was burning, he spoke. Which is also shown in this place, because the servant being consulted bestowed counsel upon him consulting him, saying: (Verse 6.) Behold there is a man of God in this city, a noble man: all that he saith cometh to pass without doubt: now therefore let us go thither, if perhaps he may tell us of our way, for which we are come.

24. He calls the man of God Samuel, in whom we have already said the preachers of the holy Church are designated. Who indeed is called a man for the reverence of holy conversation, and all that he speaks is shown to come to pass without ambiguity: because whatever he threatens concerning eternal punishments, whatever he promises concerning eternal joy to the just, it is so as he denounces, both the impious shall go to punishment, and the elect to glory. Who also is shown to be in the city: because the elect pastor is known to be always vigilant in the common custody of the subject people. The pastor is in the city, because while he guards others, he is fortified in himself. Whence also through the prophet, in the praises of all the men of God, it is said under the description of one: He shall dwell on high, the fortifications of rocks shall be his highness (Isa. 33:16). For by how much more highly he is suspended in the vision of the eternal citizens, by so much more strong for himself, and more useful for his neighbors is he found to be.

25. He is also called noble: because he is conspicuous by heavenly conversation, and has nothing of the rusticity of worldly life. For he is seen to be noble from whence he is a citizen. For of secular men, because there is no composition of manners, as if nourished in exterior places, they are rustic. For from the accustomed dishonor of the mind, they bring forth base motions of the body; and as if very degenerate, they know not the gesture of urban custom, while through all that they do, they cover the beauty of their life with the vileness of earthly obscurity. On the contrary, the men of God are noble, who while they strongly do those things which are divine, in all their work they resplend with heavenly light: and they have nothing of degeneracy, who in the great light of all their conversation bring forth the rays of celestial origin.

To this man therefore is Saul led by the servant, that he may be instructed: because they who are to be placed in the height of prelacy are admonished to be subjected to the spiritual sense by the mastership of perfect preachers. He admonishes us to be led by this servant who says: If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law (Gal. 5:18). Truly it is to be asked why it is said doubtfully: If perhaps he may tell us of our way, for which we are come. But because he desires to learn spiritual things, because he longs to receive huge gifts: whether he be worthy of the same gifts, he cannot know. He begins therefore to doubt, who does not presume himself to merit such great things by his own merits. Which

doubt indeed arises to the elect from the virtue of humility. Wherefore also it is said to Saul by the voice of the accompanying servant: If perhaps he may tell us of our way. Because indeed the spiritual sense suggests to us not to savor high things, not boldly to presume concerning Almighty God, but to ask His gifts with the highest reverence of holy fear. Meritoriously therefore is he called a servant (or child), who is preached to always teach humble things. While therefore he says: Let us go thither, and suddenly subjoins: If perhaps he may tell us of our way, he clearly indicates that the spirit works in the sense of the elect of God, while it makes them both to approach devotedly to seeking spiritual gifts, and to fear with great reverence concerning the omnipotence of the giver.

(Verse 7.) And Saul said to his servant: Behold we will go: what shall we carry to the man? The bread is spent in our bags: and we have no present to give to the man of God, nor any thing else.

26. The minds of the humble have this as their own: that they have spiritual gifts, but in those things which they have, they do not attend to themselves. For because they perceive the gifts of virtues from the Holy Spirit, therefore the Holy Spirit, who bestows the gifts, takes them away from their estimation, so that they may have these in the virtue of conversation, but may not have them in the tumor of elation. Well therefore is it said of Saul: From the shoulder and upward he appeared above all the people. And he said to his servant: The bread is spent in our bags, and

we have no present: because the elect men, and those fit to dispose the height of the holy Church, look upon themselves as small through humility in that very thing in which they are great through virtue.

And they have bread indeed for the refreshment of the souls of the faithful in the wisdom of the word, but a basket indeed in the memory of internal meditation. For when they preserve in memory for the instruction of the faithful those things which they gather in secret meditation, they replace them as it were as bread in a basket. For concerning these baskets it is said in the Gospel: They filled seven baskets with the fragments (Matt. 15:37; Mark 8:8). When the loaves abound on the table of the Lord, the baskets are commanded to be filled: because when the soul of the elect is refreshed in the heavenly contemplation of the Redeemer, it is instructed in the same contemplation of truth, so that the nourishment of the word, which is seen to increase in itself, may be replaced in memory for the instruction of the faithful. They have also something else abundantly besides bread and the basket, who together with the virtue of contemplation and the doctrine of the word, abound in the copy of holy operation.

Therefore, so that the humility of the saints may resound in the speech of the king to be ordained, he says: The bread is spent in our bags, and we have no present to give to the man of God, nor any thing else: because the Holy Spirit makes those who are prepared for the government of

the ecclesiastical height great in the virtue of the internal gift, but altogether small in the respect of their own estimation. Let the servant therefore say: Let us go thither, if perhaps he may tell us of our way. But let Saul inspect himself as empty: because the Holy Spirit, while He instructs the senses of those living honestly, makes them sometimes bold, sometimes timid. Bold indeed, so that they may presume... (Verse 8.) Behold, there is found in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: let us give it to the man of God, and let him tell us of our way.

27. As a servant (or child) the sense of the elect man speaks good things when he is impelled to speak by the nod of the Holy Spirit. What is it, therefore, that he says: There is found in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver? What is this part of a shekel of silver? But because by the name of silver divine oracles are designated, silver in the hand of the servant is the divine word in the virtue of knowing. For it is one thing to be able to say a word, another to be able to feel it. For even the reprobate speak the divine oracles, but none but the elect can feel them. For that thing is felt whose virtue is recognized. For even sick fish eat, but the force of the sickness takes from them the experiment of taste: so that what they are seen to eat, they are prohibited also to feel. So indeed, surely, all carnal men, while they speak heavenly things which they do not love, use things as if sick, which they are prohibited to feel. Silver, therefore, is found in the hand of the servant when, through the merit of humility, holy men

receive with a great affect of charity the heavenly things which they speak: so that it is very sweet to them to say heavenly things, because they are sweetly, and much more sweetly, saturated through love. Whence also it is written: The poor shall eat and shall be filled (Psalm 21:27). For because the food of the soul is the word of God, the poor eat and are filled, the rich cannot be filled: because indeed the elect men, who love heavenly things, as often as they hear these, they grow hot more fervently toward them; the reprobate speak and hear heavenly things, which they receive into no sweetness for the refreshment of their mind. But it is called the fourth part of a shekel of silver for the quality of time. For that we may see the other parts of this shekel, the prophets, apostles, and martyrs are to be considered. For because according to the quality of time the sonority of preaching was distributed to individual orders, they as it were individually had a fourth part of the shekel. They therefore exhibited the fourth part of the shekel when they promised the arrival of the Redeemer to the Synagogue. The Apostles gave their part when they preached to the Jews that He who had been promised had already come. The Martyrs also bestowed their part when they were leading infidels to the faith of the Redeemer.

(Verse 9.) For he was called a Seer.

28. For to be called is to be said by public relation. But a Seer is he who also looks back upon internal things, which the mind of the carnal does not attend to. Whence also it is said of

the holy animals: Round about and within they were full of eyes. Who are circumspect in exterior things, and provident in intrinsic things. On the contrary, the Lord, rebuking the presumption of carnal teachers in the Gospel, says: If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14). He is also called a Seer to whom remote and absent things are present. Which well suits the holy preachers, who through knowledge are as much present to spiritual things as they disdain to fix their intention on exterior things. For such the pastor of the holy Church ought to be: because he is constituted in the way of the heavenly country to provide light to the subjects. Let him therefore always scatter rays of light, so that the faithful subjects, from the experience of his illumination, may draw others to illumination. It follows, and says:

(Verse 9.) Formerly in Israel thus every one spoke going to consult God: Come, let us go to the Seer. We go to consult the Lord when we go to learned preachers, that we may find counsel for our salvation. But because now there is such a rarity of perfect men, while we attend to the flower of the religion of ancient times, let us bewail its failure in the present time. Being compunct by the misery and calamity of the present time, let us sigh that the flower of the elapsed time has withered with the beauty of holiness. While therefore we discern the pastors of the Churches to adhere to earthly things, to seek fleeting things, to bring forth no insignia of spiritual life, while no light of our prelates is poured

into us, remembering those things which have gone before for the labor of compunction, let us say: Formerly in Israel thus every one spoke going to consult the Lord: Come, let us go to the Seer.

Israel is called seeing God, or in whom is God. Which name is certainly conveniently fitted to the holy Church, whose people it is called. For also in the Gospel it is said: Behold I am with you even to the consummation of the world (Matt. 28:20). Which indeed, because in the prior time it had pastors florid with spiritual conversation, learned in great knowledge, who with great contempt vilified earthly things and thought upon heavenly things: toward the light which the people saw in them, they could exhort one another, saying: Let us go to the Seer. If therefore we must go to the seers, likewise we must turn away from the blind: because we ought not to imitate, but to flee, the examples of reprobate prelates: but always to ask the instruction of our edification from those who by the merit of conversation know spiritual things. And because none but spiritual men do this, it follows:

(Verse 10.) And Saul said to his servant: Best is thy word; come, let us go. The best word is that than which a better can by no means be heard. As often therefore as counsels for our salvation are suggested to us spiritually, the word is made within us than which a better could not be found. We praise therefore the word of the servant as often as we are well-pleased in the purpose of our spiritual sense. And we promise to go with him when we consent to spiritual thoughts. But

because a good thought is then fruitful when it is perfected in operation, it follows: (Verses 10, 11.) And they came into the city, in which was the man of God: and as they went up the ascent of the city, they found maids going out to draw water, and said to them: Is the Seer here?

31. They who seek the man of God come into the city: because it often happens that the life and doctrine of a prelate is sought in the conversation of the subjects. So surely also trees are often sought, whose species are found not in the leaves, but in the fruit. But often shrubs that have sprung up are mixed with great trees, and they lie that their fruits are of those trees with which they are mixed. He therefore who wishes to discern the fruit, let him first discern also the branches: so that he may recognize from which tree the fruit proceeds. So, so indeed it is in the conversation of the faithful: because in the elect people of a good preacher, while many evil ones are admixed, as it were thorns arise within good trees. Therefore the conversation of the elect preacher is not to be explored in all subjects, but in the elect alone. Then indeed we discern as it were the branches of a good tree with discretion, when in the people we imitate those rectors as elect apples, who profit by the example of their master: and we flee those as briars, who are reprobated by the fraud of the ancient enemy. Well therefore is it said of Saul and his servant: that they came into the city, and ascended the hill of the same city; because indeed the perfection of holy men when it is sought in subjects, not imperfect members, but

elect and perfect ones are to be sought. For also artisans first begin their works, then they adorn them. A painter also, when he desires to superinduce beautiful colors or gold, first lays a viler color. He therefore who wishes to judge of the skill of artisans, let him not look back upon their begun works, but their perfected ones. Therefore let him ascend the hill of the city, so that he who desires to find the Seer may find him. For the hill is the lowest and dug-out place. In which part of the city indeed those are signified who have as yet profited very little in higher conversation. We therefore ascend the hill when we avoid proposing to ourselves the plain of weak hearers for an example.

32. And then indeed we find the maids going out to draw water: because we look back upon the beauty of holy minds in a more perfect conversation. Maids indeed are the minds of the elect, whole through innocence, comely through the brightness of virtues. And because they preserve their beauty in a more secret life, they cannot be seen, except when they go out to draw water. Maids draw water when elect souls pour forth streams of tears from the profound grief of their present exile. They are said indeed to draw water: because while they remember themselves as cast forth in this valley of tears, mourning, they as it were send the rope of thought to the deep, from which with labor they draw the waters of tears. Then also they are seen to have gone out: because they who are such within lie hidden, they appear however in the eyes; and

they indicate how much they love the Creator, who sustain life in such great grief of the present world. From these therefore it is to be asked: Where is the Seer? Because the place of the perfect is then well known, when it is shown to us by those who through the progress of life are near to their conversation. But preachers have diverse places. For they have one place for themselves, another for the subjects: because indeed in themselves they dwell in the highest contemplation, for the subjects they descend to the mountain of doctrine. Through contemplation they are as it were in heaven; and because those things which they teach are high, both they descend when they teach, and speaking sublime things they retain themselves on high. Therefore the more perfect hearers are near to their rector, not when he is in the highest contemplation, but in the lower mountain of doctrine. Wherefore also the maids answering say:

(Verse 12.) He is here, behold before thee: for today he is come into the city.

33. As if they should say: Therefore we can indicate his place, because he came thither where we were accustomed to see him. For if he resided in the height of his sublimity, no one would show him to thee. For the teacher is in the city when through the ministry of preaching he dwells in the instruction of the subject people. The teacher is in the city when he leaves his own things that he may dispose common things. For because the peoples of a good preacher are fortified and strong through his exhortation, when he dwells

in their ministry, he is recognized to be in the city. Likewise because in the multitude of the subject people some are simple, others are wise, the maids subjoin:

(Verses 12, 13.) Hurry now, for today he is come into the city: because there is a sacrifice of the people in the high place. And as you go in, you shall immediately find him, before he go up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he come: because he blesseth the victim, and afterwards they eat that are invited.

34. When Samuel comes into the city, he ascends into the high place: because the elect preacher in the instruction of subjects pronounces now plain words, now high ones. When therefore he commands plain and intelligible things, he is in the city; when sublime things, and those which are scarcely understood, he is in the high place. He is in the city when he proposes examples to the simple; but in the high place when he pronounces the heights of spiritual words to the perfect. For he was as it were in the city who was saying: I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). Likewise he was in the city when he was demonstrating remedies to the weak, saying: Because of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (Ibid., 2). But he ascends into the high place, because not long after he subjoins: But concerning virgins I have no commandment, but I give counsel. I would that all men were even as myself (Ibid., 25, 7). He confesses himself also often to

ascend into the high place of words, because he says: We speak wisdom among the perfect (Ibid., 6).

35. What is it, therefore, that the maids say: Hurry now, today he is come into the city, except because he was rarely seen in the city, namely, coming late and receding quickly? By which mastership surely the doctor of the holy Church is instructed, that namely he should be rarely in public, frequent in secret: so that by how much the more lately he is seen, he may be more devotedly venerated. Then indeed he is received as if heavenly: because by how much the more he has lain hidden in the secret of contemplation, he draws richer treasures of the word of God to those who expect him. For he can say many good things in lowest matters to whom it is granted to see the highest things through the secret intuition of the mind. And because those things which are said are seen more sweetly, the maids say: Hurry. As if they should say: if he shall have fulfilled that for which he came into the city, you cannot see him replaced in his secret.

36. Which word indeed is now not to the word of the letter, but is an example for the religious. For the holy man was of such great strictness (districtio) that he had appointed days and hours in which he could have been seen by him who desired it. They say therefore: Hurry. As if they should say: If the appointed time shall have passed, in the hours of his quiet he does not intend to words or actions. We therefore who have taken up the order of remote life ought to

observe this more attentively. Hours of ministry are to be appointed for us, so that we may persist briefly in work, and be able to return hastily to the height of contemplation. The very delays of our secret silence are to be guarded by such a law of strictness that they themselves also who are accustomed to approach may know that they may not have access to us against our purpose.

37. Because we have begun to explain these things spiritually, this can be suitably understood as being said against the simple. For in the city, he who appears to be a stranger is thought to be able to speak to Samuel, but in the high place he is not so thought: because we consider those whom we believe to be simple to be in need of plain, not high, instruction. Therefore, they ought to hear the holy preachers then, when they speak plain things to the simple which they understand: not when they say high things which they can by no means understand. They say therefore: "Hurry now, today he has come to the city: because there is a sacrifice of the people in the high place." This is such as if one were to say: Because there are many who desire to hear the highest things, now you ought to hurry, when he appears to be instructing the simple like yourself. The sacrifice of the people is indeed the devotion of the chosen people. This devotion, because it is excited in the hearts of the elect by the word of preaching, is as it were perfected by Samuel. But the sacrifice of the people is in the high place when the hearts of the faithful subjects devoutly desire to hear the high words

of holy preaching. Whence it is also aptly said: "Because the people do not eat, unless Samuel first blesses the victim": because the more perfect hearers, while they desire to reach the highest perfection of virtues, wait in great desire for the word of knowledge, through which they may reach the things desired. In which place it is to be noted that the offered sacrifice was not yet, and yet he says: "The sacrifice of the people is in the high place." For if a sacrifice is not before it begins to be offered, how was there a sacrifice which was not? But because we follow spiritual things, there was not yet a sacrifice, and yet there was: because when the chosen faithful seek to be instructed more deeply, they already indeed have a great devotion for hearing, which, after the preaching has been heard, they have much greater. The sacrifice is not yet, therefore, offered: because that greatness of devotion, which is born in the heart of the elect from the word of preaching, is not in the heart before the word of the preacher. And indeed the sacrifice is in the high place: because from the expectation of the word, there is already in the heart of the one wishing to hear a great force of devotion. Wherefore it is also well said: "Because the people do not eat until he blesses the victim." For because they greedily love the highest things, until they perceive those same highest things, they do not rest. For if the victim of the mind is its devotion: the victim is blessed when it is sanctified at the voice of preaching, so that as it is made purer, it may be held more acceptable for divine reception.

For that which is blessed in the sacrifice of God is indeed clean when it is offered, and material: but the offered is so much the cleaner, as it is not only material, but spiritual: as it is not only clean, but also cleansing. For who would doubt that sins are cleansed by the offerings of victims? For thus, thus is the devotion of the mind: for when it longs to hear good things, it is clean; but when it has been received and blessed by the hands of holy preaching, it is rendered so much more ardent and sacred, as it has more clearly learned whom it can known to love more sweetly. It was indeed clean before, like a preparation of the sacrifice, which desired to know the good, and yet it was a material preparation: because it did not yet know what it sought to learn, but it is very clean and spiritual when, already sanctified by the voices of doctrine, it no longer seeks to hear what it may know, but rejoices to experience what it loves through what has been heard. Then also the victim is not only clean, but cleansing: because the more it is kindled by a more fervent love of heavenly things, the more powerfully are the darknesses of carnal negligence driven away from it. For it is written: "Because charity covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8): because we certainly destroy our carnal things when we are raised to heavenly things with ardent devotion.

38. And because it is added: "And then they shall eat, who are called." What else does this designate, but that the affection of devotion is the food of the mind? For then we eat, when the victim is blessed: because when our devotion is

raised to the love of the Creator at the voice of the preachers, the soul, which has reached the sweetness of the Creator, already has its food. Then, therefore, they eat who before the blessing of the victim were unwilling to eat. For those who prepare themselves with the highest expectation of intention for the perception of divine sweetness, while they receive no evil desires through appetite, are filled more greedily, as if fasting, with the refreshment of devotion. For as it were they wait for the blessing of the victim for refreshment, who flee all illicit desires, so that they may be satiated by the vision of internal glory through devotion. For it is written: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). For he who does not receive foolish things in his heart, while he desires heavenly things, is pure in heart: and while he is led through the good of preaching to the sweetness of divine contemplation, he has as it were the blessing of the victim in the saturation of the soul. He says therefore: "Then they shall eat, who are called." For the fasting are called to eating, while the preacher speaks outwardly, who guard their mind from depraved desires, and are drawn through the grace of the Holy Spirit to the experience of internal sweetness. For those who had come were then called as guests. The called fasting ones, therefore, then eat, when they are fed by the devotion of spiritual grace, who have prepared themselves for perceiving it with a great guard of their mind. But what is it that they say: (Verse 13.) "Go up, for today you shall find him"?

39. But while the elect praise the good things of the preachers, the hearts of the hearers are irradiated with a great light. For that heavenly conversation of a good teacher, which they preach, is the day. Let them say therefore: "Today you shall find him." For on that day the preacher is found, when his life is not less than his fame: when he is praised by the voice of the elect, but those who hear the praises find and know in his laudable conversation all that they hear. On the contrary, the Lord rebuking the Pharisees says: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, who are like whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful to men, but within are full of dead men's bones" (Matthew 23:27). Hence again he compares the vain-glorious to unbelievers, saying: "How can you believe, receiving glory from men" (John 5:44)? In the day indeed those of this kind are praised, but on that day they are not found: because they who hear their praises behold as it were the whiteness of the sepulchre from without; but when they seek the praised virtues, they find within a night of sins like sad and stinking bones of the dead. Let them say therefore, for signifying the true glory of the just man: "Today you shall find him": because when the just are praised, they have in the truth of their conversation whatever shines bright from them by the voice of praise. And because such great men are to be sought with hasty devotion, there follows: (Verse 14.) "And they went up into the city. And as they were walking in the middle of the city,

Samuel appeared, coming out to meet them, to go up to the high place."

40. When we hear the praises of holy men, we go up into the city: because we seek them there where they descend, not where they are. But, as I said above, the place of preachers, which they have for themselves, is the secret contemplation of divinity: but their place for subjects is preaching. Sometimes they speak plain things, sometimes high things. They have therefore a common place for all, they have a sublime and special one for some, and they have a secret one for themselves. These three spiritual places are indeed signified: because Samuel is said to go out, and to appear in the middle of the city, and to go up to the high place. For he who went out in order to appear, was where he had been hidden before he appeared. Priests go out, therefore, when they come from the secret of meditation to preach. They appear in the city, when they say plainer things, that is, for acting or for understanding. They go up into the high place, when they either command strong works to the wise or reveal high things of mystery. Our orderly ascent is therefore shown by this, that Saul is said to go up in the city. For the places of our Pastors, in which they are accustomed to pray or to be in secret, are for us to be venerated, not to be approached. Which we can know not only by example, but also by divine exhortation. In the Song of Songs indeed the bridegroom announces, saying: "I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor awake my beloved, until she please" (Song of

Solomon 3:5). For the minds of the perfect are brides: because while in the secret of divine love they place themselves as it were in a bedchamber, there through vision they find him to whom they are joined in ineffable love. When therefore the bride sleeps in the bedchamber, she is joined to the bridegroom: because while the elect soul of the preacher is hidden in secret contemplation, it is placed as it were in the bridegroom's bedchamber. He therefore who wakes her, takes her from the bridegroom: because certainly the rest of the elect soul is not only its own delight, but also that of the bridegroom. Whence it is also said through the prophet: "The bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride" (Isaiah 62:5). Rightly therefore the bridegroom adjures the daughters of Jerusalem, that the bride be not waked by them as long as she wishes to sleep: lest, while she rises from the quiet of the bedchamber, he himself lose the enjoyment of love. The going out of Samuel is therefore to be waited for, because holy men are to be venerated in the secret of their silence, not to be disturbed. Therefore one must go up in the city; because the elect teacher in the common place of doctrine is seen with as much profit to his own as he is known to go out in order to be useful. In which place it is to be noted, that of Samuel it is not said: "Today he went up in the city," but, "today he came into the city": but of Saul and the servant it is said, not that they came, but that they "went up." For the one came as it were through a plain, the others climbed as it were into high places. What else is shown to us

by this, but that the plain things which preachers speak are not plain to us? In the city, therefore, we do not come, but go up, when we either behold the plain things of preaching with difficulty, or carry with labor the small things which we are commanded. But because to stand in the city is to be fortified, therefore we go up; because when high men teach us to do small good things, they vehemently prohibit us from acquiescing to the counsels of malignant spirits. And because it is very laborious to overcome all temptations, we endeavor to reach the words of the teachers, who command this to us, as if through the labor of ascent. But because it is written, that "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (which certainly is taken not only of eternal retribution, but also of the present), almighty God for the merit of work grants to his elect increases of virtue (1 Corinthians 3:8). For even to Abraham not sparing his son it is said: "By myself have I sworn: because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy son for my sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed" (Genesis 22:16). For for the most part, they who labor faithfully in doing those things which they know, deserve through divine grace to know greater things which they may do. In whose type Saul is well said to go up first in the city, and is afterwards said to be led by Samuel to the high place. But to come to meet is to meet one coming through the same way. When therefore we wish to learn the way of salvation from holy preachers, they indeed come to meet us, when they meet us

with the word of salvation which we seek. For they come as it were by the same way, when they hasten to teach us that which we have proposed to learn. This indeed is the moral meaning of all: for if we search into those things which spiritually belong to some, he comes to meet us; because he foreknows that the king who is to be ordained is coming to him. But whence he knows it, is added:

(Verse 15, 16.) Now the Lord had revealed the ear of Samuel a day before Saul came, saying: "At this very hour which is now, tomorrow I will send to thee a man from the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him leader over my people Israel, and he shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines." 41. He went out therefore to meet him, that he might lead him into the high place: because he who is sought for the government of holy Church is both to be shown by divine gift, and to be called to a sublime conversation. The ear of Samuel, because it is said diminutively (auricula), what does it designate but the humble understanding of the spiritual teacher? The ear, therefore, is revealed by the Lord, when the humble understanding of the preacher is instructed by the Holy Spirit; that he may hear what things he is about to do, and dispose of what has been heard. But it is to be subtilely looked into that it is said: "A day before." For a day is the life of the just man, as Paul attests, who says: "You were sometimes darkness, but now light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). But when the life of the elect is shown, the hidden day is revealed. For man sees

the pretext of a good work, but God the light of the heart. Because, therefore, the elect and the reprobate are hidden by the intention of the heart, the Lord intimates the coming king a day before; when through his grace holy preachers recognize in those who are to be promoted that the testimony of a good work precedes the purity of intention. For there is no light of work which rectitude of intention does not precede. Rightly, therefore, a day before is the king who is to be ordained recognized. But they do not behold the subsequent day unless it be born from the preceding: that they may consider the day before the day, the intention before the operation, and behold as sent by God in the light of holy operation him whom divine grace demonstrates to shine through the purpose of the heart. And because at the same hour at which he is promised, he is exhibited: what does it give to be understood, but that he who is chosen ought to be perfect, not only in body, but in mind? For when God speaks to holy men, it is the full light of day. For the day has an origin, it has also an end. Near the end he convicts sinners, saying: "Adam, where art thou?" (Genesis 3:2). And because neither those who begin good things, nor those who grow sluggish from a good work, are to be promoted, the preacher is sent at the hour of perfect speech, when such a one is exhibited as may shine with the full light of a good work, and resplendent with the full brightness of truth. Who also is described as coming as a man from the land of Benjamin. A man indeed he is called, for the

fortitude of work; from the land of Benjamin, for the right confession of faith. Benjamin indeed is called the son of the right hand. Who therefore is here called the son of the right hand, but he of whom it is written: "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father" (Mark 16:19)? The land of Benjamin therefore is the holy Church. Because therefore heretics have been expelled from this land, from the land of Benjamin comes the king, when not polluted by any heresy, but catholic in faith, he receives the primacy of holy Church. Who enjoys the praise of a man, if he be firm in faith, strong in operation. Here certainly over the people of the Lord he is commanded to be anointed as leader: because exterior sacraments benefit those priests who are not unworthy of the gifts of the same sacraments. Or priests are anointed, when through the ministry of those ordaining them, they receive increases of spiritual graces. Whence also follows: "He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines." As it were anointed they can save others; because they have perceived spiritual graces more abundantly. For they who save the people are anointed over the people: because they who are ordained by the Lord to rule others, receive spiritual gifts of charisms by which they can be useful to them; and to those whom they precede in order, they are also superior in merits. And because for the most part a good pastor is chosen by the merit of a good flock, it is well added: (Verse 16.) "Because I have looked upon my people." Likewise because with great prayers a good pastor is to be sought

from the Lord, it is added: (Verse 16.) "Their cry is come unto me."

42. But perhaps some are moved because that which is said here seems contrary to what was said above. For there he says: "They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them, according to all their works which they have done from the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt even unto this day" (1 Samuel 8:7). But now he says: "Thou shalt anoint him leader over my people Israel, and he shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines: because I have looked upon my people: for their cry is come unto me." Above, the king is permitted to be ordained as if by one angry, now he is ordained as if by one pious and benign. Also, who does not see how much these words of benignity dissent from that sentence which was brought upon him by Samuel? "Because," he said, "thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also hath rejected thee, that thou be not king" (1 Samuel 15:26). Which we indeed quickly solve, if we subtilely look into the force of the words themselves. For all these words of divine benignity are ascribed to the merits of the people: "He shall save my people"; and, "I have looked upon my people"; and, "their cry is come unto me." For their sake, therefore, the king is decreed to be ordained, whose cry is heard. For although Saul was to be repelled from the kingdom for his future wickedness, yet he had in himself, as long as he reigned, that whence he could have been useful to the people subject to him. He was certainly to

be strenuous in war, but elated in mind. He was to have that whence he might fall for himself, and that whence he might stand for others. That, therefore, whence he could be useful to his subjects, the Lord providing says: "He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines"; and, "their cry is come unto me." Yet it still seems very contrary that the cry of that people should be believed to be heard, who are rebuked for having rejected him. To which it is to be answered: because there were in that people both the reprobate and the elect. There, therefore, the reprobate are rebuked for having rejected the Lord, here the desires of the elect come to the ears of almighty God. From which thing what is to be gathered, but that often it is good for the elect that evil rulers are ordained? It is not, therefore, wonderful if God as it were is angry at his rejection, and ordains a king: because the dignity of the future king was both evil and good. Evil indeed because proud; but good because strenuous in the defense of subjects. All which we see now being done in holy Church: because for the most part he receives its primacy who is useful in word to others, but swollen in mind for himself. By preaching virtues, as if by standing, he destroys vices, but by thinking high things of himself, he falls. He here, therefore, by preaching saves the people of God, but by swelling precipitates himself. Like a powerful king, by the word of the people of God he wears down hidden adversaries, but by elation he falls from the sublimity of the kingdom. Not for himself, therefore, but only for the people is

the king constituted; when he is permitted to preside in holy Church who tramples upon the good things which he preaches, by being proud, or by living wickedly.

In this place it is to be noted that when a pastor is chosen in the holy Church, he is sometimes ordained for himself and the people; sometimes for neither the people nor himself; sometimes for himself, not for the people; and sometimes indeed for the people, not for himself. For himself and the people, when a chosen preacher is given to chosen subjects: because while the multitude of subjects is led to the eternal fatherland, the gifts of merits are heaped upon the good pastor. A pastor is given neither for himself nor for the people when a reprobate people is permitted to have a reprobate pastor, since he presides in such a way, and they obey him in such a way, that neither he who teaches nor those who are taught deserve to reach eternal goods. Concerning whom the Lord says through Hosea: *I will give them kings in my fury* (Hosea 13:11). For a king is given in the fury of God when one worse than the wicked is decreed to preside. Indeed, such a pastor is given then, when such a people is received to be ruled as may equally be condemned to eternal punishment. A pastor is given for himself, not for the people, when a good man is set over the wicked; as the Lord says to Ezekiel: *I send thee to the children of Israel, to an apostate nation that has departed from me* (Ezek. 2:3). A pastor is then given indeed for himself, not for the people, when although the chosen

preacher cannot convert his listeners to God, he nevertheless does not lose the eternal gains of his labor. But for the people, not for himself, when a pastor is granted to good subjects who possesses gifts through which he may benefit them, but not himself. Such indeed were those concerning whom the Lord commands the disciples, saying: *What they say, do: but what they do, do not* (Matt. 23:3). As if He were to say: Take from them what they have received as useful for you, as if it were yours; and leave in them what they do not have for your gain, but for their own destruction, as if it were theirs. Saul, therefore, having cast off the Lord, is chosen, and yet he is said to be about to deliver the people of the Lord from the hand of the Philistines, because almighty God often benefits His good faithful through those prelates who do not please Him in the office of that same prelacy (*praelationis*). It follows:

(Verse 17) *And when Samuel had looked upon Saul, the Lord said: Behold the man of whom I spoke to thee, this man shall rule over my people.*

44. For this was done on the following day, which the Lord had promised on the preceding one, saying: *Tomorrow at this same hour I will send to thee a man from the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him over my people Israel.* He is seen on the second day, therefore, who is promised on the first: because the preachers of the holy Church search out the virtues of the elect in their secret life. For those who are to be promoted, while they bring forth good things,

promise something great from themselves. On the first day, therefore, a king is promised; because the preachers behold the great works of the elect and, as the Lord speaks within, they recognize those whom they wish to ordain as rectors (*rectores*) of the holy Church. Samuel looks, therefore, on the following day, when the preacher sees him who is to be promoted in the great light of his conversation. And then indeed, as if by the Lord's indication, he recognizes the king to be ordained: because he sees that it is worthy to prefer to others him who stands out in the high fortress of holiness. And because those who are great in merits are small through humility, it follows:

(Verse 18) *Saul came near to Samuel in the middle of the gate. Tell me, I pray thee, he said, where is the house of the Seer.*

If the preacher is then in the city when he speaks plain and common things which are understood, what is the gate of this city but humility? For the knowledge of the divine word is hidden from the proud and revealed to the humble. Whence also He speaks to the Father in the Gospel, saying: *I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones* (Matt. 11:25). Indeed, He called the proud and those who feel high things of themselves "wise," but the humble He called "little ones." Of whom certainly another Scripture makes mention, saying: *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the hum-

ble* (1 Pet. 5:5). For He resists the proud, lest they understand eternal goods, but He gives grace to little ones, that they may know those same eternal goods by His revelation. The elect, therefore, because they come to spiritual meaning through humility, go as if through a gate to hear the preachers. The chosen preacher also, because he speaks spiritual things humbly, Samuel meets Saul in that same gate. For both are as it were in the gate when those things which the chosen preacher speaks are heard humbly by another chosen one.

But he who had newly come had found whom he was seeking, and did not know it. Wherefore also the same Saul says to Samuel: *Tell me, I pray thee, where is the house of the Seer.* For this is characteristic of great men, that they are recognized with difficulty by the least. In the flesh indeed they are despised, but in the mind they are sublime. Outwardly they desire to appear contemptible, but they do not cease to do venerable things. Because, therefore, they desire to profit greatly by their examples, they admire them not only in outward things but in their innermost parts. They see in them outwardly, therefore, what can be despised by the carnal, but they equally observe what within spiritual men ought to be venerated with great admiration. While they hear them to be sublime by fame, they desire to recognize them in the height of their conversation (*conversatio*). According to history, therefore, Saul saw Samuel and did not know him; that what happened to them in figure might designate

spiritual things to us. For when we are little ones, we as it were see perfect men while we hear of their virtues from those who relate them; but those whom we see we do not know, because we cannot know by experience, because we hold in the eyes of the heart that which we perceive by hearing. When, therefore, we seek from them the secrets of their conversation to imitate them, we undoubtedly ask them as if concerning their own house. For their house is their conversation (*conversatio*). John's disciple wished to know this house when he questioned the Lord, saying: *Master, where dwellest thou?* (John 1:38). Who undoubtedly, because he was to be led to His familiarity as if a member of the household, heard: *Come and see.* Philip did not know this house when seen, to whom He says: *Have I been so long a time with you and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me, seeth my Father also* (John 14:9). Concerning the Lord it is also written that He spoke to Moses as with His friend; but the same Moses, seeing and not knowing, asked, saying: *If I have found grace in thy sight, show me thy face* (Exod. 33:13). But because the spiritual conversation of the saints is opened only to the devoted and suppliant, Saul similarly prays that the house of Samuel be shown to him.

(Verse 19) *And Samuel answered Saul, saying: I am the Seer. But ascend before me to the high place today, that thou mayest eat with me, and I will let thee go in the morning.*

47. What is it to say: I am the Seer: except to demonstrate himself humble, just as he was seen

in the eyes? As if he were to say: You hold him whom you seek as great in your estimation, but he whom you see is small. For in this word, Seer, it is not "I" that is preached. As if he were to say: That Seer is I: not what you estimate, but what you discern. But he who knows how to humble himself, knows how to give gifts not as humble, but as sublime. Wherefore also he commands him to ascend to the high place before him, that he may eat with him. He ascends into the high place who raises his mind to know higher things. Indeed, to ascend into the high place is to prepare the heart to understand higher things. Whence also Peter is taken up into the mountain, that he may deserve to see the glory of the transformed Redeemer (Matt. 17:1). For in that ascent of the mountain, the sublime preparation of the mind is expressed: because he who does not place his soul in sublime things through intention will not be able to see high things. Because therefore we understand better the high things when we are prepared, Saul is commanded to ascend into the high place before Samuel. For as it were we ascend into the high place before the preacher when we first intend our mind to know high things, and those very things to which we intend ourselves are afterwards spoken to us. But what is it that he says: That thou mayest eat with me today? But when holy preachers speak heavenly things, they refresh the hearts of their chosen hearers: for as truth testifies, because the food of the soul is the word of God, Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds

from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). For bread is the nourishment of the body, the word of the mind. Those who refresh the body without the mind are dead in mind, living in flesh. Wherefore also Paul says of the delicate widow: Living she is dead (1 Tim. 5:6). For the widow would not die through the delicacies of foods if she satiated her soul with the food of the word of God, since Paul himself says: Nothing is unclean which is perceived with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:4). But the living widow dies when she nourishes the body with food, but kills the soul with hunger. Therefore in bread alone man does not live: because since man consists of soul and body, just as he lives otherwise through the body, so also it is necessary that each be nourished by different foods. That we may eat, therefore, we ascend with the prophet when we raise the mind to the high things of the divine word, that we may be satiated by its heavenly savor through devotion.

48. And because the preachers themselves greatly love the heavenly things which they speak, we as it were eat together when they devotedly bring forth in speaking what we, devotedly hearing, place in the belly of the soul. For we eat together: because we together hear the word of God. For Truth says to the preachers: It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you (Matt. 10:20). Which Paul also proves when he interrogates his hearers, saying: Do you seek a proof of Christ who dwells in me? (2 Cor. 13:3). Because, therefore, in the holy preachers Christ and his Spirit speak, the preachers

themselves hear him speaking the more clearly, the closer they are to him whose seat they deserve to be. They will be able, therefore, to be refreshed the more fully by the nourishment of the word, the more they already have within themselves the chamber of refreshment (cella refectionis). For they are friends of the bridegroom, and they stand, and rejoice with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom. When, therefore, holy preachers speak divine things, they hear: but because they know by certain experience when the Spirit speaks in them, they hear themselves, but not in themselves, because they also speak, but having spoken in themselves, they venerate another speaker. In that, therefore, which they hear and speak, they both refresh and are refreshed. They refresh the hearers indeed, while they bring forth the word with their voice: they themselves are refreshed while the word which they bring forth is brought forth to them by divine revelation. They, however, are more devotedly saturated who, in the locution of the Spirit, have experienced the delicacies of the mind. Is it not the experience of the speaking Spirit to see themselves unconsulted and unpremeditated, and suddenly consulted and ready? To know what they had not known: to have what they had not had: to lose the torpor of the mind, and suddenly to glow with wonderful devotion: to be filled wonderfully immediately and in a moment with the fullness of knowledge, and to bring forth understood things with wonderful eloquence of the word? Therefore the chosen preachers have the experience of the

Spirit speaking in them, in the sudden revelation of truth: they have suddenly the ardor of charity, they have it in the fullness of knowledge, they have it in the most eloquent preaching of the word. For they are both suddenly instructed and suddenly glow, and in a moment they are filled, and enriched with the wonderful power of speech. Of that sudden experience, the Lord says: It shall be given you in that hour what you shall speak (Matt. 10:19). Of that sudden fervor of charity, Cleopas says: Was not our heart burning in the way; while he spoke, and opened to us the Scriptures? (Luke 24:32). Of the experience of fullness and eloquence also, Luke mentions, saying: Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing Spirit, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2). In the same Spirit they were filled and spoke, that they might designate this which we assert: because namely in speaking they feed others, who are fed by hearing that which they say. And because they know the ardor of the sound of the vehement Spirit, or the locution, or the fullness, they feast the more sweetly in spiritual gifts, the more worthily they have been assumed to his reclining. He says therefore: Ascend, that thou mayest eat with me today; because the good teacher, while he sweetly receives into the devotion of the mind what he says, feeds himself and those who hear at the same time.

In contrast, reprobate teachers, because they do not love what they say, fast while they feed others with the word. For since the Lord has said

that the word of God is the refreshment of the soul, and the word of God in the mind is full erudition and full devotion; they are not fed by the word of God who do not devoutly hear what they speak. The Apostle indeed, as if already filled with that sweetness of the word, says: *Of his fullness we all have received* (John 1:16). There is indeed one fullness of the word, and another of the book. Indeed, only the elect can receive from the fullness of the word, but from the fullness of Scripture even the reprobate can [receive]. For the book of the blessed John the Apostle and the book of the blessed Paul the Apostle are indeed fullnesses which are had of them. Undoubtedly Paul or John wrote their words, but the Word speaking in them inspired what each one wrote. He, therefore, who receives the word of Scripture not in love but in knowledge, receives from the fullness not of the word, but of the book. And because he receives a dead thing, he himself does not live in the receiving of it. But why do I say dead Scripture? It is not only dead, but killing. For it is written: *The letter killeth, but the spirit vivifieth* (2 Cor. 3:6). This indeed every divine letter does. For the letter is the body, but the life of this body is the spirit. He indeed receives a vivified and vivifying body who reads the letter and refreshes his mind in the love of understanding. Reprobates, therefore, who search the Scriptures which they do not love, who speak boldly outwardly what they do not understand inwardly in its flavor; while others perceive with a devout mind the refreshment of the Scriptures which

they [the reprobates] expound, others are as it were satiated by that which they themselves give, but not themselves. Let Samuel say, therefore: *Ascend, that thou mayest eat with me today*: because from that which the chosen teachers grant to their subjects from the word, they both hear together and are satiated together. For behold, it is demonstrated in the very same word that we speak. For who doubts that Samuel wrote this Scripture which we are expounding? And yet he himself who wrote says these things: *Samuel answered*; so that he might clearly show that what he himself was writing, another was imparting.

(Verse 19) *I will let thee go in the morning.*

50. He is indeed let go from the high place in the morning who, when he profits in the light of higher knowledge, proposes to dwell in the great light of good work. Or he is let go in the morning who intends to preach to others the word of great knowledge which he learned from the mouth of the preacher. For when we propose good things, we are as it were in the morning at the beginning of the day; because we have already begun to behold the clarity of the good which we should follow. But this morning grows into the full day when he who proposed to do great good things or to preach the high joys of eternity, exhibits in the great light of virtue that which he proposed. In the morning, therefore, Saul is let go from the high place; because the listeners of good preachers do not delay to exercise sublimely what they hear sublimely from them. But chosen men know

both how to hide and how to manifest the good things which they have. They hide them indeed, lest they perish through elation (*elationem*), but they manifest them lest they remain unfruitful. While they hide them, they then guard them; but while they manifest them, they bring forth fruit. For there follows:

(Verses 19, 20) *And I will tell thee all that is in thy heart; and as for the donkeys (*asinis*) which thou lost three days ago, be not solicitous, because they are found.*

How preachers study to conceal themselves is shown above in the word of Samuel, where it is said: *I am the Seer*. But now, because he says: *I will tell thee all that is in thy heart*, what else do we hold but that holy men often both hide and bring forth the virtues which they have? But, as I said, they hide them lest they should appear great in great virtues; they bring them forth so that the elect may imitate them. And so they assert that they are strong in the word of wisdom or the spirit of prophecy, not that they may be venerated, but that they may be heard. Wherefore the Psalmist also, insinuating that he had the grace of the word, says: *I have understood more than all my teachers* (Ps. 118:99). Certain, therefore, of the skill of the spirit, he confidently invites us, saying: *Come, children, hearken to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord* (Ps. 33:11). For Micah affirmed that he was a prophet when he said: *Would that I were not a man having the spirit; and that I rather spoke a lie* (Mic. 2:11). Hence Elisha says of Naaman the Syrian: *Let him

come to me, and let him know that there is a prophet in Israel* (4 Kings 5:8). Hence Paul says: *They are Hebrews, so am I; they are the seed of Abraham, so am I; they are ministers of Christ, so am I; (I speak as a fool) I am more* (2 Cor. 11:22, 23). On the contrary, however, Amos says: *I am not a prophet, but a herdsman plucking sycamores* (Amos 7:14). Hence also Paul, when he wishes to hide himself for [his own] guarding, says: *I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God* (1 Cor. 15:9). Hence John the Baptist, being questioned, says: *I am not the prophet* (John 1:21). Indeed, he was not for elation, but he was a prophet and more than a prophet for his ministry. Samuel, therefore, that he may guard himself, says: *I am the Seer*; and that he may present himself for gain, says: *I will tell thee all*. Which, if someone wishes, he can understand in the same way; because when he says: *I am the Seer*, if he asserts himself to be a seer, he says this so that he may communicate the good which he has with the elect. That he may, therefore, prove what he asserts, he subsequently adds: *I will tell thee all*. Which the doctors of the holy Church do; because while they intuit the virtues of minds, and the vices; and [they study] to heal the vices, and p...

52. This was expounded above in the person of Saul, as it befits rudimentary preachers. Indeed, he lost the donkeys (*asinas*) who by no means drew to penance (*poenitentiam*) the sinners to whom he offered the word of life. He would find them indeed if those who had hidden themselves

in the night of wickedness returned to the light of justice, in which men could have been found. Why then does he say: *They are found*, unless because very great men often consider that the good of salvation can easily be found in those of whose life the unlearned despair? For even skilled physicians of bodies often presume to cure those of whose health the unskilled cannot presume. In this way undoubtedly sinners are often drawn to penance and satisfaction by learned doctors, who could not be drawn by the unlearned and rudimentary. Because, therefore, both by the preaching and the example of the perfect those return to the Lord by repenting who could not be converted through the ministry of others, Samuel rightly says the donkeys are found, which Saul could not find. This saying can also be understood for the progress of the rector (*rectoris*) to be ordained. As if he were to say: While thou profitest in erudition and life, thou wilt be able to gain for the Lord even those whom thou couldst not yet. So certain indeed is the virtue of progress, that its fruits, which do not yet consist in reality, consist in the certainty of hope. And because by these words he is invited to endure the labors of holy preaching, he expounds what rewards of merit he ought to expect, saying:

(Verse 20) *And to whom shall be all the best things of Israel? Shall they not be to thee and to all thy father's house?*

53. Israel, which is called "seeing God," whom does it more rightly signify in this place than that blessed society of eternal citizens who, from the

labor of this life, have arrived at the eternal vision of almighty God? What then are the best things of Israel, if not the gifts of eternal retribution? Paul indeed says: *Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor* (1 Cor. 3:8). Hence he likewise says: *There is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory* (1 Cor. 15:41). The retributions and prizes of all the faithful, therefore, are the good things of Israel. But because the reward of chosen preachers is supreme, to them belong the best things of Israel. Concerning these best things of Israel the Lord indeed promises to His faithful servant, saying: *Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods* (Matt. 24:47). For he who is placed not among all, but over all things, is declared to have not only the good things of Israel, but even the best. Let Samuel say, therefore: *To whom shall be all the best things of Israel? Shall they not be to thee and to all thy father's house?* As if he were to say: Even if the labor of preaching is great, it ought to be borne so much the more devoutly as it has greater gains of reward. With a solicitous mind, therefore, the doctor of the holy Church ought to ponder that not only the good things of Israel, but even the best are his, so that he who expects things so supreme and best may always do greater and more excellent things. For those same supreme things are owed not to the supreme order, but to the supreme labor. For even the excellent doctor did not say: *Every man shall receive his reward according to his dignity*,

but *according to his labor*. When, therefore, the best things of eternal life are referred to the preachers, a great labor is enjoined upon them in this life: because undoubtedly he does not prevail to have better things than others who does not study to be better. And because this is common to all preachers of the holy Church, the best things are referred to be not only Saul's, but for all his father's house. For sons are as it were born from a father when others are newly substituted for others in the order of preachers, splendid with the same nobility of holiness. The house of the preacher is also his spiritual conversation (*conversatio*). Therefore to all the house of the father...

(Verse 21) *Saul answering, said: Am I not a son of Jemini of the least tribe of Israel, and my kindred the last among all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then hast thou spoken this saying to me?*

54. As if he were to say: Why do you ascribe such great things to me, when I am nothing? For he is a son of Jemini who imitates those who are negligent in the care of themselves and in the example of their neighbor. He is indeed a "Twin" (Geminus), because while he neglects the care of himself, he does not bestow examples of good work upon others. He, therefore, who imitates such people is called a son of Jemini. He is said to be from the least tribe of Israel because the last order of the holy Church is that of converted sinners. Meritously, therefore, he who confesses that he is a sinner is said to be from

the least tribe of Israel. His kindred also is said to be the last among others because, according to the voice of Truth: He that shall break the least commandment, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:19). For Benjamin is called the "son of the right hand." By this name the people of the holy Church are surely designated; for while they are born in the faith of the Redeemer, they are prepared through good works for the goods of the heavenly fatherland. The right hand of God is indeed that strength of eternal life. The kindreds of the tribe of Benjamin are the diverse ways of life (conversationes) of the elect. For as diverse kindreds come from one principle of generation, so many ways of life of the faithful arise from one origin of orthodox faith. Holy men, therefore, when they cast themselves down through humility because they confess themselves to be sinners, and yet rightly believe in God, assert themselves as it were to be both sons of Jemini and from the last kindred of Israel. But because the more they humble themselves, according to the voice of Truth, the more they are exalted (Luke 14:10, 11), there follows:

(Verse 22) Samuel therefore taking Saul and his servant, brought them into the parlor, and gave them a place at the head of them that were invited.

55. Samuel takes Saul when the preacher of the holy Church opens the heights of preaching to his chosen hearer. For the subject is taken when, through the word of the teacher, he is elevated into the knowledge of heavenly things.

And because he does not desire to know spiritual things with a carnal intention, he took not only Saul himself, but also his servant. For he had remained as it were in the depths without a servant who said: My heart hath forsaken me (Ps. 37:11). Our heart indeed forsakes us when we are so conquered by carnal concupiscences that we place the intention of the heart in earthly, carnal, and corporeal things, and not in heavenly and spiritual things. He had found this lost servant who said: Thy servant hath found his heart (2 Sam. 7:27). For we find our heart when we seek spiritual things through the intention of the heart; when we tear this away from earthly things to direct it toward heavenly things. The chosen preacher, therefore, neither commands strong things nor manifests spiritual things to those who are still carnal. For even Paul says to the Corinthians: I could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. As unto little ones in Christ, I gave you milk to drink, not meat (1 Cor. 3:1). As if he were to say by these words: Therefore I did not lead you to the high place, because you did not have a spiritual sense with you, like Saul's servant. Wherefore also suggesting the cause, he says: For you are yet carnal. Well, therefore, is Samuel said to have taken Saul and his servant: because the doctors of the holy Church command strong things to those, and manifest high things to those, whom they consider to be spiritual. They are also brought into the parlor (triclinium): because the latitude of charity is shown to them. For he is placed as it

were in a parlor who, through that which he has learned on high, dwells in the latitude of charity. Or certainly, our entrance to the parlor is love; the parlor is the beauty of spiritual life. Whence John says: He that loveth not, abideth in death (1 John 3:14). For if he who loves not abideth in death, he who loves abideth in life. We are brought into the parlor, therefore, when we rise into the affection of heavenly conversation (conversatio) through the affect of love. For it is the place of refection, because there the mind is refreshed by the internal sweetness of its Redeemer. There follow the words:

(Verse 22) For there were about thirty men.

(Verse 22) For there were about thirty men.

56. Three times ten make thirty. The number three suggests the faith of the holy and undivided Trinity. The number ten, through the ten commandments of the law, designates the perfection of good work. The number thirty, therefore, designates those who hold that faith which works through love. Saul is placed at the head of these when, through divine grace, he who is to be the future pastor of the Church becomes higher in merit than those over whom he ought to be superior in dignity. Samuel attributes this sublime place: because he who merits such highness of life profits by the institution of his elders. To whom, indeed, since great things which he should do, and not the least, are now demonstrated, there is added:

(Verses 23, 24) And Samuel said to the cook: Bring the portion which I gave thee, and com-

manded thee to set it apart by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said: Behold what is left, set it before thee, and eat: because it was kept on purpose for thee, when I invited the people: and Saul ate with Samuel on that day.

57. What is signified by the shoulder of the breast, if not the fortitude of action? Which is attributed to the cook, when it is demonstrated to lesser ones by the supreme preachers. For the cooks are the priests: because while they speak to the chosen faithful in the fervor of the spirit, they cook the foods of the mind, as it were, through fire. But the portion which is given is said to be set apart: because the fortitude of good work in the preacher ought to be singular. Which he sets before Saul when he commands the pastor about to be ordained in the holy Church to consider how great his fortitude ought to be. But also concerning that which the cook set before him, Samuel says to Saul: Behold what is left, set it before thee. It remained, indeed, because Christ did not fulfill all our things; through His cross He indeed redeemed all, but it remained that he who strives to be redeemed and to reign with Him should be crucified. He surely had seen this residue who said: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him (2 Tim. 2:12). As if he were to say: What Christ fulfilled is not valid, except for him who fulfills that which remained. Hence the blessed apostle Peter says: Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:21). Hence Paul says: I fill up those things

that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my body (Col. 1:24).

58. But it should be noted that the cook set the shoulder before Saul, and yet Samuel commands Saul that he ought to set it before himself. What is this? A server at the table is accustomed to set a dish before those dining: which, while he who is dining draws it to himself, he sets more closely before himself what was a little further from him. The cook, therefore, sets the shoulder before Saul, and Samuel commands Saul to set it before himself: because that which is enjoined upon a new preacher concerning the fortitude of good work, he ought to draw as it were closer to himself through the study of consideration. Which also, after he has drawn it to himself, he eats: because he disposes to do what has been long considered. For to eat the shoulder is to hide in the mind through purpose what is commanded outwardly concerning strong action. For he was as it were persuading every chosen person to set the shoulder before himself and to eat it, who said: When thou shalt sit to eat with a prince, consider diligently what is set before thy face: because it behooves thee to prepare the like (Prov. 23:1). In the table of the prince, indeed, he designated the virtue of the shoulder. And while he said: Consider diligently what is set before thee, he taught him to whom he spoke to set the shoulder before himself. But he suggested that he ought to eat it, because he said: It behooves thee to prepare the like. For by preparing similar things we eat; because while we propose to do the strong things

which we hear, as it were eating, we store the foods of life in the belly of the heart. But the vessel of election commands the supreme doctors themselves under the instruction of a single disciple, saying: Impose not hands lightly upon any man (1 Tim. 5:22). For because they are to be chosen with great retraction of counsel, who are to be elevated to the summit, it is aptly added: Because it was kept on purpose for thee, when I invited the people. As if he were to say: Set before thee what I set before myself before it was set before thee; consider what I have considered. For the part of the shoulder is kept on purpose (de industria); because the most strong action of the preacher is well committed to him who is judged by supreme men, with great consideration, worthy of such a ministry. That part was indeed kept on purpose then, when the people were called; because when the faithful subjects come to receive the ministry of preaching...

(Verse 25) And they went down from the high place into the town, and Samuel spoke with Saul on the roof. And Saul spread a bed on the roof, and slept.

59. Whoever is assumed to the highness of pastoral care ought to have in that same sublimity of his order both the altitude of his own life and compassion for the infirmity of another. Let Saul, therefore, ascend with Samuel, and let him descend into the town. Let the rector know the high things he should do; let him know the common things he should dispose. Let him say with Paul: Our conversation is in heaven (Phil.

3:20). Let him say with us: Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I see another law contending against the law of my mind, and leading me captive in the law of sin (Rom. 7:24). The rector is in the high place when he speaks wisdom among the perfect. When he disposes carnal things, he descends into the town, saying: For fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband: let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife in like manner to her husband (1 Cor. 7:2). He is in the high place when he says: No creature shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:39). But he descends into the town because, speaking, he says: I became weak to the weak, that I might gain the weak: I became all things to all men, that I might save all (1 Cor. 9:22). Samuel, therefore, took Saul to the high place and set him down in the town: because supreme men, when they ordain the summit of the holy Church, teach those whom they place in that same summit to live sublimely, to preach plain things, to be rigid to themselves but tempered to their subjects: so to attend to their own salvation that they can be weak with the weak; I would say weak through the affection of the mind, not through the languor of internal sickness. For if the doctor lies down through languor of mind, he cannot cure the sick and raise those who are lying down. Well, therefore, are Saul and Samuel said to have descended into the town and to have spoken on the roof (solario). For the town is on the level,

but the roof is on high. To the high place also the roof is level; to the town it is not level, but high. Thus indeed chosen preachers, when they have compassion for the lesser members, as it were desert the high place: but descending into the town, they are on the roof; because they come indeed from on high, but by pitying and consulting the infirmity of the subjects, and not by doing and [becoming infirm].

60. And because the new preacher needs much consideration to do these things, Saul is said to have spread a bed for himself and to have slept. For a new preacher to sleep on the roof is to dispose in his sublime consideration how he ought to bear the burdens of his subjects. For if he is awake to the intention of the world, he surely acts so as not to seek the good of such great discretion in his innermost parts. He ought, therefore, to sleep, so that he thinks of no secular things: because he who is oppressed by secular things can never dispose spiritual things. But also he will not be able to sleep who does not spread a bed for himself: because undoubtedly if he does not think of the examples or words of the good, it is impossible for him to rest from outward things. We place soft things under us, as it were, when we think of the doctrine or the life of the elect. We also sleep on those same beddings: because we can then rest well in consideration when we are occupied in spiritual things. Let it be said, therefore: Because Saul spread a bed for himself, and slept, to suggest to the chosen mind: that if it occupies itself negligently with outward things,

it may not acquire the grace of internal rest. But he who wishes to dispose spiritual things well by considering, until he perfectly orders them within, ought not to wake up to those things which are without. Aptly, therefore, is added:

(Verse 26) And when they were risen in the morning, and it began now to be light, Samuel called Saul on the roof, saying: Arise, that I may let thee go.

61. It becomes morning, indeed, when the splendor of truth opens itself to a quiet mind. For the human mind becomes dark through ignorance, and bright through the illustration of truth. He who is ignorant, therefore, is in the night; when he is illustrated, he is in the day. But he who sleeps in the night rises in the morning: when he raises himself to do those things which he has ordered through consideration. And because the business of ordaining the king was being treated, both are said to have risen. The supreme preacher rises, indeed, that he may ordain his hearer to the ministry of that same preaching. He who is to be ordained rises, that he may not hope to receive so sublime an order without the innermost affect of the heart. They rise equally, indeed, because a sublime office is given, a sublime one is received. In which place another thing is to be noted: that both rose first, then Samuel called Saul, saying: Arise, that I may let thee go. But according to the history, if both rose, Saul is admonished to be prepared for work because he is commanded to rise from sleep. But because both the supreme priests and he who

is assumed to the order of preaching attentively consider the burden of so great a ministry, they as it were sleep together, and rise together. But he who is newly to be ordained, rising from sleep, is commanded to rise also to work: because although he studied to ponder by meditating on the height of the order, he ought nevertheless to reach it through the merit of conversation. Rising, therefore, he is commanded to rise, that he may propose to equal by merits the sublime order which he deliberates to undergo. Whence also he is called on the roof: because he is commanded to strive for high things. Who also says: And I will let thee go. For he rises that he may be let go: because he will be able to be free in the ministry of preaching who has grown in the height of great conversation. He rose indeed who had risen: because he who by considering learned the height of dignity, took care to raise himself in that same height of dignity through sublimit of life.

Whence also is added:

(Verse 26) And Saul arose.

Then is added:

(Verse 26) And they both went out: to wit, he and Samuel.

62. The pastor goes out when he comes from the secret of meditation to the public of work. For when he disposes what he wants to do, he is within; but when he does those things outside which he thought, he as it were goes out. Saul also went out, because in outward dignity, he who is promoted receives that which he thought about for a long time, whether it should be

received. Both are therefore said to have gone out, because both were within: while the one with a solicitous mind foresaw what or to whom he should give; the other likewise more attentively thought what kind of person he was who should perceive such great things. Because, therefore, the ministry of holy preaching is to be given and received with the highest discretion, while the king of Israel is anointed, both the king and the prophet about to anoint him are said to have gone out. But many manuscripts have: And when they were risen in the morning, before it began to be light: which indeed can be conveniently understood. It is morning, indeed, before it begins to be light, when in some way the day begins to breathe, and yet there is not the full light of day. But for the preachers of the holy Church, while they consider the good conversation of those whom they dispose to ordain, it is as it were morning. But because they cannot know their future, it is morning, but before it begins to be light. Which is well said in the ordination of him who is recorded to have afterwards displeased almighty God. For as it were in the morning, before it began to be light, the prophet saw him who appeared to him in the light of good conversation. But the full clarity of day was not yet, because he could not see the future darkness in him through the present light of knowledge. Which indeed is done in the holy Church as many times as there are those who are good, who are chosen in the present, but are not going to persevere in that same good. For he goes out as it were in the morning and before

the light, who shows the present light of good work, but hides the future darkness of life. But what was done from there follows:

(Verse 27, seq.) And as they were going down in the last part of the city, Samuel said to Saul: Speak to the servant to go before us, and pass on: but do thou stay a little, that I may declare the word of the Lord to thee. And Samuel took a little vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him.

63. For what is it, that the king is led and anointed in the farthest part of the city? But the last part of the city is the last part of the subject people. Those, therefore, who hold the last place in the holy Church, are as it were in the farthest part of the city. But in the last part of the Church itself, converted sinners seem to be. For all the just are in the superior or first part. Or perhaps virginity holds the first place, continence the second, conjugal life the third, and the conversion of sinners the last. In the farthest part of the city, therefore, the king is anointed: because the rector of the holy Church is ordained for sinners, not for the just. Hence for this reason Truth says through Himself: I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance (Matt. 9:13). Hence again He says: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill (Ibid. 12).

64. But we said that Saul's servant designated the spiritual sense. What is it, therefore, that he is commanded by Samuel to go before and pass on? But the servant goes before when that is done which is suggested to us by the spiritual sense,

not what is commanded by carnal motion. But he goes before and passes some, he goes before and does not pass others. The servant going before does not pass the arrogant, but he passes the humble: for while the arrogant do great and spiritual things, they are great in their own eyes. For they have as it were with them the servant whom they follow, who glory that they are spiritual in the spiritual things which they do. To whom indeed the prophet reproaches, saying: Woe to you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits (Isa. 5:21). The elect, therefore, in all things which they do, take care indeed to be spiritual, and avoid holding themselves as spiritual. They are great indeed in merit, humble in estimation: because they always do great things, but in those same great things they never behold themselves as great. As if, therefore, they make the servant pass on, whom they send ahead, when they have the spiritual sense present in work, but far from estimation. But what is it, that he is commanded to stay a little, that the word of the Lord may be declared to him? But he stays a little, the servant having been sent ahead, who for the hour withdraws himself from his own judgment and does the will of another. He makes the servant pass on, therefore, and stays a little, who at the command of a superior deserts even those things which he thinks are spiritual: he deserts them, that he may be able to conveniently effect those things which are enjoined upon him. Which certainly suits the preacher about to be ordained: for while he considers the weight of

pastoral care and his own infirmity, the spirit going before says this to him: that he unworthily receives so great a burden being so weak. Let him, therefore, not only let the servant go before, but make him pass on: that he may not follow his own judgment, but receive that which is decreed for him by the provision of a better person. And concerning the one staying, there is immediately added.

4. For he says as if to a humble pastor, trembling before such a great ministry: You tremble for this reason, because you do not know whether this which has been done concerning you is from God; but because you can know this, you ought not to tremble. This therefore shall be a sign to you, that not man, but God has anointed you as prince: namely, those two men will say to you: The asses are found, which you had gone to seek. As if he were to say: If you find those two men, and they tell you this, know that God, not I, has appointed you prince. What then do these two men designate for us, if not the perfect preachers of the holy Church? They are two indeed, because they are perfect in both precepts of charity; men, because they are robust in holy conversation. They are said to be found near Rachel's sepulcher, because through the study of the contemplative life they are divided from the intention of the world; and while they seek the gains of souls, they are not buried. For it is the undisputed opinion of the venerable fathers that by Rachel the beauty of the contemplative life is signified. Near Rachel's sepulcher, therefore, the

men stand, because perfect teachers so devote themselves to heavenly contemplation that they may carry the solicitude of the holy Church. They stand near Rachel's sepulcher, because they direct the state of good work through the virtue of contemplation: and because they do nothing in work, except what they arrange by contemplating. And because in the very height of heavenly contemplation they study to hold not their own presumption, but the reason of the holy Church, Rachel's sepulcher is described as being in the borders of Benjamin. As I have already said, in Benjamin, who is called the son of the right hand, the Redeemer of the human race is designated. The borders of Benjamin, therefore, are the rules of the holy Scriptures: concerning which borders indeed it is written: Do not transgress the bounds which your fathers have set (Prov. 22:28). Because therefore holy preachers, when they see high things by contemplating, do not discord from the rule of faith; the sepulcher, near which they stand, is rightly said to be in the borders of Benjamin. Which men indeed at midday leap over great pits, because through the fervor of perfect charity, into which they have been taken up, they despise all the high things of the world that are seen. For whatever is discerned as high in this world is not true height, but a pit, which casts down to the lower parts all whom it receives in its ambition. The high things of the world, therefore, are to be avoided by spiritual men, not sought after, because they open themselves from hidden places, and those whom they receive by

absorbing, they lead to the lower parts. Spiritual men, therefore, leap over pits; because while they raise themselves through heavenly desire, they despise earthly things. For as if having seen the pits they give a leap, when, so that they may despise earthly things, they elevate themselves to desire eternal goods. At midday, therefore, they leap over pits; because those cannot despise the world except those who have the full light and ardor of heavenly charity. Then, therefore, let Saul understand that he has been anointed as prince by the Lord, when these shall say to him: The asses are found, which you were seeking. Indeed they tell Saul the asses are found, when they discern him suitable for gathering the gains of souls. As if he were to say otherwise: Believe that you have been chosen by God for the ministry of preaching, not by men, if those indicate this concerning you who, while they are full of the spirit of God, what they say is felt to be not human, but divine. Because therefore concerning ourselves we must believe not ourselves, but those better than us, Saul aptly recognizes from the men leaping over great pits at midday, that he has been anointed as prince by the Lord. But it is one by whom he is anointed, others who attest that the anointing itself is from the Lord; because every business of the holy Church, just as it is more proved by the collation of the holy fathers, so also is it more robust.

5. For as it were a sign of his anointing the blessed Paul then sought, when he came to Jerusalem to see Peter, and conferred the Gospel

with him and the other apostles. For he had received the apostolate not from man nor through man, but from heaven, by the Lord Jesus calling (Gal. 1); and yet he proved the ministry of his anointing through the collation of his fellow apostles. For he says of himself: I conferred the Gospel with them, lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain (Gal. 2:2). The Precursor of the Redeemer also had anointed disciples, but that they might recognize the signs of their anointing, he sent them as it were to the one leaping over great pits, saying: Are you he who is to come, or do we look for another (Matt. 11:3)? For John knew whom he had preached, whom he had baptized; but he sent the disciples, so that having seen the signs, they might believe more firmly and might have held the indications of their election more securely. Those therefore who are provided as suitable for the order of preaching, recognize in sign of their election that the souls of sinners, which they seek, have been found. And because almighty God rejoices not only in the preaching but also in the conversation of the chosen teacher, he adds and says: And your father, having left off the asses, is concerned for you, and says: What shall I do for my son? We have said that Saul's father Kish, who is called hard in our speech, designates those who by word and example teach to despise earthly things, and to hasten to the heavenly country through a hard and rough conversation. This hardness of the heavenly life we have recognized both in the word and in the life of our Redeemer. If therefore we

look to the summit of our erudition, we are sons of the Redeemer. Our father, therefore, having dismissed the asses, is concerned for us; because our Redeemer so wishes us to seek the salvation of others, that we may not neglect our own. He wishes sinners to be called to penance, but he does not wish those who call those same sinners to perish. He wishes that the converted sinner may have the justice which he did not have; but he does not wish the just man to lose the palm of justice which he has. Having left off the asses, therefore, he is concerned for his son, because he wishes his preachers for an hour to rest from the solicitous intention for others, so that through rest they may be able better to provide for themselves. And because that same solicitude for the holy Church is to be resumed by a good rector, our rest is interrupted; because a prior solicitude precedes this, and a posterior one accompanies it. Let the chosen preacher, therefore, be free for the utility of his subjects, and free for his own; but let him so have care for his own, that he may immediately return to that of others which he deserts; because then our Creator loves us as sons, when we both love our subjects as brothers, and love Him as father, while through the affect of solicitude we are joined to them, and hasten to Him through our rest, which He loves, as to a father. For this love of our rest is expressed in this, that it is said: What shall I do for my son? This indeed the father says, who tenderly loves his son. This, therefore, is not said concerning the son being present, but absent. But because he seeks

the lost asses of the father, he is very beloved to him; because he who strives to convert the souls of sinners by preaching, is already joined to our Redeemer in great charity. Who certainly through the solicitude for others is as if far from him, but near through the rest of contemplation and the affect of prayer. Because therefore he desires us to be near him both through contemplation and prayer, as a loving father he says: What shall I do for my son? As if he were to say: How shall I exhibit him present to me, who is absent? But because the great men of the holy Church praise the solicitude of our preaching, but vituperate the excess of solicitude, those who say the father's asses are found, assert that the father is concerned for his son. The elect, therefore, can recognize the sign of their anointing; because undoubtedly they are then led by God to the summit of the holy Church, when through words and examples they are suitable for the salvation of others, and through rest studious for their own; and when they seek sinners for heaven, they do not leave themselves behind for the world. It follows:

(Vers. 3, 4.) And when you shall have gone from there, and passed farther on, and shall have come to the oak of Tabor, three men will meet you there, going up to the Lord in Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another three loaves of bread, and another a flagon of wine. And when they shall have saluted you, they will give you two loaves, and you shall receive them from their hand.

6. When we wish to profit well in holy conversation, it is necessary for us to collect for ourselves the examples of many of the elect; for even bees cannot compose honey if they do not gather it from various flowers. Saul, therefore, well proceeds from some men to others; because the more copiously we discern the examples of the saints, the better we are taught. For the flowers of eternal fruits are the works of the saints, which while they are bedewed with the dew of heavenly love, we pluck from them that whence we may be filled for our own doctrine and for the utility of others. For Saul goes away from there and passes farther on, when the rude preacher profits through the examples of the elect, and goes from the beheld virtue of one to explore the conversation of another. Whom it often delights to wonder at the labor of preaching in some, often in others the strength of good work; he venerates those speaking, he strives to imitate these working. He looks at those, with what beauty they shine without; the splendor of these he scrutinizes not in exterior conversation, but in the innermost parts. Whence also he is rightly said to come to the oak of Tabor when he passes on. For the oak is a shady and strong tree. In which tree indeed the more secret conversation of the saints is expressed. For the men of this conversation, while they do not go out to the exterior works of the active life, are as it were in the shade; because they cannot feel the fires of temptations. For because they rest in heavenly desire, the farther they are removed from the love of the

world, the more quiet they remain in the shade of refreshment. But this shade is of a strong tree, because the conversation of the saints despises earthly things all the more strongly as it rises more purely into the love of heavenly things. It is strong also because those powerfully tolerate the adversities of the world who love only the heavenly things which they see. And because they are in the great light of internal splendor, who disdain to look back at earthly things through love, the oak itself is called of Tabor. For Tabor is interpreted as coming light. For light comes when the internal clarity of the Creator opens itself to the chosen mind. The oak is therefore called of Tabor: because secret conversation acts by despising earthly things, that it may more clearly behold the innermost light of the Creator. For we are secret when we guard our senses in the fear of God. And then indeed we discern the coming light, because when the members of the body are well ruled, the grace of the Creator is poured back into our mind. And it is to be noted that he is said to come to the oak of Tabor, who knew from those leaping over pits that the father was concerned for him. For the preachers of the holy Church for the most part praise virtues which they themselves cannot be free for. They preach indeed the secret of the contemplative life; but while they are concerned for the guardianship of their subjects, they avoid adhering to the secrets of that life. As if Samuel were to say: Those men praise to you the study of contemplation; but because they cannot hold what they praise,

it is to be sought in others. Therefore we pass from there to the oak of Tabor, when we know the laudable study of the contemplative life from holy preachers; but we seek its perfection in those who spiritually intend toward it. The three men, therefore, who find the anointed king at the oak of Tabor, designate those who are perfect in the study of the contemplative life. Who are rightly said not to be found by the king, but to find the king there. For they are not found, because they are hidden. But they find us, because they open the light of their secret conversation to us when they deign. They are not found, because they withdraw their life from all testimony of men. But they find us, because through the affect of charity they show us something of their light to imitate. Who likewise do not proffer their virtues to be imitated except to those who desire to obtain and exercise them with great desire. First, therefore, it behooves us to come to the oak of Tabor, that we may be able to be found by those three men. For we are as it were already in the shade of the coming light, when we are inflamed with great desires of the highest contemplation.

7. Then therefore the three men appear to us: because those who deign to show themselves to us who desire them, are strong in the guardianship of speech, thought, and work. For they cannot be of a more secret life if they had kept the doors of the eyes, heart, and mouth open. Because therefore they guard the heart from inept thought, the mouth from idle speech, and the whole body from wicked operation, they are

three; but men, because they observe that same guardianship most strongly. Three men therefore appear to us: because when we discern such as these, we intuit in them the strength of virtue. Who certainly are in the shade of the coming light; because they can see the internal light of the Creator all the more clearly, as they more studiously guard a clean heart from the pollution of the world. To such indeed the Lord appeared rising from the dead, and such the Holy Spirit filled. For of that secret it is said: When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). And again: After eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: Jesus comes, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. Concerning another secret likewise it is written: And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1). They have indeed shut doors who, against the negligence of human lapse, keep the offices of the body strictly under strong guardianship. They are also within; because they rest in the internal love of the heavenly life. To whom indeed the rising Lord appears, because they behold his glory all the more clearly, as they

more strictly follow the mystery of his passion through contempt of the world. These also can be filled with the Holy Spirit, as if in a house; because those receive the gifts of his graces abundantly who have prepared themselves to receive them by contemning visible things.

8. Who are rightly said to ascend to the Lord in Bethel. For Bethel is called the house of God. But what is the house of God, if not that house which inaccessible light inhabits? The inaccessible light also is the revelation of his divinity. It is indeed light; because it can be seen in some way by clean hearts. Most full indeed in itself, it fills all things, but abundantly filling the universe, it is not contained. It is contained indeed, that it may fill, but filling it is not contained, which, all things having been filled, is not exhausted. And so the revelation of the Creator, because there is such an immensity of light that it illuminates all things and is narrowed in none; while it is seen and not comprehended, it is inaccessible light. These three men therefore ascend to the Lord; because those who guard themselves in a more secret life are sublimated in the contemplation of divine light. But because they cannot yet reach the very sight of almighty God, they are said to ascend into Bethel. For whatever the human mind can think concerning almighty God, is not God. But while by thinking it transcends all things, while whatever of innermost light, whatever of internal sweetness and pleasantness, whatever of spiritual delight it can imagine for itself, it is believed to be less than that, yet it reaches a

certain light which is not God, but which God inhabits. And because then the soul of the elect is wonderfully inflamed, wonderfully refreshed, ineffably enjoys delight, it is compelled to think how ineffable a light, sweetness, and delight He is who is Himself, if that light which He inhabits, and is not He Himself, is so immense. Moses indeed had ascended to the Lord in Bethel when he spoke with him on the mount. But he who had reached the light which God inhabits, sought the light which was God himself, saying: Show me your face (Exod. 33:13). Concerning whom it is also written, that the Lord spoke to Moses face to face (Ibid.). What is it, that Moses speaks face to face with the Lord, and yet beseeches the Lord that the Lord show his face? But the face of God is the knowledge of him. God is known, however, through a mirror, and he is known through himself. Through a mirror here, through himself in heaven. But the mirror is that light which God inhabits; but he is that light which he himself is (1 Cor. 13:12). But Moses, who is said to see God face to face, and to ask for his face to be seen (Exod. 33:13), what does he more rightly designate than the perfection of the elect, who already behold the mirror of that highest light, but yet vehemently desire to reach the very truth of the light? This knowledge of the light indeed does not know how to satiate the desires of the elect, but to excite them; but that other both satiates and excites. For it is so pleasant a thing that it is ineffably desired; and so full, that those who have now always seen this in great desire, are al-

ways satiated with ineffable plenitude. The men, therefore, who ascend to the Lord, are said to ascend in Bethel; because when we profit much in this life, we can see the very light of the Creator through a mirror, but we are by no means able to see it in itself.

9. And because none but the humble are exalted to this sublime vision, it is well said of those same men: Because one carried three kids, another three loaves of bread. Finally, he carries three kids who considers that he has failed by mouth, heart, and work in repenting. For because sinners are signified by kids, those who in the final examination are to be placed at the left of the eternal judge are expressed by the name of kids. He therefore carries three kids to the Lord who does not cease to consider the sins of work, word, and thought by repenting. And he is indeed a man, and yet he carries kids; because he strongly takes care not to sin, but as a sinner he does not cease to make satisfaction. For he was a man, and he carried kids, who said: In many things we all offend (James 3:2). And because they strive to blot out the sins which they confess by repenting: one carries three kids, but another carries three loaves of bread. Loaves of bread indeed we have referred above to the affliction of penance; because if bread sometimes signifies the delight of the present life, bread is twisted (tortured) when we are tormented for the past delight of the flesh. Whence also King Hezekiah, when he is pricked by repenting, promises that he will twist his royal delights, saying: I will recount all my years in the

bitterness of my soul (Isa. 38:15). For when the carnal mind is dissolved in the delights of fault, it as it were has a day; because it joyfully sees that which it does. The days of a reprobate mind, therefore, are evil delights. The sinner therefore recounts all his days; because when he comes to his senses through divine grace, he does not cease to make satisfaction for all evils. For first one is said to carry three kids, then another three loaves of bread; so that the virtue of each of the elect may appear, who is strong in good work, humble by estimation, afflicted through the contrition of penance. And because they cannot be of such great perfection except those who by love of eternal goods have forgotten temporal ones, the third is said to carry a flagon of wine. He indeed carries a flagon of wine who has filled his mind with the heat of the Holy Spirit, by which he may both seek the things that are before by running strongly, and abandon those things which are behind, as if in a great oblivion of drunkenness. For he carried kids, who said: Christ came to call sinners, of whom I am the first (1 Tim. 1:15). And because he also carried a loaf of bread, he says: I chastise my body, and bring it into servitude (1 Cor. 9:27). But as if drunk with the wine of an amphora, he says: Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching myself forth to those that are before, I pursue towards the mark, for the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13). The three men therefore ascend to the Lord, and bring three kids, and three loaves of bread, and a flagon of wine: because devoted

to the studies of a more remote life, they rise to the contemplation of the true light from the merit of humility. But what sort they are in themselves, and what sort they are to others, he explains, saying: And when they shall have saluted you, they will give you three loaves of bread, and you shall receive them from their hand. Holy men salute us when they announce to us the eternal goods of salvation. But those who salute us through the body, bow the head, so that they may exhibit reverence to the one saluted. But for spiritual men to bow the head is to put down the mind from high contemplation. For if they do not bow the head, they cannot salute: because they do not instruct us with salutary erudition if they do not put down the mind from the highest contemplation of heavenly things. For then they exhibit great reverence to us: because they do not hold those for whom they deign to descend from their high summit to be small.

10. But while the future king is saluted, two loaves are given to him. For two loaves are given to the preacher being ordained, when he is taught to weep for not only his own sins, but those of others. He has therefore one twisted loaf, when he is afflicted for his own sins; he has another, when he endeavors to bewail the sins of his subjects. But the Psalmist, more clearly insinuating this bread, says: Rise after you have sat, you who eat the bread of sorrow (Ps. 126:2). Hence he confesses to the Lord, saying: Thou shalt feed us with the bread of tears, and give us drink in tears with measure (Ps. 79:6). The twisted loaf (torta panis)

therefore is the bread of sorrow, and the bread of tears. And perhaps for that reason that one man was carrying three twisted loaves: because there were three who were going together, so that when they divided them among themselves, each might have one loaf. Which can also be conveniently understood of the kids. In which matter what is to be noted, except that men of a more remote life, while they hold a singular conversation, do not have the care of others? They have therefore one kid, and one loaf, who are pricked for their own sins alone, and are not burdened with those of others through the pastoral office. And because those who are of the same perfect conversation emulate the affliction of the flesh in themselves, it is well that one carries three loaves, another three kids, and the third a flagon of wine. For as one carries what all are to offer or eat, and all eat or offer what one carries, when each of them, kindled by pious emulation, has in himself good examples for others, and does not neglect to imitate the good things which others have. And because twisted loaves (tortae panis) are spoken of in the feminine gender, this surely insinuates that for him who is pricked by custom, more and more tears arise from others. For as if in the feminine sex, the affliction of the penitent is fecund; because the more often each one is pricked, the more abundant flows of tears are ministered to him. To Saul, therefore, not one loaf, but two are given, because it does not suffice for the preacher to weep for himself alone. Let him therefore receive from the hands of the men two loaves; so

that he may clearly learn to weep by the example of the perfect, but...

11. And it is to be noted, because Samuel commands the anointed king, saying: And you shall receive from their hand. Of which word, what better reason can be gathered than that which is openly seen: because namely we do not willingly emulate affliction in holy men? For those who ambition the honor of prelacy and dignity are innumerable: but those who seek the labor of ministry and the affliction of the flesh from the same prelacy are few. We indeed willingly wish to be sublimated over others, but we avoid bewailing their sins. For then we see the loaves offered to us, but we are unwilling to receive them from the hands of those offering: because in the elect men we discern an affliction which we do not imitate. Let the prophet therefore command, saying: You shall receive from their hand. So that he who ambitions to be a fit ruler of the Church may by no means avoid assuming what has been said. Well also Saul is first led to the men leaping over great pits, then to those who carry loaves, kids, and wine: so that the rude preacher may learn in others to despise the high things of the age, and in others to offer the affliction of the flesh and the hosts of tears for himself and his subjects to almighty God. But still insinuating the sum of his progress, the prophet adds, saying:

(Vers. 5, 6.) After these things you shall come to the hill of the Lord, where is the garrison of the Philistines, and when you shall have entered the city, you shall meet a company of prophets, com-

ing down from the high place, and before them a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp; and they themselves prophesying. And the spirit of the Lord shall leap upon you, and you shall prophesy with them, and you shall be changed into another man.

12. A hill is the height of a mountain. But what is more rightly accepted in this hill than the holy intention of the Scriptures? It is indeed the height of a mountain: because it does not lie in the plain of the letter, but is exceedingly erect in the sublimity of spiritual senses. Therefore the rude preacher leans upon the right path of virtues if, after he has seen public preachers and remote anchorites, he sees and acknowledges the height of Scripture. In which matter it is to be noted, that we said that Saul, in that he stands out from the shoulder and upwards above all the people, signifies an erudite man and a man of great conversation. Why therefore does he ascend to the hill of the Lord, to come to the height of the Scriptures which he knows? But in like manner it could be asked of him, why he went to see the men leaping over great pits, who was said to be of great conversation. To which it is to be said: that he was shown to designate great men in conversation, but rude in the ministry of preaching. He therefore who can profit through the examples of the better, and in the purity of contemplation and the office of preaching, ought to return to the height of the Scriptures: because by how much higher life he profits, by so much more subtly he attends to the sublimity of the sacred

eloquence. Let the prophet therefore say: After these things you shall come to the hill of the Lord. As if he should say: When you comprehend the perfection of holy men by perfect imitation, you will profit in such great understanding of sacred Scripture; that you may see that to be plain now, which you thought you saw sublimely in it.

13. There is the station of the Philistines: because those who fell from heaven by the drink of pride mock the Jews and heretics through the Scriptures. They stand, therefore, on the hill: because they deceive the hearts which they possess in the Scriptures by the falsity of understanding. As often as the Jews presume to ascend to the hill of the Lord, they are captivated by the Philistines standing there. For while they estimate that they understand the sense of Scripture sublimely, demons meet them in their ascent and, deceiving them, kill them. Deservedly, therefore, Saul is commanded to go to the hill of the Lord not immediately, but first, having seen those jumping the ditches, and those carrying loaves and wine: because faithful men are fortified by the great protection both of the doctrine of the better and of examples. Whence also it is said to the same Saul: Thou shalt have a company of prophets coming down from the high place meeting thee. As if he were to say: Thou wilt be able to fear the station of the Philistines so much the less, as thou shalt have prophets meeting thee for security. And because it is called a "company" (grex) of prophets, a great multitude of our defenders is signified. Let the Jew fear, therefore: because

while he ascends alone, he perishes. For what do these same prophets meeting us say? Woe to him that is alone, for if he fall, there is none to lift him up (Eccles. 4:10). For he is alone who is abandoned by God. Surely no one lifts him up when he falls, because some one of the saints does not assume him who is abandoned by God. Every chosen one, therefore, ascends secure: because he is not alone. For he who speaks through us is with us. For he also promises again, saying: Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (Matt. 28:20). Surely he was not alone who said: I am not alone, but he who sent me is with me (John 8:16). Likewise he was not alone who inquired, saying: Do you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me? (2 Cor. 13:3). Which can be conveniently understood not only of the spiritual presence of the Lord, but also of the material doctrine of the chosen. Holy preachers indeed ascend to the hill of the Lord, where the station of the Philistines is: but because they have the company of prophets meeting them, they by no means fear the Philistines themselves. But who are these prophets, except the great preachers of the holy Church? For it is the ministry of a prophet to reveal hidden things and to foretell future things. But the doctors of the holy Church, while they draw the hidden senses of the Scriptures to common knowledge, open the secrets which are not known: and while they preach eternal joys, they reveal future things. The prophets, therefore, come to meet us: because the doctors of the holy Church show us the truth of

the holy Scripture. For while they tell us those things which we wish to know about the sacred word, they occur to those going by the way by which one proceeds to the hill of the Lord. There, therefore, through the meeting of the prophets we are secure, where the Philistines are: because through the authority of the holy preachers we acknowledge the understanding of the Scripture, in which the Jews and heretics are destroyed by the sword of their errors by demons. For behold, if we recur to the Law of Moses, we surely find the hill of the Lord. There surely we read of the tabernacle, there of the great high priest, there of the blood of goats and calves together, and of the paschal Lamb. The Jews understand this in their own spirit according to the letter, in which because they have none of the prophets with them, they die. I, if I wish to ascend to this mountain, first see the prophets descending, and I ascend secure. And to leave aside the new ones for now, Isaiah first meets the one ascending, saying: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearer, he shall not open his mouth (Isa. 53:7). Hence Paul says: Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having found eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11, 12). But if we wish to have more on this hill, we find all the prophets seeking it: because what the old doctors

had promised, the new preachers show fulfilled in our Redeemer.

14. Wherefore also the Redeemer of the human race can be conveniently designated by the name of a hill. Whence Isaiah, prophesying, says: It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains (Isa. 2:2). It is indeed called a hill for the sublimity of holiness: but of the Lord, because He is the Son of the highest Begetter. In which hill, namely, the garrison of the Philistines is said to be: because He was born for a sign that shall be contradicted. The garrison of the Philistines indeed is the contrariety of heretics. For as if standing on the hill, they lie in wait for those ascending the hill: and while they pervert the sacred Scriptures by expounding them badly, they destroy those who carelessly ascend to know the Redeemer. Let not the elect person therefore tremble, ascending he has a company of prophets meeting him: because all the preachers of the Old and New Testament announce to him the Redeemer Himself. Who namely come from the high place: because what they preach on earth, they see in heaven. Whence also it is said from heaven to John, as if indeed from the elect company of prophets: Come up hither, and I will show thee what must be done after these things (Rev. 4:1). Who when he had ascended, beheld and acknowledged already reigning the Lamb whom Moses had figured to be slain, and he himself had seen offered on the cross: and he learned how great thanks they gave to Him for

whom He had been slain. From the high place therefore the preachers come: because what they preach to the lesser ones, they learned in celestial contemplation.

15. Well also the company of prophets is asserted to meet Saul at the entrance of the city; because we can see the highest preachers of the holy Church there, where they descend, not where they are sublimated. For those things which they say to us little ones, we hear: but those things which they see in heavenly places, how they see them, or sweetly love them, we do not see. For Paul the apostle was caught up into paradise, and taken up to the third heaven, he heard also secret words, which it is not permitted for man to speak (2 Cor. 12:4). Who therefore could find so great a preacher caught up into paradise, or taken up to the third heaven? But the blessed Paul said these things of himself, being forced. Whence also in the end of the exposed sublimity, humbling himself, he says: I am become foolish, you have forced me (2 Cor. 12:11). How great therefore were those things which he was unwilling to say, if he came forced to manifest these? For he also who heard what it is not permitted for man to speak, saw what it is not permitted for man to know. You might say perhaps: If he wished, how could he nevertheless say in human speech the beauty of that third heaven, relate the light of that inward clarity, the inenarrable brightness of the angels, and the inaccessible clarity, how sweetly all those elect and blessed eternal citizens receive from His fullness, how desirously they take, how fully

they are replenished, how sweetly they taste the sweetness of divine goodness, with what delectable fullness they are satiated: what splendors there are for each from that one ineffable light of the Creator, what beauty there is of all together from that one glory: by what excellence of dignity some excel others, how the good are subject to the better with the ineffable joy of justice?

16. We cannot follow Paul to this high place, but we enter the city, in which as if descending from on high, he comes to meet us. For we who cannot discern the high things which the preachers see, ought to hear venerably the plain things which they teach. But when they descend, they carry before them the psaltery, the tympanum, the pipe, and the cithara. For they have the psaltery because they announce the kingdom of heaven: they have the tympanum because they preach the mortification of the flesh: they have the pipe because they command the subjects to weep for the acquisition of eternal joy: they have also the cithara because they teach the pious to rejoice for the certainty of eternal goods. The psaltery indeed, which resounds from the superior part, also designates the preaching of eternal joys: because while it suggests loving the things above, it as it were sends the sound of its sweetness from the superior part. The tympanum truly, because it is stretched from the skin of a dead animal, in it not inconveniently the mortification of our flesh is figured. But the pipe, because it is accustomed to be had in the funerals of dead men, we have learned from the Gospel: because when

the Lord wished to raise the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, he cast out the pipers from her house and expelled the tumultuous crowd (Matt. 9:25). What then is expressed in the pipe but the mourning of the saints? For while they behold themselves cast away from that eternal life which they desire, they bewail themselves as it were dead. But the cithara is a very joyful musical instrument. By which instrument surely the word of consolation of the chosen is aptly figured: because as it were we are cheered at the sound of the cithara when the chosen preachers console us among the hardships of the present exile. The psaltery therefore is placed first in the promise of the preachers: because before all things the glory of the heavenly kingdom is to be preached; so that while we acknowledge the good which we may love, we may desire to labor for obtaining that same good. Hence it is that when in the Gospel Matthew asserted the principles of the Lord's Incarnation, he said: John began to preach and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven will approach (Matt. 4:17). But because when we know heavenly things, if we wish to arrive at them, it is necessary that we mortify the passions of the flesh, the preachers of the holy Church as it were after the psaltery make the sound of the tympanum. But that mortification of the body, what else is it than the preparation for eternal beatitude? Therefore we love that heavenly things be prepared, and we are commanded to ask for them with most ardent weepings. For as it were with the pipe we bewail the dead when we

vehemently grieve because we do not yet live in that eternal life. After the tympanum, therefore, our preachers have the pipe when they teach us both to mortify our members and to groan for the love of eternal life. They also lead the cithara after the pipe: because they command us so to bewail the hardships of the present exile that we may rejoice in the promise of the eternal inheritance. For the great prophet resounded the psaltery when he said: My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eternal life (John 10:27). Striking the psaltery likewise, he said: The Son of man must be exalted, that every one that believeth in him may not perish, but may have eternal life (John 3:14). He sounded the tympanum who said: Mortify your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, concupiscence (Col. 3:5). He sounded the pipe who said: Be miserable, and mourn, let your laughter be turned into mourning, and joy into sorrow (James 4:9). He sounded the tympanum who said: For thy sake we are mortified all the day, we are estimated as sheep of slaughter (Psalm 43:22). But he has the pipe before him who likewise speaks to God, saying: Thou shalt feed us with the bread of tears, and shalt give us drink in measure (Psalm 79:6). The Lord had the pipe before him when he said: Amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice, and you shall be made sorrowful (John 16:20). But subjoining as it were the sound of the cithara, he says: Your sorrow shall be turned into joy (Ibid.). He sounded the cithara as it were to us who said: Rejoice in the

Lord always, again I say, rejoice: let your modesty be known to all men; the Lord is at hand (Phil. 4:4). He sounds the cithara to us who, announcing the goods of our city, says: Joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of praise (Isa. 51:3). Because therefore the preachers of the holy Church announce the heavenly kingdom, and for the sake of obtaining the same kingdom, command to mortify the flesh, to bewail captivity, to exult in the hope of future beatitude: the prophets descending from the high place are said to have before them the psaltery, the tympanum, the pipe, and the cithara. And it is called a "company" of prophets because there are many shepherds of the holy Church, and they have one shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

17. And it is to be noted that the prophets are said to have the psaltery, the tympanum, the pipe, and the cithara before them, so that the form of the chosen preachers may be seen. For the reprobate have after them the things which they preach: because they say and do not, they neglect to do the good things which they know. Whence also it is still said to king Saul, already contemning the commands of the Lord: Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee, that thou shouldst not be king (1 Sam. 15:23). Hence through the prophet the Lord complains of the Jews, saying: They have cast me behind their body (1 Kings 14:9). But the holy doctors, because they keep the way of heavenly life which they preach by the continuous gait of good work, it is said in their type that

the prophets had the psaltery, the tympanum, the pipe, and the cithara before them as they were descending. For these instruments can be referred to the preaching of the Redeemer. And because not much earlier we said that the hill of the Lord is the Redeemer himself, let us look at the agreement of the organs. He who names him the king of the eternal kingdom surely sounds the psaltery for us. And he who asserts in him the discipline of our mortification, as it were strikes the tympanum. He sounds the pipe who announces the Redeemer dead for the salvation of the world. He strikes the cithara who says that he rose from the dead and ascended to the heavens. But at the pleasantness of so many organs we are cheered, if we hear the very company of prophets sounding. For David says: His going out is from the highest heaven, and his meeting is even to the highest (Psalm 18:7). Hence likewise he says: All the kings of the earth shall adore him, all nations shall serve him (Psalm 71:11). For he who obtained the superior part of praise, and preached the coming of the Redeemer from the highest heaven, held as it were the psaltery in the praise of the Redeemer. Isaiah touched the tympanum of his mortification, saying: And we have seen him, and there was no sightly appearance, and we desired him, despised, and the latest of men, a man of sorrows, and knowing infirmity: and as it were his face was hidden and despised; wherefore neither did we esteem him (Isa. 53:3). Sounding likewise the pipe of his death, he says: As a sheep he shall be led to the slaughter, and as a lamb

he was dumb (Ibid. 7). David, striking the cithara of the resurrection, says: Let the whole earth be moved from his face, say ye among the nations that the Lord hath reigned from the tree: for he hath established the world, which shall not be moved (Psalm 95:10). Also touching the cithara of the ascension, he said: Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth, who ascendeth above the heavens of heavens to the east (Psalm 67:33, 34). The prophets, therefore, descend from the high place when holy preachers announce to us those sacraments which they learned in high contemplation. And they speak the psaltery, the pipe, and the cithara: because they assert our Redeemer to be the Lord of the eternal kingdom, and humbled through the human condition, and by his death to redeem the world, and by rising to repair heavenly things. Which instruments of praise surely they have before them: because they understand those things which they say. On the contrary, indeed, Caiaphas is said to prophesy (John 11), and to be ignorant of those things which he said; when he touched the pipe of the Lord's death, and not as a chosen prophet had it before him, but after him. Well, therefore, is added of the chosen prophets: And they prophesying. Because while they see what they say, they as it were have before them the instruments which they touch; and while they preach, they bring forth that which they knew by foreseeing. Saul, therefore, comes to the hill of the Lord when the chosen and raw preacher profits in spiritual knowledge, and knows the Redeemer of the human race not in

the plain of his humanity, but in the high majesty of his divinity. Then indeed he hears the choirs of the prophets singing together: because he perfectly understands all the Scriptures which are of him. He therefore who saw the men jumping the great ditches, who beheld those carrying the kids and the cakes of bread and the flagon of wine, arrives at the hill of the Lord when he who is known to have profited through the examples of the chosen is uplifted to the height of knowledge and, knowing the Redeemer sublimely, loves him ineffably, from whom he can ask what he likewise desires to know of him, as a familiar friend.

18. Well it is added: And the spirit of the Lord shall leap upon you, and you shall prophesy with them. The spirit of the Lord is said to leap, because the hearts of the elect are suddenly filled with His gifts. Who immediately begin to prophesy: because those who are full of the divine spirit, cannot be silent about the great works of God. Or he is asserted to be about to prophesy, to whom Samuel promises the grace of the divine word. Which is such as if he should say: You who now in that abundance cannot speak in the spirit coming upon you, when that fullness shall have infused itself into you, you will abound in the copiousness of speaking. For the Lord, promising this leaping spirit to the disciples, said: When that spirit of truth shall have come, he will teach you all truth, and will announce to you the things that are to come (John 16:13). The spirit coming upon them indeed leaps, whose hearts, coming suddenly, it illustrated (Acts 2:2). And being illus-

trated they prophesied, because they preached the Redeemer of the human race in every tongue. Which certainly we discern to be done in the holy Church even now: because often those who desire to speak divine things, are suddenly taught by the same spirit, and can speak very well even those things which they have learned by no premeditation. For the keeping of the commands of God, they perceive the grace of the word in the sublime revelation of the Redeemer. For what wonder, if they can suddenly perceive the light of science, who through the purity of life are always seats of the Holy Spirit? But what sort of gift of the Holy Spirit would it be, if it gave science, and did not give the affection of great charity? For those who are replenished with that spirit, preach heavenly things, but they love what they speak. Aptly therefore he subjoins: And you shall be changed into another man. What else is the love of an elect mind than the change of antiquity? For our nature through the fall of the first man was so damned, that daily by slipping it fails, and by failing it grows old. But we who fail in ourselves, when that spirit leaps upon us, are renewed: because immediately we are made what we were not. Someone was lukewarm, but suddenly visited by the spirit, he is made fervent. He begins to burn through devotion, to be strongly exercised in good work. He is therefore changed into another man: because he begins to be what, before the leaping spirit in him, he could not be. Someone is already of good conversation, he loves heavenly things, he despises earthly things,

but for those things which he loves above, and for those which he hates in the lowest things, he does not prevail to weep. Often indeed he desires to weep and cannot, who recalls that he has committed many things which he ought to bewail: but when that spirit suddenly leaps upon him, he breaks forth into fountains of tears. He is therefore changed into another man, who receives the grace of compunction through the arriving spirit, which he did not have before the arrival of the same spirit. Someone desires to obtain purity of heart, to think heavenly things, to be hindered by no occurrences of secular cares; but he cannot rise to that which he desires through devotion by the affection of purity. But suddenly snatched in the virtue of the supervening spirit, he ceases to be carnal, he powerfully casts away the cares of the age, and rises into the contemplation of eternal things with wonderful purity. He wonders then that he is what he was not: he wonders that he then was not what he is. For when in spiritual things he sees himself such, he wonders who is such, that he could not have been such. He is therefore changed into another man, who sees himself to be that which he was not, and not to be that which he had been. Well therefore of Saul: You shall be changed into another man. Because the preachers of the holy Church when they receive the grace of divine preaching, do not receive only the science of the word, but the virtue of love: so that through the word they may be able to profit others, and through the love of the word they themselves may become better. For when

they speak, they are changed into another man: because when the spirit speaks through them, they themselves are joined to the same spirit by wonderful charity, and from His will they now dissent neither in word nor in operation. For praising such a man, sacred Scripture says: He who adheres to God is one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). For we adhere to God when we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit abundantly; and we are made one spirit with Him, when we accord with the divine will in mind, mouth, and work. Well therefore the prophet Samuel subjoined, saying:

(Verse 7.) When all these signs have come upon you, do whatever your hand finds to do: for the Lord is with you.

19. These are indeed the signs by which a preacher may recognize himself, and then he may dare to do all that he disposes to act, when he knows it by certain experience; because in a great abundance of charity he receives the power of the Holy Spirit. But a preacher ought to teach those things which he does, as Luke says of the Lord: That Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day in which, giving instructions to the apostles through the Holy Spirit whom he chose, he was taken up (Acts 1:1, 2). Hence Paul says: I do not dare to speak of those things which God has not effected through me, in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deeds (Rom. 15:18). Therefore Samuel commands the anointed king, saying: Do whatever your hand finds to do. As if he were to say: When you see yourself full of divine grace, teach others whatever you do, because from the

same divine grace presiding over you, you have both the ability to live excellently and to preach usefully. But nevertheless, what he ought to observe before all these things he subjoins, saying:

(Verse 8.) And you shall descend before me to Gilgal. For I indeed shall descend to you, that you may offer an oblation, and immolate peace offerings. For seven days you shall wait for me, until I come and show you what you should do.

20. What is it that he first says: Do whatever your hand finds to do, and then adds: For seven days you shall wait for me, until I come, and show you what you should do? But he who had received the signs, by which he knew himself to be the anointed king from the Lord, was to be proved whether he recognized those very signs. This indeed is more suited to a spiritual than to a historical explanation. For to come into the hill of the Lord, we said pertains to the perfect knowledge and love of the Redeemer: to be filled with the gift of prophecy, to the power of the Holy Spirit. He says therefore: When all these signs have come upon you, do whatever your hand finds. Because whoever is certain of the inward inspiration of the Holy Spirit can presume both concerning the purpose of a good work and concerning the arrangement of preaching. He said likewise: For seven days you shall wait for me, until I come; and I will show you what you should do. Because the supreme pastors of the holy Church, while they doubt concerning the progress of the lesser ones, are very solicitous that they may recognize this in them by certain indications. But what are the

indications of the spirit, if not the excellent gifts of humility? For the Holy Spirit, with whatever greater light of virtues He irradiates the hearts of the elect, with that He also enriches them with a more abundant gift of humility. For by how much they are higher in merits, they are more level through the virtue of humility. He therefore who is commanded to descend to Gilgal before the prophet and to wait, upon him indeed the burden of obedience is enjoined for the sake of knowing his humility. For the right order of an elect conversation is that he should not enjoin obedience upon others, which he himself has not cared to bestow upon others. Therefore he is commanded to wait, so that it may be known whether he is truly humble. If therefore the sign of a perfect preacher is the filling of the Holy Spirit, and the virtue of humility the sign of that fullness, what is said in praise of humility, except that its gifts are the signs of signs?

21. But because the king, about to offer sacrifice, is commanded to go before through the prophet, we discern those things which are said better if they are seen in order. For Gilgal is interpreted as a wheel. But what does the wheel signify in this place, if not the life of the obedient? A wheel indeed proceeds by turning, and now seeks the heights, now the lower parts. So indeed is the life of the obedient, because it acts below what it draws upwards, and sees above what it exhibits below, as if being raised to the heights and put down to the lowest parts. For what the obedient act below, they lift upwards; because when they

obey the commands of their prelates, the things they work are earthly; but from the earthly things which they do, they look forward to supernal rewards. Likewise, what they have above, they bend toward the earth, because that they may act earthly things well, they contemplate celestial things, and they work only that which they see to be suitable for that highest happiness. The Lord indeed commanding Moses to bend this wheel, says: Do all things according to what was shown to you on the mount (Exod. 25:40). For he who saw in the highest things what he did in the lowest; indeed he bent the upper part of the wheel toward the earth. He had also raised the lower part toward the higher things, who said: The Lord lives in whose sight I stand (3 Kings 17:1). In the lowest indeed he stood through the humility of obedience, while he reproached a perfidious king; but he raised the plainness of his work in the sublimity of divine contemplation, so that he might best turn it like a running wheel, while in earthly work he looked at what he might merit celestially. This indeed is the form of elect obedience; that in all that we do outwardly, we should look back everywhere to the present power of the Founder (Conditoris). So indeed in the subjection of our obedience we can have both the rectitude of the work and the increases of devotion. We are indeed then right in work, because for His sake whom we see, we exercise ourselves in the labor of obedience. We are also devoted, because we believe that we please Him whom we attend to as the inspector of our labors and the bestower of

eternal retribution. And because the commands of superiors are to be observed with perfect humility, it is well said to Saul: For seven days you shall wait. For the number seven is on account of the gifts of the sevenfold Spirit. For seven days we wait for the teachers of the Church, when through the power of the sevenfold Spirit, we receive such clarity of inward devotion that we in no way neglect their precepts. In which place it is to be noted, that he did not say: For seven days you shall be in Gilgal, but: For seven days you shall wait for me, after you have descended before me. We descend before the preacher when we do that which is commanded of us by his judgment. Then indeed we are said to descend, because we subjugate our minds to their command. But to wait for seven days is to fill the good of obedience with all the light of the heart. Which we certainly then act when we pass by neither the hard nor the light commands of superiors. Indeed the Lord willed no one of the days to be vacant from this light, when He said: He who shall loosen one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:19). And because the perfect obedience which we exhibit to men is a gift of the Creator; he who waits for seven days is said to offer an oblation and to immolate peace offerings. The oblation indeed is of the Lord because it is offered to men for the sake of God, but what is offered to men is received by God. The victims are the services of the obedient, because when we are subjected to men for the sake of God,

we overcome proud spirits. By the other virtues indeed we assault the demons, by obedience we conquer them. Therefore they are victors who obey, because while they perfectly subject their own will to others, they themselves rule over the Angels who fell through disobedience.

22. But it is to be noted that Samuel commands Saul to descend to Gilgal before him, but he did not want him to offer the oblation and victims without him. For he said: I indeed shall descend to you that you may offer an oblation, and immolate peace offerings. For seven days you shall wait for me, until I come to you, and show you what you should do. What is this, if not that we ought both to be wisely ignorant of our own good things, and sometimes to know them usefully? They are to be ignored, lest they provide elation to us who are weak; but they are to be known by the more perfect, so that they may grow through devotion. Whence also it is well said in the Gospel concerning the pregnant Elizabeth: And she hid herself for five months (Luke 1:24). For those who cannot yet be spiritual and strong are designated by the number five. But she who has newly conceived hides herself for five months: because she acts good things through the senses of the body; but because she is not yet spiritual and strong in this good work, she wisely hides those things which she acts. He therefore offers victims to God, he offers an oblation, who receiving the coming prophet waits for seven days: because then what he bestows is worthy of God, when the bestower is just by the

virtue of obedience, and fearful by the consideration of the divine immensity; when he does not believe himself to be anything else, except what he recognizes by the trial of his superiors. For we offer, as it were, in the presence of the prophet, when we believe only those works of ours to be worthy of divine reception which are approved by the judgment of holy preachers. And because he is said to immolate before the prophet, this indeed signifies: that in our works [Perhaps in our works] we ought to believe wise and spiritual men. Because likewise Saul waits for seven days, the preacher of the holy Church ought to arrange the virtue of the subject wisely, so that he may not praise his good things before him except when he can despise the favor of his own praise. Whence also the same oblation and victims are foretold to be offered by Saul to God, and not to himself. To God indeed he offers victims, who is not vainly extolled concerning the virtue which he has, but attributes all that he performs to the grace of the Founder (conditoris). This also, because we learn by the magisterium of teachers, Samuel well concludes his speech, saying: And I will show you what you should do. To him indeed who waits for what he should do, he indicates it: when he who is known to obey perfectly is taught how he ought to command others. But this is not yet exhibited to Saul, but promised. For he is not sent to immolate, but to wait. And because we profit by the conversation of the saints, it is aptly added:

(Verse 9.) Therefore, when he had turned his shoulder to go away from Samuel, God changed another heart for him.

23. For another heart is changed when it is directed to seeking better things; the heart is also changed when it is abandoned to evil. But in Saul, who was first good and later was evil, how it ought rather to be understood according to the letter is not very clear. But if it is said for his progress, he had a changed heart, because he who had sought asses was now thinking about the arrangement of the kingdom. If indeed he is recognized to have received an evil heart then, he was humble before the prophet: but as he began to depart, he likewise began to be proud. In his mind he was already thinking of himself not as a little one but as a king. He was not yet sublime in order, but he was sublime in estimation. But because through this sacred history nothing is yet said openly concerning his pride, we also act more rightly if in the meantime we remain silent about what might seem sinister concerning him. But what can yet support his remaining innocence is said in the following: For Saul was the son of one year when he had begun to reign, and he reigned for two years over Israel (1 Sam. 13:1). For if he was a humble king for two years, a changed heart is asserted for him on account of the vigor of his purpose, not on account of the novelty of pride (tumor). In that therefore which Saul is said to have a changed heart, he is likened to the new preachers of the holy Church, who when they receive the order of preaching, become

better through divine grace. For Samuel anointed Saul as prince, but God changed another heart for him, because we receive the sacraments of sacred orders outwardly from the teachers of the Church, but we are strengthened inwardly by the power of the sacraments from almighty God. But the power of the sacrament is the grace of the sevenfold Spirit. Which grace certainly those who receive are changed as if having received another heart, because those whom the Holy Spirit strengthens by His grace, He makes them immediately to be what they were not. So indeed also the disciples of the Redeemer feared before; but when another heart was changed for them through the coming of the Holy Spirit, they preached the word of God with confidence (Acts 4:31). Indeed God changed another heart for them, to whom He gave the skill of all tongues (Acts 2:6). Indeed He changed another heart for them whom He clothed with wondrous charity and illustrated with the splendors of all virtues. And it is to be noted, that God changed another heart for him then, when he turned his shoulder to go away from the prophet. For he turns his shoulder, as if to go away, when he who receives the order of preaching disposes to do that which is commanded of him concerning the pastoral office. He disposes indeed, but he does not prevail if God does not change another heart for him, because a high place is not well ruled unless the mind of the ruler is filled with the highest grace of the divine gift. But because this is promised to him in the future, there is added:

(Verse 10.) And all these signs came upon him in that day.

24. For the doctrine of the elect preacher, what is it else than the day of the learned disciple? For he who walks in the day sees both the level places which he may walk, and the precipices which he may decline. So indeed, while we are illuminated by the doctrines of holy preachers, we clearly see what is to be done and what is to be avoided. In that day, therefore, in which the prophet preaches, the good hearer of his election perceives the signs, who beholds in himself those gifts of virtues which his preacher showed him would be present before. They are indeed signs, because by these those who are promoted to the order of preaching understand themselves to be elect of God. Therefore, let no one consider himself anointed to the primacy of the Church who has not seen the signs of that day to be present in the power of perfection. First, therefore, let him attentively behold the first sign, namely, if by the example of men he already knows how to leap over great pits. Let him also know the following sign, if at the oak of Tabor he has met three men, whom he saw carrying kids and loaves of bread to Bethel to the house of the Lord, if he received two loaves from their hands. Let him nevertheless see the third, if he has come to the hill of the Lord, if he has beheld the companies of those prophesying, if the spirit of the Lord has leapt upon him and he can already prophesy in their midst. And indeed he saw the men leaping over pits if by the example of the perfect he has already learned to

refute all things of the age. He has come to the oak of Tabor if he has already learned to experience the strength and pleasantness of the contemplative life. In which he also beheld those carrying kids and loaves of bread and wine to the Lord, because from the lovers of the contemplative life he has already learned both to acknowledge himself incessantly as a sinner, and for those same sins to afflict the flesh, and to offer the grief of his affliction gratefully to almighty God. He has come to the hill of the Lord if by progressing he has ascended to the revealed inward glory of the Redeemer or the sublime understanding of the Scriptures. He has met the company of prophets if he has understood the concordant science of the preachers of the holy Church. In whose midst he has felt the spirit of the Lord leaping upon him, in that ineffable sweetness of internal experience he has recognized in himself the gift of the supervening divinity, and has poured out the abundance of known grace in speaking. As often as holy preachers show these things to us who are imperfect, through the doctrine by which they illuminate us, they as it were bring forth a most clear day. And indeed promoted preachers already know all these things, the ordainers explaining them.

25. Since therefore they have the day of signs, let them healthfully attend if they already see the promised signs. For he who has not yet learned to despise the glory of the world could hear the first sign promised, but he has not seen it shown. If he does not know the strength and sweetness

of the contemplative life, he has not merited to see the good of the following sign. If he has not ascended to the height of the Scriptures through the knowledge of inward erudition, he has not yet come to the hill of the Lord. If he does not yet have the power of the Holy Spirit supervening in him, he cannot prophesy. For without that spirit he is a carnal pastor, and what he speaks cannot be referred to the dignity of preaching, but to the daring of temerity. By what dread therefore can we wretches be terrified? For behold, we have received the leadership of others, we who do not have the power of the received government. We have heard the signs of spiritual prelacy which we do not see in ourselves through the light of experience. We desire earthly things, we are occupied with exterior cares, and we are repelled so much further from celestial contemplation, as we are weighed down by the solicitude of earthly acts. Depressed also by this mass of earthly life, when can we touch that splendor of the inward glory of the Redeemer, when can we arrive at the highest senses of the holy Scriptures? But also we cannot speak of celestial things, which we do not know, as if they were known. And we who do not wish to be vacant for the love of the internal life through quiet, do not feel the spirit of the Lord leaping upon us. Therefore let the known and not possessed signs terrify us: so that when we are pricked (compungimur) for the immensity of our negligence, we may seek the power of the received order through weeping and lamentations. Hence the Psalmist deplores in the voice of the

weak, saying: We have not seen our signs, there is now no prophet (Psalm 73:9). For he is a prophet when these already mentioned signs of prophecy are foreseen to be present in him. If therefore he is assumed to the height of prelacy, let him not consider himself for what he is by the altitude of his order, but for what he is by the virtue of perfection. Let him say therefore: We have not seen our signs, there is now no prophet. As if he were to say: I would say that there is now a prophet, if I discerned the gifts of the spirit with which the person of a prophet ought to shine. He therefore who has heard the perfection of the received pastoral order which he has not merited to obtain in himself by living, is not a fit teacher of the holy Church. In the first king, therefore, the progress of all the pastors of the holy Church is shown, while it is said: All these signs came upon him in that day. And because the same progress of the elect preachers is wonderful, there follows:

(Verse 11.) But those who knew him yesterday and the day before, seeing that he was with the prophets and prophesied, said to one another: What is this thing that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

26. What is it that they say: What is this thing that has happened, if not to wonder greatly at what could not be comprehended by them? They knew him as a man, the son of a man; they saw him associated with prophets: they knew him as carnal, they saw him as spiritual: they knew him as simple, they saw him as a prophet. They say therefore: What is this thing that hap-

pened to the son of Kish? They who were able to know what he had been: how he could be what he was, they were ignorant. Here finally is the progress of a spiritual preacher, that he who is sometimes known in common life, may have in a superior order that which is ignored. Three steps of perfection indeed are shown, because he says: Yesterday and the day before. Indeed in two days the preacher is recognized, in the third he has what even those who knew him do not recognize. For the first day pertains to the hearers, the second to companions, the third is of preaching. For the pastor had the first day when as a disciple he obeyed his prelates. For he is seen as if in great light who is devoted in the virtue of obedience. He had the second day when he already began to be a coadjutor of the better. Indeed that clarity of great conversation, in the example of the elect, makes a very great day. The Lord hinting at this day, says: So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). But the third day is of the leaping spirit and of prophecy. Indeed in the third day the pastor is beheld when he equals the sublimity of his dignity with the splendor of his conversation, when clothed with celestial power, he shines for his subjects with such life and such doctrine that he can be seen by them, discussed, and yet cannot be judged. Such indeed was Moses, when he descended from the mount with a most bright face, whose subjects saw the brightness, but could not direct their sight into the shining

clarity (Exod. 34:35; 2 Cor. 3:7). Such was he who gloried, saying: But we, beholding the glory of God with revealed face, are transformed into the same image, as if by the spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). Such certainly were they whom the Holy Spirit had filled. Whence also those who had come together in Jerusalem, wondering, say: Are not these who speak Galileans? (Acts 2:7). For they were asking that they might know what they were hearing, and yet could not know. But those who knew Saul, wondering, ask concerning the thing which happened to him; because we sometimes see those humble and despised in the lower order of the holy Church, whom while the Holy Spirit assumes to the order of preaching, He clothes with the splendors of His graces and shows them wonderful in those same splendors. But well do we wonder at the virtues of the saints when we ascribe them to the goodness of the Founder (conditoris). Wherefore also Moses confessing to the Lord says: Who is like to You among the gods, Lord, who is like to You, glorious in the saints, wonderful in majesty, doing prodigies? (Exod. 15:11). Hence the Psalmist says: God is wonderful in His saints, He Himself will give power and strength to His people (Psalm 67:36). It is well subjoined:

(Verse 12.) Another answered to another, saying: And who is their father?

27. What is it that hitherto was said of Saul alone: What is this thing that happened to the son of Kish? And now it is answered as if of many: And who is their father? But if it be understood

according to history, it can in no way stand. It remains therefore that the sense which is taken away from the letter should be sought in a spiritual signification. When therefore it is said: Who is their father? Not only Saul prophesying is attended to, but all that company (cuneus) of prophets. All which prophets indeed, because they were very spiritual, were not judged from carnal progeny, but from celestial origin. Indeed the father of the prophets is He who through Malachi inquires, saying: If I am Lord, where is my fear? And if I am father, where is my love? (Mal. 1:6). For because they are joined to almighty God in great charity, they are named sons of Him whom they love as a father. Which is so much more fittingly suitable to the preachers of the new Church as he has lifted them higher into celestial nobility, who uncovered to them the clarity of such a race in the form of prayer. So, he says, you shall pray: Our Father who art in heaven (Matt. 6:9). Which is such as if he were to say: The holy preachers would be to be wondered at, if they performed the wonderful things which they do by their own power: now it is not a wonder what is seen; because He through them acts this to whom nothing seems difficult. Let one therefore say to another: And who is their father? As if he were to say: What wonder is it if they teach wonderfully since it is not they themselves who speak: but the spirit of their father who speaks in them? It is not said therefore: Who is his father? (John 6:42). Lest what is suitable to many sons should be conferred upon one alone. For only He

who is Son by nature dares to say: My Father works until now (John 5:17). And likewise: The Lord said to me, You are my Son, today I have begotten you (Psalm 2:7). For that he might bring out the difference of each dignity, he speaks to Mary Magdalene, saying: I ascend to my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God (John 20:17). As often therefore as one preacher is beheld bright with a wonderful life or preaching, he is seen not alone in the supernal generation, but with innumerable others; because almighty God who is shown wonderful in one makes a very much more wonderful admiration of men, when innumerable ones are attended to, who had that which they wonder at in one. Which nevertheless can be referred conveniently to the detraction of the carnal: for when they try to diminish the fame of spiritual men, they explore their carnal things which they may bring forth for derogation. And mostly in the holy Church they have a wonderful fame of sanctity who have no secular height. When therefore carnal ones reproach in them either the origin of the flesh or poverty, who by divine generation are already great and rich, they as if mocking inquire concerning the father of the prophets. And because they have it as a very new thing that small men of the age can be seen so great, there is subjoined: Therefore it was turned into a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets?

28. Which indeed if they looked at with the eyes of the heart, they would not have it as a new thing. For the Holy Spirit acts in His own manner, when He raises the poor, the humble, and the

simple to the height of virtues. For concerning Him it is written: Who puts the humble on high, and lifts up those who mourn with safety (Job 5:11). Hence the almighty Father says concerning His same almighty Spirit through the prophet: Upon whom does my spirit rest, if not upon him who is humble, and quiet, and trembling at my words? (Isa. 66:2). Hence Paul says: Not many wise according to the flesh, not many noble, but the foolish things of the world God has chosen, that He may confound the strong: and the ignoble things of the world God has chosen, that He might destroy those things which are; that all flesh may not glory in His sight (1 Cor. 1:26, etc.). Which proverb certainly can also be ascribed to the elect. For no less wonder was had concerning the blessed apostle Paul, when it was heard by the Church that he evangelized, who was accustomed to assault the Church by threatening and slaughter, and now defended it by preaching. Then indeed those who heard could say: Is Saul also among the apostles? Does he preach Jesus, who was accustomed to persecute Jesus? But this has now been turned into a proverb of the elect. Indeed it is a proverb when something else is hidden in that which is said. But the conversion of the blessed apostle Paul was made a proverb of the sinner. Let every sinner therefore hear the conversion of the blessed Paul, and let him not despair concerning the multitude of crimes. For Saul, breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, everywhere afflicted the elect, kept the garments of those stoning

the protomartyr Stephen, and as it were stoned with the hands of all, who rendered all ready for stoning (Acts 9:1 seq.). But he who stood such as a persecutor of Christ, being converted to Christ, was made the head of the nations, because he obtained the primacy of the whole Church. While we behold such a great sinner converted, and honored with such a sublime dignity by the Lord, let us presume that we can find the remission of our sins. Our proverb therefore is that the persecutor is assumed for evangelizing, which contains this mystery; that the converted sinner can not only hope for pardon from the Lord, but that by manfully contending he is able to reach the crown. But this is accustomed to be the distance between carnal and spiritual preachers, because carnal ones after high words of preaching descend to the depths of a wicked work, but spiritual ones after the sublime things which they speak raise themselves up into much higher desires of the celestial fatherland.

(Verse 13.) And he ceased prophesying, and came to the high place (excelsum).

29. He comes to the high place after the ministry of prophecy, who raises his mind to the celestial joys which he preaches: and by loving raises himself to those things which he shows by speaking. Teachers indeed preach level things with the lesser ones, with those whom they teach they are as it were on a level. And because after the words of preaching they prepare themselves by good works to merit those things which they preach, they are said to come to the high place.

They who certainly are sublime in word and work are not so in the thought of elation. They always act great things indeed, but they never desire to be seen as great. Well therefore there is subjoined:

(Verses 14, 15 and 16.) And Saul's uncle said to him and to his boy: Where did you go? Who answered: To seek the asses, which when we had not found, we came to Samuel. And his uncle said to him: Tell me what Samuel said to you. And Saul said to his uncle: He indicated to us that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom he did not tell him, which Samuel had spoken to him.

30. The word of the kingdom is the honorable pastoral dignity. For it speaks by its very representation: because he is not an uncle who is sublimated in such an order. Therefore the king does not tell the word of the kingdom: because the pastor of the Church speaks with great splendor of divinity, but does not speak with elation. But he who does not tell the word hides that which he speaks. For he always speaks a word to whom he has a word, otherwise it is not a word. Therefore he has the word of the kingdom who shines with that conversation which provides examples of the celestial journey to others as if by speaking. Therefore he does not tell the word who does not reveal the magnitude of sanctity through vain glory. He has indeed what he may indicate, but he does not wish to indicate what is shown through itself. For he who radiates with great dignity and great sanctity shows many things by living which

he does not say by speaking. The Lord willed the preacher to have this word of the kingdom, when He commanded bells to be placed on the garment of the high priest (Exod. 28:34). The garment of the high priest indeed is the showing of a good conversation. Which is as it were inserted with many bells, when he multiplies good works which cry out for the example of the lesser ones. But the king does not dare to tell the word of the kingdom: because it is commanded to the priests that they should carry the decorum of the garment before the Lord. Before the Lord indeed he carries the decorum of the garment who both shows good things, and desires to please not men outwardly through vanity, but God inwardly through love from the showing of good works. Then certainly the priest is silent, but while he walks that which he carries cries out; because the elect preacher does not indicate himself by boasting, but by living well he by no means ceases to speak. Let it be said therefore of Saul, that he did not tell his uncle the word of the kingdom: because elect men, when they perceive the splendor of dignity or the increases of a good life, bring themselves forth through examples, but hide them by silence. And because they believe themselves to be lesser in merits than other elect ones, he to whom he does not tell the word is said to be his uncle. For an uncle is said to be the brother of a father. But the Redeemer of the human race, as many as He institutes by the sacraments of His faith and doctrine, He makes so many sons for the unfading glory of the eternal inheritance.

For those who are instituted in the Church are as it were little ones yet sons. But he who by great merits already meets Him as a perfect man, is a brother of the Redeemer. Such indeed the blessed apostle Paul praising says: Heirs of God, co-heirs of Christ (Rom. 8:17). Since therefore perfect preachers hold other elect ones as perfect and themselves as imperfect, he is called the uncle of Saul who is reported to have interrogated him concerning the word of the kingdom. But Samuel had told Saul that same word of the kingdom: because elect men have learned the spiritual conversation which they have by the speech of their superiors. But the king who had been initiated through anointing, had not yet been chosen by the people. Whence also follows:

(Verse 17.) Samuel called the people to the Lord in Mizpah.

31. Mizpah, as I said, is interpreted as speculation (speculatio). But in the ordination of a king the people are called to Mizpah, because those who come together for ordaining a pastor of the holy Church are taught to attend to his spiritual things, not carnal. Indeed to speculate is to know the preacher to be ordained through the form of holy Scripture. For the holy Scripture is the mirror of the elect. For as if through a mirror the pastor is known, when he is shown such in morals as he is preached in the sacred eloquence. Well therefore Samuel convokes the people in Mizpah, so that the election of a good prelate may not be by human judgment, but by divine: since not such a one is chosen as can be decreed by the judgment

of men, but such as is declared in the sacred eloquence. Which because it is of the divine gift, it is necessary that the people who are known to expect such great things from God should be purged from their guilt through the satisfaction of penance. But the very knowledge of sin is the preparation for the divine gift, because often when we believe ourselves unworthy of the divine gift, we merit it through humility. Whence also Samuel strives to turn those who had come together to receive the king first to the consideration of their own sins, because there is subjoined:

(Verses 18, 19.) And Samuel said to the children of Israel: Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the hand of all the kings who were afflicting you. But you today have rejected the Lord your God, who alone saved you from all your evils and tribulations, and you said: By no means, but a king shall be over us. 32. He carefully shows them both the good things which the Lord bestowed upon them and the evil things which they themselves did to the Lord, so that they might acknowledge themselves to have transgressed all the more grievously as they dared to offend Him by sinning, from whom they had received such great benefits. What it truly means to reject the Lord, and how it ought to be understood according to the letter and according to the spiritual sense, has been set forth extensively above (Above in the exposition of verse 7, chapter 8), where the Lord says to Samuel: They have not rejected you, but me, according to all their works

which they have done from the day in which I brought them out of the land of Egypt. But because holy preachers instruct by teaching those whom they prick by reproving, he added, saying: (Verse 19.) Now therefore stand before the Lord by your tribes and families.

33. We are commanded to stand before the Lord indeed when, by the precept of our superiors, we prepare our hearts to know His mandates. Or the elect stand before the Lord when they are considered by the highest men in spiritual virtues: so that he who appears better among them may be preferred over the others through pastoral care. And because there are many orders of the faithful, they are commanded to stand before the Lord by tribes and families. Executing this indeed more extensively, he adds, saying: (Verses 20, 21.) And Samuel applied all the tribes of Israel, and the lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin, and he applied the tribe of Benjamin and its kindreds, and the kindred of Matri fell, and it came even to the son of Kish.

34. He made them all stand by tribes and families; so that he might consider all, and having considered all, choose the more useful one. But since he himself already, by the Lord revealing it, had known the king, and by His command had anointed him as prince, why is he who is to be chosen [Perhaps, eligendus] still sought through tribes and families? But the king had been found by the prophet alone. Therefore he who was found is sought, so that he who was not found by the people may be found. He is also sought by

lot, so that the people could not doubt that him whom the prophet would choose was provided by divine dispensation. What then is signified in this deed, except that the princes of the holy Church are to be chosen with much consideration? For the highest preachers, from the internal grace of the Holy Spirit which they have, are full of a great light of providence. And because they are very humble, they do not presume upon the magnitude of their internal illumination. Wherefore they also prove before others those things which they order well within themselves. For the prophet alone knows the future king, when the highest rector of the holy Church beholds the person of the rector to be ordained and his merits. Whom he also anoints as prince when he asserts him to be full of spiritual gifts. Nevertheless he still convokes the people, divides them by tribes and kindreds, places lots, and finds him whom he knew as if by art. The tribes indeed and families stand as if divided, when in the state of virtues the diverse orders of the holy Church are attended to. For when we gaze upon the many perfections of the elect, when we see the brightness of virgins, the strength of the continent, the honorable ministries of clerics, the solicitude of monks, we attend to them as if to standing tribes. And because in the service of God there is much variety of these, while we behold those things which are in individual orders, likewise the varieties, we see as if standing not only tribes, but also kindreds. And the lot falls upon a tribe: because better men are often found in one order

than in another. For a tribe receives as it were a lot, when those who are more perfect than others seem to agree with the ministry of preaching. But the lot does not yet fall upon a person, but upon a tribe, when there are many in whom a worthy person is hidden. Therefore it still remains for the highest men to inquire. Well therefore is the lot said to have fallen upon the tribe of Benjamin; and Samuel to have applied that tribe and its kindreds and to have arrived at the son of Kish, because the elect and highest men of the holy Church do not cease to consider the virtues of individuals, until they come to him who may be found worthy by the lot of the pastoral ministry. But those who are worthy vehemently dread to take up the burden of such an order. Whence also follows:

(Verses 21, 22.) They sought him therefore, and they did not find him: and they consulted the Lord concerning him, whether he would come thither. And the Lord answered: Behold, he is hidden at home.

35. For they hide themselves lest they be found: because they refuse to undergo a dignity whose burden they judge themselves to be unequal to. For spiritual prelation has the external glory of dignity, and it has the magnitude of internal work. For the rector is both honored by his subjects, and he carries those by whom he is honored. With the beginning of honor, therefore, the cause of a burden is born, because from where honor is received by the rector, from there he receives that by which he is weighed down.

Although the honor of dignity itself is in itself a great burden of the mind, because it ought to be despised, and yet it pleases. It ought indeed to be despised lest it elevate the mind through pride; and it ought to be received so that the subjects may venerate the celestial things which the teacher speaks. Therefore a heavier burden is born from honor, because the elect pastor can bear with great virtue of soul that he should despise that in himself which he receives in himself for God's sake, namely so that he may be such for God, but to himself he may not be such, and he may both deny and not deny himself; so that he may be what he is for God's sake, and what he is for his own sake, he may not be. And so the honor offered is received from the subject, so that the preaching may be commended. The preacher also despises the offered honor because that which is honored is not extolled, but he rejoices that the ministry of the word of God is commended. How difficult this is to do, however, is better understood by thinking than by speaking. For it is impossible for weak minds to bear the burden of others strongly and to dispose the reverence of offered honor with virtue of mind; so that among the obsequies of the same honor, he may know how to rejoice in the progress of the subjects, and may not know how to swell with his own reverence. Because therefore elect men do not wish to displease God, they refuse when called to take up the office of prelation. But they also have this same flight from the ministry for the virtue of humility, not for the boasting of dignity. For they

flee as much as they can; but if they have been provided by the Lord, they can by no means hide away. Wherefore also this same Saul is hidden at home, but is shown by the Lord disclosing him, because elect men withdraw themselves from the external ministries of the holy Church, but nevertheless they are brought forth to dispose the external ministries by the Lord's dispensation. Because indeed now in the holy Church there are few who withdraw themselves from such great honors, and many who thrust themselves in, those who thrust themselves in ought to note; because he who is said to have been hidden at home by the prophet was sought not for the spiritual dignity of the Church, but for the secular glory of the kingdom. For they were not seeking this man for a high priest, but they wished to make him king. Let the priest see, therefore, with what mind the summit of the holy Church is to be fled, if kings flee to ascend the summit of the world so cautiously. But because the more urgently holy men refuse to take up the order of prelation, the more devotedly they are sought by devoted peoples, follows:

(Verse 23.) They ran and fetched him thence. After these things it is also subjoined: (Ibidem.) And he stood in the midst of the people.

36. The prelate stands in the midst of the people when his strength is seen by all his subjects. For to stand is of virtue. He therefore who works good things constantly stands. And because good works provide an example to the lesser ones, he is seen standing in the midst of the people, not in

solitude. Which also is conveniently accepted to be said for the rectitude of intention. For he who stands with the rectitude of the body raises his head on high. But he who does good things publicly does not stand with the strength of the work if he does not have the rectitude of intention. Therefore the king is said to stand in the midst of the people, so that the form of the prelates of the holy Church may be shown; because they ought to show good works for the example of the subjects, but avoid receiving the glory of the world from the same good work. But he also subjoins how great he ought to appear, and says: (Ibidem.) And he was higher than all the people from the shoulder and upward.

37. We have extensively shown above (Book 4, chapter 4, number 20), that excellent magnitude of body in holy preachers designates the increase of perfection. In the midst of the people, therefore, he is seen sublime who, placed at the summit of virtues, is not unknown to his subjects. The right order of the elect preacher indeed is that before the sublimity of the ecclesiastical summit, he should ascend the summit of virtue, and for the honor of God he should obtain the summit of glory, but shine with greater sublimity through the revealed perfection of virtues. Such a Pastor indeed is to be greatly preached by perfect men, and to be desired and loved by the lesser ones. Well therefore is it subjoined: And he said to all the people: Surely you see whom the Lord has chosen, that there is none like him in all the people.

(Verse 23.) And all the people cried out: Long live the king.

Follows: (Verse 24.) Samuel spoke to the people the law of the kingdom, and he wrote it in a book, and placed it before the Lord.

38. Concerning the royal right (jus regium), because we have spoken extensively above (Book 4, chapter 4, number 4, following), we remember only this much about it, that it is not prescribed for history, but it is shown what reprobate kings are going to do, and what good ones are going to avoid. Subjects are indeed to be defended by kings, not to be spoiled of their own goods. They ought to provide help to their subjects, they ought not to take away fields, vineyards, and olive groves. But if anyone should wish to contend that these things were written not to be avoided, but to be done, the right of tyrants is written for that king who, having rejected the Lord, is demanded. Therefore the cruel law of the kingdom is the vengeance of the people rejecting the Lord. For it was not unjust that he should lose fields and vineyards, who was spontaneously losing the Lord reigning over him. All things therefore which are contained in this royal right against equity, we see to be equitable, if we consider whatever the people had transgressed in asking for a king. For what great burden of the law is there in the examination of divine equity, if they should place sons and daughters unwillingly in the king's work, whom they had spontaneously taken away from the liberty of God? And what is seen to be inconvenient, if what is placed

at the end, they themselves should become servants of men who were rejecting God reigning over them? While therefore the law of the kingdom is written, a punishment of perpetual memory is handed down by which the audacious may be punished; which because it had been brought by the justice of the Lord, is reported to be replaced before the Lord. But perhaps that right was other than this law which is written. If this is true, Samuel speaks this before the king to the people, so that the king may know what he should require from the people, and the people may know what they ought to exhibit to their kings. Which law is written in a book so that it may be reserved for the memory of future things. It is placed before the Lord, so that it may be held venerable. But we have said that the kings of the Churches are holy preachers, to whom we have shown that all things which are contained in the royal right clearly agree. Therefore Samuel speaks this law to the people when the elect teacher instructs the faithful of the holy Church with what humility they ought to be subjugated to their superiors. It is also written in a book when he firmly inserts these things in their minds. For he who speaks so that his hearers forget what has been heard, says the law to the people, but does not write it in a book. Therefore to write in a book the words which the teacher speaks is to commend them attentively to the minds of his hearers. The Lord as it were wished to write what He had said, when He said: Remember my word which I said to you: The servant is not greater than his Lord

(John 15:20). Hence Paul, describing the spoken law of the kingdom in a book, says: Remember your superiors, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose end of conversation beholding, imitate their faith (Heb. 13:7). But if anyone should wish to take another law to be pre-signified here, let him behold that one which the blessed Paul shows, saying: He who announces the gospel, let him live of the gospel: and he who serves the altar, let him live of the altar (1 Cor. 9:14). For the Lord was speaking this law of the kingdom to the people when He said: He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive a just man's reward (Matt. 10:41). And so that He might describe this more strictly in a book, strengthening the word from the lesser, He says: He who shall give to one of these my little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward (Mark 9:40).

Follows: (Verses 25, 26, 27.) Samuel dismissed all the people, each one to his own home. But Saul went to his home in Gibeah, and a part of the army went with him, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said: Shall this one be able to save us? And they despised him.

39. If a simple history is sought, what could ever be said more plainly? But if we attend to the force of the individual words, great are the things which are enclosed in this simplicity of words. For the people are asserted to have been dismissed to their own home, but the king is

held not to have been dismissed to his home, but to have gone. It is said separately also of the houses of the people and of the house of the king: because the people are reported dismissed into their own home, and the king to have gone into his own. Yet the people were dismissed before the king went away. Concerning the departing people also it is cautiously signaled, and they are reported to have gone into their own home not together, but individually (singuli). But concerning those who followed the king it is not said: A part of the army went, individually after the king, but: A part of the army went with him. And at the end, those who follow the king, their hearts are reported touched by God; those who despise the king are named sons of Belial (Belial filii). Here indeed the manner of speaking is not simple, but is very subtle to him who knows how to consider, not what simply sounds outwardly, but what it wisely insinuates within. What is it, therefore, that the king is said to go into his own home, but the people to be dismissed? But we have shown that the king designates the pastor of the Church, and the people the subjects. To go, however, is of a free man; to be dismissed is of him who can be retained. Therefore the king is said to go so that in the person of the preacher the liberty of the mind may be preached. For the teachers (doctores) can go when they wish, and return, because they are strong in good work, wise in internal disposition. For they come when they go out to their subjects either by the example of a good work or by the word of preaching. But they go away

when they return to the secret of the mind, and dispose within what they are to do without. In which consideration surely because they remain daily, they are as it were hidden within the house. Therefore the king is said to go into his own home, because the preacher of eternal life, proven by operation, secure in the doctrine of wisdom, is free to go out to works, and to enter into the counsels of the mind.

40. But the people are dismissed to their own home, because the faithful subjects are not free to dispose of what they wish, but to those things which are commanded. They are dismissed as it were held, while they are instructed to do what is ordered; to avoid presuming what is not ordered. And because they are sent to diverse works, each one of them is dismissed to his own home. For so that we may well perform those things which are commanded to us, before we appear in work, we are hidden within in internal consideration. Therefore our kings dismiss us individually to our home, because to those things which they enjoin upon us, they command us to go through a secret disposition of the mind. They indeed command well, but if we neglect to foresee the manner of our operation, we dissipate with an unconsulted mind those things which were well commanded. Therefore individuals return to their own home when each faithful subject anticipates by disposing in the counsel of the mind the work of obedience which he proposes. But because, after the king was chosen, the people are asserted to have been dismissed to their own home before

the king went away, another thing can be designated in this. For those who receive the king go into their own home when each subject prepares himself by considering, so that he may pay faithful obedience to him whom he sought to be over him. In this place, therefore, it is not for considering things commanded, but for subjecting oneself with the lowest disposition to things to be commanded. For the king also to go away into his own home is so that he may consider with discretion the things to be commanded to those prepared. Therefore one is the house of the king, another that of the subject people; because the former consider with a high mind the paths of the subjects to be disposed, the latter prepare to execute the commands of the prelates through the strength of an intimate purpose. Hence also the house of the king is reported to be situated in Gibeah (Gabaa). For Gibeah is said to be high. Therefore the house of the king is shown to be in Gibeah; because the elect teacher strives not to inhabit by thinking low and earthly things, but to meditate on high and heavenly things. Hence also correctly a part of the army is said to go with him into Gibeah, because those who are strong against the devil follow their elect pastor to the heights of virtues. Therefore a part of the army is said to go with the king, because in the holy church there are many faithful who strive to obey their prelates humbly, and imitate their life through good works.

41. And because none can do this except those who have been prevented by the grace of the Holy

Spirit, when a part of the army is said to go with the king, it is added: Whose hearts God touched. For because we are accustomed to touch with the finger, God touches the hearts of the Saints when He grants them the grace of the Holy Spirit. And they feel His touch: because, having received the gift of internal virtue, they are moved from the weakness of their carnality. These immediately become soldiers of the heavenly army, because through the power of the Holy Spirit they desert weak things, and are prepared for doing strong things in the war of Christ. But because within the holy Church some do not fear to despise their prelates, let them hear that those who despise the king are called sons of Belial. Indeed, through the vice of pride they are generated in the imitation of him of whom it is written: He beholds every high thing, and he is king over all the children of pride (Job 41:25). These aptly insinuate the ways of the proud, because they say: Shall this one be able to save us? For holy men, because they despise present things and seek eternal things, bring forth even in their outward conversation the contempt for the world which they retain in their mind; they are venerable within, they seem despicable without. Therefore the proud, because they behold only that which can be despised outwardly in the Saints; but that which is greatly to be venerated, they do not deserve to discern, say: Shall this one be able to save us? As if by despising they might ask: Are such great things to be hoped for from one so small? Is this one so small, and we so great, he so weak, and we so strong, to

be believed able to save? For what else is it that they say: This one and we; unless that the proud and arrogant, looking at others, always believe them to be small and weak; but themselves to be great, strong, and wise? Deservedly therefore are they called sons of Belial, because while by being proud they extol themselves, they conform themselves to him who is said to have fallen from heaven in the same way. Concerning whom also despising the king it is said: (In the same place). And they brought him no gifts.

42. If we discuss these things according to the letter, they indeed insinuate this, that both the lords of the lands and the spiritual prelates of the holy Church are to be honored with outward offices. Hence also the blessed Apostle Paul addresses the elated Romans, saying: Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom (Rom. 13:7). Hence the prince of the Apostles, exhorting, says: Be subject to every human creature for God's sake, whether to the king as pre-eminent, or to governors as sent by him (1 Pet. 2:13). But we grant spiritual gifts to our rectors when we offer them the due reverence of honor, and keep with great devotion those things which they command. For great gifts are the reverence of honor and the humility of subjection; because while we are subjected to our rectors within through humility, and through outward services we exhibit the reverence of honor without, we provide them one gift from the body, another from the heart. Therefore, so that the prophet might insinuate the type of the

proud, he does not say: They brought him no gift; but, they brought him no gifts; because while they despise the elect preachers, they surely disdain to offer them honor from the body and humility from the heart. But when the elect preachers recognize the fault of their subjects, sometimes they desire to correct it immediately by rebuking, sometimes they dissemble that they know it; so that they may seek a fitting time for deleting it. Hence also concerning the same despised king it is immediately added: (In the same place.) But he dissembled that he heard.

BOOK FIVE.

CHAPTER ONE.

1. When I wished to assert the depth of this sacred history in the preface of this work, I asserted that it could be seen most especially in this, that it was written by prophets. They indeed were accustomed to speak mystical things, not only in words, but also in things; to bring forth plain things, but to signal high things. For because the Holy Spirit spoke through them, it was plain what they themselves said as men, but profound and mystical because the highest and uncircumscribed Spirit suggested the speech to men. Because therefore we are expounding the prophet Samuel speaking, we stand in need of so much the greater study, as he himself, sublimely assumed in the grace of the Holy Spirit, spoke of outward things, but saw inward things. He mostly asserted carnal things, but signaled

intimate and spiritual things. But because it is impossible to reach divine things by human study, we must not trust in our own strengths, but in the condescension (dignatio) of the Holy Spirit who, sent by the Redeemer, filled the whole world, and this, which contains all things, now has knowledge of the voice in all (Wis. 1:7). What therefore the same prophet now pursues concerning the begun deeds of the Israelites, let us hear. (1 Samuel, chapter 11, verses 1, 2.) And it came to pass (it says) as it were after a month, Nahash the Ammonite went up, and began to fight against Jabesh-Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash: Have us as confederates, and we will serve you. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them: On this condition will I strike a covenant with you, that I may pluck out all your right eyes, and place you as a reproach in all Israel.

2. If the history is sought, nothing can be said more plainly, nothing can be understood more easily. But if we wish to follow the spirit, let us first hear Paul speaking, who, looking at the old things, says: All these things happened to them in figure: but they are written for us, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. 10:11). He also intimates that there are spiritual wars, saying: Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual things of wickedness in the high places (Eph. 6:12). When, therefore, Nahash is said to go up and fight against Jabesh-Gilead, internal battles of vices are designated. By which

words, indeed, the progress of the sacred history is shown, so that new wars would be stirred up for the new king; which, while he finished them well, he would demonstrate the glory of his strenuousness. Who, therefore, is this Nahash the Ammonite? What is Jabesh-Gilead? But Nahash is interpreted as 'serpent,' Jabesh as 'dried up.' Concerning the serpent, moreover, it is said in Genesis: Because he was more subtle than all living things (Gen. 3:1). If the likeness of this serpent is sought in vices, what do we find more similar than the violent motion of gastrimargia, that is, of gluttony? The motion of lust, the crime of theft, the appetite for base gain, the impetus of anger, the bitterness of worldly sadness, the sloth of acedia, the appetite for vain glory, and the tumor of pride are openly detestable; but the vice of gluttony is so much more fraudulent as it is more hidden, because it suggests food to the body as if it were necessary, but while it abundantly refreshes the flesh, it plunges the sword of lust into the mind. It persuades that which is not sin, but from where eating is received as if it were not sin, from there the soul is subjugated to the sin of lust. Whence also in paradise the serpent is shown to have come to deceive the woman by the vice of gluttony, who would suggest one thing and obtain another; so that while he showed things to be eaten, he would proffer unforeseen death. This serpent, therefore, designates the greed of gluttony, because it both creeps with respect to just necessity and spreads the poison of impious delight. Well also is he called an Ammonite,

which is interpreted as 'a people of sorrow,' because that which he persuades seems joyful, but it will be very mournful in eternal damnation. Moreover, he is called 'a people' because all gluttonous persons are weighed down by a frequency of innumerable cares for the solicitude of the belly. He goes up to Jabesh-Gilead because he desires to precipitate the bodies of the just, placed in the high virtue of abstinence, into the concupiscence of foods. Rightly, indeed, is the flesh called 'dried up' which is not weighed down by the moisture of fatness. To those indeed Nahash goes up whom he sees to be dried up: because the spirit of gluttony brings more serious wars upon those whom he recognizes as attenuated by fasts. Well, moreover, is Nahash said to have begun to fight: because holy men do not have the suggestion of gluttony in a covenant of friendship, but in the contrariety of a battle. For those who abstain fight as if with a serpent when they suppress the appetite of gluttony with great virtue, so that they may not be infected by the poison of lust. To fight, indeed, belongs to gluttony, to provoke the hungry bodies of those who abstain to 260 an inordinate repletion of the belly.

3. But the appetite of gluttony can tempt perfect men, it cannot overcome them. Well, therefore, is he said to have begun to fight against the dried up (city), not to have conquered, because chosen men feel the impetus of carnal desires, but they know how to resist the same desires by the virtue of the mind, they know how to provide necessary things through discretion. They know

indeed how to suppress the impetus of gluttony rising up fiercely, they know how to afford just nourishment to the necessity of the body. For hence the excellent Doctor says: I know how to be full and to be hungry (Phil. 4:12). He indeed knows how to be full and to be hungry, who both refreshes the body moderately, and does not consent to the vice of gluttony suggesting an immoderate perception of foods. Wherefore also answering to Nahash, they say: Have us as confederates, and we will serve you. Those indeed seek a covenant from gluttony who would wish to refresh the flesh according to their will, if they could feel no incitements of lust in the flesh. As if they should say: We will give what is just to you so that you may not bring upon us what is not just. It is just indeed that the body be refreshed, but it is very iniquitous that the refreshed flesh be excited through the ardor of libido to the contumely of the spirit. We seek a covenant, therefore, when we wish so to favor the flesh for the perception of foods that we may feel no evils of lust from the flesh. But this we can indeed wish, we cannot obtain, because for certain we offer a just refreshment to the flesh as if a tribute, but no good things of peace are promised to us from the flesh. For when we direct the hearing of the mind well to the responses of the vices, we recognize this for certain in the voice of gluttony, because if we fatten the flesh through increasing concupiscence, we are struck by blindness of heart. Wherefore also the same Nahash says: On this condition will I strike a covenant with you, that I may pluck out

all your right eyes. Our right eye is the intuition of eternal clarity, but the left eye is carnal concupiscence. The right eye, therefore, is plucked out when the mind is struck by that blindness, so that it is no longer opened to seeing heavenly things. The eye is indeed plucked out when light is so torn away from a reprobate mind that no root remains to it from which a revived light may burst forth. Nahash, therefore, plucks out the right eyes of his confederates when gluttony so prevails over conquered abstainers that they desire carnal things alone, and no longer attend to those things which they were accustomed to love. And because whoever is cast forth in this life is condemned in the future before the angels and chosen men, there is added: And I will place you as a reproach in all Israel. Then indeed the reprobate are placed as a reproach in all Israel when, in the extreme examination, they blush before all the chosen concerning the iniquities they have perpetrated. Or they are placed as a reproach in this life because, while they themselves boldly perpetrate evil things with a blinded heart, holy men blush for their faults. But those who, with their right eyes torn out, disdain to appear base, let them attend to what follows: (Verse 3.) And the inhabitants of Jabesh said to him: Grant us seven days, that we may send messengers to the borders of Israel; and if there be none to defend us, we will come out to you.

4. Who are the inhabitants of Jabesh, that is, of the dried up (city), unless they who have the chastisement of the attenuated flesh in long use

of virtue? For many begin to resist gluttony, but while they begin to be fatigued by the labor of abstinence, they incline themselves to the use of their accustomed gluttony. For as it were, they desire to enter the city of Jabesh and to be made its citizens, but while they do not endure the torture of the dried up and hungry flesh, they can by no means become its inhabitants. Those, therefore, inhabit Jabesh who have the attenuation of the body 261 through the vigor of the mind in right of possession, and are surrounded as it were by the walls of the dried up (city), while through that by which they attenuate the body they are protected from the ignited darts of lust. These, when they are fatigued by the very strong stings of gluttony rising up, seek a truce for seven days, in which if aids are lacking, they may go out to Nahash. But we expound this war of the Ammonites better if we look into it for the infirmity of the caught flesh and the sagacity of the learned mind. This also we see more clearly if we subtilely attend to that which is contrary in the foolish and the weak. For some within the holy Church are devoted through desire, but remiss through the accustomed debility of vices. They can indeed propose good things, but because they are unable to follow out what they propose, they are both overcome by present concupiscence and they trust that they can recover in a near time the good which they desert in the present. They often indeed dispose themselves to fast, but when they are conquered by accustomed gluttony, they judge that they must eat on that day

and fast on future ones. And since the ferocity of gluttony is always present to them, and the desire of future goodness is also present, this is acted by the fraud of the serpent, so that the good which is proposed is not found. For tomorrow, which is always promised, is never found. But because this is acted by those whose mind is weak and whose flesh is strong, let us see how they mock the serpent whose mind is strong but whose flesh is weak. For concerning the same serpent the Psalmist says to the Lord: This dragon, which thou hast formed, to mock him (Ps. 103:27). For he is never more conveniently conquered than when his versuteness is overcome by pious fraud. Whence also the Redeemer, reproaching blessed Job for the astuteness of his wisdom, says: In his eyes, as with a hook, thou shalt catch him (Job 40:19). In his eyes, indeed, as with a hook he caught the serpent, who exhibited flesh to him and concealed divinity; and while that one caught what he desired, he was held and destroyed by that which he did not see.

5. Holy men, therefore, so that they may mock the enemy, have the rigor of conversation in present virtue; for the mocking of the infirmity of the flesh they promise a certain advantage in the future. For often those things which they do are huge, but for the infirmity of the flesh they do not presume always to do hard things, and to promise rough things. They indeed sustain the same hard things so much more easily as they do not see their burdens to be in them in a perpetual promise. But while they live very well, and strive

to profit daily and not to fail, they always promise to the flesh that licit blandishment of the flesh, concerning which they cannot despair, in a future estimation; but they by no means cease to inflict the pain of begun affliction upon it. Through that, therefore, by which hope is left to the flesh in its appetite, as if to the future good of the same flesh, the spirit promises the presence of its arrival. But because it does not desert the accustomed rigor of continence by failing, the flesh has the promise of pleasure in the future, and the chosen mind the strength of virtue in the present. In which place it is to be noted that they promise to go out to Nahash under condition, but they are fortified by the walls of the city without condition: because those who abstain, even in that in which they are weak according to the flesh, trust to be strengthened through divine mercy. And because they desire to supplant the vice of gluttony by deceiving, they say: Grant us seven days. For as it were time is granted by gluttony when it is suppressed in that respect that its desires may sometimes be served. In which space of days, indeed, Nahash awaits the exit of the besieged citizens to himself, but the citizens of Jabesh await aids, because indeed the appetite of gluttony desires to be refreshed from the weak flesh 262, but the chosen mind to be strengthened in the virtue of abstinence. In seven days, moreover, aids are sought when we are erected by every light of the heart against the darkness of temptations, when against depraved counsels we find whatever we can by our reason; and we are fortified from the

erudition of others concerning the rays of light which we do not discern in ourselves. For while we look to the conversations of the perfect for the strength of our virtue, we find as it were through seven days the aids of defense. We indeed seek a truce; because we fight with Nahash, that is, the serpent, whose poisons are the more hidden, so we must seek the more subtle counsels. Whence also they promise to send messengers into all the borders of Israel: because chosen men are aided by the examples of all those who see God for the advantage of their edification, but that which is said: If there be none who defends, we will come out to you: in the voice of the chosen, not a doubt of aids, but a certainty is shown. As if mocking the adversary persuading with astute words, they proffer words by which they may give hope to him and by no means take away confidence from themselves. For they who say: If there there shall not be one who defends, we will come out to you; give a certain hope of going out. But because they say this who are certain of aid, they deceive their enemies by promising. But where the same aids may now be found, he expounds saying: (Verses 4 and 5.) Messengers therefore came into Gibeah of Saul, and they spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And behold, Saul was coming in the morning following oxen from the field, and he saw the people weeping, and said: What has the people, that it weeps?

6. Gibeah, as we have already said above, is interpreted as 'high.' And because the height of

merits is not equal for all the chosen, the messengers are related to have come into Gibeah of Saul; that we may be taught by a spiritual signification, that when we are impelled by strong temptations, we should recur to the counsels of our preachers. But also we are instructed by the affliction of the weeping people, that we may be joined to fraternal necessities by an intimate compassion of the mind. Saul, moreover, saw the people weeping, and asked for what cause they wept, because the chosen teacher makes the necessity of his subjects his own by compatient feeling, and desires to relieve it. He comes indeed from the field, because he goes out from the secret of his fertile heart. In the morning indeed he comes from the field, because in the rising splendor of the true light upon him he inquires into the causes of his subjects. And he follows oxen, because the strong affections of charity precede him. For as it were he has two oxen before him, who is both joined to his neighbors through love, and is inflamed by divine charity and thence loves his neighbor ordinately, because the love of God strongly enkindles this one. Wherefore also through Moses the Lord says: Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass (Deut. 22:10). The ass indeed is carnal love, because he who carries those whom he loves is as it were a strong animal; and because he does not inordinately love the same for the sake of God, he is lascivious. In an ox and an ass, therefore, it cannot be plowed, because the soul is not cultivated by the fruit of eternal reward if the purity of love, by which

it is joined to God, is polluted by an inordinate love of the neighbor. Saul, therefore, coming from the field, follows oxen because the chosen teacher retains both affections of charity integral in his fruitful heart, from which he can prepare for himself the abundant fruits of eternal retribution. And he comes in the morning, because when he goes out to his subjects, he opens the day of his virtue. But now, the necessities of the people being known, let us hear what he did. For there follows: (Ibid. and verses 6, 7.) And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of the Lord leaped upon Saul when he had heard these words; and his fury was enkindled exceedingly. And taking both oxen, he cut them into pieces and sent them into all the borders of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying: Whosoever shall not come out, and shall not follow Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen.

7. What do we say in these words, unless that the weak things of the saints, and those which seem carnal, are not weak and carnal, but spiritual and robust? We are indeed accustomed to reprehend an excess of anger in religious men, but behold Saul, that he might be able to be exceedingly angry, first the spirit of the Lord leaped upon him. How much to be feared, therefore, the anger of the saints is, we discern if we think of the spirit of the Lord leaping upon them, if while we look at them being angry outwardly, we equally attend to the spirit moving them inwardly. As often, therefore, as we are corrected by the zeal of our elders, we can vehemently fear under their

indignation, if we believe their impetus to be a motion of the Holy Spirit. And because Saul cut both oxen into pieces, sent them into all the borders of Israel, and brought forth threats, that so it should be done to the oxen of all who had been unwilling to follow him and Samuel, what else does he intimate, unless that all those who are more sluggish to affording aids to neighbors are not only to be invited, but to be compelled? Whence also it is immediately subjoined. (Verse 7.) The fear of the Lord therefore invaded the people, and they went out as one man.

8. For because we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, we afford aids to them in a right order when we are not compelled to exhibiting these by fear, but are provoked by love. But when we lose the effect of this due love, it pertains to the zeal of our preachers that we should rise up in aids of the brothers from fear. Well, therefore, is it said: The fear of the Lord invaded the people, and they went out as one man: because for the most part we are lukewarm in the love of neighbors; but by the threats of our prelates we are erected to a state of devotion, and from fear we approach a good work, but from the beginning of fear we are brought through to the bond of great charity. Whence also well is fear said to have invaded the people, but all are related to have gone out as one man. For many cannot go out as it were as one man unless those who ascend to an equal unity of love. For hence also it is said of the perfect disciples of the

Redeemer: They had one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32). There follows:

(Verse 8.) And he numbered them in Bezek; and there were three hundred thousand of the children of Israel, and thirty thousand of the men of Judah.

9. First the children of Israel are said to have gone out, then to have been numbered by Saul, because the chosen preacher, when he attempts to move the militia of his subjects against hidden enemies, first looks at their strong purpose, then he places them in the number of warriors. For as it were we are within, and cannot be numbered, as long as the virtue of our mind is hidden from our pastors. And when we go out we are numbered, because when we open the fortitude of our minds to them, they trust that they now have associates in the spiritual fight. But when they desire to erect weak minds to the purpose of a good work, they not only strive to erudite us by the doctrines of the greater, but also to enkindle us by the examples of the lesser chosen ones. Well, therefore, are three hundred thousand of the children of Israel, and thirty thousand of the men of Judah, related to have been numbered. Indeed, the number thirty pertains to the rectitude of faith and the study of good operation: because there are no precepts of the law if they do not tend to the contemplation of the supreme Trinity. Aptly, therefore, are the men of Judah said to be contained in thirty thousand, because they have the confession 264 of the right faith and the strength of good operation. Moreover,

our fathers were of the same faith and operation, but in the contemplation of the divinity, in which they had profited far more highly than we, by so much also they exhibited stronger works of faith. Wherefore also three hundred thousand of the children of Israel are numbered. Thirty indeed comes from three, and ten into thirty, but in the tricenary number both the denary and the ternary are simple; but so that we may number up to three hundred, we multiply both the denary thirty times and the tricenary ten times, because even if the contemplation is great, and the works of the subject people are great, those things however which preceded in our fathers were incomparable. For as it were our denary number is massed ten times in their perfection, while our things are greatly submitted to their perfection. Thirty thousand men of Judah, therefore, and three hundred thousand children of Israel numbered with us, preachers lead to fighting against Nahash; if when they wish to aid the tempted abstaining subjects, they propose to them the exceptional deeds of the very strong fathers and of the lesser ones. Israel indeed is called 'Seeing God,' or 'in whom is God'; which name certainly does not suit one still weak or unlearned. However many perfect men we bring forth in the affliction of the flesh and contemplation of the mind, we dash the serpent Nahash with so many armed men. But now let us hear by what words the king's army may comfort the besieged. (Verse 9.) And they said to those who had come: Thus shall you say to the men who are in Jabesh-

Gilead: Tomorrow there shall be salvation for you, when the sun shall be hot.

10. Such perhaps is that which is said to us by the counsel of that wise man: If the spirit of him that hath power ascend upon thee, leave not thy place (Eccl. 10:4). The place of each of the chosen is the site of good conversation. But when it is permitted, the impugning spirit can have power, because he could in no way impugn the hearts of the chosen unless divine dispensation permitted this. He commands, therefore, that we should not desert our place, because if we are strong amidst the brief darkness of temptations, quickly the divine light will be present, at whose arrival the power of darkness vanishes. Well, therefore, is it said: For tomorrow, when the sun shall be hot, there shall be salvation for you. The exhortation of holy preachers is day, because while it touches the tempted hearts of the lesser ones, it erects them to the hope of victory. But night follows this, because even if divine aids are separated, nevertheless the rushing darkness of carnal desires does not yet depart. What, therefore, is the day of tomorrow unless the arrival of divine visitation? For it is called 'the day of tomorrow' because the splendor of divine aid is very near to the tempted chosen. Whence also through the prophet the Lord says: I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off (Jer. 23:23). Hence the Psalmist says: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth (Ps. 144:18). Hence item the Lord himself promises back, saying: Before you call upon me, I will say: Behold, I am here (Isa. 58:9).

The first day, therefore, is the light of preaching, the tomorrow is that of divine grace. But it is to be noted because he said: When the sun shall be hot; so that the clarity of the day may illuminate the obscurity of the sense, and the heat of the sun may enkindle the love of the heart; so that the mind may see by light the good which it desires, and concupisce by the heat of the mind that which it sees. This double remedy of the mind, indeed, is exhibited against the double war of the devil. For the malignant spirit, that he may overcome the minds of the chosen by tempting, first objects the darkness of evil thoughts, then he enkindles the flames of concupiscences, because unless he has first blinded the mind, he does not impel it to the depravity of concupiscence. The chosen 265 mind, indeed, while it is permitted to be tempted, its state is disturbed in both, because it can feel the molestations of concupiscences in so far as, God permitting, it cannot cast off from itself the darkness of thoughts. But because it is permitted by God to be tempted, at the arrival of his grace, it is relieved from both evils: while against darkness it receives light, and through the heat of the arriving spirit, it casts off the cold of the mind. For he begins to see heavenly things who was not strong enough to lift his mind from carnal things, and he ardently desires those things which he lovingly beholds. Well, therefore, is it said: Tomorrow there shall be salvation for you, when the sun shall be hot; because if we manfully bear the strong impugnations of the ancient enemy, we are uplifted by the celerity

of divine grace to the light of the heart and the virtue of great charity. And because the chosen hearts of subjects gratefully receive this counsel of holy preachers, there follows: (Verse 9.) The messengers therefore came and told the men of Jabesh. And they were glad. But also, with the aid promised to them, let us hear what they may respond to the Ammonites. For there follows: (Verse 10.) And they said: In the morning we will come out to you, and you shall do to us all that shall please you.

11. This indeed, because they who are already secure of near aid say it, they afford a certain hope to the enemies whom they mock by promising. In voice indeed they simulate debility, but they keep the fortitude of promised aid within. Another thing, therefore, they promise, another they believe. For they who said: Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you shall do to us all that shall please you, gave the enemies this to believe, that they would so deliver themselves into their hands that they could do with them whatever they wished. But they who knew the king would come into their aid on the following day, thought of going out with him not to the hands of the enemies, but to their slaughter. According to the spiritual sense, indeed, we promise our exit to the serpent Nahash, that is, to the concupiscence of gluttony, in its day, but we defeat its battle lines in our day. Its day indeed is the delight of corporeal satiety. For he who proposes to fill the belly according to his will, dedicates as it were the first day to concupiscence, and yet he is still within,

because he proposed a certain light of delight which he has not seen by working. Tomorrow, therefore, he has gone out who exhibited this joyful thing which he promised to the flesh, both by working and by delighting. But holy men, as I said above, mock gluttony; because when they cannot despair of its appetite in perpetuity, they promise back that which they promise and do not take, as if in the future light of delight. They are indeed compelled outwardly by the excessive fragility of the flesh, and clothed inwardly with the strength of great charity. Through that indeed, that they cannot renounce appetites, they promise as it were with an exterior voice what they do not have in intention. Through that however, because they are secure concerning the divine, they propose to act another thing than they speak with the voice of infirmity. In their day therefore they go out to Nahash, because for the sake of oppugning the concupiscence of gluttony, they proceed through the light of supernal aid, and visited by supernal grace, they are now strong against every impetus of the flesh, who, having been left for a little while, feared its impugnations. Which splendor of divine grace, because it is sometimes infused through the mouths of preachers into the lesser members of the holy Church, there follows: (Verse 11.) And it came to pass, when the tomorrow was come, Saul appointed the people in three parts, and he entered the middle of the camp in the morning watch, and he struck Ammon until the sun was hot.

12. The people indeed is divided into parts, that we may not strike the serpent Nahash 266 with only one battle line. And indeed it is divided into three parts, that the fruit and dignity of sacred abstinence may be shown: because to that contemplation of the holy Trinity, which we lose by eating, we are recalled by fasting. For hence it is that the fasts of the Law, and of Prophecy, and of the Gospel are commended. For Moses, that he might deserve to receive the Law, fasted twice for the number of forty days (Exod. 34:28). Elijah, that he might evade the hands of Jezebel, arrived in the fortitude of one meal for forty days at Horeb the mountain of God (3 Kings 19:8). Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, fasting for forty days in the desert, took no food at all (Matt. 4:2). Saul, therefore, divides the people into three parts: because the fasts of the Law and the Prophets, and of the Gospel, are brought forward as an example for those who abstain. And when the tomorrow comes, the teacher enters the middle of the camps: because with divine grace, which illuminates the hearts of preachers for teaching, it also irradiates the minds of the hearers, and powerfully lifts them to the hope of victory. On the tomorrow, therefore, the teacher about to triumph enters and opens the camps of the enemies, and in them he powerfully strikes the battle lines of concupiscences. And because the minds of those same subjects profit by hearing, the king is said to enter the camps of the Ammonites in the morning watch, and to dwell in their slaughters until the day should be hot.

The morning watch, indeed, in God's inspiration is the fervor of the sun in its plenitude. For as it were the morning light rises for us when, depressed by the darkness of temptations, we begin to see the light of virtue from the mouth of preachers, which we may follow. And the sun becomes hot for us when through their words our mind is enkindled, and as if boiled down by the heat of the burning sun, is inflamed with desires. Then indeed Ammon is vehemently struck: because the people of vices is put to flight from our senses. The ruler, therefore, who enters the camps of the Ammonites in the morning watch, should not hide the sword from slaughter until the day becomes hot, because he ought to insist on the erudition of his subjects so long as he may see them inflamed with the great heats of internal light. In which place it is to be noted: because Nahash, that is, the serpent, is said to be the king of the Ammonites: moreover, Ammon himself is interpreted as 'a people of sorrow.' And because we said that the vice of gluttony is designated in this serpent, when Nahash is struck, the people of sorrow is defeated: because from the one vice of gluttony, innumerable columns of vices are brought forward to the conflict of the soul. And when the same vice of gluttony is cut back, we subjugate many other vices to ourselves. There is indeed one vice of gluttony, but there are innumerable stings of libido which follow that preceding one as if a king. They indeed suggest joyful things, but lead through to the lamentations of eternal weeping. With Nahash,

therefore, it is fought, but the people of sorrow is struck: because when we tame gluttony, the incitements of libidos are destroyed. Whence well not Nahash himself, but Ammon subject to him, that is, the people, is asserted to be slain: because the appetite for eating is to be restricted, not extinguished. But it is never well restricted if the following people of sorrow, that is, the base motions of libidos, are not killed. Our principal contest, therefore, is against Nahash: because when he is overcome, Ammon is slain: because libido is then well struck if its principal beginning is subjugated. But how far the progress of modesty may proceed is shown latently through those things which follow. (Verse 11.) But the rest were dispersed, so that two were not left together.

13. The proof of true abstinence is not in the attenuation of the body, but in the perfection of chastity. For 267 well is the serpent worn down if gluttony is so restricted that all violence of the libidinous motions of the body is diminished. For an illicit motion cannot be taken away from the flesh as long as it is the flesh itself, but the violence of moving can be taken away. That the law of the flesh should not move the members cannot indeed be taken away from the flesh; but nevertheless the violence of motion can be taken away from the flesh, so that motion may be left to it; but all obscenity of delight be taken away from the same motion, and that motion may be simple, in which the remaining turpitude of libido may not be. Well, therefore, are others related to have been turned to flight, because when

divine grace perfectly remunerates any who abstain, it takes away the stings of all obscenities from their corporeal motions; but it leaves to them those natural motions, so that they can always be tempted, but can never be overcome; while it leaves that which is very displeasing to them, but so debilitates what it leaves that it does not permit it to prevail over the victors. He had indeed struck the Ammonites who said: I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27). Others also being slain, he could not slay the fugitives, because he deplores, saying: I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind (Rom. 7:23). Item because he saw those who had remained to be debilitated, he says: No creature shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ (Ibid. 8:39). What is it therefore, that he deplores that a law is in his members fighting against the law of his mind, if others being extinct, others have been turned to flight; unless because perfect men vehemently grieve at this very thing, that they sustain simple motions of the flesh against their will? For they would wish so to remain in the flesh that they would sustain nothing from the flesh against the will of the mind. Which indeed, because it is impossible, he premissed saying: To will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do (Ibid. 7:18, 19). As if he should say: I would wish to be in the flesh, not with that perfection

by which one perfect in the flesh is perfect, but as the Angels of God in heaven. But this I find not the power to do, because as long as the death of sin shall not have been swallowed up in the future resurrection, that sin which dwells in me moves me against me. But that which cannot be extinguished as sin, can be put to flight. Indeed, the motion of the flesh is as it were turned to flight while it is well chastised by fasting. For it erects itself against the spirit so much more rarely and with more difficulty as the presiding spirit subjects it to itself through extenuation, when it so tames it that it is late to grow proud and quick to rest.

14. But it must be subtly considered what is said: That two should not be left together. Two indeed remain, but they do not remain together. There are two indeed: impure thought and the natural motion of the flesh. For the conflict of the saints, sometimes an impure thought comes first, sometimes they feel the law of the flesh rising within them against the law of the mind; but those who are already victors do not fear enemies turned to flight if they return again to the fight, because they cannot fight with them together. For when a perverse thought encounters them, they cast it off before the flesh is moved by its suggestion. And when the law of the flesh moves the members, the law of the mind by no means fosters the base motion by thinking base things; and while it casts off one, it by no means feels the fight of the other. Well, therefore, is it said of the perfect victory of the elect, because: Others were

dispersed, so that two of them together were not left: because through the maceration of the body they profit into such a height of perfection that whatever is brought in by the flesh, whatever by the mind, is easily overcome by them, while it is not permitted to meet in battle. 268 And the elect perceive this victory concerning all the senses of the body, those who can subject the besieging Nahash to themselves through the virtue of abstinence. For the flesh, refreshed and fattened, is easy to a slip of the tongue, of the eyes, of hearing, of smell, and of touch. Therefore, while the illicit motions of the corporeal senses are led from the vice of gluttony to the battle of the mind, the Ammonite people as it were accompany King Nahash to the siege of the Israelites. But while Nahash is perfectly conquered, Ammon is both extinguished in part and in part so turned to flight that two of them together are not found; because while we wear down the body through abstinence, we enervate the innumerable illicit motions of our senses; and those which we cannot altogether eradicate, we put to flight as if they were weak. Of which two do not remain together for us in the fight; because in the delight of any corporeal sense, we do not join the sense of the mind. For often we look with the eyes, often we hear with the ears, often we perceive by touch, often by smell, those things which can draw the carnal soul to illicit love.

And the people said to Samuel: Who is he that said: Shall Saul reign over us? Give up the men, and we will put them to death. And Saul said: No

man shall be put to death this day, because the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

15. To Samuel indeed the Lord had said above: They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them (1 Sam. 8:7). But concerning Saul it was said a little before: But they despised him, and brought him no presents (Ibid. 10:27). But that one being rejected, this one despised, the enemies now being slain and victory obtained, he heard the people shouting: Give us the men, and we will put them to death. Both could indeed, not by putting to death but by consenting, be avenged of their enemies; but also because the rejected prophet speaks, the despised king favors the one saying: No man shall be put to death, because our holy preachers are crowned with a greater victory when they tolerate the adversities of their neighbors than when they conquer external enemies. Whence also true wisdom speaks in Solomon, 269 saying: The patient man is better than the valiant (Prov. 16:32). But it must be noted what is said: In this day. He indeed desires to kill in the day of his victory who inflames those whom he draws to the love of God by the brightness of virtues to harm others. Or he kills in the day of victory; because by that light of brightness by which he is brought into the veneration of the preacher, he is excited to hatred of those detrating the same teacher. For he that hateth his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15). Because from the doctrine of the good shepherd the good are so to be helped that the evil are tolerated; the cause for which no one is to be killed is well subjoined:

Because, he says, today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

And Samuel said to the people: Come and let us go to Gilgal, and let us renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord.

16. If therefore all things are done in that way which was said above in ordaining the king, we lead it to the custom of the holy Church, its rulers are ordained with great subtlety. For first the king to be chosen was shown to the prophet, then sought as if unknown: afterwards also found by lot, hidden at home, revealed by the Lord, taken up by the people, and received into the royal dignity by all. What is it therefore that they still go to Gilgal, that the kingdom may be renewed there? But the king is sought and found with great discretion, because the affairs of the Churches are very high, which if the weak and unskilled undertake, they are depressed by the very magnitude of the things. Attentively therefore and with the most subtle investigation he is sought out, who is to be preferred to such a height. Who surely is to be greatly preached, not when he is constituted by the judgment of those seeking, but when in the very disposition of the highest ministry he is found strenuous. Well therefore, with the king already constituted triumphing, it is said: They proceeded to Gilgal, and they made Saul king there before the Lord: because when the strength of the preacher is known, he is honored in the minds of his hearers. Indeed we go into Gilgal, that is, the wheel (rota), when through the sacred

word we discuss the operation of our teacher, and we make him king there before the Lord: because him whom we see to be probable, we judge to be worthy of such a height. First therefore Saul is said to be chosen by the people, at the last constituted king in Gilgal before the Lord: because although a shepherd may be chosen in the holy Church with much gravity of counsel, whether it be by merit, which is by order, is not known except when it is declared by the strength of works. Let it be said therefore not of another, but of him [Perhaps alio is superfluous] who shone with a great victory: All the people proceeded to Gilgal, and they made Saul king there before the Lord, so that the dignity of the high priest may not consist in the ambition of the height, but in the highest virtue. And indeed one goes into Gilgal, so that he may not dare to judge of the highest place, to whom the hidden precepts of the holy Scripture are closed. And he is constituted king before the Lord: because then the teacher is cultivated by the devotion of his subjects when they acknowledge his life as accepted by the Almighty Lord. But of that very knowledge of the life and doctrine of their shepherd: because often one believes not in oneself but in the better, well is the people said to have constituted the king before the Lord in Gilgal: but the same people to have proceeded to Gilgal at the warning of Samuel. Let us go, he says, into Gilgal, and let us renew the kingdom there. For the kingdom is renewed: because while the chosen preacher is seen in great virtue, the hearts of the hearers are submitted to

him with new and recent devotion. Whence as it were with the victory of the king shown the kingdom is renewed, when having known the great life of the teacher, the very hearts of the subjects receive the splendor of new devotion, and through his example are excited to the purpose of great virtue. But now let us who have seen the triumphs in one battle of internal things, see already the times of peace run through with wonderful equity in another.

CHAPTER II.

(1 Sam. 12:1-3) And Samuel said to all Israel: Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. And now the king goeth before you: but I am old and greyheaded: and my sons are with you. I have lived before you from my youth until this day. Behold, here I am. Speak of me before the Lord, and before his anointed, whether I have taken any man's ox, or if I have taken any man's ass: if I have calumniated any man, if I have oppressed any man, if I have taken a gift at any man's hand: and I will despise it this day, and will restore it to you.

1. When reprobate pastors are in charge, their principal purpose is in the rapine of their subjects. Because they know not how to look upon the abundance of eternal goods, the more ardently they concupisce present things, the more greedily they receive what is offered, and violently take away what is not offered. They lay snares for the innocent, they oppress the weak,

they receive gifts, and pervert rights. Concerning these pastors the Lord reproaches Judea through the prophet, saying: Thy princes are like wolves in the evening, not leaving until the morning (Zeph. 3:3). The calumniators of the innocent likewise and the oppressors of the weak he strikes also, saying: He that putteth not into their mouths, they prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be to you instead of a vision, and darkness instead of divination (Micah 3:5, 6). For while they know the iniquity which they do, through the audacity of the most wicked work, they fall into blindness of heart, so that through love they may no longer see the light of truth, through which they might repent of their depravity. Likewise Isaiah reproves the acceptance of gifts, saying: All love bribes, they run after rewards (Isa. 1:23). The holy man, therefore, while he shows the simplicity of his innocence, appeared sublime in that height of merits. Which indeed of virtue praise is shown in that one thing, so that the same conformity of goodness may be shown to all elected teachers.

2. We have indeed the innocence of life for ourselves, but we ascend the height of prelacy for others, not for ourselves. Through the good of innocence we tend towards the eternal fatherland, through the height of prelacy we watch in the custody of others. In that virtue we are secure, but this loftiness we possess with great fear: because we who vehemently dread to render an account of our own works, must render an account to God of that which we presided over others. If there-

fore elected men, God willing, ascend even the height of prelacy unwillingly, God willing, they desert the same height of devotion. The holy man therefore says: Behold, I have hearkened to your voice, and have made a king over you; and now the king goeth before you. But I am old and grey-headed. And my sons are with you. As if he should say in other words: Because I was in charge not for myself, but for you, I have freely given to another the dignity which I held. In the same dignity I have now grown old, and yet the long use of pre-eminence, which I held, did not hold me bound in its ambition. What is it therefore that he says: My sons are with you, unless because in holy men there is a great force of spiritual love, by which, when sons are born to the height, they take away the right of succession? But he who so quietly deserts the sum of order shows 271 what kind of man he remained in the same height. Because indeed he did not exercise the violence of rapine, he says: Speak of me before the Lord and before his anointed, whether I have taken any man's ox, or ass. Likewise because he sought an occasion of harming no one, he subjoined, saying: If I have calumniated anyone. Likewise because he was not heavy to the weak, he says: If I have oppressed anyone. Likewise because he sought not earthly but heavenly things from his prelacy, he says: If I have taken a gift at any man's hand, and I will despise it today, and restore it to you.

(Verses 4-6) And they said: Thou hast not calumniated us, nor oppressed us, neither hast

thou taken anything at any man's hand. And he said to them: The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand. And they said: He is witness. But he himself still subjoins, saying: The Lord, who made Moses and Aaron, and brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt, he is witness.

3. In which place it must be noted that the holy man did not speak the good things which he did, but he set forth the evil things which he did not do; so that by being silent he might preserve the good things for eternal gains, and by speaking he might not lose the odor of a good opinion. For Paul speaks, saying: We are the good odor of Christ in every place (2 Cor. 2:15). He himself also rebuking some, says: The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you (Rom. 2:24). Hence likewise he admonishes the disciple, saying: It behooveth also a Bishop to have a good testimony from those who are without (1 Tim. 3:7). While therefore he asserted that he had so cautiously avoided evil, and was silent about the great good things which he did, the blessed man openly showed in how great a height of virtues he stood, while by reprobating evil things, he preserved the odor of a good opinion for the example of the elect; and by hiding the works of virtues, he guarded the rewards of eternal retribution. But it must be noted that when he asserted the Lord as a witness of his innocence, he said that the Lord himself made Moses and Aaron. What else is this, but that he also showed the height of his own virtue, but wished not to appear alone in such a

height? As if he should say with latent senses: I am not to be wondered at in such virtue of mind: because I am not alone in it. I have the contempt of things in a gift of virtue, but I have this not in the intention of vain praise: in which I perceive others far better and more sublime. And because he asserted that the Lord made Moses and Aaron themselves, it is such as if he should say: That I was able so strongly to beware of evil things, ought to be ascribed to his grace, who made Moses and Aaron such. But to what end the holy man premissed these things, he shows: because he subjoined, saying: (Verse 7) Now therefore stand, and I will contend with you in judgment before the Lord of all the mercies which he hath done with you and with your fathers.

4. It is an order of the highest reason that he who does not care to do good things, by no means reproves evil things in others. The holy man therefore first cautiously asserted that he had avoided evil things, then he leapt forward to the reproof of others; so that he might insinuate the mores of the elected preacher, who is not strong enough to bear the fruit of preaching well, unless when he demonstrates by a splendid conversation that which he preaches as lucid from eternity. He says therefore: Now stand, and I will contend with you in judgment concerning all the mercies of the Lord. To stand, for the hearers, is to erect the intention of the mind to the word of the preacher. Merito therefore are they commanded to stand: because the teacher profits nothing by exhorting, if the hearer does not intend the mind

to those things which he speaks. Enumerating the same mercies, he says: 272 (Verses 8-11) When Jacob was entered into Egypt, and our fathers cried to the Lord, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron: and brought our fathers out of Egypt, and placed them in this place. And because they forgot the Lord their God, he delivered them into the hand of Sisera, the captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines, and of the king of Moab: and they fought against you. Afterwards they cried to the Lord, and said: We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: now therefore deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Barak, and Jephthah, and Samuel; and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you dwelt confidently.

5. He indeed commemorates these mercies done according to history for this reason, so that in that which they sought a king, the people might acknowledge themselves guilty before the Lord. For he who had the Lord present to remove all dangers, had no need of a man as a king over him. But he showed the very presence of the Lord through the bestowed mercies, while he asserted them to have been delivered from the hand of the Egyptians by Moses and Aaron, and from the hand of Sisera and the Philistines, and from the hand of the king of Moab by Jerubbaal, Barak, and Jephthah, and by Samuel. In which place it is greatly to be sought why the petition by which a king is sought is so strictly both reproved, and

the very helps of the divine mercy are taught to have been bestowed on the people of God through prelated men. In which matter what is to be responded, unless that the prelacy of kings is very different from the prelacy of judges? Those indeed presided as equals, but these exhibit the arrogance of domination in the power of pre-eminence. Those commended the testimony of their innocence before the Lord and all the people: because they neither oppressed anyone, nor took away anything alien for their own uses: but these not only take away their own things from their subjects, but even press the very persons of their subjects with the burden of servitude. Subjoining therefore he says:

(Verse 12) But seeing that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said: Nay, but a king shall reign over us: whereas the Lord your God was your king.

6. As if he should say: For this you chose for yourselves a man, for which you were accustomed to have God. Which place certainly if we wish to discuss spiritually, this is gathered from it: because those who desire a carnal man to preside over them, repel divine grace from themselves. For while they live by the example of humble teachers, they are as it were delivered from Egypt: because they flee the darkness of worldly love with all desire. Because also they escape the tyranny of all vices by their doctrine, they are as it were delivered from the hand of Sisera, the Philistines, and the king of Moab, leaders being sent. In whom God already alone

omnipotent reigns: because while they imitate humble pastors without, they gratefully receive the love of the divinity reigning among them. Let the prophet therefore say: You said to me: Nay, but a king shall reign over us; whereas the Lord was reigning in you: so that he may show that those who subject themselves to carnal men by imitating them, lose the dignity of divine grace. It must also be noted that the prophet Samuel through the virtue of humility everywhere shows himself to the elect in the norm of rectitude. For when he asserted the liberation of the Israelite people, he did not say: The Lord sent Jephthah and me; but: Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hand of your enemies. He indeed named himself as if another, so that the virtue of liberation should not be ascribed to the person of the one sent: but to the grace of God the sender. The Lord, he says, sent Samuel, and delivered you. As if he should say: Whom he willed, he sent; and through whom 273 he willed, he did. And perhaps he speaks of himself as of another because it is not he himself who speaks through himself, but the Holy Spirit. And because by the permission of God, the king being now constituted, the man of the Lord was speaking these things; he was certainly speaking to this end, that he might direct the king and the people to the worship of God, not that he might evacuate the royal dignity itself. Whence also subjoining, he says:

(Verses 13-15) Now therefore behold your king, whom you have chosen and desired. Behold, your

God hath given you a king. If you will fear the Lord, and serve him, and hearken to his voice, and not provoke the mouth of the Lord: then shall both you, and the king who reigneth over you, be followers of the Lord your God. But if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but will rebel against his words, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, and against your fathers.

7. These things are certainly not mystical, but historical in all. For where prelates and subjects lead a reprobate life, they likewise undergo the penalty of divine vengeance. But because good things are led separately, and evil things separately; those for which the hand of the Lord is predicted to be upon them in the future must be considered more subtly. What therefore is it that he says: If you will fear the Lord, and serve him: unless because many fear the judgments of divine severity, and yet do not desist from doing perverse things? With a trembling heart they indeed think of the future judgments, but overcome by present pleasure, they by no means avoid committing evils. Well, therefore, after the fear of the Lord his services are mentioned: because that fear alone is probable which, while it shakes the mind, draws it to the study of a good work. Likewise because there are some who through the fear of the Lord reject certain evils, and do some good things; and yet neither fully desert evils, nor sufficiently work good things, it is added: And hearken to his voice. He who hears the voice of the Lord both fully does good things and inwardly deserts evils. Those same good works

indeed are to be held in the delight of sweetness, not in the estimation of roughness. For those to whom the things which are commanded by the Lord always seem hard and rough, little by little they fall away and fail. For hence Truth itself says through itself: For my yoke is sweet, and my burden light (Matt. 11:30). Hence John says: His commandments are not heavy (1 John 5:3). They are indeed not heavy to the elect: because while they desire the glory of eternal life with great desire, they gratefully bear the Evangelical precepts. Also the mouth of the Lord can be understood as the preaching of perfect charity. For as it were he wished to show the blandishments of his mouth when he said: This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12). This indeed is the commandment of the Lord, this is the yoke of divine sweetness. For what is more light, or ever more grateful, than love is carried? What besides, being heavy, does he not lightly tolerate who loves? For whatever is loved, is carried with great devotion. Because therefore the bond of perfection is the charity of God and neighbor, well...

8. But because he was speaking to the weak and carnal, subsequently denouncing he says: But if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but will rebel against his words, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, and against your fathers. 274 The hand of the Lord is the severity of divine vengeance. Which hand indeed is extended over sons and fathers when, by the merit of divine contempt, both reprobate prelates

and subjects are punished. The same hand is also extended to vengeance when the voice of the Lord is not heard, when his words are provoked: because those who reject the divine commands as hard and unsupportable are depressed in the future by an intolerable burden of penalty. For the foolish audacity of man, whence he refuges to undergo for a little while those things which seem rough to him, thence he subjects himself to rougher things for eternity. For if he were wisely wise, he would persuade himself of this which is displeasing: so that through the hard and rough things of this most brief time, he might escape the hard and rough things of future damnation. These things indeed the hard hearts of the carnal quickly hear, but they cannot easily be softened through wholesome counsel. Well therefore is subjoined:

(Verses 16, 17) Now therefore stand, and see this great thing which the Lord will do in your sight. Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain: and you shall know and see that you have done a great evil in the sight of the Lord, in asking a king over you.

9. Because this request for a king is so attentively and so often reproved, it suggests this to the elect: that those who promote carnal men to the summit of the holy Church are held by a most grave obligation of sin. For other sins obtain the merit of a single penalty, but he who constitutes a carnal prelate incurs as many merits of penalties as that man provides examples of depravity to

the faithful subjects. But the heavy weight of the crime cannot be laid down, except by the austerity of great compunction. Moreover, the grace of compunction is not infused into the mind, unless the magnitude of the sin itself is first shown to it. The Prophet of the Lord, therefore, so that he might provoke the sinning people to the fruit of congruent repentance, suggests to them by a miraculous movement of the air the great sin of transgression. Moreover, in the harvest of wheat, rains and thunders do not occur in that region. Well, however, is subsequently added:

(Verses 18, 19) Samuel cried unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel: Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

10. Which surely, if we deduce it to our times, so that the people may come to the knowledge of sins, the preachers cry out to God for them: because they demand the salvation of the faithful with great desires. For the preachers to cry out is to request the salvation of the elect with great devotion. To whose cry the Lord gives a voice: because he excites the hearts of sinners, so that they may recognize the wickedness of their depravity. He gives rains: because he helps the excited hearts through the infusion of supernal grace; so that each one may not only desert the evils which he has done, but also strongly do the good things which he desires. But this is said to be

done in the day of the wheat harvest, so that the power of the miracle may be designated. Indeed, the change of the heart is not a lesser miracle than the perturbation of the air. It is not a lesser miracle for dry hearts to revive, than for rains to flood in an unusual manner in the summer heats. For it is a greater miracle to shake the insensible mind with an inward sound, than for thunder to sound forth from clouds collided by the wind. But the right order of conversion is shown in the ordered positioning of the words. For he says: The Lord gave thunder and rain: and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. For in a most ordered conversion, when evil is deserted, good is propagated in the mind; when the mind of the convert nourishes the good seed as if through rain, and subjects itself to God and men through the virtue of obedience. Well, therefore, is it said: All the people feared the Lord and Samuel, because he who receives the advent of the Highest Spirit both deserts evils and apprehends good things, and is so subjected to God that he is even prostrated for God before men. And because they do not have presumption in the virtue of obedience itself, they say: Pray for thy servants unto the Lord, that we die not. When the spirit of life infuses itself into the mind, it immediately raises it to the fear of death: because it is the teaching of the same spirit that the mind should act by fearing, lest it find what it fears: but holy men praying for them can be heard, who also reveal the hidden sins of the heart through the humility of confession. Whence also is subjoined: For we have added

unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. Because truly these things...

(Verse 20) And Samuel said: Fear not. Ye have done all this wickedness. Yet turn not aside from following the Lord.

11. The mind of the penitent is then well directed, if it fears the divine judgments and trusts in the mercy of Almighty God. Fear indeed without hope precipitates into despair, but when it is joined to hope, it works the salvation of the mind. Wherefore the best teacher ought to watch with the greatest study, so that he may terrify the sinner and lead back the terrified one to the hope of pardon: in order that through fear he may cease to sin, and through the hope of obtaining indulgence, he may seek the port of divine mercy. Samuel, therefore, raising the terrified subjects to the virtue of hope, says: Ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord. As if he were to say: If you cease to sin, you can more quickly reach the obtaining of pardon for the things committed. Therefore turn not aside from following the Lord. It is promised from the praise of the just. For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways (Luke 1:76). Hence Elijah says: The Lord liveth, in whose sight I stand (1 Kings 17:1). Hence the Psalmist says: Let the just exult in the sight of God (Psalm 67:4). To stand in the sight of the Lord, or before the Lord, is to presume upon the love of the Creator from the testimony of a good conscience. Indeed, they stand in his sight who, from the merit of a great action, are secure concerning the supernal grace

of their Creator. But sinners, when they commit evils, flee from the face of the Lord, but when they deliberate to return by repenting, they are as it were behind the back of the Lord: because they neither wish to depart further, and yet they cannot presume upon God as friends. Hence it is that the sinning woman is said to have stood behind, so that she might merit to kiss the feet of the Lord (Luke 7:38). She also stood behind who touched his hem, and merited to be cured from her flow of blood (Matt. 9:20). Indeed, she stands behind for the shame of sin, but touches through the virtue of hope. Because, therefore, we ought always to blush for the iniquities committed, and to avoid those things in which we are confounded, Samuel commands sinners not to turn aside from following the Lord. But because it is not enough for the sinner to convert so that he does not commit sins, he subsequently added:

(Verse 20) And serve the Lord with all your heart.

12. For then we can deserve pardon, if we cease to sin and adhere to good works. For to serve the Lord in all the heart is to retain no intention of sinning in the heart. Every heart is indeed turned to the service of the Creator when we so do good things that we hold no evil things through purpose. Which also the Prophet of the Lord, Samuel, openly suggests when he subjoins:

(Verse 21) And turn ye not aside after vain things, which cannot profit you nor deliver you; for they are vain.

13. Literally he calls the idols of demons "vain things". But to us those vain things are to be accepted here which the Preacher shows, saying: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity (Eccl. 1:2). For in comparison of eternal goods, all things are vain, even temporal goods. For whatever in this world is seen as joyful, delectable, sublime, or prosperous, is surely vain: because it is difficultly held, and quickly lost. Indeed, suddenly the high things of the world collapse, beautiful things pass away, joyful and prosperous things vanish. For when the world is seen flattering while standing in these flowers of its own, the sudden fortune is disturbed, or by a hasty death, and one that overturns all things, it is concluded. Vain therefore are the joys of the world, which flatter as if remaining: but by passing away quickly, they deceive their lovers. Let the Prophet Samuel say therefore: And turn ye not aside after vain things, which cannot profit you. As if he were to say: Foolishly are the goods of the world desired, which cannot be held longer by their desirers. And it is to be noted, because it is said of the future: Which cannot profit you: because certainly they are seen to profit now; but when in the future they shall have begun to be punished for them, they by no means profit. Whence also is aptly subjoined: Nor deliver you; for they are vain. As if he were to say: Therefore they do not help you then, because they fail with the world, and after the world they are not had. Much indeed do the goods of the world last if they reach with the lover even to the extreme of life. After the world,

therefore, they do not profit, which cannot pass the end of life. In this life indeed they bind their lovers with sins; but then they shall not deliver, where indeed they are through merit, but they are not through help. In which matter it is to be carefully noted: because temporal goods will not profit those who are said to turn aside after these things. For to turn aside after the goods of time is to flow into the desire of them, to prefer the love of them to the divine love. Meritly, therefore, for these men vain things shall not profit: because they would not have them in that order in which they were created. But with what fruit vain things should be despised is suggested, while it is subjoined:

(Verse 22) For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

14. Vain things bring a great evil upon those turning aside after them: because while they inordinately desire earthly things, they are forsaken by the highest and almighty God to sustain future torments. To these, therefore, who are prohibited from turning aside after vain things, the Prophet meritly promises back, saying: For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake. Because they who for his love despise vain things are delivered from true evils, and from the faith of the promise they receive the reward of the eternal inheritance. For the Lord makes his people whom he raises up to the joys of eternal beatitude. There indeed the revealed glory of his majesty presides over him, whom

in the world he holds assumed from the love of vanity through hidden grace. To swear indeed to the Lord is to promise back; and that he makes them his people, the Lord swears, who does not turn aside after vain things: because earthly things are to be despised so that we may merit to obtain the goods of the eternal inheritance. Nor yet let anyone believe that he can be led to these things by these merits; because here it is strictly expressed: For his great name's sake. For it is not by our goodness, but of God it is done, that an earthly man should enjoy celestial goods. For it is the gift of God, not of ourselves. It follows:

(Verse 23) Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.

15. He speaks these things to whom the Lord above said concerning those to whom he speaks: They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Behold the prophet is rejected, and to those rejecting him he speaks saying: God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. Equally, if this is discussed according to the precept of the Law, it would not be a sin if he did not pray for those rejecting him. For the Law of Moses commands, saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy (Lev. 19:18). But even those who rejected the prophet had stood forth not as friends, but as enemies. What is it therefore that he says: God forbid that I should sin, except because the holy man, sublimated to the summit of charity, not only loved

friends, but even embraced those same enemies? Indeed, instructed by the mandate of the old Law, but illustrated by the splendors of the new grace, he reproves the license of antiquity with Evangelical perfection. In which fact, surely, we are compelled to make accounts with ourselves. For hence it is commanded through the Gospel: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you (Matt. 5:44). How much therefore are enemies to be loved now, when we are commanded (Preface num. 6), if they could be loved then when they were commanded to be held in hatred? And because he endeavored not only to pray for them, but to erudite them, subjoining, he says:

(Verse 23) And I will teach you the good and the right way.

Why therefore does he call the way of divine service good and right: since it would not be good if it were not right; nor right, if it were not good? But the way was good by which the people ascended from Egypt to the land of promise, and yet while it circled through the desert, it was not right. Therefore the way is good by which it is tended to the supernal country: right, by which it is easily reached. Therefore the way is good and right when we are converted to the religious life, we exercise divine services with the instant fervor of great devotion. Whence also Samuel well expounds the same way, saying:

(Verse 24) Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart.

17. This indeed is the good and right way: because it tends to eternal life, and quickly

reaches it. For through the fear of the Lord evils are avoided; by serving him, his mandates are fulfilled. Whom surely we serve in truth when we perform his precepts for the sake of supernal retribution alone. For he who expects a temporal reward for a good work does not serve God in truth, whom he does not love with a false purpose in his operation. But those who desire to serve God in truth are commanded to put the whole heart in divine services, so that they may so do the things that are of God, that they retain nothing in the mind that is against God. This surely is a way not only good, but right: because it tends to salvation, and quickly leads its victor to perfection. For just as another way of the land of promise is shown good, which leads through; right, which avoids a bypass. For through this each one reaches the summit of virtues so much the better as he does not turn aside through the circuits of negligences. Indeed, this right way is expressed in that through which the Lord is said to have wished to lead the children of Israel to the land of promise. He wished surely to commit to them the labors of the desert, so that he might lighten for us, stepping after the footsteps of his only-begotten, the course of so great a journey. For they could not yet hear: If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me (Matt. 19:21). For while the old people discoursed through diverse things by the license of temporal things, they could not be led quickly as if through a circuit of labor to the land

of promise. So that the Prophet may suggest to us the way of the new life, he says that the way is good and right, and to fear God, and to serve him in truth and from the whole heart: because they quickly reach the sublimity of divine grace who do not cease to seek Almighty God both by good work and by fervent desires. And because he had made the same people attentive to hear the words of preaching through a miracle, he subjoins:

(Verse 24) For consider how great things he hath done for you.

18. As if he were to say: From these things which you have seen, gather how terribly you ought to fear Almighty God, and how devotedly you ought always to serve him. Which words surely, if we wish to draw them to ourselves, so much more is God to be feared venerably by us, and served more devotedly, as we have perceived more wonderful things in our Redeemer. But because what the good hear, the wicked boldly despise, he subjoined, saying: But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

CHAPTER III.

(1 Samuel 13:1) Saul was a son of one year when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel.

1. Above, when the business of ordaining a king was treated, it was said of him who was to be preferred to the others by divine judgment: Because he was choice and good. Likewise con-

cerning him already elected into the kingdom, and set in the midst of the people, Samuel says: Behold, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people (1 Sam. 10:24). Concerning the same king it is now said: Saul was a son of one year; so that while he is attentively praised, he may be perceived to have been elected good by the Lord. Why therefore is he said to be of one year when he began to reign, unless that his innocence may be preached? For literally, how could he be a son of one year, who stood out from the shoulder and upward above all the people? What therefore cannot be understood according to the letter, ought to be understood through the reason of internal intelligence. Thus he is described as a king of one year, so that the gift of childhood in the person of the king may sign the good of innocence. Whence also it is commanded to the children of the eternal kingdom: Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children (1 Cor. 14:20). Which certainly Truth itself threatens even to the pastors of the Churches, saying: Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). Concerning the king, therefore, who was first good and afterwards stood forth as evil, it is said: that he was of one year when he began to reign, and reigned for two years. For although he reigned for many years, he is said to reign in those alone in which he is recorded to have been innocent and humble. For afterwards, being proud and disobedient, he heard: Because thou hast rejected the word of

the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king (1 Sam. 15:26). He indeed knew himself rejected from the kingdom, and yet being rejected he did not fear to reign. How many things did he afterwards act strongly? But behold, all those times are not deputed to him for the kingdom. Let us therefore rejoice to have lived in that time alone in which we lived innocently and humbly. For those times which we consumed in the vanity of the world, and the fleeting life of the flesh, are by no means remembered, as if lost. There are also still those who are thrust in to seize the summit of the holy Church: concerning whom the Lord complains through the Prophet, saying: ...

Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin.

2. The number one thousand, which is completed by collecting a hundred ten times, suggests the height of perfection. When this is indeed repeated three times, various perfections of the elect are designated in it. Saul, therefore, chose three thousand men of Israel: because the preacher of truth leads not the weak and feeble to the defense of the holy Church, but robust and strong warriors. Indeed, they are said to be three thousand: because in the peak of the state of perfection, they bring forth virgins: next to whom they place both the continent and the defenders of truth. For while by the example of virgins they inflame others to the height of incorruption, while by the life of the continent they take others

away from the corruptions of the world, while they defend the weakness of the humble through the aids of the powerful, good teachers come against the enemies of the holy Church as if with three thousand chosen men.

Moreover, they are called men for their fortitude, and are related to be of Israel for their divine contemplation. For one cannot be contained in the highest number of perfection who lacks either the virtue of great work or the knowledge of internal vision. Why is it that some are said to be with Saul, and others with Jonathan from the chosen men? But even the names of the places themselves in which they are said to be must not be believed to be empty of mysteries. Jonathan, who is described as being the son of the king and has a portion of the warriors, indeed suggests those who are assistants to the teachers in the ministry of preaching. They are certainly their children: because they love them vehemently, by whose ministry they are begotten for God. But they preside over a part of the warriors: because they take care of the holy Church, and by example to some, and by exhortations to others, they promote them to the love of virtues. For it is as if the great king had sent his son into the army, who spoke to the Corinthians, saying: Therefore I sent to you Timothy, who is my most dear and faithful son in the Lord: who may remind you of my ways which are in Christ Jesus, as I teach in all the Churches of the saints (1 Cor. 4:17). Hence he likewise says: When Timothy comes, see that he

is with you without fear: for he works the work of the Lord, as I do (1 Cor. 16:10).

3. Now Jonathan is said to be with a thousand men in Gibeah of Benjamin, but Saul with two thousand in Michmash and in mount Bethel. Gibeah, as we have often said already, is interpreted as "lofty"; Michmash, "humility"; Bethel, "house of God"; Saul is called "petition"; Jonathan, "gift of the dove". Indeed, we related the three thousand chosen men of Israel to the virgins, the continent, and the defenders of truth. Therefore, while Jonathan is called the gift of the dove, and a thousand men are said to be with him in Gibeah, that is, the lofty place: what else does he suggest than those who, by the most clear example of virginity, offer to others the norm of the same modesty? Well is he called the gift of the dove, the institutor of virgins: because it is brought about by the incomparable grace of the Holy Spirit that the corruption of the flesh is unknown by those remaining in the flesh. Well also are the virgins said to be in a lofty place: because that which surpasses human nature is situated at the highest peak of virtues. Whence also that beloved virgin of Jesus, suggesting the place of virgins, says: I saw upon mount Sion a lamb standing, and with him a hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his father written in their foreheads (Apoc. 14:1). Whom he also suggests from the light of their own conversation, saying: These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins, and they follow the lamb whithersoever

he goeth (ibid., 4). They are indeed said to be with the lamb on the mountain; because through the merit of incorruption, by which they separate themselves from earthly and carnal delights, they are sublimated in the supernal glory of the Redeemer.

But two thousand are said to be with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel. Michmash, which is interpreted as humility, what else does it signify than the blush of the continent? For while they recall past delights of the flesh, they blush. But because they are strong men, they are related to be with Saul; and while they despise the experienced allurements of the world, by the example of their virtue they draw countless others to the contempt of the same world. But nevertheless they inhabit Michmash: because while they recall what they were like in the world, they cannot be proud of that which they see themselves to be great in God. Who are well related to be with Saul, who is called "petition". For the preacher of truth ought to be of such great charity that by instant desire he is felt to be not a petitioner, but a petition. Indeed, he ought to desire the salvation of the faithful so instantly that, from the habit of internal taste, he leads every movement of the heart into the affect of supplication. With whom there are a thousand men: because more perfect hearers agree in charity with chosen teachers, and commonly pray to the Almighty Lord for the salvation of the faithful. They are therefore in Michmash with the king: because they inhabit humility for themselves, so that

they may merit to be heard for others. But while the chosen teacher profitably presides over all subjects, he promotes the virtues of all to the crowns of victory. For he supplicates with the humble, he fights with the strong, he persists in prayers with secluded men, and he protects the weak and feeble with the exposed defenders of the Church. Well, therefore, are they said to be with Saul among the thousands of warriors not only in Michmash but in mount Bethel: because the preacher of the Church, just as he excels the diverse orders of the elect, so he ought to be their cooperator. For they guard Bethel, that is, the house of God, who defend the holy Church by the authority of the word. When they encounter any tyrants with the voice of free authority, when they raise themselves against the powerful of this world, when for the defense of the humble they contradict the powers of this world, they guard Bethel, the house of God, like the king's warriors. These certainly are related to be with Saul: because they are the co-helpers of great teachers in the defense of the Church.

But of the rest it is well said: (Verse 2) But the rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

4. He speaks of the rest of the people, whom the number of a thousand does not include. Every man is sent back to his own tent, because the weak and the imperfect are not to be brought forth to the highest and strong works. For neither the continent, nor virgins, nor martyrs can be made from the feeble. To the former indeed, so

that past delights of the flesh may not return to them; to the latter, so that they may despise the unexperienced allurements of the flesh; to the former, so that they may not fear the adversities of the world, the greatest fortitude is necessary. Therefore the rest of the common people are sent back to their own tents, lest they be condemned for the rashness of a higher life, and like the weak and feeble perish in war, while they pledge the faith of a high conversation which does not have the strength of high virtue. For the blessed Apostle Paul was sending away every man to his own tent, as it were, when he said: Because of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (1 Cor. 7:2). For like a skilled master of internal warfare, considering both the crowns of victory and the gravity of the fight, he weighed the strength of the soldiers in the weight of war, judging it best for the weak to live in cities, lest they perish in bitter Mars. Wherefore also segregating them from the camps of the strong, he says: Return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency (ibid., 5). But with the feeble removed, what is done in the most strong battle line of virgins is explained, when there is added: (Verse 3) And Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines, which was in Gibeah.

5. Just as the bridegroom's battle line excels in order, so it first received the titles of victory. For Jonathan strikes the garrison of the Philistines: because chosen virginity of the flesh, sublimated from the citadel of continence, extin-

guishes shameful movements. Well, moreover, is it called a garrison of the Philistines: because in the virginal body, carnal movements do not have the rest of delight, but the state of a struggle. For they stand: because they attack, but they cannot rest: because they please the holy mind least of all. Therefore the garrison of the Philistines in Gibeah is struck when the desires of the flesh are inwardly weakened by chosen virgins, and they obtain the peace of triumph, while they do not have the usual wars. To which victory indeed, because they often profit by the exhortation of their elders, a thousand men are in Gibeah with Jonathan: but Jonathan is said to strike the camps of the Philistines. And because by the example of some, others are often excited to the emulation of virtue, there follows: (Verses 3, 4) And Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines, which was in Gibeah. Which when the Philistines had heard, Saul sounded the trumpet in all the land, saying: Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard such a report as this. Saul struck the garrison of the Philistines, and Israel raised itself against the Philistines. Therefore the people cried after Saul in Gilgal.

7. Above, King Saul is described as having chosen three thousand men for himself. If, therefore, we wish to compare the parts of each army, ten chariots of the Philistines and two horsemen are assigned against each man of Saul. For ten times three thousand are thirty thousand. In the number six also the number three is doubled. By which war, indeed, both the multitude and the

ferocity of the hidden enemies are designated. They come against us in chariots and horses: because at one time they strive to offer evil thoughts to the hearts of the elect, at another time harmful allurements of visible things to their bodily senses. For horses are swift for running and strong for onset. To which, indeed, evil thoughts are aptly compared, which come swiftly to the heart and prick strongly. Horsemen come into battle against us when evil spirits both swiftly excite evil thoughts in us and strongly attack us through them. But two horsemen come against each of the faithful: because if we collect the hidden snares of the reprobate spirits into the sum of consideration, that special purpose of theirs is: namely, that they may strike the principal virtue in us, and utterly extinguish the charity of God and neighbor. Indeed, one horse is seen to rage when by a reprobate thought an evil spirit suggests to us that our neighbor should be hated. But the horse which is seen alone is not alone: because no one loves God who hates his brother (1 John 4:20). Because likewise divine charity does not agree with any principal vice in the mind, as often as a spiritual vice is suggested to us by the fraud of demons, we ought to beware of the excessive speed and violent ferocity of the raging horsemen.

In comparison with a horseman, indeed, the blow of an archer or a footman is in every way weak. But the onset of a horseman is violent with the strength of the horse: because, indeed, the virtue of the evil spirit is nothing in the contest of

the elect if he himself is not permitted to reside in an evil thought. Because, therefore, our enemies are very strong in war when they are permitted to sit upon internal thoughts, a crowd of horsemen is numbered in the army of the Philistines. But ten chariots are assigned to each chosen one in battle. For we have five senses of the body by which we receive the experience of delight. But evil spirits, when they desire to deceive the mind through the allurements of the flesh, show to the bodily senses the species of things which the flesh may desire, and through the species of the same things suggest that the mind should covet what is offered. For the adversary raises a chariot on its wheels, as it were, while on one side he offers the allurements of things, on the other he holds the thoughts; he offers these, he sends in those, and as if by rolling he carries himself lofty to the soul, while the evil spirit raises himself against the elect both through the allurements of things and through the art of suggestions. Therefore there are ten chariots: because against each of our bodily senses they have species of visible allurements, and they have against as many senses of the soul both deceptive arts of persuasions.

8. But what is it that the rest of the people are mentioned to be very many, like the sand which is on the seashore, unless because, under the leadership of evil spirits, an innumerable crowd of vices rages against us? For just as the subject common people follow the chariots and horsemen, when the snares of demons pre-

cede by attacking the mind: so that it may be devastated by the subsequent vices, as if by a multitude of irrational common people. But well are first the chariots and horsemen, and then the numerosity of the common people described in the spiritual fight of the saints: because, indeed, there is no numerosity, no strength of vices, if this crowd of evil spirits does not precede by exciting and sending them in. By which words also it is hinted how cautious and circumspect the life of the saints ought always to be. For if the rest of the common people are compared to the very many sand of the sea, the multitude of darts is innumerable and almost inevitable. For although all vices may be known to the skilled faithful, yet with how many movements they strike the heart, in what ways, or for what causes they always come to the heart, they cannot entirely know. They indeed powerfully cast away the open darkness of temptations; but often they do not escape the mist of ignorance in lighter things, as if the particles of sand. They always show the fortitude of good work, but those who overcome great armies of horsemen with great virtue, do not inwardly restrain their tongue from every superfluous speech. By continual use they direct the body in the service of Almighty God; but their mind, which perfectly orders the members without, sometimes by no means avoids superfluous thoughts. For what else do they then feel than the importunate multitude of the common people, who have prostrated chariots and horsemen with great virtue?

9. But the excellent teacher says: To them that love God, all things work together unto good (Rom. 8:28). God indeed permits his elect to be attacked by great temptations, so that they may be most magnificently crowned in the heavenly kingdom: but he permits great battles, which they may win; he excites light ones, in which they may fall: so that the victory of the strong may be great, and the fall harmless; so that when falling they may easily raise themselves, and those strong things in which they had stood as victors may not extol them. For if we overcome chariots and horsemen, we ought not to be extolled by the victory: because there are innumerable things which we commit by thinking, speaking, living, tasting, and hearing, and working. For even he could not avoid the darts of this innumerable common people who said: In many things we all offend (James 3:2). Hence also the beloved of Jesus speaks, saying: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8). Who then would now dare to be extolled as a victor, if such great men manifest that they cannot entirely escape the darts of sins?

But because these are described in a spiritual war, we ought not now to estimate what we suffer, but how we may be able to weaken the onset of our enemies. The common people of the Philistines are compared to the sand, which is very much on the seashore: because every power and number of vices is increased from the perturbations of the world. For the sea designates this world: because while it is driven by a great variety

of things and times, it is perturbed as if by raging winds. But on the shore, when the driven water of the sea is poured back, innumerable particles of sand are gathered. What then is the seashore, but the heart of each one negligent in spiritual conversation? Indeed, by the order of religion, he is seen to stand as if on solid ground; but while he does not restrain secular thoughts, he receives the waves of the sea breaking upon him, as it were, and heaps of sands: and he can indeed be driven by the waves and overwhelmed by the sand from where he does not fear to approach the sea: because if he restrained the thoughts of the world by the contemplation of spiritual things, he would not feel the vices of mind and body, which the occupation of the world carries in like sands and waves. Why then is the crowd of enemies said to be like sand, unless because evil spirits attack the chosen athletes of Christ with the same vices by which they overcome the negligent? They come with a crowd of secular noise against those who have learned to despise the world in its delights with their whole mind. They form pomps of visible things, they renew the already despised love of the world by feigning: so that they may draw hearts flaming with supernal love to harmful delights. But holy men, because they consider that this innumerable crowd of wicked thoughts comes forth from the abyss of the world, by fleeing the world with their whole mind, avoid becoming seashores, and no longer fear such a crowd of enemies: because while they

restrain themselves in internal contemplation, the crowd of vices cannot have access to them.

There follows: (Verse 5) And they went up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven.

10. For evil spirits to ascend is to attempt high things through heavenly desire for the purpose of deceiving the hearts of the saints. But it is well said: They encamped in Michmash: because they reside in those hearts which they do not see sublimated in the high love of heavenly things. For Michmash is interpreted as humility. But to be humbled in holy eloquence is often taken for a defect of virtue. Whence also in this same history of the kings, Tamar the daughter of King David, whom her brother Amnon is read to have violated, is said to have been humbled. Being corrupted, she was indeed humbled: because she had stood a lofty virgin, and when she lost the high summit of virginal honor, she came as it were from a lofty to a flat and humble place (2 Sam. 13). Concerning the future depression of the proud it is also said: Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled (Luke 14:11): because they fall in the examination of the supernal Judge who glory vainly in the loftiness of this world.

Well therefore are the Philistines said to pitch their camps in Michmash: because through wicked counsels demons inhabit those who do not care to hold the high summits of virtues. For while they seek earthly things, they inhabit flat and humble places, as it were, where the invisible enemies can easily pitch their camps. Concerning which enemies indeed it is said through the

Prophet: Who say to thy soul: Bow down, that we may pass over (Isa. 51:23). An upright soul is indeed lofty, a bowed one is humble: because through the loftiness of virtues and through heavenly desire it is raised up into high things: but when it flows down to vices or to the love of the world, it falls indeed to that place where the rushing enemy easily treads it down. Therefore they say to thy soul: Bow down, that we may pass over: because if they do not humble it to earthly actions or thoughts, they neither penetrate it with evil persuasions, nor perturb it with the war of vices.

11. Hence, therefore, we can gather how far we ought to be from the world in act, word, and thought. For our words, thoughts, and works are flat and humble when they are secular. Through these, indeed, we are in that place where the camps of hidden enemies are freely pitched, where we can be captured so much more easily as we are not raised up by any citadel of fortification. For what faithful person does not already know that they collect the faults of our words, thoughts, and works, and keep them for our accusation at the coming of the future Judge? Whence also the Lord, suggesting that this humble and despised place Michmash is to be fled by us, says: Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36). Therefore the place of the enemies is called humble, so that indeed it may suggest to us that we ought always to be lofty in word, thought, and work.

And because while the reprobate are captured in the humble place of their more remiss life, they show examples of depravity which may be proposed to others to be imitated: Michmash is said to be to the east of Beth-aven. From the east indeed we see the light of the sun arise. But the life of the reprobate, although it has the truth of obscurity, yet those who always seek it for the vain delight of the world are indeed deceived as if by the splendor of a false light. Whence also it is said through blessed Job: Their light shall be taken away from the wicked (Job 38:15). Now indeed the allurement of the world pleases them as something bright; but when they depart from the world, they shall undergo perpetual darkness, which they believed to be light. Then they shall see that it was not light, when prosperity is changed into adversity, light into darkness, laughter into mourning, sweetness into the worm, beauty into deformity, honor into disgrace, allurements into punishments and eternal torments.

These things indeed, because the hearts of the impious do not feel now, they refuse to imitate the manners of the good; and by the example of the lost, they do not fear at all to take whatever pleases them from the world: because they imitate those who through a reprobate life have become habitations of demons. Whence also they are deservedly called a useless house: because they often receive the preaching of the saints, but the word which they hear from their mouth, they by no means allow to dwell in them

through love. They are therefore a useless house: because they do not make a fit habitation for God in themselves. The Truth Himself designates this useless house in the Gospel, saying: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head (Matt. 8:20). Hence again it is written: The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will not dwell in a body subject to sins (Wisd. 1:5). Well therefore is the useless house said to have Michmash in the part of the east: because those who despise the preaching of the saints, in the example of the reprobate seeking the lowest and earthly things, rejoice as if in the rising of a great light. But while, through the mysteries of the sacred history speaking, the conversation of the evil is demonstrated, how cautious the life of the saints is, is subsequently shown.

For there follows: (Verse 6) Which when the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, the people were afflicted, and they hid themselves in caves, and in secret places, and in rocks also, and in dens, and in cisterns.

12. We are indeed in a strait when we are tempted within by unclean spirits and behold without the examples of evil men. Therefore, against the internal temptation of evil spirits, it is well said: 'The people were afflicted,' and against the exterior examples of impious men: 'They hid themselves.' For the cunning adversary suggests smooth and joyful things for us to desire, who is never better conquered than if, being tempted, we run to the lamentations of devoted prayer.

And we can more quickly avoid the examples of the depraved if we judge that they are not even to be looked back upon. Therefore, for the saints to be hidden is to disdain to see the reprobate things. And because they guard the five senses of the body from the imitation of the reprobate, five kinds of hiding places are also described: namely, caves, secret places, rocks, dens, and cisterns. For the caves of the mountains are hidden things: because the hearts of the saints are high in heavenly desire, and are closed and inaccessible to malignant spirits. Therefore we enter the caves when we return to the secrets of our minds, lest with wandering eyes we see things to be desired without. We are hidden in secret places when we keep the hidden silences of a closed mouth. We ascend the rocks when we place the act of the body in robust operation. Whence also it is said of these hidden things through the prophet under the assignment of one: 'He that shutteth his eyes that he may not see evil, and stoppeth his ears that he may not hear blood, and shaketh his hands from every bribe: he shall dwell on high, the fortifications of rocks shall be his highness' (Isa. 33:15). We enter dens and cisterns when we guard both the sense of smell from the obscenities of the world and the ears from hearing vain talk. For the cisterns of the waters are the words of the holy Scriptures. Therefore we are hidden in cisterns when we enter into the waters of the sacred eloquence, so that through the office of the ears we may water the meadows of our minds. But well are the hiding places of Israel recorded in

a type of the elect: because he who does not protect the senses of the body from the defilement of carnal delights does not escape the sword of the hidden enemies. Therefore let him speak the victory of that hidden encounter, let him say: 'The people were afflicted.' Let him speak openly of the triumphs of the contest set before him: 'They hid themselves.' For the affliction of the elect mind is the peremptory edge of every diabolical temptation. For while it is profoundly pricked by compunction, it is raised up into the love of supernal joy; and it now more strongly rejects the offered delights of the world as it now more fervently loves the heavenly things, to which it ascends by weeping. For the excellent teacher says: 'Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts 14:21). Which entrance of the heavenly kingdom is certainly so hoped for in the end of times that it may be felt in the daily life of the saints. Therefore our tribulation is the entrance of supernal joy. Deservedly, therefore, as often as the elect mind is pricked in the lamentation of its affliction, by troubling itself it obtains this, that it may enter into the contemplation of that supernal kingdom, in which it may ineffably rejoice. And while holy men refuse to see the lovers of the world in the flower of passing joy, while they hide their bodily senses from their imitation, it is not a flight from that which is seen, but a glorious victory. They indeed flee earthly acts, but they follow after heavenly ones; they seem to be hidden to the world, but they are revealed to heavenly glory. Therefore, by

fleeing harmful things, they follow their enemies more strongly, and triumph much more nobly, when they so hasten to heavenly things that the polluted ferocity of their adversaries does not touch them. There follows:

(Verse 7) But the Hebrews passed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

13. If we wish to know this first according to the letter, these Hebrews are felt both to have been terrified by fear and to have fled to their enemies. For not long after, in the open victory of Jonathan, it is written: 'The Hebrews also that had been with the Philistines yesterday and the day before, and went up with them into the camp, returned to be with Israel, who were with Saul and Jonathan' (1 Kings 14:21). But what is signified in this deed, except what we see daily happening in the holy Church, that the life of the good is safe and most cautious, but the headlong impatience of the negligent? For the weak and the audacious are curious towards the actions of the world; they are feeble for enduring the war of temptation. And if we discuss our own affairs in these, many such are found in monasteries. Within the harbors indeed they inhabit tranquil things, but they by no means weigh the storms of the open sea and the whirlwinds of tempests. And when they think that they act as if strong without, they easily go out to the most heavy battles of temptations; against strong adversaries, they are powerless. Improvident indeed in reason, weak in strength, just as they do not understand the frauds of cunning temptation,

so also they do not escape the open snares of allurements. Therefore they pass over the Jordan, because they are bowed down to perpetrate the shames of the flesh. For Jordan is interpreted as their descent. Those, therefore, who desert justice fall from the high mountain of virtues. Because, therefore, the weak all willingly desire the allurements of the world which they see, in their type the Hebrews are reported not to have been carried across the Jordan, but to pass over the Jordan. For to pass over belongs to one who is willing. And so those pass over the Jordan who are turned to carnal delights by a voluntary and hasty deliberation. But they can be understood to pass over the Jordan who begin to sin newly, but surpass the wickednesses of other sinful men by sinning. For they would reach their descent by ceasing, not by passing over, if they did equal evils to others and did not overcome them by daring. And because they find their equals even in a more wicked life, they are well recorded to arrive across the Jordan at the land of Gad and Gilead. For they dwell as if across the Jordan who through the use of sinning become worse than the evil. He had come to raise up sinners from this descent of fault, of whom it is written: 'He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins' (Luke 3:3). He who had come to preach penance for all faults is preached to have come into all the regions of descent. There follows:

(Verses 7-9) And while Saul was yet in Gilgal, all the people that followed him were terrified.

And he waited seven days according to the appointment of Samuel, and Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were slipped away from him. Saul therefore said: Bring me the holocaust and the peace offerings: and he offered the holocaust.

14. Thus far because the divine word has spoken of Saul, as was said above, as elect and good; it seemed reasonable that what was said of him, both through history and through morality, we should take in a good part. But now, because we have come to the place of his transgression, it is indeed necessary that we see in him also those things which are to be avoided. But what should ever have seemed more zealously to be avoided by all the elect than the evil of pride and disobedience? This indeed brought down the loftiness of the first angel, this laid low the glory of the lost spirits. This took away happiness from the first man; this brought in the perpetual miseries of human captivity. And behold, to the first angel and the first man, the first king of the elect people is joined through disobedience, so that while the great fall, the small may be raised up. For we are well raised up if we both behold their falls and avoid them. Where therefore Saul fell must be attentively considered. For Samuel had said to him above: 'Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal.' I indeed will come down to thee, that thou mayest offer a holocaust, and an oblation, and mayest immolate peace offerings. Seven days shalt thou wait for me, till I come to thee: and I will show thee what thou shalt do (1 Kings 10:20).

Therefore he fell through disobedience because he did not wait for seven whole days, as he had been commanded. For in the same place it is suddenly added:

(Verse 10) And when he had made an end of offering the holocaust, behold Samuel came. 15. In which place it must be considered with a trembling heart how, by neglecting the expectation of a very short time, he was rejected. 'When he had made an end,' he says, 'of offering the holocaust, behold Samuel came.' If, therefore, he had waited for him for only the shortest interval of time, in which he offered the holocaust, he could have securely obtained the strength of his kingdom. Therefore, if there is such a penalty when a prophet is despised, what do we think is incurred from that sea of divine animadversion when the divine precepts themselves are broken? And because the delight of the flesh and every commission of sins passes in a moment, and the hour of transgression is indeed brief, yet the penalty of the shame is not brief; because while we set up the kingdom of sin in ourselves for a moment, we lose those kingdoms of all ages. For immediately after the sin the prophetic word comes to rebuke; which would be present if we did not sin, to strengthen us in good. For a polluted conscience already has the divine eloquence against itself; which if it avoided being polluted, helped and raised up by it, it would subsist in its own vigor. For what else does it spiritually designate to us, that which is said: 'And when he had made an end of offering the holocaust, behold Samuel

came'? And if he had not offered the holocaust, Samuel would nevertheless have come. So indeed also when we are tempted, divine grace is near to help those who hold out: near also is divine justice to condemn those who fail. Whence sacred Scripture, exhorting us to wait, says: 'If the spirit of him that hath power ascend upon thee, leave not thy place' (Eccles. 10:4). Hence the prophet testifying says: 'The Lord is my helper, and therefore I am not confounded' (Isa. 50:7). Hence the Psalmist, beholding those same nearby helps, says: 'I set the Lord always in my sight, for he is at my right hand, that I be not moved' (Ps. 15:8). But now let us hear what the prophet says to him who does not wait; what he who would not wait answers:

(Verse 11) And Samuel said to him: What hast thou done?

16. The prophet indeed knew what he had done, but by questioning he reproved the deed of disobedience. Whence also it is said by the Lord to the sinning Adam in paradise: 'Adam, where art thou?' (Gen. 3:9). The magnitude of the guilt can also be intimated through this questioning. As if he should say openly: It seems a small thing to thee that thou hast offended by disobeying, but by offending thou hast fallen from the sublime height of thy glory. Now, therefore, many within the holy Church overwhelm themselves with shames, and are secure as if they lose nothing or very little. Therefore let it be said to the fallen one, let it be said: 'What hast thou done?' It seems a small thing to thee that thou hast

polluted thyself with the filth of sin, because thou dost not attend to what glory of eternity thou hast lost, what penalty of Gehenna thou hast deserved. The sinner is indeed questioned as to what he has done, that he may be brought to the heart through lamentations, that he may know that he has incurred great things and may not grieve little. But because the fault of disobedience itself is born from the root of pride, the disobedient are accustomed to hear the magnitude of their guilt from rebuking teachers, but not to make satisfaction by humbly confessing. For when they desire to seem sublime, they disdain to show their falls; and therefore they bring forth excuses, they pretend justice, because they blush to appear as sinners. Well therefore it is added:

(Verses 11, 12) Saul answered: Because I saw that the people slipped from me, and thou wast not come according to the days appointed. Moreover the Philistines were gathered together in Michmash. And I said: Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not appeased the face of the Lord. Forced by necessity, I offered the holocaust.

17. Behold, he who is accused of the temerity of a great transgression does not fear to assert great causes of justice. 'I saw,' he says, 'that the people slipped from me.' Behold, here he is asserted to be destitute of the people: 'Moreover, thou wast not come according to the days appointed.' Here he shows himself cheated of the prophet's promise. Moreover, the Philistines were gathered together in Michmash. Here likewise he objects the immi-

nent danger of the encounter. Wherefore, bringing in a word from his action, he says: 'Forced by necessity, I offered the holocaust.' As if he should say: Thou accusest me of a great guilt, when the guilt is so much lighter as it does not consist in temerity, but in necessity. But let us see what the prophet, who would not know himself, knows him to be, adding:

(Verse 13) Thou hast acted foolishly, and hast not kept the commandments of the Lord thy God.

18. The proud, because through a swelling they think themselves to be above men, are competently rebuked when the divine will which they offend is objected to them. Saul, therefore, is rebuked in the manner of the proud, who is reported to have despised the commandments of the Lord his God. Which is such as if he should terrify the proud and contemning one, saying: Even if thou despisest men, now thou hast broken not the counsel of men, but the commandments of the Lord thy God. Rightly therefore thou weighest thy guilt, if thou considerest him whom thou despisest with a trembling heart. And it is to be noted that he did not say: Thou hast not kept the commandments of thy God, or, the commandments of thy Lord, but: 'Thou hast not kept the commandments of the Lord thy God.' As if he should say openly: It would be a daring of great transgression if he whose commandments thou despisest were only thy Lord, and did not also exist as God. How great therefore is that which is committed when the commandments of God and Lord are neglected? Because likewise he

did not say: of my Lord God, or of our Lord God, he rebukes him for having offended the grace of divine familiarity. As if he should say: Thou hast despised the precepts of him who, while he raised thee from the lowest, while he set thee over others, while he made thee king, through the imposition of such great gifts, was as it were specially thine. Still also it is added, whence the audacity of his transgression is shown to be greater:

(Verse 13) Which, he says, he commanded thee.

19. Finally, some of God's precepts are common to all, not special to some. Therefore, that he may convince the audacious culprit of his temerity by an open objection, he demonstrates that he has despised not common precepts, but his own and singular ones. 'Which,' he says, 'he commanded thee.' As if he should say: Thou hast despised those commandments of thy God and Lord, which thou oughtest to have observed not as common to all, but as thy own, and singular things trusted to thee alone. But what he deserves, he explains, saying:

(Verses 13, 14) Which if thou hadst not done, the Lord would now have prepared thy kingdom over Israel forever, but it shall by no means rise further.

20. Behold how great things he lost, who, as he thought, despised nothing. Behold, he endured the prophet for seven days; but when he ceased to wait for him at the end of the day, he lost the glory of such great dignity. Whence also it is said through the prophet: 'Woe to them that

have lost patience' (Ecclus. 2:16). They indeed lose patience who do not finish the good things which they begin. To whom indeed woe is said to be: because they not only lose the reward of the begun labor, but are also struck by the penalty of their apostasy. But the penalty of the proud and disobedient king is declared when it is said: 'Which if thou hadst not done, the Lord would now have prepared thy kingdom over Israel from henceforth and forever; but it shall not rise.' From henceforth and forever an elect kingdom is prepared: because those who order temporal things well, prepare for themselves the sublimity of eternal glory. Now indeed the kingdom of the elect is prepared, when their ministries are rightly dispensed through divine grace. Which profits from henceforth and forever: because from the sublime action of this time, they merit that more sublime glory of eternity in the heavens. And so in the end it is said to the reprobate king: 'Thy kingdom shall by no means rise further.' As if he should say: While he fails from temporal rectitude, he does not reach to the loftiness of eternity. Or for this reason it is said to not rise according to the letter: because it fell with him, and did not remain in his sons after him. But, that he may be struck by the penalty of envy, he is compelled to hear not only his own rejection, but also the election of another. For the prophet, adding, says:

(Verse 14) The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and hath commanded him to be captain over his people Israel.

21. Through all these words the proud one is crushed: 'The Lord,' he says, 'hath sought him a man after his own heart.' As if he should say: He sought him for this reason, because thou wouldst not be after his heart. As if he should say: He has constituted such a man as captain of his people, who may execute the precept of the divine counsel by the virtue of devotion. For because we are accustomed to deliberate in the heart those things which we wish to do: while by the use of our speech the heart of God is placed in the sacred eloquence, his intimate will is designated by it, which is then recognized by us without when the precepts of disobedience are revealed. We are near it indeed when we both recognize this through the understanding and guard it through love. Well therefore does the prophet Samuel say of the Lord: 'The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and hath commanded him to be captain over his people.' Because he commands others usefully who already knows how to obey God perfectly; who commands only this, which proceeds from the counsel of the intimate truth.

22. But what is it that is said as if of the past: 'The Lord hath sought him a man, and hath commanded him to be captain,' when he had not been sought, nor had it been enjoined upon him to be over his people? For after Saul struck Amalek, the Lord said to the same prophet: 'Fill thy horn with oil, and come, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite' (1 Kings 16:1). But this question is easily solved if the foreknowledge and predesti-

nation of Almighty God be seen. To Him indeed to predestine is to act, and with Him those things are already done which have been preordained by Him to be done. Whence also it is written of Him: 'He hath made the things that are to come' (Isa. 45:11, according to LXX).

But God is said to have sought a man, so that a model of prelates to be chosen may be provided to men. For we are accustomed to seek those things which either we do not know as present, or do not see as absent. But God, to whom nothing is absent, nothing hidden, is not said to have sought a man as one absent or hidden; but He is said to have sought so that everyone who is chosen to the summit of the holy Church may be taught to be examined by men. But he ought to be sought according to the heart of God; so that, namely, he may not only understand the divine will, but show it by good works. Because likewise elect men do not come to the honor of the primacy out of ambition, but are led when compelled, it is well said: 'And he commanded him to be captain': As if he should say: He did not enter into the honor of prelacy through ambition, but ascended being compelled.

'Man' can also be understood for fortitude; 'after the heart of God' for internal charity. When therefore necessity requires, let a man be sought for the care of the holy Church, that he may be strong in conduct; let him be sought according to the heart of God, so that through the effect of great love, he may be as if united to the divine will: let it be commanded to him that he be cap-

tain; in order that he may not ambitiously desire to ascend the order of sublimity out of greed, but may greatly fear it out of humility: and thus let him fear as one humble, that he may more devotedly acknowledge himself to be subject to the command of God. But because by these words the prophet had reprehended the life of the fallen king, it follows:

(Verse 15) And Samuel arose, and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

23. As if from a height to the plain the doctor of the holy Church comes, when he rebukes the faults of sinners, and bends the sublimity of his status, when he humbles himself through the affect of charity to discuss the crimes of the wicked. Well therefore of him, who had rebuked the sinner, it is said: 'He arose, and went up.' For the elect preacher arises when he raises himself by intention to the height of his spiritual conduct: but he ascends when he comes to the arduous loftiness of that same life of his through customary work. Celestial desires indeed, spiritual virtues, good works are in the sublime: earthly affects, secular concupiscences, vices and sins are in the lowest parts. But the doctor, that he may well correct those who have fallen, first finds the faults by discussing them, then strikes them when found. Therefore, that he may clearly and openly see what he should strike, he bends the eyes of his mind to see the lowest wounds of sinners. But he does not strike the things perceived, if he does not descend to touch them in the lowest parts.

Therefore the prophet is said to arise and ascend, because elect doctors usually come thus to see and emend our lowest things, so that they never forget to return immediately to the heights of their conduct. By which words also the liberty of the sacerdotal mind is asserted. For many rebuke others who perturb themselves with a most violent war of anger. But after the faults have been rebuked, they are unable to arise and ascend: because, being turbid in themselves, they are by no means permitted to proceed to the heights of intimate quiet. Some indeed hear the foulnesses of others to be coerced; but when they have descended to think upon the lowest things, they are defiled by their harmful delight. The weak indeed and unequal to such a great ministry, while they desire to loose the knots of others below, do not free them, but bind themselves. What therefore does it mean, that it is said of Samuel: 'He arose, and went up,' unless what we behold in more perfect men, who so look upon our defilements that they are by no means defiled by them: so are they angry with us, that they can swiftly ascend the heights of their secret quiet within? For they are strong and powerful, and they who bear their great and strong things lightly, are not burdened by our infirmities. And because in our correction they bring forth the testimonies of the holy Scripture, they are said to arise from Gilgal, and to ascend. Gilgal indeed, as I have already said many times, is named a wheel. But the testimonies of the Scriptures, because they are rolled in our erudition through various

senses, are like wheels. And because when holy preachers desert the solicitude for subjects, they are sublimated in the contemplation of eternal life, Samuel is said to ascend into Gibeah of Benjamin. Finally, Gibeah of Benjamin is interpreted as the hill of the son of the right hand. Who therefore is the son of the right hand, unless He whom the holy Gospels confess to ascend to the heavens, and to sit at the right hand of God the Father? The hill of the son of the right hand, therefore, is the eternal loftiness of the Redeemer. For when holy preachers desert our lowest things, they arise by intention into those high divine things of the Redeemer, and ascend through vision.

24. This which is said: 'He arose, and went up,' can also be understood more simply according to the historical sense: because, namely, he recognized very little humility of penitence in the king whom he had rebuked, by which he might be compelled to remain. Nevertheless the same king is left in his ministry, that he may be corrected by that very separation from the prophet; because many whom the words of the preacher do not correct, greatly fear to be divided from the familiarity of preachers, or from the unity of the holy Church. Near the preachers they are hard, but being separated they come to their senses; and they who have sinned by disobeying, now humbly prepare to obey God. Whence also King Saul not long after is commanded to demolish the Amalekites: so that, if he should fulfill the command of the Lord by the slaughter of the same nation, he might loose the knots of his former

disobedience (1 Kings 15). Separated indeed from the prophet, he seemed to do those things, so that he might be commanded to do others. Wherefore it is also added:

(Verse 15) And the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the people who were fighting them: coming from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

25. Some so fall into sin that they are not held in any good work: but others, while they recall that they have committed evil things, strive more instantly to do good things. For by doing good things, they cover the evil things which they leave behind, lest they be judged as discovered by the eternal judge. This indeed, if we lead the deed of Saul into the good part, we find this: because he who previously, fearing in the sacrifice, despised the commands of the prophet, afterwards indeed hastened to crush those whom he had feared, the adversaries of the people of God. In which place also this is to be noted, that he whom the prophet deserted, ascended from Gilgal to experience the wars of the enemies. For the just severity of preachers casts out many sinners, whom nevertheless the divine memory does not leave. They lose the consolations and exhortations of the rectors on account of their faults: but they consult the sacred Scriptures, they resume their purpose; and they who had lain fallen as if by the evil of disobedience, proceed, being raised up through the fervor of obedience, to the wars of secret enemies.

Well therefore are they mentioned to come from Gilgal, that is from the wheels: because they

receive from the holy Scriptures that from which they may be able to strongly suppress the military force of the adverse part. But because they busy themselves to recover by conquering the height of their lost conduct, they are said to ascend into Gibeah of Benjamin. Because likewise others had shut themselves in hiding places, others had fled to the enemies, those are called the 'rest of the people' who were terrified by no fear, but hasten with their king to the place of encounter. Which we see even now in the Church: because, namely, many as if little ones propose to profit through the study of private life, many strong ones are also bold in the exposed contests of the malignant enemy; so that they may openly see the allurements of the world which they might seek, but they despise what they are seen to seek. These indeed do not consist in hiding places, but in the field of open contest, exposed for battle, strong for triumph, who are able to fight, and cannot be overcome. Whence also they are designated through a perfect number, when it is added:

(Verse 15) And Saul numbered the people that were found with him, about six hundred men.

26. For the week is completed by seven days, but one of them is prohibited for working, while six indeed are granted in the study of good work. But the hundredfold number contains the sum of numbers. In the six hundred men, who else are designated but those who are robust in work and in the deliberation of the heart? For some propose strong things, but because they do not do what

they propose, they do not reach to the number of six hundred men. In the six hundred men, therefore, strong workers of the holy Church are designated, because they propose great things, and fulfill the rigor of their purpose by the fortitude of good operation. Who are well said to have been found with the king, because they agree with the pastors of the holy Church in good will and pious action. For they are with those from whom they neither disagree in will, nor discord in operation. Who are said to agree in such a way that the dignity of the preachers is felt to excel; because even if the subjects do the same good which the preachers wish, nevertheless those are pre-eminent in the same good whose virtue of mind is as much more ardent, and effort of operation more robust, as their order is more lofty. Wherefore also it is said separately of the king and his son:

(Verse 16) And Saul and Jonathan. For why are the king and his son named separately, unless because the action of the good prelate is clear to be singular? And because there is not a uniform equality of all the faithful subjects, it follows:

(Verse 16) And the people that were found in Gibeah of Benjamin.

27. It has been sufficiently repeated that Gibeah is interpreted as a hill. Now a hill is not the summit, but it is the altitude of the mountains near the summit. What indeed is understood in that hill but the high and perfect life of the faithful subjects? This, namely, although it may not be equal to the loftiness of the preachers, yet it

is clearly seen to be sublime far above the merits of others. Whence also of certain principal elect it is read in the Apocalypse: 'No man could say the canticle, but those hundred and forty-four thousand' (Apoc. 14:3). Clearly demonstrating them, he says: 'These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' While therefore the spiritual battles are described, the people found in Gibeah of Benjamin are specifically numbered, because the choir of virgins is so much more violent against the ferocity of unclean spirits, as it is wounded by no wound of theirs, polluted by no filth of their suggestion. For free and whole, it is ready for the encounter, strong for the blow. Are they not on the hill of the son of the right hand, whom the beloved Jesus looks upon by the merit of their integrity, saying: 'I saw a Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand'? (Apoc. 14:1.) But also unless they were very strong, being fatigued they could by no means ascend to such great loftiness. Likewise unless they were free of all thoughts, they would not be able to run everywhere after the Lamb. Because therefore in the triumph of the secret contest every virgin is wonderful, while the order of the encounter is described, under the type of the people of Gibeah, the special dignity of virginity is mentioned. It follows:

(Verses 16-18) And the Philistines had gone up into Michmash. And three companies went out of the camp of the Philistines to fight: one company

went toward the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual; and another company went toward the way of Beth-horon; and the third company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

28. Why is it that the Philistines form three companies, unless because the malignant spirits strive to insert perverse things into our heart, tongue, and work? For because every sin is committed by thinking, or speaking, or doing, there are three companies of the Philistines: because the malignant spirits busy themselves to impel souls to sinning by negligence of the heart, unbridling of the mouth, and audacity of perverse work. Whence also the first company is said to go against the way of Ephraim, because they begin to attack innocence from the heart. The way of Ephraim, indeed, that is of the fruitful heart, is good thought. Against the way of Ephraim, therefore, the first company of the Philistines goes: because the secret adversaries, if they do not first take away the use of good thought from the mind, cannot reach to the eradicating of the fruits of its virtues. Therefore they come against the way of Ephraim when they lie in wait for good thought, by which way it is said to tend toward the land of Shual. For what else is the mind of the elect disciple but the very fruitful land of the doctor? Whence also the Lord in the Gospel, explaining the parable of the seeds, says: 'That which fell on the good ground are they who in a good and very good heart receive the word, and

bring forth fruit in patience' (Luke 8:15). It is said therefore of the first company of the Philistines: 'They went toward the way of Ephraim': so that while we perceive the spiritual sense of the letter, we may obstruct the entrance of thought to the malignant spirits.

But while we fortify the heart, we are likewise compelled to restrain the tongue from superfluous locutions. Whence also the second company is said to enter by the way of Beth-horon; for Beth-horon is interpreted as the house of wrath. Now the house of wrath is the mind serving the use of a litigious tongue. Which house certainly that wise man suggests, who says: 'Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool' (Eccl. 7:11). By this indeed the enemies enter to the heart of the fool, because the malignant spirits, while they loose the tongue to unbridled words, kindle wraths, and strike the mutual charity of the faithful. He therefore who has learned to beware of harmful thoughts, if he does not know how to hold the guardianship of the mouth, has conquered the onset of one company, but has not escaped the other. But the third company turns itself to the way of the border. What is the border of thought and word, unless the consummation of good work? For we think and speak good things for this reason, that we may lead them to the end of good work. But when the ancient enemy does not prevail to harm by words and thoughts, he spreads snares at the end, and desires to evacuate or impede the good work of the faithful. But what is the way of the border, unless the study of good operation?

Because therefore by many snares the malignant spirits strive that the study of good work be deserted, the third company is said to be turned to the way of the border. Also in this border, the end of our life can be understood. Indeed the company is turned to the way of the border, because the enemy strives to interrupt the good work, lest it be led through to the end of life. Whence also the Psalmist, expressing in himself the weeping of those who have fallen, says: 'They have stretched out cords for a snare for my feet, they have set a stumbling-block for me near the way' (Psal. 139:6). Near the way indeed the stumbling-block is set, so that the good works of the elect may be deserted before the consummation of this life.

29. But what is it that he says: 'In the land of Shual, overlooking the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness'? But these names of places are put to designate the location of the border which he had mentioned. Now 'Shual' (Sabaa) in our language is called 'captive'; 'Zeboim' are called 'wild goats.' Now what is that captive, unless human nature, which was placed in paradise, and now is bound in this world to endure the hardships of this mortality? And what is the land of this captive, unless the pilgrimage of temporal life? Well therefore, while the company is said to turn, the land of the captive is mentioned: because the malignant spirits can move battles against us in this land of our pilgrimage; but in that other life of ours they cannot. But the present conduct of the elect, although it may be placed

in this exile of captivity, if it perfectly guards the way of the border, after the straits of this border, it reaches to the height of immortality. Whence also the borders of this land are mentioned to overlook the valley of Zeboim, that is, of the wild goats. For the valley of the wild goats is the precious death of the saints: because whence they are laid down by dying, thence they are raised up to eternal joys. Who does not know that wild goats are swift animals and give great leaps? Rightly therefore wild goats designate the dignity of holy souls, which desert their bodies in death, but as if giving great leaps, they ascend through vast merits to the supernal kingdoms. Let him say therefore, that the border of the land of the captive overlooks the valley of Zeboim: because even if human condition is condemned, yet it is so exalted in the Son of God, that when it is led to the end of temporal life, it is given in death, that it may be raised up to the loftiness of eternal life. Let him say therefore: 'Because the third company turned itself to the way of the border in the land of the captive, which overlooks the valley of the wild goats': that he may assert that the malignant spirits try to pervert the final good things of the elect for this purpose, that they may not ascend to supernal joys. Which valley also is said to be situated 'toward the wilderness.' What is accepted by the name of 'wilderness' in this place, unless hell? Wilderness is indeed rightly understood where none of the elect is found. It is also called a wilderness in which no solaces of hardships are felt. Therefore the valley of the

wild goats is mentioned to be situated toward the wilderness: because the death of the saints has everything diverse from the merits of hell, and has nothing convenient or worthy of the punishments of hell. It follows:

(Verses 20, 21) Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel. For the Philistines said: 'Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears.' Therefore all Israel went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his spade, and his axe, and his hoe.

30. All these things indeed are described so that the manner of the subsequent victory may be suggested. For the armed were conquered by the unarmed, so that the whole of what is conquered may be attributed to the praises of Almighty God. But if we follow these things spiritually according to our custom, we shall not find them void of mysteries. What is it therefore that is said: 'A smith was not found in Israel,' unless because we are instructed for spiritual battles not by secular letters, but by divine? For a smith is not found in Israel because the faithful who see the Lord by no means fight against malignant spirits by the art of secular science. For being aided by the art of the smith they would conquer, if by the darts of secular eloquence they should prevail against secret enemies. Which erudition of secular books indeed, even if by itself it does not profit for the spiritual conflict of the saints, yet if it is joined to divine Scripture, the science of that same Scripture is more subtly learned. To this end only are the liberal arts to be learned,

that through their instruction divine oracles may be more subtly understood. From the hearts of some the malignant spirits take away the desire of learning: so that they may both be ignorant of secular things and not reach to the sublimity of spiritual things.

Well therefore is it said: 'The Philistines had taken care, lest perhaps the Hebrews should make sword or spear.' For the demons clearly know that while we are instructed in secular letters, we are aided in spiritual things. When therefore they dissuade us from learning them, what else do they take care against than that we should make spear or sword? Let the historical things speak, and let the prophet suggest and explain the study of the elect: 'Israel went down to the Philistines, that every man might sharpen his share or his spade.' We descend to the Philistines when we incline our mind to learn secular books. And it is called a descent, because Christian simplicity is on high. But why is it that secular letters are said to be on the plain, but the manner of teaching sublime? Because since they narrate no celestial things, they both explain those things which are proposed in a wonderful order of speaking, and are sublimated in narrating, and are laid down in speaking carnal things. Which manner of speaking or understanding, he who desires to know, let him descend to the Philistines, let him sharpen his share and spade, so that he may even be laid down to hear the carnal things of secular writers, who strives to be thoroughly instructed by their eloquence.

Almighty God indeed placed this secular science before us on the plain, that He might make for us a step for ascending, which ought to lift us to the altitude of divine Scripture. Therefore He wished to send it before, that in it He might instruct us to pass over to spiritual things. Whence also Moses, who published for us the principles of the divine oracles, did not learn divine things first, but so that he might be able to grasp or express divine things, he formed his unpolished mind in all the science of the Egyptians. Isaiah also stood out as more eloquent than the other prophets: because he was neither as Jeremiah of Anathoth, nor as Amos the herdsman, but was nobly instructed and urbane. Paul also, the vessel of election, is instructed at the feet of Gamaliel before he is caught up into paradise, or raised up to the altitude of the third heaven (Acts 22). And therefore perhaps he excels the other apostles in doctrine: because being intended for celestial things, he first studiously learned earthly things.

But now, as I think, the properties of the rural instruments are to be sought spiritually. What, then, is suggested in the plowshare (vomer), which is drawn by oxen going before, but the affection of twin charity? And what in the mattock (ligo), in which each one is exercised alone in the cultivation of the field, but the study of private life is shown? For some wealthy and strong husbandmen plow with oxen: because they both love the Lord strongly, and through brotherly love they more diligently attend to the gains of souls. Therefore they sharpen the plow-

share at the smiths of the Philistines: because they compose the study of holy preaching from secular erudition. But some, as the poor, use the mattock: because those who think they cannot be sufficient to gain the souls of others, do not cease to prepare for themselves alone what they can concerning eternity. Each of them uses as it were a mattock: because they do not cease to prepare the field of their own mind for divine cultivation. And because in this study of private life also secular erudition is very profitable to them, he sharpens the mattock while he is taught: because one instructed in the study of his own life attends more subtly to each thing. But with the axe (securis) we do not dig the earth, but we lop off the branches of trees. What else then does the axe signify, but the zeal of good emulation? For when we are kindled to imitate the examples of better men, we as it were cut off branches for ourselves, with which we may nourish the fire for dispelling the chills of our negligence. The apostle Paul commands us to hold this axe, saying: Be zealous for the good in the good, all of you (Gal. 4:18). Which axe is certainly sharpened: because the instructed faithful, as they better recognize the examples of the faithful, so also they desire more fervently to imitate them. The hoe (sarculum) or trident digs the earth more subtly; so that it is known not so much to dig as to scrape and break the clods. What is expressed by this trident hoe but the virtue of discretion? Through which certainly while we discuss things done or to be done with subtle consideration, we as it were level the

clods of our land to be sown into fine dust. Which trident hoe is indeed asserted, because the power of discretion composes not only things to be done, but also things to be thought and spoken.

(Verse 21.) Therefore the edges of the plowshares, and of the mattocks, and of the axes, and of the tridents were blunt, even to the correction of the goad.

They are not said to be folded back or worn out edges, but blunt. For if they were folded back or worn out, they would cut nothing at all. But a blunt edge, even if it does not cut everything quickly, cuts some objects through the delay of labor. So indeed are the hearts of the simple, which if they do not subtly understand spiritual things, while yet they slowly understand some things, they have a sharpness of mind that is not acute, but blunt. For they often wish to discuss obscure things; but while they barely come to those things which are open, even by long thinking, they cut as it were with a blunt edge by delaying. Which is certainly shown not only in the hidden sacraments of the Scriptures, but also in the latent suggestions of demons. For they cannot repel the enemy from themselves whom they cannot quickly recognize. While therefore with a great delay of thought they expel the snares of evil suggestion, they cut as it were with a blunt edge what they could have cut off more quickly through sharpness of mind. But what is it that is said: Even to the correction of the goad? The goad (stimulus) is said to be the rebuke of prelates. Whence also it is written: The words of

the wise are as goads (Eccl. 12:11). A goad indeed is called a rebuke, because while it argues against faults, it pricks the mind. But the goad is blunt when the intellect of the prelate languishes, so that he neither finds the faults of the subjects by recognizing them, nor reproves them by finding them. Well therefore is the rebuke of the rector asserted to be a goad, because it does not prevail to prick the tumors of vices if his mind, instructed through knowledge, does not see what is to be pricked. Whence also, in the type of learned prelates, it is well added:

(Verse 22.) And when the day of battle was come, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of all the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, except Saul and Jonathan his son.

33. What is received through the spear, but the sharp providence of the holy preachers? And what is demonstrated through the sword, but the subtlety of their understanding? For through the spear we pierce things objectified far before us. But through the sword the enemies near, and almost joined to us, are slaughtered. Well therefore in the spear, the providence of the chosen is shown, through which they strike hidden enemies before they suffer their near attack. For while they prevent the future snares of demons by taking care, they as it were strike from afar with the spear those whose near blows they do not wish to receive. Whence also the blessed Apostle Paul, while he discerned from afar the armed spirits of fornication, held conjugal chastity as it were a spear, and did not

permit them to approach nearer, saying: Because of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render the debt to the wife, and likewise also the wife to the husband (1 Cor. 7:2). And again: Return together again, lest Satan tempt you because of your incontinency (Ibid. 5). Hence also of himself he says: I chastise my body, and bring it into servitude, lest preaching to others, I myself should become a reprobate (1 Cor. 9:27). For he who, lest he should become a reprobate, had chastised his body, surely pierced his enemies placed somewhat far before him with the spear. Therefore the providence of abstinence for taming the lust of the flesh is received as it were a spear, through which the coming enemies are struck. Well also through the sword understanding is expressed: because he who acknowledges and rejects the perverse suggestions of the malignant spirit in the present time, as it were strikes a near enemy placed next to him. Who also as it were cuts with a sword sharp on both sides: because he reproves both false goods and true evils. But what is it that the sword is said to be in the hand of Saul and Jonathan? But they are not in the hand of those who sharply understand near and present things, and foresee future things, and do not exercise strong things for extinguishing them. They know openly that the ancient enemy precipitates the greatest part of the human race into fornication through the strength of the flesh, who nevertheless do not care to chastise the flesh through abstinence.

Thus also some openly behold present evils, but by no means strive to avoid them. These surely have the sword and the spear, but they have them not in hand. Well therefore in the day of battle the sword and the spear are found in the hand of Saul and Jonathan: because those alone are chosen men who understand both present and future evils, and desire more ardently to overcome them with the intention of the heart. Which however is said in this place for this reason, that the people may be taught to have held nothing in hand, who are shown to hold plows, mattocks, axes, and hoes. For by these words the chosen are not distinguished from the reprobate, but the dull from the skilled. But because we have already shown the armed men, let us explain the mode of the contest. It follows.

CHAPTER IV.

(I Sam. 14:1.) The garrison of the Philistines went out to go up to Michmash (Magmas), and it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man his armor-bearer: "Come, and let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines, which is beyond that place."

1. The garrison of the Philistines goes out when the crowd of evil spirits is shown to chosen minds through harmful suggestions. Which indeed is called a garrison because the battles of the chosen are described. For to stand, for the malignant spirits, is to exercise great strength in the fight against the chosen. For by standing, one can strive more strongly for anything to be done

than by sitting. Therefore, the garrison of the Philistines is said to have gone out so that the effort of the demons in our war may be clearly gathered. And because they think to oppress the faithful as if they were inferior and lesser, they prepare to go out to ascend into Michmash. Or they desire to ascend into Michmash when they strive to deceive the hearts of the little ones by tempting them. But chosen preachers, when they understand the tempted hearts of their subjects, do not delay to bring help. They place these as if in safety, and lead those with them to sustain the dangers of the wars. Why is it that the armor-bearer is led to the war, unless because subjects instructed through knowledge are to be promoted to the victory of internal contests? For some know the physical art who do not know the experience of healing: so indeed in holy Church there are some who have learned the art of interior combat, but have not yet been led to the strict necessities of contests. They hear of great men fighting, but the battles which the great magnificently endure, they know by hearing, but do not know by virtue. Such indeed are those who are invited to imitate the footsteps of the Redeemer. "If any man," He says, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). The arms indeed of Jonathan are the exhortations of the teacher. The armor-bearer indeed carries the arms, with which not he himself, but another fights. So indeed are those who are newly instructed in holy Church. For while they hear virtues from teachers, with

which the teachers themselves fight against the craftiness of evil spirits, they indeed have that in their mouth which they do not yet have in the exhibition of virtue. Jonathan therefore said to his armor-bearer: "Come, let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines": because chosen teachers teach their subjects not only the art with which they may fight, but also draw them to the war so that they may triumph.

2. And because remiss pastors do not care to undertake the battles which they suggest, he does not say: "Go, and pass over to the garrison of the Philistines": but: "Come, let us go over." They indeed provoke others to the contest, but they themselves are the first to attempt the same contests. What indeed is it that he says: "Which is beyond that place"? But there is a certain place in holy Church which, closed to great battles, is not exposed. To possess the goods of the world, to marry a wife, to procreate children, to exhibit the allurements of all lawful things to bodies, is to remain fortified from the enemy in that place where nothing imposed is burdensome to those placed in that order. But if anyone, kindled by the desire for a better life, strives to pass over this place, it is necessary that he be prepared for the gravest battles. For those contemning riches, embracing the poverty of Christ, spurning marriages, ought always to embrace the love of chastity. The former have continuous rising most grave battles of the flesh, the latter the assault of the heart: because neither is poverty borne lightly, nor are bodies subjugated to chastity without great ago-

nies. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man: "My son, coming to the service of God, stand in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation" (Eccli. 2:1). As if to say: Because thou hast willed to go out from the place of protection, it is necessary that thou now be fortified for open war against the strongest camps of the enemies. While therefore he says "beyond that place," not "this place," Jonathan suggests the virtue of the teachers, who through a singular purpose of religion, are always in the open field of contest. And because they flee the vice of boasting and elation concerning everything in which they fight strenuously, concerning everything in which they triumph nobly, it follows:

(Verse 1.) But he told not his father.

2. And because remiss pastors do not care at all to undertake the battles which they suggest, he does not say: Go, and pass over to the garrison of the Philistines: but: Come, let us pass over. They indeed provoke others to the contest, but they themselves first attempt the same contests. But what is it that he says: Which is across that place? There is indeed a certain place in the holy Church which is closed to great battles, not exposed. For to possess the goods of the world, to take a wife, to procreate children, to exhibit comforts to the body from all lawful things, is to remain fortified from the enemy in this, that nothing imposed is burdensome to those placed in that order. But if any one, kindled by the desire of a better life, strives to pass over this place, it is necessary that he be prepared for the most heavy battles. For

those contemning riches, embracing the poverty of Christ, spurning marriages, ought always to embrace the love of chastity (pudicitia). These continually have the most heavy battles of the flesh rising up, and those the impugnation of the heart: because neither is poverty lightly borne, nor are bodies subjugated without great agonies of chastity. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man: Son, coming to the service of God, stand in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation (Ecclus. 2:1). As if he should say: Because thou hast willed to go out from the place of fortification, it is necessary that thou now be fortified in open war against the strongest camps of the enemies. While therefore he says across that place, not this, he suggests the virtue of the teachers, like Jonathan, who through a singular purpose of religion, are always in the open field of contest. And because from everything they fight strenuously, from everything they triumph nobly, they flee the vice of boasting and elation (elatio), it follows:

(Verse 1.) But he did not tell this same thing to his father.

3. The virtues of the elect are indeed to be kept silent, lest they be spoken of through boasting, but sometimes it is no fault to manifest them for the glory of God. But because we have expressed great preachers in Saul, this surely, that Jonathan conceals the beginning of the battle from his father, suggests this: that the great things we do, we sometimes laudably conceal for the sake of humility. We are indeed now made such through

corruption, that we can never avail to seem good even to those who are over us without elation. When therefore from a manifest thing a latent evil is born, the good is wisely hidden, lest it be defiled by the evil coming upon it. But among these things it is to be known, that they can conceal their virtues from their prelates in that necessity, who know well how to recognize the good that they do. For if they are too simple, often that is not good which they think to be good; and while they do not indicate a vice as it were a virtue, they carry a hidden enemy in themselves. Whence also Jonathan, who covered the purpose of the war from his father, is asserted to be so great: that under his leadership a part of the army is reported to have been led forth. There were, it says, two thousand men with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, but a thousand with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin (1 Sam. 13:2). Let it be said therefore of Jonathan: But he did not tell this same thing to his father: because learned men, while they fear to incur the vice of elation from their great works, certainly hide them from those by whom they could have been helped. Which aids of the preacher we learn better, if we see them in the place of their perfection. For it follows:

(Verse 2.) And Saul stayed in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, which was in Migron.

4. Gibeah (Gabaa), as we have said, is interpreted as a hill; Migron (Magron), is said to be from the throat. But holy preachers are very sub-

lime, not only in work, but also in contemplation. Therefore this extreme part is the sublimity of work, but that inward part, of contemplation. By this extreme part of their loftiness they are indeed seen by us for an example; but by that inward part, they are joined to the Creator in great love. These the prophet shows to us as to be admired in the extreme part of their sublimity, when he says: Who are these, that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows? (Isa. 60:8.) For they fly as clouds: because they are light from the weight of fault, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit swift in good work. But they are as doves at the windows, because for an example they reach out to us through good works, as it were through openings, but they are by no means captured by the appetite for praise from the shown cleanness of life. But the king also resides under a pomegranate tree; because in the shadow of the Redeemer the preacher has rest. He is indeed fatigued by great labor, but he is refreshed by the consolation of the words of the Lord. Whence also the same apple tree is said to stay in that place which is called from the throat. For what in this place is more aptly called from the throat than the sweetness of the holy Gospel is designated? For so now we can stay in the shadow of the Redeemer, if namely we take his words for consolation from the meditation of the Gospels. But in this the preachers can reside more quietly, who the higher and nearer they receive that word of the divine throat, the more sweetly are they nourished. This is also the cause for which king

Saul is said not to stand, nor to sit, but to stay under the pomegranate tree in Migron; because the perfect teacher is teachable of God: and while he strives to feed others with food, he himself is satiated with the sweetness of multiform spiritual delights. For while he uniquely looks upon the pleasant things of the Redeemer, he rises into a wonderful contemplation of virtues: and as if from one rind he collects very many grains, while through all those things which he recalls in the Redeemer, he gratefully leads his delicious mind. In this pleasantness of the Redeemer the bride glories that she has rested...

(Verse 2.) And the people that were with him were about six hundred men.

5. We have said above that strong men in good work are designated by this number, who are reported to be with the king: because through the study of good work, they are concordant with the life of their teacher. But the preachers of the Church have under them not only those who may do great things, but also fellow ministers of the word who may teach the highest things. They have leaders who may strengthen those fervent for battle, they have those who may run boldly, they have those who may protect powerfully. Well therefore is added:

(Verse 3.) And Ahijah (Achias) the son of Ahitub (Achitob), Ichabod's (Ichabot) brother, the son of Phinehas (Phinees), the son of Eli (Heli), the priest of the Lord in Shiloh (Silo), wearing an ephod (Ephod).

302 (Verse 3.) But the people knew not whither Jonathan was gone.

7. Why is it that the people know not whither Jonathan goes, unless because the chosen teacher strives to conceal through humility those things which he intends to do? Whence also in the Gospel the Lord says: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth" (Matt. 6:3). For if by the left hand the present life is figured, but by the right hand the eternal life: we have men on the left, but angels on the right. Moreover, when through good works we tend toward the company of the supernal citizens, our right hand is said to work. But our left hand knows not the works of the right, if we have our fellow-workers, namely the faithful of holy Church, as helpers in the work, and do not wish to have them as praisers unto elation. Well therefore is it said: "The people knew not whither Jonathan was gone," because then only do we strive to act well in great things, when we avoid disclosing those things which we do for show. But because we bring these things for the example of the chosen, we ought to explore more attentively not only whither he goes, but also by what way he goes. It follows:

(Verse 4.) And there were between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the garrison of the Philistines, sharp rocks on both sides, and as it were in the manner of teeth, rocks broken off on every side: the name of the one was Bozez (Bores), and the name of the other Seneh (Sene).

8. Since the life of the chosen is high in merits, but the condition of malignant spirits is lowest, why is it that there is said to be an ascent, whence Jonathan strives to tend toward the garrison of the Philistines? For concerning these same Philistines in the type of demons it was said not long above: "The Philistines went up and encamped in Michmash" (1 Sam. 13:5). But they are said to be above us, in that we seem lesser in fortitude. That which we do not have the power to penetrate through intelligence is also known to be above us. Whenever therefore we propose to fight with the reprobate spirits, we ought to prepare strength for the ascent, because we men contend to fight with angels. Whence also that strenuous athlete, vehemently comforting his fellow-soldiers, says: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual things of wickedness in the high places" (Eph. 6:12). For because he had foreknown that he would fight against the spiritual wickednesses of principalities and powers, he indeed prepared the strength of the mind for the ascent of height. While the wicked spirits subject the hearts of sinners to themselves, they certainly dominate them through multiform vices. If therefore we contend to fight them there also, it behoves us greatly to ascend, so that we may be able to strike their ranks powerfully. In one way the slippery are to be saved, in another the slothful (acediosi): in one way the vainglorious, in another the proud. That the chosen teacher may be sufficient for all

these things, because he raises the mind through the sharp counsels of assiduous meditation, he strengthens himself as if for the ascent of the Philistines.

7. Why is it that the people do not know where Jonathan goes, except because the elect teacher strives to conceal through humility those things which he intends to do? Whence also in the Gospel the Lord says: Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth (Matth. 6:3). For if by the right hand eternal life is figured, but by the left hand the present life: we have men on the left, but angels at the right. But when through good works we tend to the fellowship of the supernal citizens, our right hand is said to work. But our left hand does not know the works of the right, if we have our fellow workers, namely the faithful of the holy Church, as helpers in the work, and do not wish to have them as praisers for elation. Well therefore is it said: The people knew not whither Jonathan was gone, because then only we strive to do great things well, when we avoid spreading abroad those things which we do for show. But because we bring forth these things for an example of the elect, we ought to explore more attentively not only where he goes, but also by which way he goes. It follows:

(Verse 4.) And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: the name of the one was Bozez (Bores), and the name of the other Seneh (Sene).

8. Since the life of the elect is high in merits, but the condition of the malignant spirits is lowest, why is it said that there are passages (ascensus), from which Jonathan strives to tend to the garrison of the Philistines? For of the same Philistines, in the type of demons, it was said not long above: Ascending they encamped in Michmash (1 Sam. 13:5). But they are said to be above us, in that we seem less in strength. That also is known to be above us, which we cannot penetrate through intelligence. As often therefore as we propose to contend with reprobate spirits, we ought to prepare strength for the ascent, because we as men contend to fight with angels. Whence also that strenuous athlete, vehemently strengthening his fellow soldiers, says: Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). For because he foreknew that he should fight against the spiritual wickednesses of principalities and powers, he surely prepared the strength of his mind for the ascent of altitude. While the wicked spirits subject the hearts of sinners to themselves, they indeed dominate them through multiform vices. If therefore we contend to expugn them there also, it behooves us to ascend greatly, that we may be able to strike their ranks powerfully. For in one way the slippery are to be saved, in another the slothful (acediosi): in one way the vainglorious, in another the proud. But that the elect teacher may be able to suffice for all these things, because he raises his mind through

the acute counsels of assiduous meditation, he strengthens himself as it were for the ascent of the Philistines.

9. Well moreover not one is asserted, but many are said to be passages (ascensus): because countless enemies must be met by many ways. Which is then well done, when congruent and proper cures are applied to individual vices. For, to briefly touch upon some of them, the spirit of fornication is repelled by the virtue of continence: but yet it is more easily overcome if the flesh diminishes its impetus through abstinence, lest it prostrate itself conquered to worldly concupiscence. Gluttony (gula) is broken through abstinence: but he cannot have abstinence from corporal foods who does not fill his mind with spiritual foods. For he powerfully attenuates the body who inflames his heart with the love of heavenly things: because while he strongly loves spiritual things, he valiantly presses down the desires of the flesh. To the vice of avarice also the good of voluntary poverty is contrary, but he cannot be poor in spirit who does not yet know how to love eternal treasures. So indeed anger (ira) is overcome, if through the love of heavenly things all earthly things are perfectly despised: because he no longer has that from which he may be angry, who does not fear temporal loss. So also the vice of sloth (acedia), that is, the weariness of the heart (taedium cordis), is repelled if heavenly goods are always thought upon. The mind indeed can in no way be weary which joyfully sees such pleasant goods. The narrow

evil of sadness (tristitia) also is devoured by the field of spiritual joy (laetitia): but yet spiritual joy itself does not infuse itself into the mind which has not known how to transcend the narrows of temporal life by contemplating. Well indeed is sadness overcome if the rewards of temporal labors are seen, because from where the elect mind considers itself to be temporally afflicted, from there it hopes to rejoice eternally in the heavenly country. Since therefore the preacher uses a great diversity of counsel to cure the diverse diseases of souls, because the same counsel is comprehended by a high consideration of the mind, well are they asserted to be passages from where Jonathan desires to go over to the garrison of the Philistines. And because many difficulties stand in the way of expugning the malignant spirits from the hearts of sinners, rocks (petrae) are mentioned to be among the passages. For what is designated by these two rocks, namely Bozez (Bores) and Seneh (Sene), but concupiscence and sin? Bozez indeed is said in primacy, Seneh sun, or hearing. Well moreover the name of primacy befits concupiscence, because it first occupies the mind before the mind submits itself to sin. By the name of the sun also the delight of sin is rightly figured: because it closes the eyes of the mind from the intuition of truth, and opens them to vanity. Whence also it is said to the first men by the seducing spirit through the serpent: In whatever day you shall eat from the tree which is in the midst of paradise, your eyes shall be opened (Gen. 3:5). In that eating indeed, the eyes

of the transgressors were opened by sinning, so that they might perceive the rays of false light in the experience of the fault, and might grow dark from the high contemplation of supernal clarity. Shunning to open the eyes to this light indeed, the Psalmist beseeches the Lord, saying: Turn away my eyes, lest they see vanity (Psal. 118:37). Despising this with a high mind, the blessed Job, desiring to be inserted into the merits of the perfect, says: For now sleeping I should be silent, and in my sleep I should rest: or, as a hidden abortive I should not subsist: or they who being conceived saw not the light (Job 3:13). Who are these, but they who strongly guarded against sinning? One rock therefore is called Bozez, the other Seneh, because if concupiscence vindicates a place for itself in the mind, it lifts the eyes of the same mind to the placid blandishment of sin, as if to see the light of the sun. Well likewise are they named rocks, because these two agree with the minds of the iniquitous, so that they do not easily admit preachers to return to them. But they are also called cliffs (scopuli): because from here and there, namely both in mind and in body, they retain a precipitous use of depravity. For while they are solidified by no integrity of manners, no integrity of works, in the manner of a cliff, they are precipitous from here and there. And because it is said in the manner of teeth, what is given to be understood, but that which we often see, that they who despise the exhortations of preachers, strive to bite their life with detractions? But about the same cliffs it is added:

(Vers. 5.) One protruding to the North, opposite Michmash, and the other to the South, against Gibeah.

10. The first rock protrudes to the North, the other to the South, because through concupiscence the fervor of charity is extinguished, and through sin the ardor of concupiscence is increased. For the reprobate mind, while it is subjected to concupiscence, is despoiled of charity, and while it does not fear to sin, it kindles in itself much sharper desires for sinning. For as if placed in the greatest height and heat of its day, in the flux of sin, it both rejoices immoderately and is ardently dissolved. He therefore strives poorly to heal the disease of concupiscence who thinks to fulfill this more concupiscently by sinning so that he may rest. Indeed, concupiscence will be as much greater after sin as the delight of sin itself begins to be more pleasing to itself. But the first rock is said to be situated opposite Michmash (Magmas), the other protruding against Gibeah (Gabaa). Michmash, as we have already said enough, is interpreted as humility, Gibeah as a hill. Opposite concupiscence certainly has humility, but the blandishment of sin has heavenly conversation. For everyone who desires forbidden things, while he despises the teacher, is proud. Opposite therefore he has humility, which he does not retain in the devotion of obedience. But also he who in the fervor of sin, as if in meridian clarity, is dissolved, protrudes against Gibeah, that is, the hill, because while he is adverse to heavenly things, he is prepared

for Tartarean punishments. But because such are also led to the eternal life by the preaching of the Saints, let us see the zeal of the preachers themselves in the deed of Jonathan. For it follows:

(Vers. 6.) Come, let us go over to the station of these uncircumcised, if perhaps the Lord may do for us, because it is not difficult for the Lord to save, either in a multitude or in a few.

11. What is the station of the Philistines, but the strength of malignant spirits? For holy men, when they prepare themselves for the correction of sinners, know openly that they fight with the angels who fell from heaven. This fight therefore, because it is of angels and of men, is fought by the strong with the weak, with the simple by the astute. For from these strong ones he had received an assault who said: The strong have rushed upon me, neither my iniquity nor my sin, O Lord (Psal. 58:4). Paul also, beholding the astutenesses of the fallen angel, says: We are not ignorant of his astutenesses (2 Cor. 2:11). Against the astute therefore the way of cautious reason is to be sought, but against the strong divine aids are to be asked. That therefore preaching may be felt to be exhibited with great caution, Jonathan is said to have invited his armor-bearer to pass over with him. And that in expelling enemies it may be presumed from the mercy of God, he speaks saying: Because it is not difficult for God to save, either in a multitude or in a few; and because the conversion of the flagitious is not easy, he says: If perhaps God may do for us. He says if perhaps, because he does not yet fully presume

concerning the full salvation of the criminal. But he shows the form of an elect subject in the virtue of humility, because he adds:

(Vers. 7.) And his armor-bearer said to him: Do all things which please your mind. Go where you desire, and I will be with you wherever you shall wish.

12. Some subjects, while they neglect the measure of their order, so confound the same measure that they communicate in the disposition of their prelates, but refuse to obey commands. They easily dare to emend the words of their elders, but they do not strive to easily fulfill what they prescribe. What therefore is shown to us in the voice of this armor-bearer, but that a free disposition is to be left to those in charge, and the virtue of not relaxed obedience is to be held by the subjects? For that they may assign a free authority of disposing to preachers, he says: Do all things which please your mind. And that he might show the prone will of the subjects to all services, he adds: Go where you desire, and I will be with you wherever you shall wish. Nor did he say there: Do some things which are in your mind, some things do not do, or do otherwise; nor here, go there, and I will be with you, and there I will not be with you. All things, he says, do, because by the disposition of the prelates all things are to be disposed: I will be also, he says, with you wherever you shall wish; because the best subject ought not to be lacking to any precept of obedience. It follows:

(Vers. 8-10.) And Jonathan said: Behold, we will pass over to these men, and when we shall appear to them, if they shall speak thus to us: Stay until we come to you; let us stand in our place, and not go up to them. But if they shall say: Come up to us; let us go up, because the Lord has delivered them into our hands.

13. It is a certain and indubitable sentence of the holy Church, that elect preachers ought to consider not only what, how much and when they speak, but also to whom they speak. Whence also the Lord, hiding the word from the notice of some, prohibits the disciples, saying: Do not cast your pearls before swine (Matth. 7:6). Hence also the Scripture forbids the word to be poured out uselessly, and says: Where there is no hearing, pour not out thy speech (Ecclus. 32:6). What is it therefore that Jonathan says: If they shall say: Stay until we come to you, let us stand in our place; but if: Come up to us, let us go up, because the Lord has delivered them into our hands, except that the elect preacher ought to attentively gather to whom he should bring forth the word of life. But because this now seems to be shown in the sense of the letter, let us express it more subtly. Preachers pass over to sinners when they please those to whom they exhibit words, not only by word but also by life. Who therefore are they who say: Come up to us, but they who bring forth signs of devotion, because they both hear the word of salvation venerably and desire strongly to retain it? To these therefore one must ascend, in whom even if there is great labor in

the work of the ministry, there are also great gains of salvation. On the contrary indeed sinners desire to pass over to the teachers when they are merged in such profound blindness that they strive to convert even the preachers themselves to the example of imitating their own depravity. Indeed they are prone to evil, impenitent in heart, and they do not dread to maculate others with the leprosy of sin which they put on. About whom that wise man speaks, saying: They rejoice when they have done evil, and exult in the worst things (Prov. 2:14). And likewise the Prophet, vaticinating about these, says: They have proclaimed their sin like Sodom (Isai. 3:9). What is it therefore that he says: Let us stand in our place? But it is such as if he were saying: If we cannot gain them, let us keep ourselves in good conversation. For our place is good conversation, about which place certainly it is written elsewhere: If the spirit having power shall ascend upon you, do not leave your place (Eccles. 10:4).

(Vers. 11, 12.) So he appeared to the station of the Philistines, and the Philistines said: Behold the Hebrews are coming out of the caves in which they had been hidden. And the men of the station of the Philistines spoke to Jonathan and to his armor-bearer: Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.

14. What is it that the Philistines say the Hebrews are coming out of the caves, except that sometimes sinners, considering the life of preachers, call their solitude, or certainly the profound secrets of their mind, caves? In which

caves certainly the Hebrews are said to hide when elect preachers do not go forth to seek the gains of others, but keep only their own either secret places or the secret desires of the mind. But then the Hebrews seem to come out of the caves when from that same secret life they leap forth to the public grace of preaching. But what is: Come up to us, and we will show you a thing, but that sinners provoke teachers to come to them while they desire to show them as if some new and unknown example of their own depravity? For they name it a thing (res), because to those placed in the delight of sin, what they do seems to be a great thing. But Jonathan says to these:

(Vers. 12.) Let us go up, follow me: for the Lord has delivered them into the hands of Israel.

15. He did not say: I will follow you, but: Follow me. This certainly ought to be of prelates, that they should go forward with the first steps to the grace of preaching, which steps certainly the subjects ought to follow. Let the armor-bearer therefore follow Jonathan, when the subjects imitate the good works of the prelates. But because in converting sinners one must trust not in one's own virtue but in divine grace, Jonathan says to the armor-bearer: For the Lord has delivered them into the hands of Israel. For Israel is interpreted as a man seeing God. Into his hand therefore sinners are delivered when those who gain them are raised to His vision through the grace of contemplation. It follows:

(Vers. 13.) And Jonathan went up, crawling on hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him.

16. Jonathan crawls on hands and feet because the preacher, so that he may ascend to the height of virtue to convert hearers, does not cease both to do good and to exercise good desires. For in the feet desires are figured, in the hands works. He therefore crawls on hands and feet who, so that he may arrive at the loftiness of preaching, proceeds studiously both in desires and in works. The armor-bearer follows Jonathan, because the subject meditates on the life of the prelate with total intention. It follows:

(Vers. 13, 14.) And when they had gone up, some fell before Jonathan, others his armor-bearer slew after him. And the first slaughter was made, in which Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about twenty men, in the middle part of an acre which a pair of oxen was accustomed to plow in a day.

17. Twenty men are struck down in the first slaughter, because through this number the perfection of the Law and of the Gospel is figured. For two led to ten returns twenty. In the ten the Law is signified, but in the two the Gospel, on account of the twin precept of charity. What is it therefore for twenty men to be slain by Jonathan and his armor-bearer, except that those who hold the words of the Law and the Gospel on the surface are changed to the virtue of spiritual intelligence through the voice of the preacher? For he who had lived evilly, and held the Law and the Gospel only in voice, is as it were then slain when he is transformed through the exhortations of the preacher to understanding the same Law and

Gospel spiritually, and to obeying its precepts. He is therefore slain who he was, so that he may begin to be who he was not. And well are they slain in the middle part of an acre: because then sinners come to spiritual intelligence when, after the love of the world, they divide themselves in part to the love of heavenly things. For an acre of land is taken as this world. In the middle part of whose land those who are converted are as it were then slain when they no longer serve this whole world, but in part, and in part they raise themselves to heavenly desires through contemplation. Well also is it said: Which a pair of oxen was accustomed to plow in a day. Who are the pair of oxen in this place, but the preachers sent two by two to preach by the Lord? Who plow in the day, because being constituted in the light of truth, they cleave the minds of the hearers through the plow of exhortation. Who are then well said to plow in the day when the minds of the hearers are obscured by no night of worldly depravity. In the day therefore the pair of oxen plows, when the teachers infuse the words of preaching into minds already illustrated from error. It follows:

(Vers. 15.) And there was a miracle in the camp, and through the fields, but also all the people of their station who had gone out to pillage were astonished.

18. It is called a miracle where new and unexpected things happen. What therefore are the camps of the Philistines, but the minds of the impious, which the malignant spirits then possess

as if by their own right, when they kindle them to every work of depravity? But what is signified by the fields, except the breadth of the world itself? A miracle therefore happens in the camp and through the fields when the minds of the impious, on account of the conversion of those whom they recently saw similar to themselves, and any minds of seculars, struck by the change of the same men, and as if astonished, are seen to be moved to admire divine grace. Whence also it is added: But also all the people of their station who had gone out to pillage were astonished. All the people of their station are all those who are prepared to imitate the depravity of malignant spirits. Who go out to pillage, because they desire to pervert the minds of others from the state of rectitude to their own infidelity. These therefore are said to be astonished when, on account of the sudden conversion of many, they are snatched away, astonished by a certain stupor of mind, to admire the benefits of God. Whence also it is soon added:

(Vers. 15.) And the earth was moved.

19. The earth is moved when the carnal mind, astonished by divine benefits, trembles for the crimes committed, and soon serves expiation for them with tears and the laments of penance.

(Vers. 16.) And the watchmen of Saul, who were in Gibeah of Benjamin, looked, and behold a multitude prostrate, and fleeing hither and thither.

20. The watchmen placed in Gibeah (Gabaa) of Benjamin are men constituted in a spiritual

peak, and in the right hand part of virtues. For they are watchmen who are raised by supernal grace to intuit heavenly things. These are asserted to be placed in Benjamin, that is, the son of the right hand, because he who is suspended in contemplation is firmed not by carnal virtue, but by the virtue of the spiritual right hand. Moreover Gibeah, as we have said, is interpreted as a hill. These watchmen therefore are mentioned to be on a hill because they watch those things which are done in the world from a high altitude of virtue. These therefore behold the multitude of sinners prostrate and fleeing hither and thither, because while they persevere in their own rectitude, they consider the punishable crimes of others, and the various errors of the heart from the peak of virtue. But if anyone wishes to understand these watchmen as Angels, he can: because they also from the loftiness of their high beatitude behold worldly minds prostrate, and see them diffused far and wide from the state of rectitude. A multitude prostrate and fleeing is beheld when a multitude of the depraved is discerned prostrate, bewailing their sins through humility, and is known to flee hither and thither from the society of their evil delight. Those who are prostrate for penance, flee to innocence. It follows:

(Vers. 17.) And Saul said to the people who were with him: Search, and see who has gone out from us. And when they had searched, it was found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not present.

21. What is it that Saul knows Jonathan to be absent, except that the carnal rector detects Jonathan, that is, the elect preacher, to be alien from himself and from his society? For carnal rectors can then notice elect preachers not to be present to them, and to be far off from their society, when they understand from their wonderful works that they labor not for the delight of vain glory, but for the sole grace of divine love. Then Jonathan and his armor-bearer are detected not to be present to Saul, when the prelate and his subject are seen to have gone out to the work of the contest for the salvation of others. But because the carnal rector then strives to return to God, when he is terrified by the malignant spirit for the crimes committed, it follows:

(Vers. 18.) And Saul said to Ahijah: Bring the ark of God. For the ark of God was there in that day with the children of Israel.

22. Ahijah (Achias) is interpreted as my brother. By this teacher therefore we ought to understand him who embraces elect souls with fraternal love. The ark of God is the human incarnation of the Redeemer, in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. This ark therefore is ordered to be applied by the carnal rector, when divine aids are to be sought by him for fear of the invading enemy.

22. For when the mind of man is depressed by carnal delight, its sight is surely dulled, so that it deserves to be ignorant of spiritual goods. But when it begins to grow weak in its carnal things, it gradually grows strong in spiritual things, so

that by progressing it may see heavenly things, and by forgetting it may leave behind weak things; indeed, the progress of a converted mind is shown, because first the earth is said to be troubled, then a miracle is remembered to have happened as if from God. But a miracle from God is that which God does without man. For that the Lord rained manna in the desert for the children of Israel (Exod. 16), that He provided birds for those who desired them (Exod. 14), God surely did a miracle without man; but when He wished to divide the sea, He commanded Moses to touch it with his rod, so that He might show a miracle which He would demonstrate to the people through a man. Thus indeed the rock is struck with a rod, so that flows of water may be produced (Num. 20), because surely the miracle which He wished to show, He did through a man, not through Himself, so that while He rendered the man venerable, the Israelite people ought to have humbly submitted to him and devotedly obeyed him. What is it, therefore, that a miracle is asserted to have happened as if from God, after the earth is troubled, except that while the Holy Spirit moves the mind to conversion, He suggests to the moved mind the examples of the elect; which it may both see with veneration and desire to imitate with devotion?

This miracle indeed, according to the history, is understood thus, because many were being killed. But now in holy Church, sinners are converted to a religious life, whom others follow as examples of virtue. The Holy Spirit indeed draws

them, and because they are drawn, He shows it to others, so that He may draw those who are drawn, and insert the observers into those who are drawn, so as to embrace both through the largess of His grace. For when He works this without man by Himself in the hearts of the faithful, surely the miracle is not made as if from God, but from God. But when He does this while the teachers of eternal life are preaching, the miracle is as if from God, because He shows His ministers to be marvelous, so that those who look at them may be able to imitate them devotedly.

But because we said above that Saul signifies the high priests, and Jonathan his son signifies the subject persons of the preachers, if we attend to the things that follow, we find the apostolic solicitude in the supreme pontiffs, which they retain. Concerning which surely blessed Paul speaks, saying: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not burned? Besides those things which are without, my daily pressure, the solicitude of all the Churches" (2 Cor. 11:29). He indeed who bore the solicitude of all the Churches, kept watch not only over the little ones, but also to discuss the deeds of the greater ones. Whence it is added here:

(Vers. 16, 17.) And the watchmen of Saul, who were in Gibeah of Benjamin, looked; and behold, the multitude was cast down and fleeing hither and thither. And Saul said to the people who were with him: Search, and see who has gone from us. And it was found that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not present.

23. The watchmen of Saul behold the battle of Jonathan, because the supreme pontiffs discuss not only the deeds of the subjects, but also the doctrine of the prelates. They explore the former, whether they act well; and the latter, whether they teach rightly. They often hear the conversation of others, but they fear lest they should not be well instructed. For what else is it that is asked, who has gone, except that he who is sent to preach ought to be such that the burden of the ministry may be securely imposed upon him; so that the mind of the sender may fluctuate with no doubt that he teaches rightly, and shows the words of doctrine by works. And because there are innumerable rulers of the Churches, Jonathan is beheld by the watchmen, because the supreme summit of the universal Church so ordains preachers throughout the world that it has ministers around itself through whom it may discuss their doctrine and diligently inquire into their works. But those who perform the ministry and embassy of the supreme summit are sublimated in a high seat of life and knowledge. Whence also those same watchmen are well remembered to be in Gibeah of Benjamin. For Gibeah of Benjamin is called the hill of the son of the right hand. Those are on the hill of the son of the right hand who, through a sublime life and through high knowledge, already seem to reach the conformation of the Redeemer. These surely behold the deeds of the victors from on high, because from the loftiness of life and the perfect erudition of supreme knowledge they deserve to prove the life

of the good and discuss the bad. They find that Jonathan is not present, because they consider the gains of preaching to be best then, when they approve the laudable person of the preacher. It follows:

(Vers. 18.) And Saul said to Ahijah: Apply the ark of God.

24. Why does Saul command Ahijah the priest to apply the ark, except because they hear the manner of the contest from the watchmen? Which indeed is well done spiritually by the supreme priests, when they do not judge before those things which they hear from reporters, until they seek the reason for them in the counsel of internal meditation. And, because they often follow even the counsels of another's mind, Ahijah is ordered to apply the ark. For the priest has an ark, who does not have a mind void of spiritual knowledge. Saul therefore commands Ahijah to apply the ark, when the supreme teacher seeks counsel from his inferiors and the learned. For there counsels are to be requested, where the grace of spiritual knowledge shines. Whence also it is added:

(Vers. 18.) For the ark of God was in that day with the children of Israel.

25. As if he would say: He commanded this to be applied, which he knew to be present. Indeed, to seek religious counsel from the irreligious, or wisdom from fools, is not to receive counsel, but to precipitate. Well therefore is it said: "For the ark of God was there," because in doubtful things we ought to consult those in whom we clearly

know that spiritual gifts are not lacking. But there are some things which are improved by counsel, and some which are improved by aid. For where there is open and indubitable necessity, there the delay of counsel is not suitable, but the speed of subvention. Ambiguous and obscure things we better accomplish by consulting, but open and known things we relieve by subvening and hastening. Whence also it is added:

(Vers. 19, 20.) And while Saul spoke to the priest, a great tumult arose in the camp of the Philistines, and it grew by degrees, and resounded more clearly. And Saul said to the priest: Withdraw your hand. Saul cried out, and all the people who were with him, and they came as far as the place of the battle.

26. For what else does it signify that Saul first sought to apply the ark, then commanded the priest to withdraw his hand, except that we ought both to arrange obscure things by consulting, and to complete with haste those things which become more clearly known? But for a preacher to hear a tumult growing by degrees, is to know the devotion of converted sinners. Which is said to grow by degrees, because while the Spirit directs our mind to good works, He leads it gently to better things through daily progress. But what is it that Saul and all the people who are with him cry out, except that they associate themselves with the combatants? But they also come as far as the place of the battle. The place of the battle is the heart of the one hearing the word of God. It is called the

place of the battle because the word which is received fights with the past conversation. For the heavenly things which he hears already please him, but the old custom rises up, and suggests that he should despise what he has heard. The battle also becomes more serious because what the preacher praises, this the malignant spirits disparage by dissuading, and as if in battle they raise themselves up against the saints, while by fighting they destroy that which is preached by their voice. What is it, therefore, to come as far as the place of the battle, except to reach the secrets of the hearer's heart through the approach of inquiry, where he may quickly find the enemies and powerfully slay them? For those who do not know how to discuss internal things cannot reach the place of the battle. Or the place of the battle is where there is frequent fame of great religion. For since people run thither from innumerable places, who desire both to lay aside the old life and to put on the new, it is rightly called the place of the battle, because there the army of spiritual virtues daily fights with the multitude of vices. There indeed, the more serious the battles, the more glorious the victories. There, the more frequent the approach of the enemies, the more laudable the number of triumphs: where not only the high virtue of the great is extolled, but the common strenuousness of all is shown by a wonderful display of fortitude. Whence also it follows:

(Vers. 20.) And behold, every man's sword was turned against his neighbor, and there was a very great slaughter.

27. What is this sword, if not the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God? For those who have been converted to the service of Almighty God in innumerable places, because they inseparably adhere to the word of God, it is as if everyone holds a sword next to himself. Therefore, the sword of everyone is turned to his neighbor, when those who have been converted in monasteries both pierce themselves in turn with the word of God, and completely kill carnality in themselves. For they are killed as if by a mutual wound, while one strikes the other with the word of God, and extinguishes whatever lives carnally in himself. Those who, because having recently been converted, had fallen from secular life, are signified by the type of the Philistines. Or the sword of one is turned to his neighbor when, through the exhortation of the converted, sinners not yet converted are converted to the Lord; when not only those who are over the word of preaching gain others, but the multitude of subjects, as many as can instruct by words and examples, and endeavor to withdraw them as if slain from the desires of the present life, and present them alive to eternal life. Indeed, we behold these gains of the slain now diffused throughout the whole Church over the entire world, because whoever now live to God through divine grace, seem dead to this world by the point of mutual charity. For the sword of everyone is turned to

his neighbor, because all the elect strengthen themselves in turn in holy Church, and inflame themselves toward the heavenly country by the study of mutual preaching. And because an innumerable people is daily acquired for God, it is well added there: "And there was a very great slaughter." Surely it is very great, which in magnitude can be known in any way, but in excellence it cannot be comprehended. Toward this surely very great slaughter he had raised his eyes, who said: "But to me Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable, their principality is exceedingly strengthened; I will number them, and they shall be multiplied above the sand" (Psalm 138:17). A very great slaughter can also be understood, not only that many are seen, but also that they are seen to be well slain. Which indeed is seen to happen in the conversion of sinners, when they so desert past things that they never revive to the same delights. For sinners to be slain, is to be separated for a time from a base life. Therefore, to be vehemently, or exceedingly, slain, is to perfectly desert the enticements of temporal life, and to pant for the joys of the future. But because there is much diversity of those who are converted, it follows:

(Vers. 21.) But also the Hebrews, who had been with the Philistines yesterday and the day before, and had gone up with them into the camp, returned to be with Israel, and with those who were with Saul and Jonathan.

28. Who are the Hebrews, who had been with the Philistines, if not sinners fallen from a

religious conversation? Of whom it was said not long above: "The Hebrews crossed the Jordan." They are indeed Hebrews by the order of religion, but they are with the Philistines, and they go up with them, as long as they are mocked by noxious suggestions, and progress in evil operation. They are indeed with the malignant spirits by the purpose and will of sin, but they go up with them because, being impelled by them, they raise themselves into the audacity of iniquitous operation. Or they are with them when they complete their sins by operating; but they go up with them when they do not fear to put forth examples of their own depravity for others to imitate. What is it, therefore, that they are said to return and be with Israel, except that such as these also for the most part recover their senses? For to return is to resume the love of religious life. And to be with Israel is to persist in the unity of charity within holy Church. To this surely they must return, that being with Israel may be proposed, because there is no conversion of a sinner if the converted lacks perseverance in good work and unity of charity. It follows:

(Vers. 22.) All the Israelites also, who had hidden themselves in Mount Ephraim, hearing that the Philistines had fled, joined themselves with their own in the battle.

29. This indeed happens as often as those devoted to a more remote life deign to direct their study toward seeking the gains of souls. For they associate themselves with their own in battle when they preach the true joys of eternal life with

the teachers of holy Church, and likewise put to flight the malignant spirits from the hearts of sinners. But it must be greatly asked how it is said: "Hearing that the Philistines had fled." Surely it is not a distinguished victory to follow those who are fleeing, but to put to flight those who are resisting. What is it, therefore, that is said: "Hearing that the Philistines had fled, they joined themselves with their own in the battle," except that by these words the gains suitable to that same remote life are signified? For it is usually the custom of those men to put forth the word rather to those consulting them than to those resisting them, because unless they recognize a devoted heart in the hearer, they disdain to emit their preaching as if it would perish in a vacuum. Before, therefore, they join themselves with their own in the battle, they hear that the Philistines have fled: because they do not so much keep watch for converting the wicked as for elevating the converted to the heights of a more perfect life. But because the very sublimity of a more perfect life is usually persuaded by the labors of great exhortation, those who hear that the Philistines have fled are deservedly said to battle. Therefore the enemies flee, but those recently hidden battle, because the men of remote life do not deign to speak except to devoted hearers, but speaking they can hardly persuade the altitude of the life which they themselves hold with a great battle of words and examples. And because the weak and imperfect cannot gather the great gains of preaching, it follows:

(Vers. 22.) "There were with Saul about ten thousand men."

He does not say ten thousand, but about ten thousand. Indeed, the perfect perfection of this number is not found on earth, but in heaven. For because there are nine orders of angels, and that multitude of elect men is raised up to their society, those ten thousand men are they who, in the holy angels and elect men, rejoice in that seat of eternal glory. Therefore, about ten thousand men are those who, placed still in the exile of this world, have received the form of that blessed society in their morals. Because likewise the darkness of sins is left behind by the love of that supernal life, it follows:

(Vers. 23.) "And the Lord saved Israel in that day."

The contemplation of internal light is surely a very splendid and most clear day, in which the Lord saves Israel, because those whose hearts He irradiates with the light of internal splendor, He raises to the loftiness of perpetual salvation. Indeed, the Lord is said to save in that day, because no one is kindled to the love of eternal life from whom the splendor of internal light is hidden. To this grace of salvation not only the elect things of the world reach, but also those things which seem despised. Whence also it is added:

(Vers. 23.) "But the battle reached as far as Beth-aven."

34. Whom does Jonathan represent in this place, if not those who are great in word and work, but yet are not great in the study of circum-

spection? They indeed preach lofty things and perform strong deeds, but they do not hold themselves manfully in the circumspection of humility. For what is it that he holds a rod in his hand, if not because the discipline by which he prohibits others from sinning, he does not exercise upon himself? The rod indeed, with which little ones are wont to be corrected, can aptly designate the word of correction. Therefore, preaching and good work are the rod and the hand. What, then, is it to extend the rod and to bring the hand to the mouth with honey, if not to receive the taste of vain favor as much from the word of preaching as from the study of a good work? But because he sins after the manner of the elect, he is said to lift the honey not with the rod, but with the tip of the rod. For they turn the rod and the hand full of honey to the mouth, who, according to the voice of Truth: "Do all their works to be seen by men" (Matt. 23:5). For while they are sated with their own praises, they have the honey not for a slight taste at the tip of the rod, but either in the whole rod or in the hand for a full meal. Such indeed were those whom the Lord reproaches in the Gospel, saying: "How can you believe, who receive glory one from another?" (John 5:44). What, then, is this tip of the rod, if not that for the most part they both wish to glorify the Lord in their work and do not shrink from appearing praiseworthy themselves? Rightly, therefore, is Jonathan said not to have heard the voice of his father, by which he adjured the people, because he does not hear the words of God or of His

preacher, who neglects to fulfill them. But what is it that from the taste of the honey the eyes of Jonathan were enlightened, if not because they who receive the aura of vain favor are strengthened from the same for performing strong deeds? In this place, the eyes are not said to be opened as if they were felt to have been closed, but so that, the vigor of the body being restored, they are understood to be restored for seeing and for extinguishing the enemies. Which indeed fits the proud perfectly, who perform greater and stronger deeds from the fact that they see their praiseworthy works being extolled.

(Vers. 28.) And one of the people answering, said: Thy father hath bound the people with an oath, saying: Cursed be the man that shall eat any food this day.

35. He reported that the father had indeed adjured the people and uttered a curse, because when a lesser person wishes to direct an erring prelate, he ought not to rebuke him harshly, but to lead him back sweetly and humbly to the remembrance of the statutes of his superiors. Whence he says: "Thy father hath bound the people with an oath." For so that he might sweetly admonish him who bound the people with an oath, he asserted that he was his father. As if he were to say in other words: You ought to preserve the institutes of your superiors with all the more love, as you see yourself holding their place higher through the dignity of succession. The people are also asserted to be bound by the oath of the father, so that not the humility of

the person speaking, but the authority of the one shown might be attended to: so that if the rank of the one suggesting is despised, the highness of him who is shown may be feared. Yet he asserts him to be the father, so that the precepts of the superiors ought to be both for fear and for love. Let him say therefore: "Thy father hath bound the people with an oath, saying: Cursed be he who shall eat bread today." Which is such as if he were to say: I wish you to be mindful of those things which are yours, not mine, because while you hold the summit of your superiors, you ought to keep their laws as if by hereditary right. Truly, by the name of bread, the favor of flatterers is rightly expressed, because it both sates and comforts the mind intent on vanity, while it renders it more powerful for performing things that ought to be praised. Which indeed is seen to fit the arrogant very well, who are animated to speaking by the praises brought forth. And because an arrogant preacher has subjects like himself, greedy for praise, it follows:

(Vers. 28.) And the people were faint.

36. What is it to grow faint, literally, if not to become weary? For those who seek transitory praises from the preaching of the word, grow faint when they are praised, because they bring forth words with no vigor which they do not see to be praised. For as if growing weary, they grow faint while, being despised, they become silent. But also while they do not eat, they seem to grow faint, because if they had the lawful food of favor, as if refreshed and strong, they would pursue

vices with the preaching of the word. Whence also the form of an arrogant preacher is shown, through that which is subjoined:

(Vers. 29, 30.) And Jonathan said: My father hath troubled the land. For yourselves have seen that my eyes are enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey; how much more if the people had eaten of the prey of their enemies which they found, would not a greater slaughter have been made among the Philistines?

37. For what is it that he reproaches the father for having troubled the land, if not because he argues that the superiors have confounded their statutes through ignorance? Indeed, by the name of the land, the humility of the subjects is designated, which is surely seen to be troubled when, by the erring judgment of the shepherds, it seems to desert the order of tranquil truth. And because while the arrogant eagerly long for the favors of men and attempt to assert that this is lawful, they bring forward their own progress as a testimony. "For you have seen," he says, "that my eyes are enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey." As if he were to say: I have grown from the praise of the subjects, while I studied not to be less than the praises. For it is also wont to be the custom of the elect preachers that, while they consider themselves to be praised, they strive with all their strength to be that which they hear about themselves from without. And for that reason Jonathan reported that he had eaten a little honey: because an arrogant tongue thinks it may lawfully receive favors for the progress of life, not

for the intention of vanity. But it is one thing altogether to strive to equal the heralds of praise with morals, another to seek praises so that in those same praises one may find the progress of life. Indeed, they strive to equal their praises with morals who despise the praises themselves, who never wish to be praised by men. Certainly as much as is in them, they vehemently flee from being praised, but because they cannot altogether escape being praised, they strive to be what they hear. But some, having shown good works, wish to be praised for that reason, so that being praised they may ascend to a greater work of virtue. By which estimation of their presumption they are surely deceived, because he who seeks praises in the smallest things, when he has done greater works, seeks praises more ardently and much more greedily. And perhaps for this reason Jonathan could not reign after his father, because he signified those who, while they vainly extol themselves, truly grow faint. He added also by reasoning, and says: "How much more if the people had eaten the prey of their enemies, would not a greater slaughter have been made among the Philistines?" To taste a little honey on the tip of the rod is to glory in any way in the eloquence of doctrine. But to eat the prey of the enemies is to [perceive] the works of virtue through memory...

(Vers. 31.) And they smote the Philistines in that day from Michmash to Aijalon.

38. The day of the mind is the splendor of learning. But those whom the arrogant instruct, because they are kindled by the ambition of

temporal glory, receive a simulation of light, not the truth. Therefore, when that day is spoken of, what else is signified, if not that often by the purpose of temporal glory strong deeds would seem to be done? For in that day, that is, by the doctrine or example of the proud, they strike, because they serve the ministry of preaching for this purpose: that they may obtain the splendor of temporal glory. And because they desire to become known to all, he says: "From Michmash to Aijalon." Michmash, as has already been sufficiently said, is interpreted as humility, but Aijalon as "my mourning brother." But the humble in this place are designated as the little and simple ones in the holy Church. And whom else does the "mourning brother" suggest, if not those whom the Lord commends in the Gospel, saying: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"? (Matt. 5:5). For he who already knows how to despise all temporal things, and to pant after eternal things with great desires, while he dreads being held in the body and groans because he is not yet in that joy of eternal life, is rightly named "my mourning brother." A brother indeed, because he has already begun to be a co-heir of Christ, for whose most blessed and most joyful inheritance he groans with all his desires. But he is called "mourning" so that the ineffable grief of the perfect may be designated. For to mourn is not to weep in just any way, but to weep most affectionately. For because they are filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they have reached that abundance of weeping which the eminent doctor

asserts, saying: "But the Spirit Himself asks for us with unspeakable groanings" (Rom. 8:26). He is also called a mourning brother because all the perfect are joined to the Redeemer in great familiarity. For he whom the Redeemer singularly loves, whom He nourishes with singular dignity for the possession of the perpetual inheritance, when he is asserted to be His brother, is declared in the singular number. Whence also He says to Moses as to a singular friend: "I know thee by name" (Exod. 33:12). Hence it is that it is said of John in the Gospel: "This is that disciple whom Jesus loved" (John...

(Vers. 31.) And the people were very faint.

It is also wont to be the custom of the proud that when an alien tongue is silent from their praises, their own estimation is not silent. Indeed, while others are silent, they cry out, because they carry the heralds of their own estimation in their heart. Well, therefore, is it subjoined concerning the same people:

(Vers. 32.) And the people turned to the prey, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground, and the people ate them with the blood.

39. He indeed takes sheep who recalls the multiple causes of his own innocence for elation. He takes oxen in prey when he thinks of the labors of his own preaching and collects, by remembering, whatever he has profited others by speaking, as if by tilling the land. He takes calves when he is extolled because the suppressed movements of lasciviousness are brought back to the mind.

For because two things are commanded in the great praise of the just—namely, the splendor of charity with the light of good work—whenever each arrogant person is extolled by his own estimation, he is said to take both sheep and calves. Sheep indeed in the innocence of good works, but calves in the mortification of corporal passions. To which he surely inserted oxen, because he is not perfectly extolled who contemplates himself as weak and impotent in any part. He is already great in his own eyes by the estimation of chastity and good work, but he elevates himself in the pride of greater elation while he recalls himself as perfect in the labor of preaching.

But to what end all these things are led is subsequently explained: "And they slew them on the ground." To slay sheep and oxen and calves on the ground is to exult in the conscience of virtues with a low and carnal joy. Whence also it is said through Hosea concerning the proud and arrogant: "They plunged the victims into the deep" (Hos. 5:2). Indeed, they plunge the victims into the deep who do not raise the celestial sacrifices of virtues to heaven through thanksgiving, but incline them to the earth through the appetite for vain praise. Whence also it is well subjoined: "And the people ate with the blood." The food of the mind is its internal joy. What, then, is it to eat with the blood, if not to in no way remove the intention of vain favor from the internal appetite of the mind? For as if blood is cast away when the mind removes the intention of vanity from the joy of a good work. For a mind of this kind knows

how to rejoice in a good work because it rejoices to approach celestial things through good works, which it shrinks from being seen in those same works for a time. Therefore, to eat with blood is to take the joy of a good work mixed with the intention of vanity. Which indeed, when it is offered by others, is simple food for the proud; but when, with no one praising, the conscience of the proud swells, they take as if by prey violently what someone did not grant spontaneously. It follows:

(Vers. 33, 34.) And they told Saul, saying that the people had sinned against the Lord, eating with the blood. Who said: You have transgressed. Roll to me now a great stone. And Saul said: Disperse yourselves among the people, and tell them that every man bring his ox and his ram, and slay them upon this stone, and eat, and you shall not sin against the Lord in eating with the blood.

40. It is proper to the preachers of the holy Church both to rebuke committed faults and to show how those that have been rebuked ought to be avoided. For those that have been rebuked indeed become known, but if it is not known how they may be avoided, once shown they are repeated. What is shown in this eating of blood if not the latent virus of elation? Moreover, latent vices are not cured unless they are exposed. Therefore, so that he might insinuate the customs of preachers, Saul first asserts that the people had transgressed, then commands that the animals they would eat be slain upon the stone. But we know the rock or stone, because Paul points it out, saying: "And the rock was

Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). Truly, the stone is rolled to the preacher when the examples of the Redeemer are recalled before him. It is also said to be rolled down so that it may be seen from every side. But it was called "great" because through Daniel it is said to grow and to fill the whole face of the world (Dan. 2). Therefore, it is seen as rolled not in just any way, but from both sides, so that God may be beheld by the arrogant and their arrogance may be depressed. Let the arrogant man see, therefore, how powerful in virtue, how sublime in majesty, how humble in virtue our Redeemer appeared. For illuminating the blind, healing the sick (Matt. 9), He commanded that what He had powerfully done should be told to no one. He shone on the mountain, He brought forth the Father as a witness of His divinity, and yet He said to the disciples: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9). And perhaps for this reason, when the Lord was already rising, an angel appeared at the monument, who rolled back the stone from its door. For then indeed the stone was to be rolled, because Christ, true man and powerful God, was to be acknowledged after the glory of the resurrection. If, therefore, the proud man has looked at one side of the stone, let him roll the stone and see the other. Let him not see the stone in just any way, because Christ is not dead, but rolled by the angel, because He rose from the dead. Let him behold, therefore, the eloquence of preaching from here, and let him roll it and wonder at the splendor of humility from there. Let him see the power of signs from here,

and from there let him see that He who shone by the power of virtue, [refused to be praised for it]...

(Vers. 34.) And all the people brought every man his ox in his hand until night, and slew them there.

41. To bring an ox in the hand is to destroy the sin of elation through the affliction of penance. For while one destroys by working what one committed by being proud, he leads the ox to be sacrificed on the stone by his hand. But what does it mean when it says: Until night, except that it is not permitted to sin, but it is permitted to destroy sins until death? Until night, therefore, the oxen are to be sacrificed, not in the night, because while we live, we can destroy sins by repenting; after death, we are not able to perform fruitful penance. Well, then, is it added in the same place:

(Vers. 35.) And Saul built an altar to the Lord.

41. Because while sinners are converted, a heavenly building is constructed as if from stones. And because most manuscripts have: And then Saul first began to build, the compunction of the heart can be understood by the name of the altar. For when compunction of the heart is raised up through the word of the teacher, surely an altar is built to the Lord. And it is said to be built "first" because it is the compunction of love. Wherefore also in the tabernacle of the covenant, two altars were commanded by the Lord to be made, namely one for burning incense and the other for burning flesh (Exod. 27, 37). The first altar was outside, the second within the holy of holies. Therefore, the first altar is the compunc-

tion of fear, the second altar the compunction of love. The former indeed belongs to those mourning their sins, but the latter to those panting with all their desires for eternal joys; the stones of the former are the recollections of sins, the stones of the latter the meditations on perennial joys. Therefore, the teacher builds the first altar when he exposes the faults at which the sinner groans while he beholds them in himself. Merely also compunction is called an altar because it incenses. But when each one is compunct for a long time for his sins, he profits by repenting unto the use of security. For after the times of affliction, he begins to burn for eternal life, and he who previously mourned for fear of punishment now begins to weep more copiously for the delay of the reward. Because, therefore, the first compunction of the elect is born from fear, while through the type of the king and the people, the preachers and the newly converted subjects are designated, Saul is then said to have first built an altar. But from the progress of some, the teacher is often kindled to attain the gains of others. Wherefore it is also added:

(Vers. 36.) And Saul said: Let us fall upon the Philistines by night, and let us waste them until the morning dawn, and let us not leave a man of them.

42. This has been sufficiently explained above, but because he desires to strike the Philistines in the night, until the day dawns, he surely insinuates this: that lest the demons be able to harm in the future, they are now to be expelled

and slain from the hearts of sinners. This life is indeed called "night" when it is compared to the eternal one. For he who has been able to contemplate that life worthily, by comparison with it, whatever is discerned as bright here is judged to be the obscurity of night. Moreover, that day dawns when at the end of this life it opens itself to the elect souls. In its departure indeed from the body, the elect soul sees eternity dawning for it, because it did not look upon the light of the present world except as darkness.

43. But what is it that is said: And let us not leave a man of them? But every Philistine "man" ought to be wasted; a little one can by no means be wasted. For no one is without sin except God alone. The "men," therefore, are capital crimes and principal vices. But then they are designated by the name of men, that is, of the strong, when they subject the hearts of sinners to themselves. Well, therefore, it is said: Let us not leave a man of them, because converted sinners, by the counsel of holy preachers, desert all the strong sins and vices, but they cannot have no sin or vice. They can avoid crimes, but they cannot avoid all sins. They can extinguish vices, but they do not prevail to bring it about that they are not knocked upon by some of them in some way. He says, therefore: Let us not leave a man of them, because the preachers of the holy Church command us to eradicate even vices; but while they kill the strong and principal ones in us, they cannot bring it about that some of them by a slight movement

do not live at all. And subjoining concerning the obedience of the people, he says:

(Vers. 36.) The people said: Do all that is good in thy eyes.

44. The eyes of preachers are the insights of reason. He, therefore, who commits himself to the judgment of the teacher, is rightly said to say to him: Do all that is good in thy eyes. As if he were to say: We who distrust ourselves concerning the illumination of our own reason, commit ourselves to the light of thy reason, which we judge to be lacking in us. But this which Saul said: Let us fall upon the Philistines, can be understood because he did not bring forth deliberated words, but by saying this, he consulted whether they ought to fall upon the Philistines. But as for the people quickly providing assent, it insinuates this which we see: that some within the holy Church, before they understand the words of their elders, approve them. For it is immediately added:

(Vers. 36, 37.) And the Priest said: Let us draw near hither to the Lord. And Saul consulted the Lord, saying: Shall I pursue after the Philistines? And the Lord answered him not that day.

45. What is it that the priest announces that the words of the consulting king, which the people praise, are to be brought to the Lord, unless that obscure and great matters, which are hidden from the simple, are never well disposed if we do not seek their outcome in the sanctuary of the mind with subtle meditation? Indeed, to draw near to the Lord is to know His will by secret con-

templation. And it is well called an "approach," because we tend from exterior things to internal ones when we attempt to know the outcome of our work in the divine will. For he who seeks hidden and innermost things, and does not desert exterior ones, does not find how to approach those things which he does not know. Therefore, when counsel is sought from us concerning hidden things, let us draw near to the Lord, so that then at last what is to be done may be proposed, when it is known in the divine will. For many things seem to be good and are not. Many things also are to be done, but they are done more usefully if they are reserved for a congruous time. Certain things also some ought to do, but others ought not to do. Which things surely if any elect person neglects to see in the secret of meditation, he by no means disposes them in the right order. On the contrary, however, he who has become accustomed to discuss them, or to act by meditating, knows not only the things to be done, but also the things to be avoided. Wherefore it is also well said:

(Vers. 37.) Saul consulted the Lord, and the Lord answered him not that day.

46. "Day" is the thought of the mind, which is thought to be good and is not known. For while it simulates that it is good, it carries as it were a light. In that day, therefore, the Lord did not answer him consulting Him, because the word of God cannot agree with bad deliberation. By the response of the word, indeed, we are accustomed to lay open the sense of the innermost will. In

that day, therefore, the Lord does not answer: because the omnipotent God is not discerned in the simulated light of thought, He who is always found in the clarity of truth. And it is to be noted that he who gave the counsel of drawing near to the Lord was a priest. For what is holier than the counsel of drawing near to God? We are priests, therefore, as often as we minister good counsels to our brothers. For nothing more sacred can be given than that through which each one ought to go to the Creator. But we, because we are describing the order of spiritual battle, ought to continue the previous things with those that follow.

47. The word of Saul was indeed that he should so waste the Philistines that he would not leave a man from them. Which can also be understood in this way: that he wished so to slay the Philistines that none of them could move wars any further. Great indeed is this "day" of the mind, in which eternal things are so sought that no temporal enemy is left from the slaughter. But because it is granted to no one so to conquer temporally that he ought not to fight at all times, it is rightly said: The Lord answered him not that day. The response of God is not only of His inward word, but of grace and gift. For when He benignly grants what is piously asked, He is said to answer. Therefore, the Lord does not answer in that day, because He permits the elect indeed to conquer, but He leaves the enemies as if living, so that they may find those with whom they may always fight. If, however, this is said for this reason, that the fault of Jonathan is hidden, great fear is

struck into the prelates. Indeed, the son sins, and He denies the response to his father. Also, one is known to have transgressed, but for the fault of one, all fear to pursue their enemies. What is signified in this fact, except that the sins of subjects harm not only themselves, but also the prelates and those living together in common with them? But because this latent fault is discussed by the king, let us now see with what sublimity any latent things are searched out. For there follows:

(Vers. 38, 39.) Bring hither all the corners of the people: and know, and see by whom this sin hath happened today. For as the Lord liveth the savior of Israel, if it be done by Jonathan, without retraction he shall die.

48. By which words, surely, he showed a very ordered arrangement of judgment, because the fault is first to be found, then the punishment is to be inflicted. For the order of judgment is confounded if it is brought forth before the discussion of the found fault. For lest he strike before the discussion, he says: Bring hither all the corners of the people: and see, and know by whom this sin hath happened today. And because the known fault is to be struck more austerely, he swears, saying: As the Lord liveth, because if it be done by Jonathan my son, without retraction he shall die. Indeed, it ought to be treated longer so that the fault may be found, but after it has been found, no one living ought to be left in it. He is slain without retraction who is prohibited from living in sin as soon as it has become known. But this "without retraction," namely to slay, is not

without retraction, because the pastor uses much consideration so that the fault, which he found by retracting, can be struck without retraction and extinguished swiftly.

49. If we attend to the weight of this paternal oath according to the history, we behold equally the fervor of that time and the lukewarmness of this time. For the ancient fathers, so that they might please God, did not spare even their sons from death. But we do not dare to pursue those whom we love according to the flesh even with a slight asperity of words. Behold, he who was nurturing his son for the kingdom, says: Because if the sin was done by him, he shall die without retraction. We see people sinning, and we either do not want or we fear to rebuke the sinners. Why, therefore, do we do this, except because we by no means love God as they did? For Moses, so that he might well avenge the sin of idolatry, commanded the Levites to kill twenty-three thousand men. In the exercise of which slaughter, surely, he said: If any man be on the Lord's side, let him join with me. Let every man put his sword upon his thigh. Go and return from gate to gate, and let every man kill his brother, and friend, and neighbor (Exod. 32, 26, 27). As if he were to say: In this each one shall show that he is the Lord's, if for His love he spares not his brother, neighbor, or friend. Saul says, therefore, of his son: Because without retraction he shall die, because for us who are now living under the grace of the Redeemer, even if the death of the body is not decreed, the life of sin ought not to be prolonged.

Indeed, the ruler kills without retraction when he does not look upon the affections of the flesh, but when he finds a crime, he strikes swiftly. He retracts indeed, who, lest he sharply sting the wicked man, thinks of the services rendered to him by him, or of the affection of consanguinity. In which matter it is to be noted that not all faults are to be struck sharply. For slight spots of dust are wiped away better by shaking them out than by washing or by applying fire. Also, grave faults are not to be pursued with equal asperity in all, because the wounds of bodies demand a vigor of medicine according to the nature and strength of those very bodies. Nevertheless, very often the prelates of the Church, when they hear of faults, burn more than is just; and while they measure out vengeance, they respect neither the quality of the wounds nor the vigor of the delinquent persons. Who surely are to be tolerated when they threaten, but from vengeance...

(Vers. 39.) To which no one of all the people contradicted him.

Because indeed the threats of elders are to be borne humbly, it is said: No one contradicted him. And because their excess is to be restrained by the wholesome counsel of the pious, not much lower down, when the king attempts to inflict that same death upon his son, all the people cry out: Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? Therefore, the people delivered Jonathan, that he should not die. But because he still strives not to strike the fault

not yet found, but to find it while it is hidden, there follows:

(Vers. 40.) And he said to all Israel: Be you on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side.

50. What is it that by the command of the king the people are separated from the king and his son, except that while a latent and suspected fault is sought, both superior and inferior persons are to be discussed? Very often indeed the people, very often their ruler transgresses: and sometimes the very fault of the subjects is ascribed to the prelate, by whose negligence it is said to be fulfilled. When, therefore, by the signs shown above, it is known that a fault is hidden in the people, and it is not known in whom it is concealed, let the king mix himself in, so that the pastor may know whether it is his own fault or the people's. Indeed, King Saul was not conscious of the fault which he himself had perpetrated neither by consent nor by deed, and yet he is mixed in for discussion, so that if it also lies hidden in him, it may be found. For he was searching himself as if unconscious of sin, he who was saying: For I am conscious of nothing to myself, but in this I am not justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Cor. 4:4). As if he were to say: I do not cease to seek myself and to find myself, because if I am hidden to myself, I shall not be hidden to Him to whom all things are naked. Let the king, therefore, say, not being conscious of that sin which was being discussed: I and Jonathan my son will be on the other

side; because elect teachers, while they are fierce against others through the zeal of rectitude, by no means spare themselves and their familiars. For as if they separate the people on one side, and do not separate themselves, they who discuss the faults of subjects, and do not care to investigate so that they may find themselves. Great indeed is the sea of human ignorance. For if we can scarcely or never seek ourselves and find what sort we are, when can we find others? For what is it that the Prophet deplores, saying: My heart hath forsaken me (Psal. 39:13). What is it that the holy Scripture announces: Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of hatred or of love (Eccl. 9:2). Also, the Prophet announces the fruit of his question, saying: Thy servant hath found his heart (2 Sam. 7:27). If the saints can scarcely find their heart, with what temerity do we cease to inquire into ourselves? But perhaps not even the Prophet could, because he subjoined: That he might fear Thee. He would surely find his heart if he had fully known whether he was worthy of hatred or of love...

(Vers. 40.) The people answered Saul: Do what is good in thy eyes.

51. But what is it that Saul commands the people that they should separate themselves on one side, and the people ask the king to do what he commands, except that the simple do not know how to inquire into themselves, even when they are commanded? He says, therefore: Do what is good in thy eyes. As if he were to say: Thou wilt be able to manage our affairs better, thou who

hast received the light of the heart not only for thyself but also for providing for our paths. But the ruler is praised for the internal illumination which he has by grace, not by estimation. He is praised indeed because he can know the secrets of others, but he himself distrusts being able to know himself. Because, therefore, he does not ascribe the light of such great grace to himself, he does not omit to postulating this from God with prayers. Wherefore it also follows:

(Vers. 41.) And he said to the Lord the God of Israel: Give a sign. What is it that Thou hast not answered Thy servant today? If this iniquity be in me or in Jonathan my son, give a showing: or if this iniquity be in Thy people, give holiness.

Therefore, we ask that a sign be given when we demand that hidden things be revealed to us. But it must be asked what such great diversity of words means for itself. For in himself and his son he asks that a showing be given, if in the people there is iniquity, holiness. Which nevertheless can be said briefly, because elect teachers know their own strength, they know the infirmity of the subject people. For themselves, therefore, they seek only the showing of the fault, because they know they are accustomed to pursue this by the austerity of penance. But for the people they seek holiness, because they desire only to know the faults of subjects; but those whom they find to act wrongly, they ask that they arrive at pardon through lamentations. For what is it to say: Give holiness, except: Sanctify those whom Thou showest? To me Thou revealest their hidden

things, but by revealing nothing is achieved, if Thou dost not refund grace by working in those whom Thou showest. Because indeed subjects often stand and prelates fall, it follows:

(Vers. 41.) And Jonathan and Saul were taken.

And because that fault itself is not easily known by whom it was perpetrated, it follows:

(Vers. 42.) And Saul said: Cast lots between me and my son Jonathan. And Jonathan was taken.

53. Those who cast lots often detect hidden things through conjectures of visible things. Thus surely Jonah fleeing is known (Jonah 1); thus Matthias the Apostle is found worthy of Apostolic height (Acts 1). Therefore, we place spiritual lots when through exterior signs of works we arrive at the knowledge of hidden things. For the "lot" of each one is his own conversation. Wherefore in Wisdom the reprobate say: Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither; let no meadow be that our luxury doth not pass through; let us everywhere leave signs of joy, because this is our part, and this is our lot (Wisd. 2:8). On the contrary, however, the Psalmist prays, saying: My portion, O Lord, be in the land of the living (Psal. 141:6). Which also Paul announcing, says: Our conversation is in heaven (Philip. 3:20). The teacher, therefore, as if he holds the lots of each one, while he sees the conversation of each one. And while the fault is known, and the person of the guilty is unknown, he as it were casts lots while he compares the manner of the deed to the person of the negligent one. But also perhaps he detects the fault while

by some sign of conjecture he arrives at the evident truth of the crime. Indeed, he is preeminent negligently who does not know both the strength and the infirmity of the faithful committed to him. For he ought to know the strong subjects, for what virtues they are apt, and in what vices they are infirm through the negligence of their neighbor. He ought to know what devotion of virtues excites these, and what quality of vices disturbs the negligence of those. As if, therefore, in exterior things he holds the lots of each one, while he foresees by what vices they can be overwhelmed, by what virtues these can be exalted. The cause, therefore, being known, he as it were impresses signs on the lots, while we ascribe the mark of the patent fault to the conversation of him who through negligence seemed to have been prone and near to perpetrating that deed before. But let this conjecture be had for tracking out the truth, not for the certainty of the found matter, because there it was immediately subjoined:

(Vers. 43.) And Saul said to Jonathan: Tell me what thou hast done.

54. For what is it that being caught he is interrogated, except that faults which seem to be detected by signs or conjectures are not yet to be struck? For as it were the wound is already held, but it is still covered. Let it be discovered, therefore, so that it may be able to be healed and cured. He is indeed to be forced or admonished that he may confess the fault which is already discerned as if openly. He says, therefore: Tell me what thou hast done, because a crime which is known by

certain open signs is not to be judged before it is most openly demonstrated. And because it is of the elect to sin and to come to their senses, to perpetrate faults and to detect those perpetrated by confessing, there follows:

(Vers. 43.) And Jonathan told him, and said: Tasting I tasted in the top of the rod, which was in my hand, a little honey, and behold I die.

55. What is it that he says: Tasting I tasted? Why did he not say above: Tasting I tasted a little of this honey, when he said: You have seen that my eyes are enlightened because I tasted a little of this honey? But some, while they confess their sins, surely diminish them with certain words, while they show that they did not commit them with their whole soul. On the contrary, however, elect men, when they accuse themselves of the smallest things, pronounce them surely not as small, but as great. What is it to say: Tasting I tasted, except that I exercised the sin outwardly, I fulfilled it with a great ardor of concupiscence? And what is it to say after the confession of sin, I die, except to expel death from oneself by repenting and confessing, and to fear it when expelled? Which is properly of the elect, who desert their sins: and yet they dread these, as if not deserted. And indeed they destroy them with pure confessions and austere torments of penance, but they fear them vehemently as if not destroyed. But what is it that he says: In the top of the rod? except that while we pursue ourselves by confessing, we ought not to bring forth a lie against ourselves. Indeed, sin is to be produced in confession, but it

is not to be augmented by a lie. Indeed, it ought to be such in confession as it was in deed. Therefore, so that the ardor of concupiscence may be well produced, he says: Tasting I tasted; and so that its quality may appear, it is subjoined: In the top of the rod, as if he were to say: Inflamed I did it boldly, but I did this. And because the son of the king confesses, he says: Which was in my hand. The rod of Jonathan signifies the doctrine and discipline of the preacher. Which is held in the hand when he not only teaches, but exercises what he teaches by working. What is it, therefore, that he says: Which was, not, Which is in my hand? except that he insinuates the estimation of the elect, who even when they commit wrong things, judge themselves unworthy of the ministry of preaching. He says, therefore: In the top of the rod, which was in my hand. As if he were to say: Being proud I sinned from that by which I made myself unworthy by sinning. It was, therefore, in my hand, and it is not, because although sometimes I did what I taught, that which I held by working I lost by being proud.

(Vers. 44.) And Saul said: May God do so to me, and more also; because thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. There follows:

(Vers. 45.) And the people said to Saul: Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? This is a crime. As the Lord liveth, if there fall a hair from his head to the ground; because he hath wrought with God this day. Therefore the people delivered Jonathan, that he should not die.

56. What is the meaning, then, of the statement: Shall Jonathan then die, unless it be that someone else would have died for the same fault? In these words of the people, the virtue of great discretion is certainly shown to us, because in the examination of the elect, not only the causes of the faults but also the merits of the persons must be weighed. This is clearly shown by these words, for it is not asserted that Jonathan was not to die because he was the son of the king, but because he had wrought a great salvation in Israel. Therefore, when great men fall, they are not to be handed over to common judgment, because their previous works deserve that the gravity of their subsequent ones be lightened. However, this lightening of the fault must not be decided by favoritism toward the person, but with respect to their previous life, because for their absolution the gains of the holy Church are to be weighed, and carnal affection is not to be admitted. But what wonder if one's own merits support the absolution of a sinner, when we learn in the authority of holy eloquence that some have been delivered for the sake of others? Indeed, some are helped by the good work of others, just as it is said by the Lord to the sinning King Solomon: Because thou hast not kept my commandments, I will rend thy kingdom asunder, and will give it to thy servant. Nevertheless in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son (III Kings 11:11). Hence it is that not only do the works of fathers profit their sons, but we have also recognized that

citizens are to be delivered for the sake of other citizens. The Lord promised to spare Sodom from destruction if He should find only ten just men in it (Gen. 18). Jerusalem is also said to be regarded mercifully because some good works were found in it. Hence it is that Eli, though just in his own life but remiss in his pastoral authority, heard from the man of God: A great part of thy house shall die when they come to man's estate; yet I will not take away from thee every man from my altar (I Kings 2:33); so that here sacred Scripture might clearly show both the one struck for his laxity and the one regarded for his past conduct. But perhaps he could be struck in part because he had some kind of impurity in his life. Therefore, it is well said of Jonathan: Shall Jonathan then die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? This is a crime; as the Lord liveth, if there fall a hair from his head to the ground, because he hath wrought with God this day. As if to say: He who has performed great works has worthily deserved to be entirely absolved. Therefore, since in ecclesiastical censure, although there is no favoritism toward persons, there is nevertheless a discretion of merits, the sentence was aptly concluded, saying: Therefore the people delivered Jonathan, that he should not die.

57. In this place it is to be noted that the king twice uttered an oath to put Jonathan to death, whom nevertheless he did not kill, overcome by the insistence of the people. Why is it that he swore and by no means kept the assertion of his oath? Two lessons come to us from this matter:

that we ought to be cautious and discrete. Cautious, indeed, not to swear; discrete, if we swear to do perverse things. For he who avoids swearing can by no means commit perjury. But when a bad oath is made, it is more just to dismiss the oath than to complete the crimes that are sworn. Therefore, let everyone be cautious before he swears, so that either he does not swear at all, or he does not swear that he will do evil. The Lord suggests that we be cautious, saying: Let your speech be: Yea, yea; Nay, nay. Swear not at all, neither by heaven, nor by the earth (Matth. 5:37). On the other hand, the reprobate are indeed both incautious and lacking in discretion. For they often promise that they will do evil things, and they do not strive to revoke their promises, as if they were about to incur perjury. Hence it is that Herod swore incautiously and fulfilled the wicked oath he had uttered in the death of the precursor of the Lord (Mark 6). Therefore, we ought to be cautious in our dispositions, but if we neglect to be cautious, our intentions are to be bypassed, not fulfilled. In this way, to desist from a purpose is not a vice of levity, but a virtue of discretion. Nevertheless, swearing things that are to be revoked and detested is to be entirely avoided and vehemently dreaded, because when such an oath is not fulfilled, fault is not entirely avoided, but the lesser one is chosen. It follows:

(Verse 46.) And Saul went back, and did not pursue the Philistines.

58. When Jonathan's fault is discovered, and when it is known that the king did not fulfill his

oath, he is said to cease pursuing the Philistines, because as long as teachers are weighed down by their own infirmity, they cannot strongly seek the gains of others. For to cease pursuing the Philistines is to desist for a time from following the vices of others through preaching. For they judge that they must first attend to their own purification, and then, being purged, watch for the salvation of others, because while they are silent, they prepare themselves so that, as if through their own penance, they may rise strongly for the gains of others. And because often while the teacher remains silent, being conscious of himself, the evil spirits do not remain silent in suggesting impious things to some of his subjects. It follows:

(Verse 46.) Then the Philistines went to their own places.

59. Indeed, when the teachers are silent, the demons go to their own places; because through the silence of the pastors they do not perish, unless it be because they are not predestined to eternal life. For they are the places of the demons, because in divine foreknowledge they are not preordained as the habitation of God. Hence it is that it is said to the first teachers as they preached: As many as were predestined to life everlasting, believed (Acts 13:48). Hence Paul says: Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated; and whom he predestinated, them he also called (Rom. 8:30). Hence it is that when the apostles wished to pass into Asia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16). Therefore, those who are

not predestined, whether they hear the words of the teachers or do not hear them, cannot be called into the habitation of God, because through the wickedness in which they were foreknown before the foundation of the world, they prepared a place in themselves for evil spirits. Well, therefore, while it is said that he ceased to pursue the Philistines, the demons are reported to have gone to their own places, because sometimes by God's dispensation the teachers are silent, so that while they are silent, those who are not of the Lord may be received by evil spirits. But, as I said, when pastors are silent after a fault, they humble themselves, so that, being purged, they may rise powerfully into the ministry of preaching. While they are silent, they weigh their own infirmity, but by considering themselves, they strengthen themselves more validly against hidden enemies. Wherefore it is well added:

(Verse 47.) But Saul, having confirmed the kingdom over Israel, fought on every side against all his enemies.

60. The kingdom is indeed weakened when pastors fall into certain faults. But the weak is confirmed when they are raised to a work of great virtue through the satisfaction of penance. And it is said to be confirmed over Israel, because as it profits toward the height of life, it overcomes by its conduct those over whom it presides in order. It is set over those who see God, but it is extolled above those who see God when it is assumed into divine contemplation above others. Deservedly, then, it is said: He fought against all his enemies

on every side, and whithersoever he turned himself, he overcame: because he who beholds eternal things more deeply easily crushes whatever comes to him for battle from the lowest things. For since no earthly things now please him, who through great charity reigns over Israel, that is, in heavenly things, whithersoever he turns, he overcomes. For what can the evil spirit suggest to him who considers no earthly things, who now loves no joys of the world? The teacher fights while he preaches, but he overcomes, because that which he forbids by preaching regarding the delight of the world, he persuades through the virtue of his conduct. And because he is said to fight on every side against his enemies, his victory is shown to be of great praise. It teaches that the teacher is perfect in every part, who has very strong enemies in every part. When, therefore, he is said to turn everywhere and to overcome, how much of his glory is proclaimed? What does it mean, then, to have enemies on every side, except that evil spirits lie in ambush for all our senses? For they deceive some by speaking, others by seeing. They fail some through hearing, others through taste or smell. They also strive to draw others into impurities through the ambushes of alluring delight or thought. They offer obscene things to others from without, which they may follow by the deliberation of the mind. But that we may more correctly show this circuit: while they draw this man toward joyful things, they place ambushes for him as if on the right side. While they cast down that man through adversi-

ties, they constrain him as if from the left side. While they invite us to past pleasures, they cast us down as if from behind. They meet those as if from the front, because often they show to the minds of the weak the length of a strict conduct and life as if by counseling. For they come from the front because they do not permit souls to proceed toward heaven. We have enemies on every side, then, because we suffer the battle of evil spirits from the front, the back, the right, and the left. Wherefore also the blessed apostle Peter exhorts us, saying: Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist ye, strong in faith (1 Peter 5:8).

61. But we have already known the circuit of the war; let us see how kings overcome in the circuit. Indeed, they overcome in the circuit who guard their tongue, and mouth, and eyes, and all the members of the body from illicit action. For while they perfectly fortify the tongue through silence, they are victors as if in one part, and while they see with their eyes things they disdain to desire, they become victors from another part. Often they also hear evil things and repel them, and because they reject harmful things, they triumph by rejecting them. Therefore, they are victors in all their senses, who do not wish to be subjected to evil spirits through any of them. But also while an unfitting thought is offered to the heart, the enemy who is rejected is struck down. For he who casts away every harmful thing powerfully oppresses the enemy. And because he likewise

despises joyful things and does not fear adversities, does not repeat the perverse things he once left, and runs fervently toward heavenly things, he is declared to overcome the enemies whom he suffers on every side. In these adversaries, surely, because the ambushes opposed to the five bodily senses are designated, they are aptly expressed by the number five. (Verse 47.) Against Moab, he says, and the children of Ammon, and Edom, and the king of Soba, and the Philistines.

62. For he who set down the names of five nations designated the deceits of demons opposed to the five senses of the body. But because the teacher fights not only by living but also by teaching, when he disputes against all vices, when he kills them with the sword of the word in the minds of his hearers, he is surely seen both to fight on every side and to overcome whithersoever he turns. But certain ones are named specifically, which primarily oppose him: Against Moab, he says, and the children of Ammon, Edom, and the king of Soba, and the Philistines. Moab is interpreted as 'from the father'; Ammon, 'the people of sorrow'; Edom, 'red'; Soba, 'inflamed' or 'turning'; Philistine, 'falling by the cup.' For what is expressed by these names except the stages of an evil life? In Moab, who is called 'from the father,' concupiscence is designated. Indeed, in a reprobate mind, because it is placed by the devil, it is generated as if by a father. But what is shown through Ammon, who is interpreted as 'the people of sorrow,' except the frequency of evil works? For because they are

many, they are called a people, and because they lead each reprobate to the bitterness of eternal mourning, they are rightly named the people of sorrow. Edom, who is called 'red,' what does he insinuate except an excessive fervor of sinning? For everyone is accustomed to sin first, then through the use of sinning, he profits in the increase of fervor, so that he dares to sin more often, and that which he doubles by daring, he always desires more ardently to repeat. By this ardor of sinning, surely, it is brought about that in a reprobate mind whatever was green with virtue or good work is burned up. 'Inflamed' (Soba), then, after Edom is described in the spiritual war, because such is the fall of a lost mind that when it strives fervently to gather evil things, it is despoiled of all good things, lost as if by combustion and reduced to nothing. Soba is also called 'turning,' because burning sin both takes away the form of God from the reprobate mind and restores it to the form of the apostate angel. Of which it is already said by divine sentence: When the wicked man cometh into the depth of sins, he contemneth (Prov. 18:3). A proud mind indeed now despises divine commands and subjects itself to carnal desires. Who, then, is the king of Soba, except he of whom it is said to blessed Job by the Lord: He is king over all the children of pride (Job 41:25). The Philistines, who 'fall by the cup,' who are they, except those who are drunk with all the aforementioned evils? Who so forget heavenly things that they seem scarcely or never to wake up to them. Through Moab, then,

concupiscence of the flesh is expressed; through Ammon, the frequent use of evil operation; through Edom, the burning desire of sinning; through Soba, the devastation and combustion of virtues; through the Philistines, the forgetting of heavenly things. When, therefore, the chosen teacher desires to lead someone out from the midst of such great snares, what a battle of virtue does he take up? And because from every stage of perdition they return to penance through the labor of teachers, he is reported to overcome whithersoever he turns. For by preaching, he sometimes kills concupiscence in someone's heart, sometimes the use of depraved operation. Now he draws those who had passed into the use of sinning, now those who, their virtues burned up and reduced to nothing, served their king, the devil, as if inflamed. And because by preaching he reminds of heavenly things, he excites those 'falling by the cup' and those who have forgotten heavenly things to the study of spiritual life and ardently inflames them through love. Well, therefore, it is said:

(Verse 47.) Whithersoever he turned himself, he overcame.

63. Because while he draws sinners of every kind to life, he is known to triumph everywhere. The Lord commanded His soldiers, His princes, to lead these triumphs when He said: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). He commanded that the gospel be preached to every creature who wished every kind of men to be led to the faith, so that

while He showed the noble triumphs of His kings, He might show them to overcome everywhere. Whence it is written: Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). He indeed wishes all men to be saved because from every kind of men He chooses those whom He draws to the joy of eternal salvation. But what he does with special fortitude, he explains, for he says:

(Verse 48.) And having gathered together an army, he struck Amalec, and delivered Israel from the hand of them that spoiled him.

64. Amalec is interpreted as 'a people licking.' What then is designated by Amalec, except the spirits of fornication? For to lick is theirs, to soothe the mind with the blandishment of the flesh for the purpose of sinning. For as if with the touch of the tongue, they seek to lick when they touch the mind with light suggestions. Why is it that against Moab and Ammon, against Edom and the king of Soba, he is said to have fought and conquered, yet not to have gathered an army, but to conquer Amalec, he gathered an army? Why is it that he gathered an army, except that to extinguish the spirit of fornication, one virtue does not suffice? Abstinence from food is indeed very strong against this vice, but alone it does not prevail; for it is like a soldier, and it can fight, but it cannot overcome, because Amalec is not conquered unless an army be gathered. He who desires to strike fornication, let him add the virtue of humility to abstinence of the body. For if the mind humbly despises to be subject to God,

it does not press down the desires of its flesh by ruling and presiding over them. But it is still necessary that he gather, because he has a small army. Therefore, let a frequent number of prayers be added to the virtue of humility and abstinence of the body. Indeed, the affections of a heart intent on heavenly things are strong soldiers against the war of the flesh. Already, then, he has an array in the frequent assiduity of prayers, but an army has not just one array, but many. Thus, he does not yet have a perfect army, and he is by no means able to strike Amalec. Is it of any use to him that he wears himself out by fasting, that he is moved to compunction for a time by praying, if his mind wanders in its thoughts and carries within itself phantasms of lewdness? But he does not prevail in avoiding shameful thoughts who does not have honorable ones within himself. For since we are always thinking, we must seek out good things for ourselves, lest we think evil things. What, indeed, are all the throngs of good thoughts except innumerable arrays of the mind? For while they surround and occupy the mind, they do not permit the most shameful enemies to approach it. And because by thinking we are kindled to a desire for great purity, our soldiers are clothed in powerful arms, with which they both turn the impetus of fornication to flight by repelling it, and destroy it by reducing it to nothing. For they have no way through which thoughts can enter the soul, which is adorned on every side with the honesty of good thoughts, as if with a very strong soldier. Now, therefore, let

the soul gather an army, which wishes to destroy Amalec and deliver the seeing spirit from the hand of its spoilers. Let it reside in the midst of these, so that, surrounded by the doctrines of the Scriptures according to the examples of the strong elect, it may have no part of itself empty from which the enemy might break in. Because, therefore, the examples of the faithful are innumerable, because the documents of the Scriptures are many, the army is great and strong, but it is not difficult to gather. Well, therefore, it is said of the king of Israel: Having gathered together an army, he struck Amalec, because the spirit of fornication is not conquered before the body is worn out through abstinence, and all the filthiness of obscene thought is put to flight by good things filling the mind. For then the 'licking people' cannot lick it, that is, soothe it by delighting it, because the flesh having been tamed by fasts, the mind having been endowed with the citadel of humility, girded with the arms of prayer, intent on heavenly doctrines, fortified by examples, it does not prevail to provide an entrance to impious suggestion by consenting. This gathering of an army surely well suits kings, that is, the teachers of the Church, because whoever strives to instruct the chosen subjects to extinguish the madness of fornication, these many lines of aid must be gathered by him through the word.

65. It is also well asserted that Israel was delivered from the hand of them that spoiled him. To be delivered (erui) is indeed said to be

plucked out (evelli). And that which is plucked out is felt to have sunk deep roots into the depths. But the hand of the spoilers is the power of evil spirits. Whence also it is written: For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave (2 Peter 2:19). What, then, is gathered, except that while fornicators assent to the desires of the flesh, they are subjected to the power of evil spirits? Because likewise the blandishment of fornication is deep, while the soul is submerged in this through desire, it is held as if by roots in the depth. Therefore, to be delivered from the hand of the spoilers is to be freed from the abyss of fornication, he who is in the power of demons. The impetuses of fornication are also well called spoilers: because of the vice of luxury it is said through blessed Job: It is a fire that devoureth even to destruction, and rooteth up all things that spring (Job 31:12). Indeed, the spirit of fornication is called a spoiler because him whom it has invaded, it surely leaves to him no gifts of virtues. For the labor of the ministry, he can indeed have some good things, but for the merit of salvation, he cannot have them. He is said to be spoiled, then, to whom, chastity being lost, no other good things profit for life. The tender things of gardens are also said to be spoiled. For who are the gardens of the heavenly spouse, except the hearts of the saints fortified through guardianship and flowering through the odor of chastity? For while they receive no shameful movements, they are decorated with the white flower of modesty. Whence it is said to the spouse in the Song

of Songs by the praises of the groom: Thou that dwellest in the gardens, make me hear thy voice (Cant. 8:13). And again: My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed (Cant. 4:12). A garden indeed, because flowering with the virtue of eminent chastity; but enclosed, because fortified through continence. Hence the spouse explains what delights the groom, saying: My beloved to me, and I to him who feedeth among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows retire (Cant. 2:16). Therefore, unclean spirits are spoilers, because if they deceive modest hearts, those deceived lose the tender flowers of such great virtue. Those, therefore, when they return from impurities to chastity, because they escape the dire powers of demons and ascend from the depth of perdition, are aptly remembered to be delivered from the hand of the spoilers. But let us see what kind of helpers the king has, who is said to deliver the people. For it follows:

(Verse 49.) And the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Jessui, and Melchisua: and the names of his two daughters, the name of the elder was Merob, and the name of the younger Michol.

66. The sons of Saul, who are born not to any inheritance but to the kingdom, insinuate those of whom it is said to the holy Church through the Psalmist: Instead of thy fathers, sons are born to thee: thou shalt make them princes over all the earth (Psalm 44:17). We have recognized that these are three, because they defend the faith of the holy Trinity by preaching. But because the king's sons are named after Amalec was struck,

let us refer their number to the merits of virtues. Indeed, maceration of the body, circumspection of the mind, and simplicity of intention are three. Therefore, because the teachers of the holy Church are strong in repressing the lust of the flesh, wise in the guardianship of the heart, and sublime in raising the intention of the heart to heaven, the sons of Saul are said to be three. There are also three: fortitude of work, the virtue of charity, and the most abundant grace of preaching. For the teachers of the holy Church, because they are sublime in great conduct, fervent in great charity, and eloquent in great wisdom of the word, are aptly signified by the number three. The names certainly suit their virtues, because Jonathan is called 'dove's gift'; Jessui, 'plain' or 'my desire'; Melchisua, 'my king salvation.' For because teachers have the excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit, they are rightly named 'dove's gift.' Because likewise they are humble among sublime gifts, they are called 'plain.' Because they ardently request eternal things for the faithful subject to them, they are reported to be 'my desire.' This voice is indeed known to be that of the small subjects, but the virtue of the prelates of such a great name. For we who lie small and cold still in our negligences do not burn with ardent desires for the heavenly country. But that which we cannot ardently demand, he requests for us who pants with great desires for that country which they desire us to attain. For the excellence of charity, therefore, not one who desires but 'desire' is called the king's son, so that the fire of love

may be specially shown to burn in the teacher's mind. Whence also it is said of the Lord through the Psalmist: Who makest thy angels spirits: and thy ministers a burning fire (Psalm 103:4). Hence it is likewise that Daniel is called a 'man of desires' (Dan. 9), because he is reported to have requested the prosperity of his people with great prayers. Melchisua, indeed, is called 'my king salvation.' For the preacher is called 'king' because he holds the highness of order and the dignity of great conduct. He is likewise called 'king' because he holds the summit of highness and the vigor of authority. He is also called 'salvation' so that by his integrity the sickness of the people may be felt able to be driven away. For a teacher ought to act daily by merit of life and devoted prayer so that each one subject to him may be able to reach salvation.

But again the teacher ought to note that when he is named by his subjects, he is not called 'our king,' but 'my king.' What does it mean, then, that he is called 'my king,' except that he ought to be so familiar to all that he is felt by love to belong to each individual? But he who is called 'mine' is named 'king,' because the humble and affable preacher does not seem to have this highness uniquely as his own, but as the special property of each, since he strives to be so common through grace that his highness seems to be the property of each individual. Moreover, it is called the 'burden of the word,' because it is said 'my salvation,' by which surely the diligent study and solicitude of the preacher is commended, because he ought

to attend to all at once in such a way that he seeks and acts for the individual needs of each. For he is called 'my salvation' by each individual if he undertakes the care of each infirm person and leads him to the goods of eternal salvation.

67. What indeed are the daughters of Saul, except the qualities of the elect who are subject to the preacher? For some serve in the studies of the active life, while others are hidden in the removals of the contemplative life. They are called daughters because of their fecundity. The former indeed brings forth a multitude of good works, while the latter produces a fullness of internal joys. Meritously, therefore, they are named daughters of the king, because while they conceive from the word of God, they bring forth heavenly fruits. Whence Merob is well named from 'multitude.' For the active life, because it is perfected from many good works, is rightly named from multitude. Or it is called from multitude because those who please God through the active life are many. For since those who pant after heavenly joys through the contemplative life are fewer in number, in comparison with them, he calls those who serve the active life 'many.' These are indeed many in number, divided in ministry, because even if they seek one heavenly country through good works, they nevertheless serve various works of piety. Certainly some of these progress so far into the love of the Creator that they even desert those good works and desire to pass to the sweetness of the contemplative life and to be free for God in it.

Whence also Michol is well called 'from all' in our language. It is indeed made 'from all,' because no one is perfect in contemplation who has not arrived at the height of the same contemplation from the labor of good work. Whence also in the Gospel the Lord says: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matt. 11:28). Then he who labors is called, when the desire for eternity in acting well is infused. And they approach the one calling them when they come to the rest of the contemplative life. In which surely those laboring are refreshed, because they abundantly take the joys of love from divine contemplation. He indeed refreshes those approaching, who shows himself to pure minds. In whose revelation, because they find many joys of contemplation, they are saturated as if by an all-encompassing sweetness of delight, not from another, but from him himself. Michol is therefore called 'from all,' because no one seeks the secret of the contemplative life who was not first in some good operation. Therefore, she is called the younger sister, not because she is inferior in dignity, but because she is later in time. If someone, however, wishes to take the contemplative life through the firstborn daughter and the active life through the younger, he can. And then indeed Merob is called from 'multitude,' because she deserts the crowds of the multitude and comes to the rarer number of those perfect in contemplation. Therefore, she is called not 'the multitude,' but 'from the multitude,' so that not those with whom she is, but whence she had

come may be recognized. Michol indeed is called 'from all,' so that in the active life the universal life of the holy Church may be designated. For in the active life those are also first who afterwards pass to the secret of the contemplative life, but in the removal of the contemplative life, they are not burdened by the solicitude of the external life. The former, therefore, can be called 'from the multitude,' the latter indeed 'from all,' because the active life contains all, while the contemplative life declines the sight of all, so that it may join itself to heavenly things by the sight of the mind. How then are they called daughters of Saul, except because each life is shown by the study of the good rector? For those who teach us to act well, to be free for the studies of eternal life, are generated for us by him whose magisterium they are learned in our heart. Which indeed, because it consists of the works of the active life, seems marvelous concerning the contemplative, which is described through Mary, the sister of Martha, who sat at the feet of the Lord and heard his word (Luke 10). But it is easily answered that while Mary sits, she signifies those perfect in contemplation. Nevertheless, Merob is rightly called the daughter of Saul, because even if sitting at the feet of the Lord she hears and learns what she wishes from him, she nevertheless must first learn how she can sit. Since this is surely known by the instruction of a wise and learned teacher, Merob is rightly remembered to be the daughter of Saul (1 Sam. 18). Whom indeed he promised to give in marriage to David, but he gave him

the younger, because some love the beauty of the contemplative life, to whose embraces they are by no means permitted to approach. For because they are necessary outside for ruling the faithful flocks, the supreme king so ordains that they receive Michol the younger, and never comprehend Merob the elder. Many, however, receive the elder after the younger, because after devoted works of charity they are received into the love of the intimate secret; which Jacob well insinuates, who loved Rachel, but first received Leah, and thus afterwards took Rachel in marriage (Gen. 29). Why is this, that Jacob was permitted to have both sisters, but David did not arrive at the chamber of the elder, except because David was a king, while Jacob was not a king? He, therefore, who undertakes the governance of souls, the ecclesiastical censure does not allow him, having undertaken the flock, to desert it and be free for the leisure of a remote life. But Merob is promised to David and is never given; Michol alone is given, because some, when they undertake the care of souls, think they are so managing the solicitude of others that they may be able to be free for themselves through solicitude; and yet they never find the rest which they seek in prelacy; and it happens that while they cannot obtain from the Lord the grace of such great purity, they fear as if they had incurred the anger of the Lord. As if, therefore, because of the king being angry, they lose the promised firstborn, because they cannot embrace that love of intimate rest which they thought they would have in prelacy. These things we have said briefly

by the way; now therefore let us return to what was left behind.

68. Both daughters of Saul are therefore spoken of, but they obtain different names because they both differ and agree. They agree indeed because they tend through love toward the eternal life which they love. Likewise they agree because good works, by which the one is unceasingly extended, the other works in whatever way. Since therefore both love the eternal things which they see, both desire to arrive at them through good operation, in whatever way they agree; but they differ because one acts more, the other sees more. For Leah also is not said to have been blind, but blear-eyed. And Rachel, if she did not bear so many, nevertheless did not remain altogether sterile. For if one life surpasses the other in contemplating or in working, yet to neither of them is the clarity of vision taken away, to neither is the glory of fecundity denied. Nevertheless, they differ in seeing and acting, because the active life has vision in passing, but work in intention; the contemplative indeed has work on the way, but intention in rest. Whence well the evangelist Mark, when he showed the love of the contemplative life under the appearance of those three women, said: They bought spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus (Mark 16:1). As if he should say: They stood in work, that they might be able to run to contemplation. Indeed, to buy spices is to dilate the odor of good reputation everywhere through the labor of good work. And to anoint Jesus in the tomb is to arrive at the

fatness of intimate devotion through the mortification of the flesh. For he is anointed as if in the tomb when he is most devoutly reached by those buried with him to the joy of his intimate clarity. Therefore they have operation in passing, because even if they sometimes work, they leave this as if by running, they who are impelled to the place of beloved solitude by a great impetus of spirit. For because they rest with all desires in the love of eternal things, they seek to see rather than to minister. Rare therefore are they in the public of work, assiduous in the secret of contemplation; they dwell little outside, enough inside. For they are even accustomed to judge it as fornication to depart even for a moment from the contemplation of Christ.

69. On the contrary, however, the active life, which is frequently busy about ministry, is rare in the secret of contemplation. For that which has proposed to prepare eternal things for itself not by sitting and hearing, but by being busy and ministering, thinks it not a loss, but an expense, if, being free for itself, and seeking its own things, and not those of others, it should rest from the accustomed offering of services. It labors more by working, therefore it beseeches less. Whence also Martha, who was busy about frequent ministry, stood and spoke (Luke 10:40). For surely it was not permitted to her who stood to sit, because if she sat to hear, she would perhaps have expended an unprepared and insufficient ministry. And it is to be noted that in passing, Martha saw the Lord, yet she speaks not in passing, but by

standing. For the evangelist cautiously expressed it, saying: Who stood, and said (ibid.). By which example indeed we are instructed, so that we who exhibit ministries to the brethren, if we cannot sit at the feet of the Redeemer through delay, we ought to assist the Redeemer through some little delay. But we assist him well if we see by passing and serving. What indeed is it to see the Lord in passing, except in all our good work to direct the intention of the heart to him? For we pass when, by running about here and there, we minister to the Lord in his members. But we see the Lord in passing if, through all that we do, we contemplate him present to us, whom we desire to please. In which place it is to be noted that Martha speaks confidently, saying: Lord, is it no care to thee that my sister hath left me alone to minister? (Luke 10:40). Which certainly suits certain perfect workers of the holy Church, who offer prayers to the almighty God so much more trustfully as they remember to have ministered to him more laboriously in his members. But because in those also who serve the active life the excess of solicitude is to be restrained, Martha is rebuked, who is asserted to be so solicitous as to be troubled about many things. The fervor of action is then rightly disposed when we so insist on work that we see with a tranquil heart him to whom we strive to consecrate our works. What indeed is excess of solicitude except a confusion of supernal intention? because while it divides itself among many things, once divided it does not rise to the intuition of supernal things.

For since the soul hardly comprehends that eternal and simple good of eternal vision when united, it surely does not raise itself to it when divided. Therefore the disposer and receiver of our works says: One thing is necessary, lest the mind divide itself toward many things, so that, united through tranquility, it may rise powerfully to the intuition of the supreme good. The two daughters of Saul, therefore, although equally daughters of the king, differ in names, because the active and contemplative life are noble by the nobility of generous religion, but they are not equal due to the diversity of office. But since we have shown their father, let us likewise demonstrate their mother. It follows:

(Vers. 50.) And the name of Saul's wife was Achinoam, the daughter of Achimaas.

70. For who is the wife of the preacher, except a good will? For he who is joined through love to a good will, to him indeed sons are born as if from a noble spouse. For when we wish to bring forth the fruits of good works, it is necessary that we first sow them in a good will. Whence well Achinoam is interpreted as 'the brother's rest.' For our brother is he who, rising from the dead, spoke to Mary Magdalene, saying: Go, and say to my brethren: I ascend to my Father and your Father (John 20:17). Hence Paul, asserting the nobility of the elect, says: But heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). What is it that is said, 'the brother's rest,' except because the Redeemer of the human race rests in the good will of his joint-heirs? And because the

good will is bestowed upon us by him by whom it is inhabited, she is reported to be the daughter of Achimaas. For Achimaas is interpreted as 'the brother's beauty' or 'the brother is beauty.' For our Redeemer is called brother and beauty because human nature lost the vigor of its dignity through the sin of the first man, but in the person of the Redeemer, it radiated with an increased splendor for itself. He is indeed our beauty, because whoever shine with the clarity of virtues in the holy Church, they all receive from the fullness of that light. Hence Paul says: In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally (Col. 2:9). Therefore, while the prophet Samuel respects the good will of our preachers, he expresses the things seen by types, saying: Achinoam the daughter of Achimaas, because surely the beauty of a good will is great, but it is born from the infusion of the Redeemer. For it ought to be loved as a spouse, but if the father is looked at, it is loved more from nobility.

(Vers. 50.) And the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

71. Abner is called 'my father is a lamp,' and Ner is also called a 'lamp.' What therefore is Ner taken to be, except the word of the Scriptures? The letter of the holy Scripture is indeed as it were the shell of this lamp, the spiritual understanding is the clarity of the light, but its oil is the devotion of love. Therefore he is the son of the lamp who willingly hears the words of the Scriptures, and wisely understands them, and those things which he collects through understanding,

he apprehends through the affect of charity. Why therefore is he called the son of the lamp, except because that which is born of light is light? For what is sin except darkness? Likewise what is a good work except light? For holy men, while they direct the steps of their works to the guidance of the Scriptures, receive as it were light from light of spiritual erudition. This indeed John expressing, says: Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not: but the generation of God preserveth him (1 John 5:18). What is it to be born of God, except to love his will known in the holy Scriptures? And what is it not to sin, except to consist always in the light of justice? For the blessed apostle Peter wanted to make us light from light when he said: You have a prophetical word, whereunto you do well to attend, as to a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts (2 Pet. 1:19). Meritously therefore Abner is called 'my father is a lamp,' and his father himself is named a 'lamp,' because those can shine through examples for others in the holy Church who have received both the clarity of light and the oil of perfect charity from the erudition of the Scriptures. But he is said through John not to sin, that he may insinuate the strength of preachers, who so reach out the hand to sinners that they themselves nevertheless are not defiled by the darkness of sins. But what is it that he is called the uncle's son (cousin) of Saul? For he is called a cousin who is born from the brother of the father. Whence here also is subjoined:

(Vers. 51.) And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

72. And when the king to be chosen was requested, it was said: Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel (1 Sam. 9:1). Because we have already fully explained what those names of the royal stock signify, let us only express this, how Abner is reported to be the cousin of Saul. But Saul is known to be the son of Kish, that is, of the hard; Abner is also reported to be the son of the lamp. We have shown that this hard one designates men of an overly austere conduct, and that Ner is interpreted as a lamp. What is it, therefore, that the lamp and the hard one are said to be sons of the same father, except because both what the holy Scripture prescribes as austere and the external virtue of hard conduct are from God? For the brother of the lamp is the hard one, because he has the grace of fulfilling the law from him from whom the law itself has its origin. Whence also the Psalmist confidently promises back, saying: For the lawgiver shall give a blessing (Psalm 83:8). For to give the law is to bring forth the precepts of life for the elect; to give a blessing is also to bestow the grace of fulfilling the law. Because therefore both the light of Scripture and the asperity of our life are from one, Kish and Ner are reported to be sons of one father. Abner, therefore, the son of Ner, is rightly said to be the cousin of king Saul, because he who is chosen for the care of souls is judged to ought to be of a hard and sharp life. But those who desire to be helpers

of preachers never do what they desire if they do not perfect the light of holy Scripture, in which they were conceived through knowledge, in good operation and holy preaching, as if by being born. Since however the knowledge of the holy Scriptures is ascribed more to the supreme teachers than to their subject helpers, and to follow the examples of conduct seems to suit the lesser more than the greater; what is it that the son of the hard one is called king, but the son of the lamp is called the king's captain? But by these words he does not signify what the supreme teachers and their helpers have, but having suppressed what they have, he explains what is to be done by each. For the king, namely the supreme and elect preacher, because he already has the light of Scripture through the knowledge of the deepest erudition, should not so trust in knowledge that he by no means follows the examples of others. The captain also, that is, the helper of the great teacher, because he is subject to the examples of the same superior of his, should lean upon the light, so that he who follows examples may be born into the erudition of a higher doctrine, as if in the great light of a lamp. He therefore who, being learned, is reduced to the examples of the greater through humility, being instructed by examples is raised to the splendor of the Scriptures by learning, is well reported to be king the son of the hard one, and the captain the son of the lamp. Such men, because they profitably stand over the elect faithful, because they strongly promote the subjects to the victories of virtues; there follows:

(Vers. 52.) And there was heavy war against the Philistines all the days of Saul.

73. The war of those teachers is weak and altogether infirm, who have neither the light of divine knowledge nor the strength of good operation. Therefore, a war is called heavy when the sons of the hard one rule over the chosen peoples, because he can profitably speak good things to others who is accustomed to precede words with great operation. But it must also be subtly observed what is said more intricately: All the days of Saul. What are the days of Saul, except the works of light? What else is the teacher's war than that which is made by the tongue? Therefore, he fights all his days who teaches many things to others, but brings forth nothing in teaching except what first shines by his own work. For he fights in his own day who draws the words of preaching from the proper light of virtue. On the other hand, he wishes to fight in another's day who busies himself to oppose reprobate spirits, not speaking what he does, but preaching what he knows. But he fights all his days: because he shows all the precepts of God in the light of work, which he wishes to disclose through the care of preaching by following them. Rightly, therefore, is the war called heavy, in which one fights with every kind of light of virtues or works. It can also be designated by this, that he is said to fight all his days, the urgency of the spiritual struggle. For he who leads a life full of virtues lives in days. Therefore, the heavy war of the elect teacher is recognized in all his

days, because he is seen always to overcome evil spirits who is never separated from the light of virtues. But elect men have the virtue of fighting, they have also the humility of fear. Through virtue they triumph, but through fear they do not cease to gather help. Whence they fight the more strongly, as they do not cease to gather the strengths for conflicting. Well, therefore, is the cause of the heavy war subjoined:

(Vers. 52.) For whomever Saul saw to be a strong man and apt for battle, he joined him to himself.

74. As if he were to say: For this reason he could war powerfully, because he did not cease to gather an army. But because he is said to have joined to himself not only the strong, but also those apt for battle, a cautious teacher is demonstrated in choosing the soldiers of Christ. For some are strong for bearing burdens, not for exercising battles, because as long as they do not know how to battle from their own strength, they are by no means able. Therefore, men are strong and apt for battle who know how to fight, and are willing. For through will they are strong, and through knowledge apt for battling. Therefore, the temerity of some is repelled from Christ's war, since the apt and the strong are remembered as chosen. For some know how to fight with the devil, and are unwilling. They are indeed wise to do evil, but to do good they do not know (Jer. 4:22). These wish to serve the ancient enemy, they do not wish to resist. For what should a teacher do if he joins these apt ones to himself for

battle? Such as these can rather destroy others by examples than he himself build up by the word. For often such as these dare to teach, and do not hold the virtue of teaching by operating. When they speak with us, they rush upon the enemies, but through works they are suddenly twisted into our own bowels. Like certain traitors of the army, they put on the arms of Christian doctrine, and through examples they suddenly strike the little ones of Christ, whom we thought they wished to protect by speaking. Therefore, the strong men who are not apt are to be repelled, not joined to us, because by reprobate wise men our strength is destroyed, not increased. Who then are the strong and not apt, except those whom we see to bear the burdens of the world strongly, and not to know how to transfer their strength into the service of the Creator? For they bear strongly the yoke of men, and the great labors of the world, but to approach the service of God they are afraid as if weak. What then are these, except strong and not apt, who do the great things of the world, and cannot do the light and gentle things of Christ? Often they are even converted in monasteries, and those who had strongly borne the burdens of the world sweat in the small things which they do, as if among great labors. What then is shown by these words, except that we should join men to the militia of Christ with great discretion, nor provide entry to those approaching before we know them to be both apt through knowledge and strong through good will? Moreover, those can be called strong and apt for battle who follow

after the wars of Amalek, that is, of lusts. For those are not strong men who cannot extinguish carnal concupiscences. And those do not seem apt for battle who are not apt for battling for the sake of modesty. Let the teacher, therefore, choose the soldiers of Christ, let him choose the strong, so that while they strongly tame the flesh, they may powerfully conquer the unclean spirits. Let him choose, therefore, the apt for battle; so that while they are not proud among the gifts of strength, they may be raised up in the glory of triumph in the heavens.

BOOK SIX.

CHAPTER ONE.

(1 Sam. 15:1-3.) And Samuel said to Saul: The Lord sent me to anoint thee king over his people Israel. Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I have reckoned up whatever Amalek did to Israel, how he withstood him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now therefore go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that he hath.

1. We have said above that Amalek designates the vice of luxury, which as it were licks, while it suggests pleasure by flattering. Therefore, the progress of conduct is shown in that he is asserted above to have been struck by Saul, and now he is not simply commanded to be struck, but to destroy all that belongs to him. Indeed, the teacher first strikes him when it is done through his word that modesty is held in the hearts and

bodies of the converts. For lust is as it were struck when the flesh is subdued in any way by the arms of modesty, and yet is not perfectly subdued. For he who already deserts the defilements of luxury, but still feels base movements rising within himself against himself, no longer practices the nefarious work, but yet he cannot drive this away from his thought. Often, unwilling and incautious, he is drawn to unclean thoughts, but those things which he thinks within through neglect excite the flesh without, so that it rises to base movements of pleasure. What then is it that Amalek, having been struck, is again commanded to be struck and destroyed, except because the preacher ought to promote those whom he instructs to a modest life unto the perfection of virtue? Therefore, Amalek is again commanded to be struck, because, not yet well killed, he lives. Amalek is struck again when those movements also which pulse the flesh are crushed by the words of the teacher, when the teacher teaches the subjects to be crowned for this purpose, that they ought so to tame the body that it may by no means rise to seductive movements. But because the flesh is never so restrained if the mind slips into thinking unclean things, after the striking, Amalek is commanded to be destroyed. Therefore, he is struck in the body, he is destroyed in the heart, while the flesh is worthily worn down through abstinence, and the mind is restrained from all unclean thoughts. In which place those prior things are also to be considered, which Samuel speaks from the person of the Lord, say-

ing: I have reckoned up whatever Amalek did to Israel, how he withstood him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.

2. Why is it that the works of the Amalekites are reckoned up, except because the defilements of luxury are greatly hateful to God? Whence the blessed apostle Paul says: Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1 Cor. 6:18). Likewise he says: Fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4). From here also rebuking more sharply, and segregating them from the kingdom of God, he says: Nor shall the unclean possess the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:5). Why is luxury reckoned up, except because the sinner is cast out by the justice of God when he is bent down to perpetrating its defilements? He therefore who is reckoned up so that he may fall, is sometimes reckoned up so that he may perish, sometimes reckoned up so that he may rise. And because, after such long spans of time having been reckoned up, the deeds of Amalek are remembered, it is somehow suggested to us; because such persons may sometimes repent after long times. Moreover, his works themselves are expressed when it is said: How he withstood him in the way when he came up out of Egypt. Israel is said to mean 'seeing God.' He who is reported to come up out of Egypt suggests the newly converted, who desert the darkness and the depths of sins, and approach the light of truth, and ascend the mountain of good work.

3. Moreover, Amalek withstood Israel in the way, because lust objects the arms of pleasure to those tending toward the height of perfection, and strikes the hearts it can with the sword of unclean suggestion. And because the fight of fornication is greatly strong and violent, he is reported not just to have met Israel in any way, but to have withstood him. To withstand is indeed to press on with a strong attack. Doubtless that ascending Israelite saw these withstanding Amalekites when he said: I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind (Rom. 7:23). Whence also looking back to the helper, he says: Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:24-25). Therefore, Amalek is said to withstand, because while we are in the flesh, we sustain the heavy wars of lust. But why is he said to withstand those ascending from Egypt? Behold, he who had raised himself to the secrets of the third heaven had the withstanding movements of the flesh. Rightly, therefore, Israel ascending from Egypt suggests not only novices, but also those endowed with great virtue. Indeed, by the name of Egypt, the darkness of this world is designated. But Israel ascends from Egypt, because all the elect, while they make progress by living holily, strive to reach the supernal fatherland. And because as long as they are in the flesh, they have the law of the flesh contrary to the law of the mind, they surely see Amalek withstanding them through powerful movements. For the violence of this passion is shown when those

same wars of Amalek, which are reckoned up, are described. For while Israel fought, when Moses lifted up his hands, Amalek was conquered; and he conquered when the former let down his hands (Exod. 17). But what is it that against others Moses fought with arms alone, but against Amalek not with arms alone, but also by the virtue of prayer? What virtue and urgency of supplication was then necessary, where if he let down his hands, he would give the honor of victory to Amalek? But surely the great contest of fornication is shown, which is overcome by such virtue, such difficulty. Therefore, the most intent prayer of the army is necessary as arms. Arms are indeed necessary, because those who wish to fight against fornication cannot conquer if they are not fortified by the other virtues. The army, as we have shown above, consists of the examples of the Fathers and the precepts of the Scriptures, which anyone ought also to consider, and so occupy the mind with them that he does not look at the defilements of lasciviousness. But being instructed by examples and doctrines, he can by no means trust in himself. Let him therefore lift up his hands, let him lift up his mind, so that he may shine with good work and devotion, who attempts to cut off perfectly from himself the war of lust.

4. Likewise, what is it that is conquered when the hands are let down, except that often through the audacity of a wicked work, even the beauty of chastity itself is taken away? Often it is not taken away entirely, but is weakened along with

the weakening works. Indeed, among works and spiritual labors, we are strong against the stings of the flesh, but if, as if weary, we grow torpid from the rigor of our accustomed conduct, or soften while we gradually neglect, the pricks of the flesh rise up, which conquer Israel as if with the hands of Moses let down (Exod. 17). Lest therefore the hands grow weary, let Aaron and Hur place a stone beneath, and by no means allow the heavy hands of Moses to be let down. Aaron indeed is called 'mountain of strength,' and Hur 'fire.' For when we grow weary, we are strengthened by considering heavenly things. What then is the mountain of strength, except the height of supernal contemplation? Which surely, because it is not in an elect heart without great charity, is rightly reported to stand by the mountain of strength of Moses. They doubtless place the stone beneath and sustain the hands, because he who ardently looks at the highest rewards of the heavens takes great strength, and does not cease to work well and to entreat the Creator. Because therefore the wars of the flesh are powerful and altogether violent, Amalek is aptly reported to have withstood the ascending Israel. Therefore, the Prophet commands the king, saying: Hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord. I have reckoned up whatever Amalek did to Israel.

5. What is it that he says: 'Hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord,' except that for those wishing to live chastely, one must subtly watch against the frauds of the spirit of fornication? As

if he were to say: Do not cease to consider with how many snares he prepares to subject the elect to himself. And for that reason he did not say: 'I have reckoned up that he withstood Israel,' but: 'Hearken thou unto the voice of the Lord.' I have reckoned up how he withstood Israel. As if he were to say: If you know the manner of the snares, you will be able to overcome the enemy more easily. Rightly, therefore, he added, saying: 'Now therefore go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that he hath.' As if he were to say: Because you know how you ought to go: 'Go, and utterly destroy all that he hath,' and so delete him that nothing of him may live further. But who could so subject the flesh to himself, who could ever so restrain the mind to himself, who could so remain in the flesh that he sustained no base movements of the flesh? Who could so refrain thought that no obscurity of impurities reached it through thought? But if the baseness of motion is not taken away from the flesh, yet the strength of the baseness is unnerved, when indeed there is a simple motion in the flesh, but in the motion there is no itch of lust. This motion indeed is not Amalekite, because it does not lick the mind which it will not be able to delight. It cannot be taken from the mind that it should not see unclean things in some way, but it is led into a wonderful use of purity, so that seeing unclean things, it is stained by no blot of delight. Whoever therefore so presides over the flesh, whoever so rules the mind, therefore presides, therefore rules, because he was able to strongly destroy

all things of Amalek. But now he subsequently explains what those universal things of his are, saying:

(Vers. 3.) Spare him not, and covet not anything of his; but slay from man even unto woman, and infant, and suckling, and ox, and ass, and sheep, and camel.

6. Who is this who spares Amalek, except he who retains something of lasciviousness either in thought, or in the mouth, or in the flesh? For many do not practice works of baseness, but they do not restrain the tongue from base speech. Many avoid luxury through work, but they do not avoid it through thought. Some do nothing base, but what they flee from in act, they covet in the heart. He therefore spares Amalek who holds the flatteries of lasciviousness either in speech, or through intention, or through thought. Therefore he says: 'Spare him not,' because from so wicked a vice nothing ought to be kindled in the mind, nothing permitted to burn in work. Let him say therefore: 'Spare him not,' so that all lustful movements, all obscene speeches may be altogether destroyed in the body. He says therefore: 'And covet not anything of his'; so that it may be thoroughly eradicated from thought. For what is lust, except fire? And what are the virtues arisen from the flesh and the mind, except flowers? Likewise, what are base thoughts, except chaff? Who also would not know that if fire is carelessly extinguished in chaff, from a small spark which remains, all the chaff is kindled? He therefore who does not wish to burn up the flowers of

virtues in the mind, ought so to extinguish the fire of lust that it can never burn through a thin spark. Let him also take away the stubble of carnal thoughts, lest while that natural heat, which cannot be extinguished, is kindled, the greenness of virtues, which cannot be kindled by themselves, be burned up as if through the mixed-in chaff.

7. What then is: 'Spare him not, and covet not anything of his,' except that all luxury in the flesh is to be perfectly tamed, and from the mind radically extirpated? It can also be understood: 'Spare him not, and covet not anything from him,' because both men and women, infants and sucklings are commanded to be killed. For women could be coveted, and infants and sucklings provoke to mercy. Who therefore are the men to be killed, what women, what infants, what oxen, what sheep, what camels, what asses, must be subtly considered. For who are the Amalekite men, except the persuading movements of baseness? For they are men because they suggest violently, and infuse the seeds of depravity into corrupted minds. The women are the concupiscences of the mind, which are laid under the aforesaid movements for impious offspring. But who also are the infants and sucklings, except those who are generated from the commingling of Amalekite men and women? For if the movement of evil suggestion is received in the mind as an adulterer, concupiscence is impregnated as a harlot. Therefore, if concupiscence itself is permitted to pour forth a nefarious birth, the

movements of lusts are generated now not only in the mind, but also in the flesh. Which, while they are being born, are infants, because they do not yet bring violence to the flesh by moving. They are indeed sucklings when they are nourished by a thin and negligent thought. For he who already refreshes base movements in the flesh with free thought, no longer bestows milk on infants, but food on adults. Therefore, the milk of the Amalekite infants is the thin thought of impurity, because if the base movement is not fed through thought, the infants are killed as if milk were denied them. Which milk surely the harlot mother proffers, because while the ardor of concupiscence prevents the mind, it is agitated as if from the worst abundance of the heart, so that worse offspring of movements are nourished in the flesh. Moreover, what is received in the ox, except a fraudulent counsel, which suggests the pleasure of the flesh by the example of the ancients, who pleased almighty God among the works of the flesh? For it is seen as it were to cleave the earth with the plowshare of discretion; but if it is taken up from deliberation, it ensnares the necks of the wretched mind with the yoke of baseness, which it carries through simulation.

8. Moreover, by the name of the sheep, the life of the innocent is signified. Whence all the elect are named sheep by the voice of our Redemptor, when he says: 'My sheep hear my voice' (John 10:27). What then is the sheep of Amalek, except the simulation of innocence? For some, while they consider both the form of the human body

itself and the properties of each sex, and the inherent lust in the members, think they can licentiously use this as a natural good. Therefore, it is as it were an Amalekite sheep when that is suggested to the continent as if a good, which is clearly proved not to be truly good. What also is signified in the camel? But the camel ruminates, and by no means divides the hoof. What then is signified in the camel, except a certain thought of luxury, which as it were begins from reason, but is not finished through discretion? For while it thinks, the camel as it were ruminates within, but while what it thinks is not disposed through truth, its hoof is not seen to be divided. For some who have professed continence, while they are overcome by the concupiscence of the flesh, trust that they can be saved in conjugal life. Some also, while they hear the apostle's license: 'Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband' (1 Cor. 7:2), confess that all without discretion of persons are included in this precept, and that men of sacred orders can use conjugal copulation. For a sense of this kind is an Amalekite camel, because it as it were begins from reason, but draws to an irrational life. What then is the ass, except the open wickedness of fornication is understood? For the devil carries some into the open chaos of fornication, and deludes some through frauds. The ass also is accustomed to carry others' burdens. But the teacher of the gentiles, while he taught that the man has not power over his own body, but the woman, likewise: 'Nor has the woman power

over her own body, but the man' (1 Cor. 7:4), what else did he command them than to carry others' burdens? Therefore, by the name of the ass, the strength of conjugal copulation is designated, because elect spouses strongly carry their burdens in turn, lest through the infirmity of the flesh they fall more loosely into the chasm of fornication. Therefore the ass is to be killed, but the Amalekite one, because the conjugal copulation is to be strengthened in the honesty of the marriage bed, but killed from baseness. Spouses indeed ought to render the debt to each other in turn, but they ought not to come together basely. Therefore the ass of Amalek is killed when in good spouses the charity of honest copulation is held, but all obscenity is avoided in base conjunction. All things of Amalek, therefore, are commanded to be destroyed, because those who propose to live chastely ought not to retain anything of the flattery of the flesh in themselves. They ought indeed to be in the flesh, so that they may do good through the flesh, but they ought so to depart from the pleasure of the flesh through the sublimity of the mind, that they do not tolerate insults from the flesh. Such indeed he wished them to be, to whom the Apostle spoke, saying: 'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit' (Rom. 8:9). But let us attend to what helpers he who is commanded to delete Amalek may suffice for these things. For there follows: (Vers. 4.) Saul commanded the people, and reckoned them up as lambs.

9. By the name of lambs, men of great prudence are accustomed to be designated. Whence it is said through John: 'I saw upon mount Sion a Lamb standing, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written in their foreheads' (Rev. 14:1). For they who had assumed the name of the Lamb were called lambs. Also explaining them, he says: 'These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins' (Rev. 14:4). What then is it that when Amalek is commanded to be deleted, the soldiers of the king are reckoned as lambs, except that when we wish to delete the spirit of fornication by preaching, we ought to bring forward the examples of the perfect? For as many as we show to be distinguished by the glory of modesty to the seculars to be converted, we carry as it were so many soldiers reckoned as lambs to the wars of Amalek. Moreover, by the name of these reckoned ones, the ministers of divine preaching themselves can be understood. They are therefore as it were lambs, because through the glory of perfect modesty, they are already likened to those virgins rejoicing with Christ in the kingdom. By which words it is surely shown that they who take up the ministry of preaching are first to be adorned with the chief brightness of chastity, because if they flow away through incontinence, they can by no means make others continent, and they do not prevail to provoke others to the good of such great light, who do not have its rays in the brightness of their own conduct. Rightly therefore is it said: 'He

reckoned them up as lambs,' because it behooves those to be greatly modest who ought to put to flight the spirit of fornication through the power of the order they have received. Whence the Lord says to them in the Gospel: 'Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning in your hands' (Luke 12:35), so that the subjects may hear the word of preaching, but the examples of a most bright conduct may draw them to the good of chastity which they hear. Whence they are well designated by a perfect number, when it is added: (Vers. 4.) Two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

10. By the name of footmen, the elect are figured, not when they preach high things, but when through good examples they demonstrate the rectitude of the heavenly journey to others. Footmen indeed run with steps where they wish to bring forth arms. But what are the examples of chastity, except the footprints of heavenly soldiers impressed upon the earth? For so that they may strike the vices of lusts in slippery places, they hasten to the darkness of their hearts with the light of good examples, and reaching them as it were by step, they destroy the enemies, who after they are known through works, draw the hearts of sinners to the good of modesty. When therefore through examples of chastity they destroy the darkness of impurities in the hearts of sinners, they are rightly named footmen. And because they are splendid not only by the pretext of corporal cleanness, but also by the light of the heart, they are reported to be two hundred

thousand. Indeed, in the centenary and millenary number, the whole sum of the decalogue is concluded. Therefore, perfect men are contained in the two hundred thousand, because through divine grace they have reached the highest citadel of modesty as much by the continence of the body as by the integrity of the mind. For they have perfection of intention both in the body and in the mind. Or because they serve God through modesty not loosely or negligently, they have the centenary of work, and because they do not cease to serve him, they have the millenary of multiplication. But they are strong and assiduous for the continence of the body, perfect and urgent for the circumspection of the heart by the perfection of virtue. Ordering such a widow also to be, the Apostle says: 'That she may be holy both in body and in spirit' (1 Cor. 7:34). For she is holy in body and in spirit if she shines also in the mind by the perfection of chastity with which she shines in the body. But if widows are such, what ought virgins to be commanded to be? For of those many, it was said under the description of one: 'The queen stood at thy right hand in gilded clothing' (Psalm 45:9). In the same psalm also she is praised, when it is said: 'All the glory of that daughter of the king is from within, in golden fringes encompassed with varieties' (Psalm 45:13-14). For what is the gilded clothing except the decor and honor of the virginal body? It is indeed called clothing because it shines without in the body, but gilded because it excels in dignity. For every kind of metal is inferior to gold. So surely all other modesty cannot

be compared to virginal decor. What then is it that is said: 'All the glory of the daughter of kings is from within,' if the glory of gilded clothing is preached to be without? For if there is some great glory of gilded clothing without, all the glory cannot be seen within. What then is it that all glory is reported to be within, except because even that glory which is without is known to be within with innumerable others? For virginity is not golden if it is without and is not within. Because therefore it is within and without, because the same shines in the body, the same shines in the mind, all the glory of the daughter of kings can conveniently be felt to be within. All glory is within, because it is not alone without, not alone within. For because there are many brightnesses of virtues in the mind of a virgin, virginal splendor is so asserted that all glory is preached to be within. This surely is what follows: 'In golden fringes encompassed with varieties.' For the golden fringes are the brightnesses never failing from the mind. Fringes indeed are the final parts of a garment. Which are for that reason praised in the decor of the spouse of Christ, because there is no glory of virtues if it ceases to shine before the consummation of life. She is called queen because of love, in gilded clothing virginity is preached. But all glory within, and in golden fringes, and asserted to be encompassed with variety, so that integrity joined to innumerable virtues may be felt to be led even unto the end. Rightly therefore against Amalek two hundred thousand footmen are reckoned, because those

are fit for warring down unclean spirits through examples of chastity, who have learned to hold it both in the light of work and in the splendor of circumspection.

11. Because they are likewise instructed and perfect in the word of God, they are demonstrated by the number of ten thousand men of Judah. For they are men by strength, but of Judah by preaching. For Judah is interpreted as 'confessing.' But they are designated by the decimal number because they have attained the perfection of doctrine through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Whence also the ten precepts of the law are attributed to Moses, which were written by the finger of God (Exod. 31:18). For what is the finger of God except the Holy Spirit? Who, when he wrote the law, surely published it in ten precepts, because although he brought forth something carnal without in it, he signified this perfection of spiritual intelligence within. Therefore, ten thousand men of Judah are to be brought forth against Amalek, so that the spirit of fornication may be overcome by apt strengths. Indeed, he licks by suggestion, because he counsels light and flattering things, but the things which he counsels by licking, he shows through the phantasms of thoughts. Therefore, so that the obscene mind may not see the things shown to it by demons, the examples of the elect are to be revealed. And so that the unclean spirit may not be able to soothe it with base suggestions, the tongue of preachers ought to be touched by the praise of modesty. Let the preacher lick it, so that

the malignant spirit may by no means be able to lick it. And let him delight it with words, lest the devil tear it apart through the delights of suggestions when heavenly things are lacking to someone. Against a double war of the heart, therefore, because a double good of help is necessary, both footmen and men of Judah are well reported to be prepared against Amalek. Moreover, if anyone wishes some to be understood through footmen, others through men of Judah, the sense of truth is openly clear, because the highest teachers have those who do not know how to teach by preaching, but are able to be profitable by work. But now let us hear by what art those reckoned subsequently fight in such great battles. There follows: (Vers. 5.) And when Saul was come to the city of Amalek, he laid snares in the torrent.

12. What is this torrent except that of which it is said through the Psalmist: 'He shall drink of the torrent in the way' (Psalm 110:7)? Indeed, the torrent designates the course of our mortality. Therefore, Saul lays snares in the torrent when the preacher of the Church inserts the consideration of our mortality into eternal rewards. For so that he may take slippery souls as if through fraud, he now begins to speak heavenly things, but suddenly he is turned to explaining the bitterness of eternal punishments, so that minds secure in the delight of the flesh may be terrified. For he leads out as it were through fraud, he strikes through snares, while by speaking joyful things he provokes to hearing, and inserts the sorrows of death, so that the slippery may hear

what they may fear. Therefore, Saul comes to the city of Amalek when the teacher attracts the hearts of sinners fortified through illicit love by the sweetness of eternal pleasantness. But he hides snares for him in the torrent because he induces the consideration of death, so that the sinner may see a soldier breaking out against him as if from snares, and while he considers that he is quickly to die, he may greatly fear to extend the delay of sin further. There follows: (Vers. 6.) Saul said to the Kenite: 'Depart from Amalek, lest I involve thee with him.' For thou hast shown mercy to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt.

Who is the Kenite (Cyneus), who is known to dwell with Amalek, and who is also forced to depart, lest he be involved with him likewise? But perhaps this is he of whom the Apostle says: "Let the husband render the debt to the wife, and likewise the wife to the husband" (1 Cor. 7:3). To whom also the name is fitting, because the Kenite is said to mean "possessing." For indeed, married people, because they are bound by marriage, are not forced to leave all things. What then is it that is said to the Kenite: "Depart from Amalek," unless because by these words all the filth of obscenity in spouses is condemned? Those who are joined in the manner of a harlot are indeed joined with Amalek. The teacher commands them to depart from Amalek when he strives to recall them to conjugal honesty. As if he were to say: "If you cannot contain yourselves from each other, let marriage be honorable for you, and the bed

undefiled." To depart from Amalek, therefore, is for spouses to use themselves, not for the filth of harlot-like obscenity, but for the temperance of honesty and for the fruit of offspring. Whence also the same excellent teacher says concerning the widow, who according to his counsel cannot remain so: "But if she does not contain herself, let her marry only in the Lord" (ibid., 9). Not in Amalek, but in the Lord; so that she who cannot abstain from marriage may avoid obscene gestures in the covenant of marriage. To whom he also threatens, saying: "Lest I involve thee with him." To be involved with sinners is to be condemned to eternal punishment. Whence also the Lord says in the Gospel concerning the wicked servant: "Having bound his feet and hands, cast him into the exterior darkness" (Matt. 22:13). Now, therefore, preachers do not involve reprobate hearers, because even if they despise the word, they can nevertheless return to penance as long as they live, when they wish. Instantly, therefore, conjugal honesty must be commanded to spouses, because it is said with a strong punishment: "Depart, withdraw without injury." Depart from Amalek, lest I involve thee with him. Without injury, indeed, one withdraws now, not then; because those who are in all things made like to the filthy shall not be exempt from their injury. He is also said to have shown mercy to the children of Israel ascending from Egypt, because the weak children of holy Church, while they cannot keep the good of perpetual continence, are received by the mercy of marriage. They ascend

from Egypt, indeed, because they desert the darkness of luxury and fornication. And they receive mercy from the Kenite because they earn the indulgence of marriage. Whence also the teacher of the Gentiles says: "This I say according to indulgence, not according to command" (1 Cor. 7:6). And because holy Church persuades her chosen subjects of the good things which she exhibits by speaking, there follows:

(Vers. 6.) And the Kenite (Cyneus) departed from the midst of Amalek. 14. A spouse indeed departs from the midst of Amalek, but cannot depart from a part of it, because although he avoids gestures of filth, he cannot avoid the affection of pleasure. Spouses can indeed temper the fire through honesty. They go out from the midst of Amalek, therefore, because although they cannot be entirely without carnal desires, they nevertheless moderate the command of the flesh under the bond of the precept of honesty. There follows: (Vers. 7.) And Saul struck Amalek from Havilah (Evilat), until he came to Shur (Sur), which is over against Egypt (Aegypti).

15. Havilah is interpreted as "birthing" (parturiens), Shur as "distress" (angustia), Egypt as "darkness" (tenebrae). Now concupiscence brings forth sin. Justly, therefore, is concupiscence designated by the name of "birthing." The Prophet also, fearing to incur the distresses of an impenitent heart, beseeches, saying: "Let not the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me" (Ps. 68:16). The teacher, therefore, strikes Amalek from Havilah even unto Shur,

when he suppresses in the hearts of his hearers the vices of conceived delight, and the faith of deliberation. He also strikes Shur when he is seen to draw to the love of pudicity those minds which had proposed to end their lives in the stench of luxury. For they are in distress who, being already captured, are constricted by the snare of bad custom. And it is to be noted that Shur is shown to be over against Egypt, because he who deliberates to end his life in luxury is now enclosed in interior darkness, from which he may be led to exterior darkness. But let this book also be closed, that we may come through silence to the consideration of what follows.

CHAPTER II.

1. King Saul, who had good beginnings, but by no means persevered in the good things which he had begun, is shown through the text of sacred History, so that we may see in him things to be imitated and things to be avoided. So indeed we also gather ill-cultivated crops, which rise up mixed with thorns for the harvest. He indeed knows well how to gather them, who so cares to pluck the ears of corn that he strives to avoid the thorns. Thus while the care of the garden is neglected, there is born with the herb that refreshes, the tare that pricks. For as if commanding the disciples to enter ill-cultivated fields cautiously, the Lord said: "The scribes and Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not"

(Matt. 23:2-3). As if He were to say: Because the acts and words of the reprobate are mixed, they are so to be used that what vivifies may be taken from them, and what kills may be avoided. Hence again foretelling, He says: "They come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Hitherto, therefore, we have gladly attended to King Saul strenuously managing the care of the kingdom; let us now subtly see him as a despiser of the Divine command, in whom that which ought to be avoided and cast away may be seen. For there follows: (Vers. 8, 9.) And he took Agag the king of Amalek alive, but all the common people he slew with the edge of the sword. And Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the flocks of sheep, and of the herds; and the garments, and the rams, and all things that were beautiful, nor would they destroy them. But whatever was vile and reprobate, that they demolished.

2. The word of the Lord had been: "Now go and strike Amalek, and demolish all that he has." Do not spare him, and do not covet anything of theirs." Openly, therefore, he stood forth as a transgressor through disobedience, because through pride he refused to fulfill the command of the Lord. The Lord indeed commanded the prophet, saying: "Do not spare him, and do not covet anything of his things." Here, however, he is shown both to have spared and to have coveted all his chosen things: so that, while the manner of transgression is shown, it may be demonstrated how detestable is the fault of disobedience.

3. But if we describe the wars of the flesh, we find that there are great royal lapses. Whence also the Lord says in the Gospel: "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" (Matt. 5:13.) Now the kings of the Church are her preachers, as has already been shown above. Who then is Agag, the king of Amalek, but the carnal sense? For since we have from the soul both rationality and sensuality, rationality is ascribed to the mind, sensuality to the flesh; and through the former we agree with angels, through the latter with brute animals. In the former, the higher we are extolled, the nearer we approach the celestial citizens. Through the latter, however, the more we slide down to the allurements of the flesh, the more carnal, so to speak, we are found. Whence, the daughters of men having already been seen and coveted, and pleasures already fulfilled in luxury, the Lord threatens in Genesis concerning those who by merit of purity were called sons of God, saying: "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). For man is made flesh when reason is subjugated to the sense of the flesh. The king of Amalek, therefore, is the vigor of the carnal sense, which commands filthy movements so that it may draw the captive reason to the allurements of obscenity. Moreover, the name fits the carnal sense of the Amalekite king well. For Agag is interpreted as "meditating" or "speaking." To meditate, indeed, is for him to collect the phantasms of lasciviousness by internal meditation. And to speak is for him to excite the flesh to lust by filthy movements. For he has

as it were a great cry of speech, because he moves the flesh more ardently by beating upon it. For by meditating he also collects what he may set forth by speaking: because everyone subjected to the carnal sense, the more freely he beholds the images of lasciviousness within, the stronger movements of filthiness he feels without. He meditates, therefore, through the internal vision of filthiness, but he speaks through the exterior movement of delight. King Amalek, therefore, is called "speaking" and "meditating," because he can excite those slipping allurements of the flesh in those whom he mocks through filthy thoughts, and whom he instructs through the experience of bland motion. But it is to be noted that the more freely he meditates, the more freely also he speaks: because he moves the flesh the more strongly, the more he holds the causes of his emotion impressed within through thought. For in the manner of a fire, the more attentively it is blown upon, the more it is kindled: because if the breath of unclean thought is absent, the ardor of libidinous emotion cannot be present. The king of Israel, therefore, fights against the king of Amalek when the teacher of the Church disputes against fornication. Whom he takes vanquished, when he receives converted sinners to pardon, not only repenting but also confessing. As it were, therefore, he holds the king of Amalek already bound, who sees the carnal sense in converted sinners already subjected to reason through the love of pudicity. But what is it that he lives while bound, unless because there are some who are

not moved by their own passions, but are moved by hearing the obscenities of others? Those who fight are strong, but the victors fall. For he who preserved the vanquished king alive, it is clear that in the triumph of the same war, the person of the captured king pleased him.

For what else do they do, who receive the confession of sins from others? For while they think upon what the confessants have done, they are inflamed toward the crimes which they hear; for often while they hear with what allurements others had overwhelmed themselves, they themselves begin to love those things which the others, now dying by their exhortation, confess. Agag is therefore already vanquished and captured in his city, but he is preserved by the victor, when that which is detested by the subjects is loved by the prelates: because the carnal sense begins to flourish in them, which has lost the vigor of its iniquitous domination in those others. And because while the pastors run to the precipice, the subjects follow; the king is said to have taken Agag alive, but the same king and the people are remembered to have spared the same king and whatever was best of Amalek. For to spare is the mark of an affected mind, through love of that which it spares. Which certainly fits the vice of lust: because as it begins to please, it draws the mind into the love of itself. Because its power is also vehement, it knows not how to have a fixed state: because indeed it quickly reaches completion, if the mind, waking up quickly, does not expel it from itself. For while it invades

the mind, it spreads itself through innumerable thoughts of filthiness. Whence also Saul and the people are well remembered to have spared the best flocks and herds. Indeed, thoughts of lust are called flocks and herds: because they are both innumerable and are fed from the contemplation of uncleanness in the reprobate heart. They are also "best," not by proof of goodness, but by the appetite of the one choosing. For in the reprobate heart, because nothing is loved more dearly, they are called the best flocks, to which no others are compared. But they are called "best" because of the blindness of the heart, but "herds" (armenta) because of the guilt of transgression. For to reprobate minds it is no great thing to think unclean things; but before God it is no small thing to store up unclean things in the temple of God, that is, in the regenerated spirit. He spares, therefore, not only sheep but also herds: because he who through the love of lust looks upon the faults of uncleanness as if they were small, spares them now as if they were small, but does not find the merits of the punishments to be small. Moreover, by the name of sheep, the lighter thoughts of luxury can be understood, but by herds the stronger and more troublesome ones. These, at any rate, the king and the people spare, when the reprobate teacher and the subjects are laid prostrate by both light and strong vexations of unclean thought. Now what is it to spare the garments, unless to deliberate upon unclean things for a mind already condemned? For if the golden clothing is the glory of the virginal bride, what

are the garments of Amalek but the foul pollutions of luxury? But they are called "garments" (vestimenta) because by their covering both the soul and the body are infected. For because the perpetration of luxury defiles both soul and body, they are named not "garment" but "garments." But, as I said, to spare is to deliberate, to love unclean things through the affection of the mind. The unhappy soul, thus captured, thus ensnared, because it is forced by strange impulses to perpetrate deliberate depravity, is well remembered after the sheep, herds, and garments, to have spared the rams. For as it were the horns of rams please it in the light blows of lusts, who strives to retain this one thing in himself, whereby he may be pierced to the death of uncleanness. He spares the rams, therefore, who gratefully receives the blows of his own precipitance. He is pricked, indeed, that he may serve the desires of his flesh; but what pricks him strongly, delights him lightly. Also, because lust allures the mind through innumerable modes of obscenity, they are remembered to have spared not only these named things, but all things that were beautiful. All things which the unclean soul is seen gratefully to fashion for itself concerning the pleasure of luxury are named the "beautiful things" of Amalek. For it could by no means desire these things, if their appearance did not vehemently please it.

7. He believed that he did not hear the words of the prophet, but the Lord complains that He has been abandoned, while He shows His words

not fulfilled in deed. Now the Lord speaks to the Church, saying: He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me (Luke 10:16). Therefore, those who through disobedience depart from the word of the preachers, abandon the Lord: because they recede from those through whose ministry they are made present to the divine will. Then they do not fulfill the words of the Lord in deed: because men speak outwardly, but God speaks inwardly in men. For it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20). In the preachers, therefore, the vileness of the flesh outwardly is not to be contemned, whose minds the sublimity of the deity so worthily inhabits. What is it, then, that the Lord is said to repent, since He is not believed to be changed by affections? But because the highest immutability speaks with mutable things, after the manner of those with whom He speaks, while He is said to repent, the temerity of the proud is designated as displeasing to Him. For we are accustomed to repent when those to whom we remember to have expended honors or gifts repay us with evil. Because, therefore, after our manner, Almighty God complains of the ingratitude of the proud king, He is said to repent that He conferred the royal dignity upon him. Which indeed is said for the heap of great damnation concerning the proud: because what they are, they are now not for merit, but for punishment, because they are not in the will of God. For God to repent, therefore, is to not have His will in the reprobate, when He remembers the honors expended by Him, but

recognizes that those upon whom He conferred good things, use the good things which He conferred evilly. God indeed suggests this repentance of His to the Jews in other words through the prophet Malachi, saying: I have no pleasure in you, and I will not receive a gift from your hand (Mal. 1:10). We see, therefore, how greatly the fault of disobedience is to be avoided, if we attend to how strictly it is struck by these words of the Lord.

8. But we, in the war of Amalek, have described the battle of fornication, which is commanded by the sacred eloquence to be entirely destroyed in us. Deservedly, therefore, it can be understood concerning teachers who have fallen in the battle of the flesh, that which the Lord complains of, saying: It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: because he hath abandoned me, and hath not fulfilled my words in deed. For His word is a precept to preachers: Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands (Luke 12:35). Therefore, he who has the word in preaching, and does not have it in the girdle of chastity: by speaking, he is seen to be God's, but by working, he is proved to abandon God. Outwardly he executes divine things, but secretly, while he is dissolved in the pleasure of the flesh, he is declared not to fulfill the words of the Lord in deed. Indeed, he abandoned the Lord by proposing evil things; he does not fulfill His words by presuming forbidden things. Well, therefore, it is said: It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king. As if to say: Him whom

I then willed to be over others, now I will not: because him whom I preferred as humble, now I see as a proud and elated transgressor. Which certainly is not said of any who have fallen; but of those whose fall is shown, and repentance is by no means foreseen. For concerning the fall of the just it is written: A just man falleth seven times in a day, and riseth up again (Prov. 24:16). Their fall is certainly in a certain way their status: because they are sometimes permitted to fall, that they may always be able to stand more strongly. They are permitted to collapse in evils, lest they lose the highest gifts of virtues through elation. These indeed, although they sometimes do not fulfill the words of the Lord, do not depart from the Lord: because they are left for a time, that they may be held eternally; and for a little while they are foolish, but after a little while they come to their senses. While, therefore, Saul is reproved not only for not having fulfilled the words of the Lord in deed, but for having left the Lord Himself, whom does he better signify than those who have fallen and are impenitent? Concerning whom indeed it is said through the prophet: They have struck a covenant with death and with hell (Isa. 28:15). To strike a covenant with death is indeed to perpetrate evils boldly, and to promise those things always to be done. (Vers. 11.) And Samuel was struck with sorrow, and cried to the Lord all night.

9. Samuel indeed is struck with sorrow, because the highest preacher is afflicted by the perdition of a subject. And he cries to the Lord

all night, because he beseeches the divine mercy with devoted prayers for the restitution of the fallen one. For a doctor to cry is to ask the mercy of Almighty God with great desires for the sins of subjects. He who cries all night, when through affection he receives the whole darkness of that sin, and for it, as for his own crime, satisfies God as a penitent. Therefore, for a preacher to cry all night is to undertake the whole cause of the subject, and to strive to destroy all the darkness of that sin by the affection of devoted compunction. But what is it, that he is said to have cried, and the Lord did not answer, except because that darkness of the impenitent heart which I mentioned is signified in that fault of Saul for which he cries? The Lord would indeed answer, if He heard the voice of the one crying. It follows: (Vers. 12.) And when Samuel had risen in the night, to go to Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel that Saul was come into Carmel, and had erected for himself a triumphal arch.

10. What is the life of a sinner but night? And what else is the light of the just than day? Whence also it is said to the converted sinners through Paul: You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord (Ephes. 5:8). But for a preacher to rise in the night is to raise the affection of the mind from the undertaking of another's fault. For the doctor lies as it were in the night when he mourns the darkness of another's sin, because he is brought down from the high security of his own innocence, that in the depth of the consideration of another's sins the darkness may be

destroyed. Therefore he rises in the night, when he raises himself from affliction; and he disposes himself to come to the guilty one in the morning, because he wails secretly through compassion, and strikes with open rebuke through zeal. Also the doctor mourns in the night, but comes in the morning to argue; because inwardly he loves the sinning subject, but outwardly he by no means blushes to argue with the erring one. For it as it were grows light in the morning, when the doctor begins to open the crime which lies hidden. What is it, then, that he is asserted to have come into Carmel, and to have erected for himself a triumphal arch, he to whom he comes, unless because the progress of evil is clearly preached? Indeed, after the fault of disobedience, to erect a triumphal arch, or structure, is to do evil things, and to be proud of the perpetration of those same evils. For they erect as it were triumphal signs when with a certain ostentation they bring forth those things by which they think they excel others. Which certainly befits arrogant as well as slippery teachers. These indeed, while they say great things, raise themselves in the height of estimation; and such as they behold themselves within, they become known outwardly through boasting and ostentation. And when they also draw that which others profit through them to the favor of their own praise, what else do they seem to do, but to demonstrate a high sign of victory with a distinguished title? Some indeed also when they live basely, and speak most honestly, consider the honesty of the words, but do

not however repute the baseness of their own life. Since therefore they desire to appear not by the reality of works, but by the splendor of words; they surely build a triumphal arch, in which they may extol themselves as it were victors. And because by the word of the base, most other base people come to their senses.

11. For these seek the brightness of victory not in words, but in works; because they do not judge trees by the beauty of the leaves, but prove them by the taste of the fruits. Whence also the Lord teaching, says: By their fruits you shall know them (Matt. 7:20). Because, therefore, they desire to be praised vainly, because they flee the judgments of the most proven men, and they lie to the rude and weak that they are something other than they are, Saul is said to have come into Carmel and to have erected for himself a triumphal arch. But what is it, that he passes into Galgala, unless because in that way in which he shows himself to the simple and religious, he desires to become known among the religious and learned? For Galgala, as I have already said many times, is named a wheel. Indeed, some within the holy Church are both learned in the sacred Scripture and are not religious, because they do not have the virtue of Scripture, namely, charity. Who while they hear eloquent and carnal men speaking, admire the words which they know. But they cannot discuss their hidden things, which they know not. Well, therefore, Saul is said to pass into Galgala; because they who seek favor from eloquent speech find that which they desire,

not among the learned religious, but among the simple and rude, or among the irreligious wise. But the highest men, when the reprobate teach good things, fear more for the elect subjects: lest those whom they edify with the tongue, they pervert with the hand, that is, by operation. Because, therefore, for a long time in the ministry of preaching slippery teachers are not to be dismissed, it is aptly added: (Vers. 12.) Samuel therefore came to Saul, and Saul was offering a holocaust to the Lord, the beginnings of the spoils which he had brought from Amalek.

12. He came indeed to Saul, that he may depose the proud man, whom as humble he had raised to the height of the kingdom. Whom he found such as he was, not such as he had shown himself by the signs of pride. What is it, then, that he offers the firstfruits of the spoils of Amalek as a holocaust to the Lord, unless because some both live wickedly and think that they please God through the profit of others? And because they believe that what they offer pleases God not a little, they are said to offer not a sacrifice or victim, but a holocaust. But the beginnings of the spoils are said, that in Samuel the vigilant study of the highest and elect prelate may be designated, by whom the beginnings of evils are swiftly compressed. As if to say: He occurred very hastily, in whose absence he could not have freedom to have even the beginning of holocausts. The beginnings of the spoils can be understood as certain chosen things from the spoils. Which the slippery with open mouth, but struck with

secret blindness, offer, when they believe from this that they please God, because they perish in their hearers those things which they permit to live in themselves. As if more openly reproving the one offering indiscreetly, he should say: He was offering that alive, which he would better offer extinguished. For if according to the words of the Lord he should extinguish every prey in Amalek, he would have offered an altogether acceptable holocaust to Almighty God. Thus indeed also a slippery teacher, if all the blandishments of the flesh, which he reproves by speaking, he would reprove by willing, he would burn a holocaust which could not be reproved. What is it, then, that is said, because he was offering the beginnings of the spoils which he had brought from Amalek, unless because the darkness of the blind heart is condemned, because it so reputes concerning that which profits others, as to neglect to see that which is harmful to itself? As if to say: Concerning that he rejoiced as it were victor, being victor in others, which he carried alive and unvanquished in himself. And because they often rave so insanely, that they even try to offer a pretext of virtue to the elect and highest preachers themselves. It follows: (Vers. 13.) And when Samuel had come to Saul, Saul said: Blessed art thou of the Lord, I have fulfilled the word of the Lord.

13. The word of the Lord was, that he should have destroyed Amalek. But what is it, that he says, I have fulfilled the word of the Lord, unless because the fault of fornication, by how much

more foul it is seen, by so much more studiously it is hidden by the reprobate? Because therefore those who are subject to the same vice of fornication always desire to lie hidden, in their type both Saul despised to demolish Amalek, and said to Samuel: I have fulfilled the word of the Lord. As if to say: Both in others I have tamed lust, and in myself I have destroyed its blandishments. And because by bland adulation he strives to bend the mind of the highest man, he premised, saying: Blessed art thou of the Lord. As if to say: This indeed I have done, but I was able to do it not by my own strengths, but by thy merits and intercessions. But perfect men can hear their own praises, but from the rigor of justice they cannot be bent. Wherefore also it is subjoined: (Vers. 14.) And Samuel said: And what is this voice of the flocks which sounds in my ears, and of the herds which I hear?

14. The voice of the flocks and herds of Amalek is the fame of basenesses. When anyone is defamed concerning smaller faults of luxury, the voice of the flocks is said to sound. When likewise he is accused of more criminal and more obscene things, the voice of the herds. As if he should lay bare what is hidden under the pretense of his false virtue, saying: Thou justifiedst thyself with thy own mouth; but the crowds of thy uncleannesses cry out through the mouths of all. But now let us see him who has begun to pretend excuses, by what defenses he may evade the crime of the infamy cast upon him. It follows: (Vers. 15.) From Amalek they have brought them. The peo-

ple spared the better sheep and herds, that they might immolate to the Lord thy God: the rest we have killed.

15. What is it that he says: From Amalek they have brought them, and did not say, We have brought? But when the reprobate are argued with, they sometimes cover their faults by denying, sometimes they transfer them to others. They cover them indeed by denying when they can lie hidden; but, while they are held as it were caught in the open, that which they cannot deny, they ascribe to others. Indeed Saul, suggesting the manners of these, says: From Amalek they have brought them. The people spared the better sheep and herds. As if to say: The evil which is heard is to be weighed from the fragility of the people, not from the virtue of the pastor. Indeed the sins of subjects in comparison with prelates are to be despised. He says therefore: From Amalek they have brought them. As if to say: This which sounds concerning a base life is true, but however the same baseness flourished in the little ones, not in the great ones. Still likewise smoothing over the same fault, he says: The people spared the better sheep and herds, that they might be immolated to the Lord thy God. As if to say: Truly the people sinned, but not unto death; because the sins of the work they now, by my exhortation, strive to destroy by the humility of confession. For the flocks of Amalek and the herds are immolated to the Lord when the slippery and incontinent come to confession, and what they have wickedly done, they

busy themselves to destroy by repenting. He says therefore: The people spared; that is, indulged in sin. But they brought them that they might be immolated; because in those things in which the people remember themselves to have fallen, they now are struck with compunction by confessing and repenting. But the better flocks and herds, as above, the more chosen sins of luxury are designated. As if to say: And if the people have seriously failed, we are not to be argued with; because for the magnitude of the crime they have the laments of compunction. What is it, that he says: That they might be immolated to the Lord thy God? But by this the custom of the deceitful is shown, who while they desire to lie hidden from the highest men, flatter them. For what is it, that he asserts Him to be his God singularly, unless because he shows him a familiar friend of God? To the Lord, he said, thy God. Not mine, but thine; because I am a sinner, thou singularly art holy. But by a wonderful use of fraud the deceitful so cover themselves that they may proffer, and justify themselves that they may accuse. For Samuel said to Saul: Suffer me, I will tell thee what the Lord hath spoken to me in the night.

16. What is it that he says: Suffer me, and I will tell thee; unless because while the deceitful persist in verbosity, they do not grant a place for speaking to the prelates who are examining them? As if to say: While thou dost not cease from verbosity, thou dost not permit me to speak those things which thou oughtest to hear. The intention of the flatterer can also be derided

by this word; who while he believes he pleases by the blandishment of praise, thinks that he holds those whom he praises, as it were, by the same praises. It is such, therefore, as if the chosen prelate should deride his praiser with honest gravity, saying: Thou who praisest me, I cannot speak harsh things to thee. Suffer therefore, that is, permit me to speak, and understand those things which I am about to speak. And because, as I said, flatterers believe they please by praising, they by no means think they will hear harsh things from those whom they praise. As if therefore about to hear joyful and prosperous things, Saul follows, saying: Speak. But chosen men, when they hear their own praises, do not soften from the rigor of justice amidst the fuels of praise. For those who despise the acts of the reprobate can by no means welcome their words. Because therefore they cannot be bent by praises, they both discuss the wicked praisers with subtle reason and pursue them with severe sentences. Whence it follows: (Vers. 17-19.) And Samuel said: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head in the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed thee king over Israel; and the Lord sent thee on the way, and said: Go, and kill the sinners of Amalek, and thou shalt fight against them until their utter destruction. Why then didst thou not hear the voice of the Lord, but hast turned to the prey, and hast done evil in the eyes of the Lord?

17. Indeed, by these words the disobedience of the proud king is subtly examined: because he

first objects the gifts bestowed; then he strikes the audacity of the transgression through the investigation of the same fault. For it is a subtle examination when any crafty sinner is so discussed that no excuse for the fault is left to him, so that the sentence of God may hold him, as it were bound, unto the death of his crime, to whom no refuge for sin remains. Therefore, so that every way of fleeing may be obstructed for the deceitful proud, both the loftiness of his dignity and the manner of his ministry are remembered to him, when it says: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head in the tribes of Israel: and the Lord said to thee: Kill the sinners of Amalek? And so that he may capture him, already surrounded and besieged by reasonings, he lays his hand upon the fault, saying: Why then didst thou not hear the voice of the Lord, but hast turned to the prey, and hast done evil before the eyes of the Lord? As if to say: Behold what thou wast, who thou hast been made, what thou oughtest to have done, behold what thou hast done; behold how much thou hast receded from that which thou oughtest to have exercised. When therefore he brought in, saying: Why hast thou done evil in the eyes of the Lord? he apprehended the deceitful guilty one, as it were by surrounding him.

18. But in this place it is to be noted that, while the proud king is reproved, the times of his election are remembered, so that the swelling of the heart may be felt not to have been present at his choosing, but to have grown in the prelate

from his summit. Indeed, he was chosen good by the Lord, but while he grew from his summit, he decreased by elation. He says therefore: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head in the tribes of Israel; but now turned to the prey, thou hast done evil in the eyes of the Lord. As if to say: Through the truth of humility thou didst merit the kingdom, but now under the pretext of being humble, thou losest the kingdom by the truth of being swollen. For what are the eyes of the heart, unless the aspect of reason? For he who has the whole vision of reason is perfectly illuminated. He is humble in his own eyes, therefore, who perfectly regards himself, and knows the humble one by perfect vision. By these words, therefore, not only the past humility of the fallen king, but also the sharpness of his reason is commended: because namely he was so great in reason that he knew himself perfectly; and so great in virtue that, looking at himself subtly, he saw himself truly humble. Since therefore when he is reproved, his past things are remembered, what else is described than that he lacks those things which he had? For they cannot be proud, unless those who first lose the eyes of the heart. Concerning the lustful, indeed, it is much more clearly evident: because they would never overwhelm themselves in the pit of fornication if they were not first darkened from the light of inward glory. Who, because they despise the high precepts of chastity, are also reproved for their swelling. He therefore who had come to depose the appointed king says: When thou wast a little

one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head in the tribes of Israel; now thou hast done evil in the eyes of the Lord. As if to say: Being now proud and blind, thou art justly deposed, who before being seeing and humble didst merit to obtain the kingdom. For even the proud Pharisees are called blind by the Truth itself, which says to the disciples: Suffer them; they are blind, and leaders of the blind (Matth. XV, 14). Which blindness indeed is especially ascribed to the lustful, because there are no vices which bring denser darkness upon the mind than lust. But now thou mayest see many who stood as clerics, to have fallen as priests. To whom certainly it is said through the command of Samuel: When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, wast thou not made the head in the tribes of Israel. As if to say: When in a lesser order thou servedst the precepts of chastity with an illuminated heart: now, having lost thy eyes, thou hast fallen into the pit of fornication. Thou hast turned to the prey, because thou hast broken the divine precepts by violent presumption. For because, with God forbidding and being as it were armed with threats and withstanding them, they burst in to violate the sanctuary of chastity: as if by the rapine of prey, they lead the chosen of Amalek to the land of the Lord. And because, as much as they can, the slippery are hidden from the preachers, Saul is reproved for having done evil in the sight of the Lord. For as if the threatening and terrifying preacher should say to him who has fallen in the pleasure of the flesh: The crime of uncleanness is indeed hidden

from men, but it is not concealed from Him who sees all things. Indeed, when the impenitent hear these and things similar to these, they can by no means be terrified. Whence even if they are already captured by reasoning, like snakes they busy themselves to slip away through the slippery from the hands of him who holds them. They proffer the tail, they hide the head: because the extremes of the works are now seen, but the quality of the same actions is covered. Whence also follows: (Vers. 20.) And Saul said to Samuel: Yea, I have heard the voice of the Lord, and have walked in the way by which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have killed Amalek.

19. For as if covering hidden things, and proffering the uncovered things of others, the slippery teacher commends himself concerning the progress of his preaching, saying: I ought not to be reproved for the fault of the subjects, but praised, which I have destroyed in the delinquents by preaching. I have struck Amalek: because the spirit of fornication has fallen in the hearts of my hearers by the sword of my tongue. Although the king lives, he has been brought: because although the sense of the flesh, as long as we are in the flesh, cannot be altogether lost, it has been captured, as it could be captured, because it cannot prevail against reason. Desiring to show the subjects themselves corrected and confessing their sins, he subjoined saying: (Vers. 21.) But the people took of the prey sheep and oxen, the firstfruits of those things which were

slain, that they might immolate to the Lord their God in Gilgal.

20. When by the violence of armed men anything proper of someone is taken, it is called prey. But the vices of the flesh and the soul, because they are propagated by the suggestion of the devil, are as it were his own. Whosoever therefore, lately remiss in himself, now however violent destroys his vices, makes a prey; because he powerfully snatches those things which are another's. And it is to be noted, because it is called to slay and prey, so that some things may be taught to be left dead, others to be brought away alive. Indeed, the delights of lust are slain when they are driven from the heart by the virtue of a supernal intention, and are cut away from the body by the contrition of the spirit. But the living are led to be immolated; because although by the conversion of the sinner the delight of the flesh or the mind is deserted, the penalty of the past delight is not inwardly deleted. Let the vices therefore be slain, let the living firstfruits by no means be kept for immolating: so that he who powerfully kills the force of sin in contempt of delights, may fear for himself to live for immolating the penalty of delight. What therefore are the firstfruits of the slain, unless the delights of sins? He is indeed said to offer these who confesses before God to the priests. And the things offered are immolated when their penalty is destroyed by repenting. For as if the slain are offered in the firstfruits, and they live through the later things: when anyone confesses his sins, and does not

strive to immolate, that is to slay before God, by repenting. While therefore the firstfruits of the slain are said to be reserved for immolating, the error of some is confounded who desert their sins, yet nevertheless do not wail for them. Because therefore not only are sins to be confessed, but also to be deleted by the austerity of penance, while Saul simulates the type of a good teacher, he asserts that his subjects brought the firstfruits of the slain to be immolated. Because also the mode of penance is to be discerned by the reason of the Scriptures, the firstfruits are led to be immolated in Gilgal. But not only oxen, but also sheep are kept for immolating: so that those who are solicitous concerning their salvation may so study to delete great things by repenting, that they may not omit to wail for the smaller things. But concerning the proud it is manifest: because, while they always desire to appear great, they blush to be noted as sinners. Being caught also they resist, and desire to appear just even in those things which they do. What is it therefore that he says: Yea, I have heard the voice of the Lord? But Samuel says: Suffer me, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath spoken to me in the night. And after a few words: Why hast thou turned to the prey, and hast done evil before the eyes of the Lord? It is evident therefore how wonderfully he swells, who then desires to justify himself when he recognizes the Lord reproving him for sin.

21. If indeed he is believed to have answered thus because he believed the words to be the prophet's, and not the Lord's, we see even now

the imitators of Saul, who while they trust in their own erudition, both despise the commands of their elders which they hear through swelling of heart, and believe they improve them by changing them. What is it therefore that he says: Yea, I have heard the voice of the Lord, and I have brought Agag the king of Amalek? But it is such as if he should say: Both what was commanded I studied to fulfill, and what was lacking I supplied. It was to be done that Amalek should be struck; but because, by God helping, he is conquered, it was to be supplied that those things which were to be immolated in his sacrifice should be kept. Which clearly appears in the proud: because when they cannot conceal an open fault, they attempt to change or diminish it. As if to say: And if thou judgest the open faults of the work, the hidden simplicity of the intention is to be attended to. It would indeed be a fault to bring anything from Amalek, unless the things brought ought to be immolated to God. This indeed often happens in monasteries, when any too religious subject presumes to add to the commands of the spiritual prelates; when he despises the regular common life and follows the choice of his own will. For while he strives to improve his life by choosing rather than by obeying, what else is he shown to be doing than coloring an open disobedience with the intention of virtue? Which place indeed not only subjects, but also prelates ought to look into subtly. Subjects indeed ought to note subtly: because from this Saul displeased God, that he attempted to immolate to God contrary to

the precept of the prophet. Let the prelates note subtly, because the prophet gave the command of demolishing Amalek to the king. For thus ought the teacher to praise the common things, so that he does not despise the proper things of individuals. That common life indeed is praised which is joined by charity, and is not darkened by mediating vices. Indeed, it is the sentence of the Apostle: Because every one hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that (I Cor. VII, 7). Those therefore whose food and table are common, ought to attend not only to the common good of refreshment, but to the propriety of passion: so that they may eat together, but they may not equally contend to fight against the stings of fornication through abstinence. For his flesh is to be more tamed, to whom the sting of the flesh is more troublesome. Now therefore the life is not common in not exciting, where the community of refreshment is attended, but it is shown to fight singularly against a singular fight. Nor does the teacher command well if he does not command whence Amalek is struck, but whence he lives. Let the teacher command, therefore, but so that the spirit of fornication may be overcome. Let not subjects refuse to obey, but where the crime of pride is incurred, not whence the pit of death is avoided. But the disobedient, while with a swelling heart they do not do the commands of their elders, when they strive to improve what is enjoined upon them, while they desire to offer their own works to God, they take away themselves. For through other virtues we spend our

things upon Him, but through obedience we offer our very selves. Samuel therefore subjoining, says: (Vers. 22.) Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?

22. For what are the good works of chosen men, unless victims and holocausts? When therefore the Lord had commanded holocausts and victims to be offered through the law, what is it that the Lord is said not to want holocausts and victims, but promises to want that He be obeyed, unless because those things which are done besides obedience are not holocausts and victims? As if to say: Then good works are good, when they do not discord from the conscience of the prelates. If indeed this is said for this reason, that the virtue of obedience may be commended, it is clear how sublime a good it is, which excels victims and sacrifices. What is it therefore that is said, He wants the voice of the Lord to be obeyed, unless because all good works are to be postponed to these goods which are commanded? For when the prelates command well, the goods which subjects choose from their own will are postponed to the commands of the prelates. But those works postponed to those are called holocausts and victims, so that not only may the small things of the lesser be felt not to be compared to the commands of the greater, but the greatest holocausts indeed are theirs who wish altogether to withdraw themselves from public work, so that they may offer themselves whole to God, burnt through love, in the secret of contempla-

tion. Victims are theirs who by no means separate themselves from the common public, but act with singular virtue, so that they may transcend the virtues of others by living more strictly. These indeed and such things when they are done with the permission of good rectors, are victims and holocausts which God approves: but when they are so done that through them the precepts of the elders are neglected, let those who offer hear what the prophet sent from the Lord speaks to the disobedient king: Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? As if he should terrify those despising the commands of the fathers as if they were smaller, and exhibiting their own as if they were greater, saying: Because you think you do a great thing, you despise the small and abject; but if you see clearly, through this you do not please the Lord. But well, while the work of the proud is discussed, the prophet acutely inquires, saying: Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For he inquires indeed that the swelling of pride may be struck by pastoral authority. He says: Does the Lord desire holocausts and victims? Because those who choose to follow their own will think that they please God; but God by no means approves their works, even when they are great and immense. But now he subjoined with what praises obedience is to be preached, and said: (Vers. 22.) For obedience is better than victims, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.

23. For because he said above: Does God desire holocausts and victims? Did he, subjecting both to the praises of obedience, when he placed victims and the fat of rams, understand the holocaust in the fat? Whatever is better is certainly better than what is good. But those holocausts and victims which God does not want are by no means good. What is it, therefore, that is said in the praises of obedience, Obedience is better than victims, and to hearken than to offer the fat of rams, unless because obedience is better then, when the holocaust and victim are not evil? As if, therefore, he might lead back the proud and disobedient to the consideration of such a great good, saying: Even if nothing were done by you through presumption, the virtue of obedience would be better than the works which you choose. It is clear, therefore, in what summit it is placed, which the prophet saw as higher than divine oblations. But if, as above, we follow the spiritual sense, victims are to be referred to the austerity of a great conversation, holocausts to the compunction of a more secret life. For obedience is better than victims, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams. Because it is of far higher merit always to subject one's own will to another's will than to wear down the body with great fasts, or to sacrifice oneself in a more secret sacrifice through compunction. For what is the fat of rams but the rich and internal devotion of the elector? He, therefore, offers the fat of rams who has the affection of devoted prayer in the study of secret conversation. Yet obedience is bet-

ter than victims, and than to offer the fat of rams. Because he who has learned to perfectly fulfill the will of his preceptor excels in the heavenly kingdom both those who abstain and those who weep. This certainly, because he speaks against the proud man and the one openly contemning the commands of the Lord, does not compare the good which he did with the good which he contemned; but destroys the simulation of good by the shown truth of a better good. As if he were to say: Even if you sought an excellent good for the more excellent glory of virtues, you ought rather to have chosen the good of obedience, which excels even the excellent things. Thus indeed speaking, he destroys the simulation of good by arguing; but by subjoining, he openly confounds the evil of the parent of disobedience, saying:

(Vers. 23.) For like the sin of soothsaying is it to repugn; and like the crime of idolatry, to be unwilling to acquiesce.

24. What is it, that those who repugn and are unwilling to acquiesce are likened by the prophet to soothsayers and idolaters, unless because soothsayers strove to know divine things and to divine hidden ones; while idolaters subjected themselves by venerating figments? But those who repugn the commands of prelates, certainly repugn for this reason, because they estimate that they know the divine will better. Like the sin of soothsaying, therefore, is to repugn: because, as if the divine altar were contemned, they perceive responses at the altars of demons, while they believe the prestigious and proud inventions

of their own heart, and are refractory by feeling things contrary to the wholesome counsels of prelates. But to be unwilling to acquiesce is said to be like the crime of idolatry; because doubtless no one would persist in the obstinacy of his own disobedience if he did not carry the figment of his own purpose in his heart, as if it were an idol. For while he conceives in his heart things to be done, he makes as it were an idol, and while he deliberates that he will act out the conceived purpose of his mind, he inclines himself as if to adore an image. Like the crime of idolatry, therefore, is it to be unwilling to acquiesce: because whoever is obstinate in his own deliberation, is therefore raised up outside in contempt of his elders, because inside he is bowed down to the images of his own purpose which he established by feigning. But it must be greatly asked why to repugn is compared to the sin of soothsaying, and to be unwilling to acquiesce to the crime of idolatry. Indeed, a crime is not said to be anything but a great sin, but a sin is named even that which is light; but if soothsayers (arioli) were so called from the altar (ara), because they had been accustomed to perceive responses by consulting, the sin of idolatry was a crime in comparison with it, because it was more insane to adore stones than to perceive false responses of living well under the appearance of divine things. Why therefore is it said that to repugn is a sin by similitude, but to be unwilling to acquiesce is a crime? But to repugn is to dissent from the will of the one commanding. Many, however, seem to repugn for the hour, while

they do not immediately receive the commands of their superiors, who nevertheless acquiesce to the same commands after a little while. But to be unwilling to acquiesce, what is it but both to repugn the enjoined obedience and to persist in the obstinacy of the same repugnance? For they do not acquiesce who are invincible in the purpose of their own heart, and omit nothing of what they decree to do by the authority of anyone. Rightly, therefore, in comparison with repugning, it is called a crime to be unwilling to acquiesce, because it seems to be a much greater and more horrible sin for the sinner. Because, therefore, those who are of this sort are not conquered by reasons, with what punishment they should be restrained, the prophet brought in, saying:

(Vers. 23.) For that you have rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected you, that you be not king.

25. For what is it, that Saul is rejected, unless because he is judged incorrigible? As if he were to say: Because you spurn all counsels of salvation, for the fault of pervicacity you ought not to be further corrected by words, but damned by the punishment of rejection. How much, therefore, the fault of disobedience should be feared is shown, if this be attentively considered, that because of this even kings are deposed. What is it that he says: Because you have cast away (projecisti) the word of the Lord, the Lord has cast you away? But the word is cast away when it is not venerably preserved in its own sublimity; for to cast away is sometimes to let slip from the

hand to the ground, either to allow it negligently, or to throw it violently. But the word of the Lord, because it speaks wholesome things, is heavenly or sublime; which is negligently cast away on the ground when it is not fulfilled through sloth. But through contempt it is cast away when the proud and disobedient repel it with a swelling heart, and disdain to observe it with the hand of operation. But because not to cast away (projicere), but to reject (abjicere) the word is reprehended, this signifies; that while the proud follow their own judgment, they become far from the Lord. For to reject is to repel something far away. For those who worthily receive the leadership of others are not only near to God through obedience, but also make those near to Him who are far from Him through vices and crimes. It is such, therefore, as if he were to say: You are expelled far from the order of dignity, because you were unwilling to be present by the merit of that same dignity. Indeed, the merit of dignity is the observation of the divine word. When this is rejected, because the merit of dignity is lost, the dignity itself is also removed. It is pleasing, therefore, to look at how many things perish for the proud through disobedience, and how many the humble gain. The former, while they rejoice to fulfill the judgment of their own will, exhibit great labors of works to God, and have no rewards of their labors; the latter, while they desert themselves, while they follow the judgment of another's will, merit the glory of eternal sublimity; whence also through the most blessed Mary, the mother of our Lord

Redeemer, it is said: He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted the humble (Luke 1:52). The Lord indeed puts down the mighty from their seat when He rejects the disobedient proud, and exalts the humble; because He glorifies the obedient with eternal glory, but words do not correct the proud, but only, while they tremble to lose honors, they feign humility, which they do not have, lest they lose the summit of glory; whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 24.) And Saul said to Samuel: I have sinned, because I have transgressed the words of the Lord and your words.

26. What is it, that Saul is reprehended by the prophet for not having heard the voice of the Lord, and for having done evil in His eyes, and by no means confesses that he has sinned; but, when he sees himself rejected from the kingdom, he confesses that he has sinned and transgressed the command of the Lord and his words? unless because the proud are audacious to contemn the words of the humble, but they cannot, in the manner of the elect, contemn the honors which they ambit. They are indeed audacious so as to contemn the commands of their elders, but they are not prepared so as to leave high things. On the contrary, however, the humble are prompt for the commands of their elders, and secure for losing high things. Because they do not seek earthly things, but heavenly ones, they despise the heights of earthly sublimity, and strive to labor for heavenly things; they wish to be subject willingly, they refuse to be preferred. Saul, there-

fore, refusing to obey God, fearing to lose the kingdom, what else does he insinuate to us than the ways of the proud, who when they prevail, avoid being seen as small or as sinners; when they are forced, they feign the virtue of humility. But, when compelled they confess, they diminish the sin which they accuse by speaking. For even if he said he had sinned by transgressing the command of the Lord, he mentioned that he had incurred that same transgression rather by dispensation than by will, saying: Fearing the people, and obeying their voice. As if he were to say: The sin which I am reprehended for having done ought to be struck with a punishment so much lighter, as it is clear that it was committed not through malice, but through infirmity. But to sin by study and will is a great transgression; but to sin by infirmity is so much more tolerable, as he who is subject to sin is unequal to the forces of the same sin. And because by the same craftiness of their own heart they estimate that they prevail over the humility of simple doctors, he subjoined as if already suasive, saying:

(Vers. 25.) But now bear, I pray, my sin, and return with me, that I may adore the Lord.

27. Correctable sins are indeed borne, because after they depart from the will of the delinquent, they can be wholesomely purged by satisfaction. But the sins of those are not borne in whose minds they are disemboweled through impenitence. Whence also John says: There is a sin unto death, let no one pray for that (1 John 5:16). Indeed, a sin unto death is that which is commit-

ted by him who can never repent. Which sin is certainly not borne by those in charge, because it is not deleted by the prayers or oblations of priests. But Saul, designating in all things the proud and obstinate, does not cease to swell, and beseeches that his sin be borne; he heaps up an unendurable burden, and asks that it be borne as if light. This indeed is done so many times in the Church, as often as those who willingly commit great crimes do not attend to their magnitude. They gather unendurable things, and think these light, and of no weight. They hide their sins from their superiors, and that they may scarcely be able to be found and argued, as much as they can, they lighten those same sins, lest those who are over them attend to their greatness. They are even strong for sin, weak for weeping for sins; they wish indeed to be dissolved by the delights of sin, but they do not wish to be purged by the bitterness of penance. What is it therefore that he says, Bear my sin, unless because they receive the sweetness of sins in themselves, but wish to burden the prelates with the burden of the same sins? Some also come spontaneously to confess, but for those things for which they accuse themselves, they do not themselves mourn, but beseech others to repent; they estimate that they are saved by faith alone, they do not care to return through penance when rejected. Whence also Saul subjoins, saying: And return with me that I may adore the Lord. For as it were receding is the preacher, when he rejects the impudent; he says therefore: Return with me that I may adore

the Lord. He thinks that by this only he is not divided from the communion of the elect, that he preserves the common faith; or certainly to adore the Lord is to be subject to the religion of faith, and to the custody of good operation. Because indeed Saul insinuates feigned hypocrites, there follows:

(Vers. 26.) Samuel said to Saul: I will not return with you, because you have cast away the word of the Lord, and the Lord has cast you away, that you be not king.

28. What is it, therefore, that the prophet refuses to bear the sin of the repenting king, unless because he saw that he was not truly repenting? To whom he answered those words of rejection which he had previously spoken, because he knew that he was by no means to be changed. By which constancy of the prophet, certain excessively lenient priests of this time are reprehended, who are weak in conversation, but strong in temerity. They scarcely sustain themselves, and dare to undertake the bearing of the burdens of others; they do not carry their own light ones, and subject themselves to unendurable ones. Behold the strong prophet refuses to undertake the burden of the royal sin, so that the priest of the Church may fear, and greatly fear to undergo the weights of unendurable sins. Mostly, however, let him so undertake another's sins, so that nevertheless he permits him by whom they were committed to weep for those things which he undertakes to expiate. Whence also Samuel by no means promised to bear the

sin of the king, and yet he mourned for him whom he reported rejected. For concerning him it is written a little after: Samuel mourned for Saul, because it repented the Lord that He had appointed him king over Israel. He did not indeed promise him to bear the sin of the king, so that the king might study to weep for it. But nevertheless he wept for him whom he had reported, that he might make the Lord propitious to him. To the letter, indeed, while the prophet repeats the sentence, he shows the irrevocable sentence of divine equity by which the sinner is so cast away that he is never permitted to return to the hand of divine mercy. It can also be understood otherwise, that he asks the prophet to return with him, that he may adore the Lord. For holy men, who do not desert the Lord by sinning, have no necessity to return to Him by repenting. For to return is the part of one going away. Which doubtless suits sinners receding from the Lord through sin, but does not suit the just remaining. What is it therefore, that the just Samuel is asked to return with the sinning Saul, unless because the elect preachers are afflicted as it were repenting for their fallen subjects, and come as if receding, while they accompany the fallen subjects with paternal affliction? They return with them, therefore, when both the subjects who sinned and the prelates who stood alike mourn for the sins of the subjects. It is such, therefore, as if he were to say: I have already known myself to adhere to you with paternal bowels through the rebuke of preaching, whom you did not leave to sin further. Because

therefore, at your objurgation, I have recovered my senses, I ask you to return with me, because by my own forces I am by no means sufficient for deleting the magnitude of such great depravity. But the prayers of such an affection were to be received if they proceeded from the truth of the heart; fitly therefore it was answered to the hypocrite: I will not return with you. As if he were to say: For you I know not how to sacrifice to God, whom I do not attend to be subject to God by the truth of humility; and, repeating what was before, he says: Because you have cast away the word of the Lord, the Lord has cast you away, that you be not king; and, because the crafty and those to be rejected and deserted are such, there follows:

(Vers. 27.) And Samuel turned to go away.

In which departure of the elders, hypocrites indeed fear the loss of temporal honor more than that of the eternal inheritance. Whence also even when deserted they cannot rest, but those things which they do not dare to act by themselves, they study to impetrate by others intervening. Well therefore is subjoined:

(Vers. 27.) But he took hold of the skirt of his mantle, which was rent.

29. What are the garments of a teacher, but to teach the qualities of the subjects adhering to him? Concerning which garments indeed it is promised again to the great Shepherd through the prophet: "As I live, says the Lord, for you shall be clothed with all these as with a garment" (Isa. 49:18). And through the Psalmist it is sung:

"The Lord has reigned, He is clothed with beauty, the Lord is clothed with strength" (Ps. 93:1). He indeed put on beauty, who joined to Himself the splendid minds of the faithful, as if they were garments. Saul therefore took hold of Samuel's mantle, when everyone proud and rejected seeks to have the honor of the height deferred to him by the highest men through the beloved and familiar ones adhering to him; and because no one prays for the rejected one among the perfect hearers, he is said to have apprehended not the mantle, but the skirt of the mantle, that is, the extremity; but that extremity is rent, because he who suggests useless things is rejected. For when a lesser person asking indiscreet things is repelled, the skirt of the garment is said to be rent. For as it were, a part of the mantle of the highest prophet was rent, when he answered Peter who was suggesting evil, saying: "Get behind me, Satan, for you do not savor the things that are of God, but those that are of men" (Matt. 16:23). Hence likewise He commands, saying: "If your hand or your foot scandalizes you, cut it off and cast it from you; likewise, if your eye scandalizes you, pluck it out and cast it from you" (Matt. 5:30). By which words indeed not only the skirt of the mantle, but also the middle parts are designated as to be cut off: because when they suggest evil, even perfect hearers are to be contemned. For hence it is, that the sons of Zebedee, together with their mother, ask that one sit at the right and the other at the left of the Redeemer; but as if ignorant of a good petition, they are repelled

(Matt. 20). For as it were, the Lord rent a part of the mantle, when He confuted by rebuking those members which were moving scandal. And it is to be noted that not the whole mantle, but a part of the mantle is rent: because while a good person suggests evil things, he ought to be repelled in that which he suggests evilly, and in that in which he is otherwise good, he is to be retained out of love.

30. By the garment also the conduct of the ruler is designated, as the Psalmist attests, who says: "Let your priests be clothed with justice" (Ps. 132:9). The skirt of the mantle therefore is apprehended, when a teacher is praised for great sanctity, when that is said in his praise which shows beauty outwardly. But because the goods of the just which lie hidden are more numerous, only the skirt of the mantle can be apprehended: because it is little that is discerned of the justice of the elect teacher, but much that is hidden. That very little indeed which is known, when it is apprehended, is rent: because the just are not held by their own praises. For because they contemn them in a moment, they cannot be held as if by the rent of a mantle. The rent part of the garment indeed is held, the prophet is not held: because that which is said of the praise of the just is true, and yet the just, while they contemn what they hear, leave as it were a rent in the hands of the one holding them. Therefore, because some things of the elders can be known, it is apprehended as if a part. But when the whole of what will be done is known by the little ones, if it is praised, it is nev-

ertheless to be cast away; because something of good works is not to be held through vanity. For hence it is, that while John, still a youth, follows the Lord already apprehended, and is held by the mantle, he is described as having fled naked, leaving the mantle (Mark 14). For the youth is caught by the garment, when he is praised for the beginning of a good conversation; but leaving the linen cloth, he flees naked, who vilifies the praises which he hears. For to flee naked is to have a laudable life, but to despise the praise of the elect life. For he flees as if naked, who ascribes nothing to himself through vainglory from the adornment of virtues. It can also for this reason be understood that he fled naked, because he who is asserted to have been caught by the parts of the linen cloth, is reported to have left the linen cloth; because it is often acted in the conscience of the elect, that, through this that they are praised in part, they suspect that they have lost not a part of their merits, but the entire merit of a good life. Samuel's mantle therefore is rent, because the elect teachers vilify their own praises. And because they are not bent by praises, he repeats the severity of the former sentence, saying:

(Vers. 28.) The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from your hand this day.

31. For perfect men indeed, because they are softened by no praise from the rigor of justice, are such after the testimony of their praise as they were before, and what they had said before, the same they confirm by repeating afterwards. But it is to be asked, what this signifies which is said:

"This day." For if the life of the rejected is night, what is it that Saul's kingdom is rent in the day? But if the life of a rejected shepherd is night, when his kingdom is rent, it makes a day. For a day does not happen, unless night recedes. He says therefore, "This day," because the darkness of the disobedient one is reported to be condemned. Whence also when Judas went out, the Lord said: "Now the Son of Man is clarified" (John 13:31); because He saw the night of that life depart, and the pure light of justice remain in the other disciples. It is also said: "This day," because the proud one being removed, the kingdom was delivered to a humble king. Whence also it is subjoined:

(Vers. 28.) And he has delivered it to your neighbor who is better than you.

Therefore when it is called day, nothing luminous is discerned of the rejected king, but the glory of the substitute is proclaimed, who ought to radiate with the splendor of great virtue from the height of the kingdom. And asserting the immutability of the divine sentence, he subjoins, saying:

(Vers. 29.) Moreover, the triumpher in Israel will not spare, and will not be bent by repentance.

32. For who is to be understood by the name of this triumpher, except the Creator of the human race? For whoever overcomes hidden adversaries, overcomes by His virtue, who bestows on him the grace of overcoming temptation. What is it that the triumpher is said not to spare, when Samuel is asked? Because when preachers are angry with sinning subjects, when they strike the

proud or the slippery with the divine sentence, they execute the judgment not by the impetus of their own fury, but of the divine will. As if he were to say indeed: I have brought forth not my own sentence, but His, which what He brings forth by decreeing, cannot be revoked. He does not spare therefore, and is not bent by repentance; but for those who can neither cease from their sins, nor repent of the sins which they love; and adding the cause, he says:

(Vers. 29.) For He is not a man, that He should do penance.

As if he were to say: And again to be is for Him to whom there is no mutability. The perfection of the substitute king can also be designated by the name of triumpher, who was both to have the glory of many triumphs, and would not dare to spare anyone against the will of the Creator. Whence also in this same book, it is written of him: "And David smote all the land, and left neither man nor woman alive" (1 Sam. 27:9). Of him also it is said: "For he is not a man, that he should do penance." For what is man in this place, but one subject to carnal passions? As if he were still biting the proud one, saying: You now repent of your sins, when you perceive the sentence of your audacity; but he will not do penance, who, as a man, is subject neither to disobedience nor to swelling. And he still confesses in his own mouth, saying:

(Vers. 30.) I have sinned.

But he shows the quality of the confession itself, because he subjoined, saying:

(Vers. 30.) But now honor me before the elders of my people, and before Israel.

33. It is clear what sort of penitence he bears, who still desires to be honored. For if he truly repented of his sin, he would have desired to be dishonored rather than honored. It is worth wondering, therefore, at the hardness of a cast-down heart. While the man of God, executing the command of the Creator, says: "The Lord hath cast thee away, that thou shouldst not be king": on the contrary, he who receives the sentence of rejection, through the appetite of elation, seeks honors. What is it, therefore, that he says: "I have sinned"? Truly confession of sin ought to be followed not by honor or glory, but by utility and contempt. For what does it profit to confess crimes, if the affliction of penitence does not follow the voice of confession? Three things indeed are to be considered in every one who truly repents, namely, conversion of the mind, confession of the mouth, and the punishment of the sin. For, he who is not converted in heart, what does it profit him if he confesses sins? A sin which is loved is by no means deleted by confessing it. There are indeed some who open their sins by confessing, but by not converting, they by no means detest them. These indeed do nothing by confessing, because what they cast out by speaking, they introduce by loving. Whence also the Scripture suggests to those wishing to confess wholesomely, saying: "With the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). What is it to

believe with the heart unto justice, unless to direct the will toward faith, working through love? When therefore anyone directs the intention of the heart toward justice through love, through the beginning of a good will, he has the fruit of a good conversion. This man certainly now confesses unto salvation, because he casts out more by speaking of the wound than he pierced by conversion. The third species therefore, that is, punishment, is necessary as a medicine; so that the aposteme of guilt, which is pierced by conversion, may be purged by confessing, and healed by the medicine of affliction. Therefore he who does not believe with the heart unto justice, by no means makes confession unto salvation, because he shows as it were the leaves of an evil tree, whose deep roots he fixes in the heart. The sign therefore of true confession is not in the confession of the mouth, but in the affliction of penitence. For then we discern a well-converted sinner, when he strives to delete with worthy austerity of affliction that which he confesses by speaking. Whence John the Baptist, rebuking the ill-converted Jews flocking to him, says: "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore worthy fruits of penance" (Matt. 3:7). In fruit therefore, not in leaves or branches, is penance to be known. As a tree indeed, so is a good will. The words of confession therefore, what are they else but leaves? Therefore leaves are not to be sought for themselves, but for the sake of the fruit; because for this reason every confession of sins

is received, that the fruit of penance may follow. Whence also the Lord cursed the tree beautiful with leaves, but sterile in fruit (Mark 11); because He does not receive the ornament of confession without the fruit of affliction. Saul therefore, who confesses and wishes to be honored, not afflicted and humbled, what does he designate, but those who have a sterile confession, and have no fruit; who prefer the beauty of confession with humble words, but follow the greenness of words, not with the humility of penance?

34. But why do we look at the ancients, when now we see such a great multitude of fallen kings? For now they fall in heaps into flagitious acts, not only weak subjects, but also negligent prelates and priests. They act slippery things by sinning, who by the order of ministry are deputed to the celestial sacraments. But many of them, while in some way they return to the heart, confess that they have erred. Who nevertheless so wish to bring forth sins against themselves, that they wish still to be honored for the office of the sacred order; they bring themselves forth as foul in secret, but outwardly, beyond the height of the order, they blush to be seen humble. What therefore are these, unless they see themselves rejected, and yet dare to wish to be honored? Often indeed they do not come from themselves, but are caught unwillingly; they perceive the commands of their rejection, and yet they ask to be honored. For they wish to act unclean things, but they dare to adhere to the sacred altars. Behold how many Sauls we attend to, how many

kings fallen from the height of the holy Church we contemplate. To each of whom indeed it is to be said: "Because you have cast away the word of the Lord, the Lord has cast you away, that you be not king": so that they may not perform the celestial ministry, whom earthly flagitious acts do not cease to stain. But this indeed we can say, yet we cannot persuade the slippery ministers. For Saul both heard that he was rejected and reigned; because unclean priests know themselves cast down from the priestly height through the pollutions of luxury; and yet against the will of God they do not cease to handle the sacred mysteries. But a king reigning against the will of the Lord was not a king, but a tyrant; because an unworthy priest, who is cast away by the merit of his pollution, when he presumes to minister, ascends to be condemned to the height of such great glory. Whence also that great senator of heaven, wishing to terrify tyrants: "He who eats the bread," he says, "and drinks the blood of the Lord unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself" (1 Cor. 11:27). Mostly indeed it is acted by instant confession, that it is believed of those confessing even concerning the conversion of the heart. Sometimes the elect preachers receive the false humility of the rejected, so that by their example others may be led to salvation. Therefore...

(Vers. 31.) Samuel therefore returned and followed Saul, and Saul adored the Lord.

35. For by the evil which lay hidden within, he deserved to hear: "The Lord has rejected you, that you be not king." But so that by the pretext

of good he might draw others to the truth of the same good, Samuel wished to follow Saul, and saw him adore the Lord. Sometimes also the evils of kings and of the great ones of the earth are to be tolerated, lest being exasperated they slide into worse things. For the children of Israel often worshipped the gods of the gentiles. Whence also it was said above concerning those converted by Samuel: "The children of Israel took away from the midst of them Baalim and Astaroth" (1 Sam. 7:4). And perhaps if the rejected king did not see the prophet returning with him to adore the Lord, he would adore the idols of demons. He both rejects him therefore, and returns with him; because in the powerful of this world iniquity is so to be condemned, that they do not lose the good which they have being exasperated. For often they are evil in secret, and others more devotedly imitate the good which is discerned. Certainly the evils of the powerful of the world are great evils to them; but the good things which they bring forth, for the example of the faithful, profit more than the good things of others. Well therefore Samuel returns with the rejected king; because elect preachers both strike the powerful of the world for iniquity, and permit them to do certain good things for example. Whence also follows:

(Vers. 32.) And Samuel said: Bring to me Agag the king of Amalek. And Agag was offered to him very fat and trembling.

36. Kings adore the Lord, when the proud and contemners humble themselves to do the

Lord's commands. The slippery adore, when they are subjected to God through the obedience of chastity. Sometimes however they feign to adore; because some have a pretext of humility or chastity, but while they are believed to have good in truth, others through the good which they believe lose the use of an evil work. Agag therefore the king they deliver to Samuel, because they bring forth the vigor of their sensuality by confessing. For when they confess sins of luxury, which they committed through the vigor of the flesh, what else do they offer to the prophets to be killed, than king Amalek? But what is it that Agag is called very fat, but the vigor of sensuality is fat in some, lean in others? What is it therefore, that he is offered fat, unless because he was led by the subjects of a rejected king? For often the subjects are negligent; but while they behold the examples of their elect shepherd, they groan among the evils which they do. Through the fragility of the flesh they fall into uncleanness; but struck by the examples of the elders, they cannot at all rejoice among the delights of uncleanness. In whom therefore is Agag very fat, except in those of whom it is said: "They rejoice when they have done evil, and exult in the most wicked things"? (Prov. 2:14). For the subjects of a lascivious teacher sin so much more audaciously, as they have no examples of their elders placed before them, which they may see. But they precipitate themselves much more dementedly, when in their shepherds they do not see the good which they may follow, and they see the evil by

whose example they may perish. In these indeed Agag grows fat: because joyfully, securely and freely the vigor of the flesh is distended in the pleasure of luxury, which is cheated of the use of enticement, with nothing opposing. The very fat one therefore is offered to be killed, when those are converted, who have greatly rejoiced in the pleasure of luxury: for the king is as it were delivered, when he who was commanding the mind, the carnal sense, is revealed to the priests of Christ through confession. Fatness also is wont to nourish fire. Well therefore it is ascribed to the king of the Amalekites: because while the spirit of fornication occupies the mind, by how much more sweetly and often...

(Vers. 32.) And he said: Does bitter death thus separate?

37. To say this indeed to the carnal sense, is to strike the mind, for the loss of accustomed pleasure, with the conversion of sadness. For because the newly converted suffer great darts of bitterness, the king whom they had served as it were complains of death: because in them carnality is by no means killed without great tribulation. To ask therefore about the separation of death, for the carnal sense, is to strike the still sad mind of the converted one concerning the loss of past delight. But also the manner of separation is sought out, when he says: "thus?" For as if seeing the austerities to which it is to be subjected, its sensuality says to the mind: Do you despise joyful things for such sad ones? This voice certainly Samuel hears: because the elect preacher recog-

nizes the tempted heart of the subject by certain indications. But what does it profit to recognize, if against that which snarls within the heart of the subject, he himself does not say something? There follows therefore:

(Vers. 33.) And Samuel said: As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.

38. Who is the mother of the carnal sense, if not original sin? For before the sin of the first man, no lust resided in the members, and the Amalekite king did not exist. There was indeed a sense of the flesh, but it was not foul or lustful; but as soon as he fell into fault, he felt the itch of the members: because he could not have an obedient movement of the flesh when he himself was disobedient to God. Original sin, therefore, is rightly understood as the mother of the insolent carnal sense, because he who began to be from her proceeds from her by birth. Hence the Apostle also, as if shrinking from the law of the carnal sense as from a most severe tyrant, shows not only the king himself but also the mother, saying: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me (Rom. 7:17). For by the "sin" which he claimed not to work, he understood the movement of the flesh; but by the "sin dwelling in him," he understood original sin. Therefore, since from original sin comes the sin of the movement of the flesh, while we consider the carnal sense as the king, we rightly name the first fault as his mother. Now the children of this mother are all concupiscences, sins, and

vices. The mother certainly becomes childless when every fault, both from the flesh and from the mind, seems to remain no longer. For she is then without children because, even if there is no longer any foulness from the flesh, and if no concupiscence now reigns in the mind, that fault nevertheless remaining in us cannot now be destroyed by the virtue of the teacher. For what is it that the Apostle says: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me? From that fault indeed, which we contract from the vicious root of our nature, we have the capacity to be corrupted by the passions of vices. Therefore, when the disordered law of the members moves the members against our will, we do not work this, but the sin that dwells in us. To will indeed is present to us then, but as yet we do not find how to perform; for we would wish that, against our will, nothing could be moved within us. And perhaps these conceptions of the worst mother, with which that fault is impregnated, if they are allowed to be poured out into foul and obscene acts, are said to be fed. The sons, therefore, are the movements which are not only naturally within, but which are manifested in foul and obscene works. The mother of Agag, therefore, becomes childless when original sin is so restrained that it is permitted to produce no acts or movements. Or perhaps she becomes childless because she once had children. When, therefore, converted sinners cease to be foul both in act and in the gestures of luxury, the fault dwelling in them is, as it were, a mother bereaved of her children.

39. And it should be noted that the mother is said to become childless by comparison. As, he said, thy sword has made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless. The virtues of the mind, from which good works proceed, are mothers: but the sword of Agag is called the weapon of luxury, which surely makes women childless, because lust kills all good works. Or surely the women are understood as the minds of the faithful, but the children of the holy minds are good thoughts, virtues, and good works. But the sword of Agag has made mothers childless; because the delight of luxury, if it is allowed to be drawn like a sword, surely slays from them all good thoughts, all virtues, and good works. For if the sharp plague of this delight is received by the mind, while it pleases to behold the unclean more attentively, it can think nothing clean and holy; and while it draws ardently toward the completion of a nefarious work, it permits nothing of virtue to be done. And because through its combustion all things perish, not only the children of Agag but all the children of the women are slaughtered. Therefore it makes mothers childless, because the delight of luxury, like a sword, while it strikes the fruits of the minds, by no means allows thoughts of virtue or the good of work to live. Just as, therefore, it made mothers childless, so also his mother becomes childless when the sinner is so converted that, besides the natural fault implanted in us, nothing of obscene works or movements seems to remain in those converted. Whence it is aptly added:

(Vers. 33.) And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

40. That he is cut into pieces means that the dead man is cut into small particles. Agag, indeed, is killed when the vigor of the flesh is so crushed by abstinences, vigils, and spiritual meditations that nothing lascivious, nothing lustful is felt to move. For his being killed is the inability of the flesh to move foully. But the corpse of the one killed is whole when its movement remains. Lust does not remain when it weighs upon the mind by weight alone; when, namely, a simple and natural movement of the flesh resides in the members, but has nothing of lustful heat.

Lust does not remain when it weighs upon the mind by weight alone; when, namely, a simple and natural movement of the flesh resides in the members, but has nothing of lustful heat. But because the minds of the elect endure this with difficulty, they carry, as it were, the whole corpse of the dead king. But what does it mean that he is hewed in pieces, if not that they do not wish to leave vigor even to the natural movement itself? He is hewed in pieces, therefore, because as often as it pulses, it is killed. While, therefore, the turns of the movements are not allowed to meet, the corpse of Agag is, as it were, cut into pieces. Or perhaps this Agag is such that he cannot die unless cut into pieces. For as I said above, luxury is kindled like a fire; and, if it is negligently extinguished, the adjacent straw is quickly inflamed. Also, a great fire, when dispersed, can often be better extinguished. For when many coals come

together in one place, they make a huge mass of embers. Lest, therefore, the one extinguishing be burned, the mass of embers is first wisely dispersed, so that it may be quickly extinguished through the pieces of individual coals. For what are the thoughts of luxury, what are the lustful movements of the body, but coals of fire? Which surely, if they come together in the heart or in the flesh, can soon burn, and can never be easily extinguished. Let the fire, therefore, be dispersed, let Agag be cut into pieces, and let the mind be guarded so as to disperse unclean thoughts, lest it permit one to adhere to another. For because it cannot act so as never to think of harmless things, let it do what it can, so that it may immediately cast out the thought that enters the mind negligently. Thus, indeed, it divides a very great fire, as it were, into individual coals and quickly, and swiftly extinguishes it, if it so separates all the flames of thoughts that it allows them to be joined in the mind neither through negligence nor through desire. Thus, indeed, it also represses the vigor of the mind's movement of the body, when it by no means permits them to meet each other. For the alluring movement of the flesh, if it is not fed by thought, does not seem to meet with another. For unclean thought is the glue of alluring movements: because he who willingly sees unclean things, immediately moves the flesh violently toward the things loved by concupiscence; the more willingly and lingeringly he thinks, the more he binds foul movements to more foul ones, as coals to coals. Let him, therefore, keep

a strong guard of the mind, who wishes powerfully to disperse the movements of the flesh. For Agag is divided within first, so that he may be divided into pieces likewise without; because he who does not suffer evil thoughts to meet, surely has the foul movements of the flesh divided, as it were, into pieces.

(Vers. 34, 35.) And Samuel went to Ramah; but Saul went up to his house in Gibeah; and Samuel saw him no more until the day of his death.

41. What is the house of a transgressor, if not the custom of an evil work? For whoever is shut up in a perverse custom dwells, as it were, in a house. To his house, therefore, Saul went up, when every reprobate, after the rebuke of the teachers, returns to the practice of evil work. For he descends, as it were, to the level ground when he feigns humility so that he may know the commands of the prelates. But why is it that Samuel is said to go away first, before Saul is said to go up into his house? But, as I said, when there is no necessity of others, the chosen preacher cannot remain with the crafty one; and because in the absence of the teacher the simulator advances, Saul did not go away but went up into his house. Indeed, for the reprobate to go up is to advance from bad to worse. So also when the proud man is said to descend, he is claimed to go up. For to go up into his house for the proud man is to extol himself by being proud even to the measure by which he is to be damned. For the house of the proud is the measure of his iniquity. For while through the prosperity of the world they

are permitted to act in tyranny, to disturb the earth, to oppress the good, to afflict the innocent, what else do they seem but to go up proud? But because it is preordained by God how much they may harm, how much they may rage, how much they may extol themselves through tyranny, they are permitted to go up even to their house. For their house is the measure of iniquity, in which they will always be: because when they have come to full wickedness, they are snatched away by death and punished through eternal torments. For he remains as if in a house, who can never go out from the punishments of his conduct. Which can be understood appropriately not only of the proud but also of the lustful and all the reprobate. For they were still in the ascent, and not yet in the house, of whom it is said: The sins of the Amorites are not yet full (Gen. 15:16). Hence also the blessed Apostle Paul says: That they may fill up their sins (1 Thess. 2:16). Therefore they go up to the house when, by the progress of evil, they advance to more wicked works, for which they will endure eternal torments.

42. But Samuel is said to go away to Ramah.

42. But Samuel is said to go away to Ramah. For teachers divided from the reprobate do not just go, they go away. For they go when they leave those who are to be corrected, because those whom they dismiss as if in anger, they afterwards return to when invited by good amendment. Therefore, for a teacher to go away is to desert the impenitent impious with perpetual censure. For they so desert those working sins unto death

through impenitence that they are not forced to return to them further. Well, therefore, did he say: Saul saw Samuel no more until the day of his death. And because they perceive that this is to be done in the contemplation of the highest truth, he is mentioned as going away to Ramah. For a consummated vision is the perfect reason of inward truth. Lest, therefore, the excessive severity of preachers be judged by carnal men, when they separate the reprobate from the communion of the Church forever, let them hear: because after Samuel came to Ramah, he saw Saul no more; because the teacher eternally divides him whom he does not recognize as belonging to the number of the elect. But this is faithfully believed if, in the form of Samuel, the affection of charity of the preachers of the holy Church is seen more strictly. For the zeal of severity is shown, because he is mentioned as not having seen Saul until the day of his death. But concerning the affection of charity, it is added:

(Vers. 35.) And yet Samuel mourned for Saul, because the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

43. For what is it that he mourns for, whom he disdains to behold, if not because holy teachers have, together with the zeal of rectitude, an affection of great charity, and the very magnitude of charity is shown, because he is said to bewail the rejected king? With what affection, then, do they bewail the sins of the chosen subjects, who have learned to bewail so affectionately even

the rejected reprobate? For the persistence of the mourning is shown, because it is added:

CAPUT III.

(I Reg. 16:1.) And the Lord said to Samuel: How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?

1. For to him to whom it is said: How long wilt thou mourn?, it is declared that he mourns persistently. Great, therefore, is the affection of the saints, even when they put forth the austerity of vengeance outwardly. For they rage without, but within they melt through love. In the manner of mothers they beat little children, but with affection they groan with the little ones whom they chastise. But what is it that the Lord says: How long wilt thou mourn for Saul? Can a mother behold a dying son and by no means weep through the rending of her bowels? She endures the dead without mourning who dies, but is weakened. What is it that He says: How long wilt thou mourn for Saul? unless because those who are lost are not to be mourned overmuch? For often a teacher is vehemently afflicted by the perdition of a subject, but is consoled in respect to the highest justice. What is this saying of God to the prophet, therefore, if not to relieve the mind of the preacher from affliction through internal solace? And because for fallen prelates the elect are substituted through divine mercy, the Lord, subjoining, says:

(Vers. 1.) Fill thy horn with oil, and come: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2. For as if consoling the mourner, He says: Why is the person of the rejected one bewailed, when a better one is substituted?

4. But the prophet is sent to Jesse the Bethlehemite, and a king is provided among his sons, because he is chosen as a pastor who has been instructed in ecclesiastical religion. Bethlehem, therefore, which is called the house of bread, what else does it designate than each and every house of religion? For by the name of bread, the doctrine of perfection is shown, as Paul bears witness, who, stirring up the weak to conversion, says: I gave you milk to drink, not meat. For you were not yet able, but neither are you now able (1 Cor. 3:2). For if milk belongs to little ones, bread belongs only to the perfect. Whence it was also said concerning the strength of the perfect man: He shall dwell on high, his loftiness shall be the strongholds of rocks, bread is given to him (Isa. 33:16). In the house of bread, therefore, a king is sought for anointing, because those are usefully promoted who are nourished in the order of perfect conversation. For he can make others strong who has not been nourished in a lax and negligent conversation. In the house, therefore, bread is sought, because in promoting a prelate, the strength of conversation must be sought. For a person of virtue is almost never taken from a weak congregation. Whence he is well sought among the sons of Jesse, who is named the salva-

tion of the Lord, or certainly salvation absolutely. A prelate is indeed rightly called salvation. For what are sins and vices but the sicknesses of souls? But the chosen preacher, through the integrity of sound doctrine, through the solidity of innocence, through the splendor of an elect life, is rightly named the salvation of the Lord. There are indeed other teachers whose speech spreads like a cancer. From their family, a king is not taken, because he does not lead sick minds to salvation, but kills them. And it should be noted that Jesse is called by another name, Isai. He has a double name, because a good teacher is not always at peace. In time of peace, he is called the salvation of the Lord, so that he may be taught to heal the rewards of wars, as if within the secure vestibules of the house. But in war, he has the name Jesse, because he both strongly fortifies himself and powerfully protects others. For Jesse is said to be the relief of the island. But what is understood by the name of island, if not minds walled in by the waves of temptations? They are indeed islands because, even if they sustain great conflicts, they are not moved. Whence also the Psalmist, preaching the victory of the elect, says: The Lord hath reigned, let the earth rejoice: let many islands be glad (Ps. 96:1). The Lord indeed reigns when no whirlwind of enemies disturbs His seat, namely, the elect minds; but the earth rejoices because the solid hearts of the teachers congratulate themselves. The islands are glad because when they overcome temptations through His grace, the hearers of the greater ones become joy-

ful. The earth indeed is the strong mind and firm tongue of the teacher. But the island is called the strong heart of the subject, which is still attacked by temptations, yet is not moved. What is it then, that Jesse is called the relief of the island, if not that through the strength of the greater ones the hearts of the lesser ones are raised up? For among so many waves of temptations they would fall, if their hearts were not raised to the desire of a high life by the strength of the greater ones. In the sons of Isai and Jesse, therefore, a king is described as being hidden, because those usefully come to the summit of the Church who have learned by the magisterium of the elect both to guard and dispose peace, and to wage spiritual wars. Well, therefore, is it said: For I have provided me a king among his sons. For among these, and not among others, a king is provided, because by divine grace none arrive at the summit of the Church who do not follow the magisterium of the elect through all the orders of time. It follows:

(Vers. 2, 3.) And Samuel said: How shall I go? for Saul will hear of it, and will kill me. And the Lord said: Take a calf with thee from the herd, and thou shalt say: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. And thou shalt call Jesse to the victim, and I will show thee what thou shalt do.

5. What is shown by these words, if not that the craftiness and cruelty of tyrants is sometimes to be eluded by a pious fraud? For by the command of the Lord, a calf is taken from the herd, a sacrifice is simulated, and the royal anointing is reached, because while tyrants desire to harm,

certain things are to be presented to them which they may believe, so that they may not find an entry for harming. Thus tyrants are to be deluded, so that the fault of lying may be avoided. Which is then well performed when that is done which is asserted, but what is done is so said that it may be hidden, because it is said in part, and in part kept silent. For the prophet Samuel is commanded to go to anoint the king, and to assert that he is to sacrifice to the Lord, not that he is to anoint a king; so that in sacrificing he may speak the truth, and in hiding the anointing, he may elude the cruelty of the tyrant while speaking true things. For that he went about to sacrifice, he clearly explains a little later, where he says: He sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the victim.

6. But it is better now to see what these things designate spiritually. What is it then, that the prophet takes a calf in his hand, and thus arrives at anointing the king? But what is the calf, if not the splendor of the image of the Redeemer? For because he strives to make him whom he chooses conformable to the Redeemer, when he preaches that very form of the Redeemer, he carries, as it were, a calf in his hand. And because he shows the splendor of the Lord's conversation, which he preaches, in the virtue of his work; the calf, which he receives from the herd, he leads by the hand. For to take a calf in the hand is to keep the preaching of the Lord's conversation in the virtue of work. Thus, indeed, going he is not killed, otherwise he would be killed: because he who speaks and does not do, is condemned by the sword of

his own mouth. What is it that he is commanded to say: I am come to sacrifice to the Lord? What is it, likewise, that he does what he says, while he comes and sacrifices, if not because he who promotes others ought to be of such efficacy that he not only says good things, but persuades them? The victim of the sacrifice, which is seen in the prophet's hand, is recognized upon the altar. For what is the heart of the chosen hearer, if not the altar of God? For when the teacher speaks good things with his mouth, and shows them by work, the calf is in the hand. But when he persuades his hearers of both what he says and what he does, the victim is on the altar. Then, therefore, he sacrifices, when chosen hearts receive through love that which radiates from the imitation of the Redeemer in the word and example of the teacher. It follows: And thou shalt call Jesse to the victim: Perhaps this place suggests that subjects are not to be promoted without the knowledge of the prelates. Jesse is first called to the victim, so that the good which the subject is seen to undergo may be founded in the mind of his master. Well is it added: And I will show thee what thou shalt do. Expressing the same thing, he says:

(Vers. 3.) And thou shalt anoint whom I shall show thee.

7. For unless Jesse be called first, those things which are to be done will not be opened: because without the master's will something is not to be done concerning the person of the subject. He having been called, therefore, what is to be done is shown, because with the will of the religious

teacher, the humility of the subject is raised to the citadel of prelation. But what is it that is said: Thou shalt anoint whom I shall show thee, if not that all disciples of an elect pastor are not equal? For among them, some are useful for obeying: others both obey humbly and have learned to command discreetly. He says, therefore: Thou shalt anoint whom I shall show thee: so that when a person is sought for the summit of the priesthood, he may be sought with great subtlety. By which words, indeed, nothing of their own is left to the ordainers of the Churches in the election of others. Whom, He says, I shall show thee, him thou shalt anoint. Who are they who anoint those whom God does not show, if not those who by carnal affection lead those to be ordained to the summit of the Churches, who do not discern merits but accept persons? These indeed anoint kings, but not those who are shown by God. They do what is their own; they take away what is God's. To show the person is of God, to provide the anointing is of the ordainer. While, therefore, they show to themselves whom they should anoint, they do not wish to have God as a cooperator. Whence also through the prophet Hosea the Lord complains of such chosen ones, saying: They have reigned, but not by me; they have been princes, and I knew not (Hos. 8:4). It is said, therefore, to the elect, what the reprobate cannot hear: Thou shalt anoint whom I shall show thee: so that none may be promoted except he who is discerned by the praise of the holy Scriptures to be worthy of such an order. In them, indeed,

the Lord speaks; there it is mentioned of what sort and how great the teacher of the Church ought to be. He, therefore, is chosen as shown by the Lord, who is commended through the sacred eloquence. These things, indeed, evil rectors despise, good ones do. Concerning the obedience of the good, it is rightly added:

(Vers. 4.) Samuel therefore did that which the Lord spoke to him. And he came to Bethlehem, and the elders of the city were amazed, meeting him.

8. According to the history, the elders are amazed, because the prophet was not accustomed to come there. In which place, perhaps, it is signified: that elect teachers ought scarcely ever to be seen in public, to be frequent in secret, free from civil business, full of spiritual things. A wonder, therefore, of the people is made, when the person of the pastor is seen in public. They wonder that he should go out, whom they knew as a cultivator of the secret. Who, because he is raised up in great veneration by the people, the elders of the city are reported to have both been amazed and to have met him. But because not the people but the elders are amazed, the perfect virtue of the teachers is shown, which is preached not by the little and simple, but by the great and learned. Who also inquire concerning the peaceful entry of the prophet. For as if his entry threatened one that was not peaceful, he who said: What will you? shall I come to you with a rod; or in the spirit of gentleness? (1 Cor. 4:21.) Why is it, then, that it is said:

(Vers. 4.) Is thy coming peaceable?

9. If not because the elect faithful, while they well consider the acts of spiritual teachers, indeed weigh the divine will in them. For because they knew Samuel was a prophet, surely he had known the secrets of the divine dispensation. While, therefore, they ask about the peaceable entry, what else do they do by asking than to wish to know the secret of the divine counsel? Would that we also, as often as we see holy men, would strive to inquire about the security of our peace, and diligently to know from them of what sort we are seen by God, we who have not eyes for our own knowledge. The entry of teachers is peaceable, therefore, when they come to those who are not to be struck for fault, but to be preached to for justice. He, therefore, who had come for the promoted just man, answered, saying:

(Vers. 5.) Peaceable, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me, that we may sacrifice.

10. Those go with teachers to sacrifice who direct their intention to heavenly things. And before those going, the prophet sacrifices when the teacher binds that which he pronounces in word in the hearts of those present through love. But that we may attend a little to the history, it is to be discussed vigilantly what is said: Sanctify yourselves and come with me. For if they do not dare to be present for the sacrificers unless they are sanctified, what is to be judged of the sacrificers? For to sanctify is to purge. How much, then, does it befit the pontiffs to be pure, where

the people invited to the sacrifice are not to be admitted unless sanctified? For the sanctification of the body is chastity, the sanctification of the mind is charity and humility. Let the one invited to the sacrifice be sanctified, therefore, but more is he compelled by whom he is invited. Let the priests note what they say to the invited: Come with me. For the sanctified come with them, if with clean peoples the clean priests approach the service of God. To go with oneself, indeed, is for the clean to approach with the clean. For if the peoples are clean and the priests are not clean, they do not come with themselves: because they do not approach in an equal order of purity. Let such as these hear what another prophet admonishes, saying: Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord (Isa. 52:11). Let them likewise hear what he says: Wash yourselves, be clean (Isa. 1:16). Because, therefore, the peoples are to be cleansed, he says: Sanctify yourselves. Because, likewise, the highest men ought always to remain in the continuous state of their purity and to draw others to the form of their purity, he subjoins: And come with me. But because the elders are invited to the victim, what do they demonstrate by type, if not that for choosing a prelate, or for anointing and consecrating him, many wise and religious men are to be called? Who indeed are sanctified and come, if they propose that in that election they follow nothing carnal. To be sanctified for them is indeed to bring a spiritual and holy intention to the offering of the gifts of the

Holy Spirit. Well, indeed, is it said in the type of the elect concerning Jesse and his sons:

(Vers. 5.) He sanctified therefore Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

11. And because we have taught through the sacred eloquence that the Lord shows the prelates to be chosen, now let us see of what sort He shows and of what sort He reproves subsequently, from the mysteries of this sacred history speaking. It follows:

(Vers. 6, 7.) And when they were come in, he saw Eliab, and said: Is the Lord's anointed before him? And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him, nor do I judge according to the look of man. For man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.

What is it for the wise to enter, if not to enter into the subtle sanctuary of discretion? But he saw Eliab having entered: because the pastor recognizes that he is worthy of the prelation of the holy Church who has both the strength of good work and the knowledge of truth. But what is it that the Lord commands him to behold neither his stature nor his countenance, if not because in the holy Church neither work nor knowledge is preached without humility? For what is the countenance of anyone, if not the outward conversation through which he is known? And what is his stature, if not the height of knowledge through which he is raised to higher things? Whom, therefore, does Eliab more rightly signify than

those who do good things and are learned, but are arrogant? Whence also Eliab is interpreted, My God is father. This indeed is his name, which they dare to presume. For what is it that he is called My God is father, if not because while they strongly do good things and wisely understand spiritual things, they glory that they have passed into the number of the sons of God through singular merit? For they would say Our Father, not My Father, to the almighty Lord, if through humility they saw themselves in common with the rest of the elect in the order of the heavenly generation. Merely, therefore, is he repelled, because in the spiritual summit none but the humble are preferred. Subtly, therefore, the prophet inquires concerning the person to be anointed, saying: Is the Lord's anointed before him? This happens now when the highest teacher knows both the life and the intelligence of the one to be chosen, but still inquires concerning the virtue of humility. But he sees his countenance and stature rejected, when he recognizes in him whatever beautiful thing he has in work, whatever high thing is in him in learning, to be without the virtue of humility. Meritedly, therefore, the Lord says: I have rejected him, nor do I judge according to the look of man: because man seeth in the face, but God beholdeth the heart. As if He should say: Men are accustomed to praise great works and words of knowledge: but I praise neither words nor works which I do not see founded in true humility. Indeed, those who are of such a sort would dread the repulse of their unworthiness, if they

would listen attentively to what the Lord says to the prophet: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For they hold as great what the arrogant do: but behold, it is said by the Lord to be so vile that it is judged not even to be looked upon. But he being removed, what follows is shown:

(Vers. 8.) And Jesse called Abinadab, and brought him before Samuel. And he said: Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

12. Abinadab is interpreted, urban. Meritedly, therefore, the Lord being consulted, he is repelled: because the holy Church does not choose for the government of souls one strenuous in secular business, but one decorous in spiritual conversation. Those are indeed urban who, having postponed the intention of heavenly things, strive to show themselves strenuous in outward studies. Neither, therefore, hath the Lord chosen this one, because by the study of a pious pastor heavenly things, not earthly, ought to be provided for the flocks of the faithful, not weak and gliding things, but sublime and eternal.

(Vers. 9.) And he brought Shammah, of whom he also said: Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

13. Shammah is interpreted, hearing. What then does Shammah designate, if not the obedient and simple? To hear for them is indeed to perform by obeying those things which are commanded by the greater ones. Whence also it is said concerning the obedience of the gentile people through the Psalmist: A people, which I knew not, hath served me: at the hearing of the

ear they have obeyed me (Ps. 17:45). But what is it that they are said not to be chosen by the Lord, if not because at the summit of the Church are placed not the unskillful humble, but the humble wise, who both know how to do what is commanded and may wisely command what is to be done? For it behooves him to do and to teach. Let him do humbly, therefore, let him teach wisely. Because, therefore, those who know how to do through humility and know not how to command through learning are not to be assumed into the royal dignity, Shammah is said not to be chosen by the Lord for the kingdom. Hence, therefore, let the simple and inobedient gather how penally they thrust themselves into preeminence, if almighty God does not even receive him for government who is called hearing through the humility of obedience. And because the holy Church has many of this sort, as well simple and well-living as humble wise, it follows:

(Vers. 10.) And Jesse brought his seven sons before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse: The Lord hath not chosen these.

14. That perfection is usually designated by the number seven, the prophet Isaiah bears witness, who, asserting the gifts of the Holy Spirit remaining in our Redeemer, says: The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:2). Why is it, then, that these, because they are rejected from the office of

preaching, are designated by the number seven, since the same number designates perfection, which no one has except from the infusion of the Holy Spirit? But this is conveniently asserted: because to many the grace of the Holy Spirit is given for living well, but it is not given for teaching. Who, because they are many, and perfect in good operation, are aptly contained by the number seven. Likewise, because they do robust things, but do not understand subtle things, they are rejected from the government of the kingdom. And there are, therefore, seven sons, and none of them is assumed to the government of souls: because even if they know how to rule themselves strongly by living well, they can by no means strongly protect others through doctrine. Never let an ordainer of the Church precipitate himself so much in ordaining, because, even if he has many who are not fit for undertaking the care of souls, yet those who can preside cannot be lacking to him. Let the teacher, therefore, seek persistently, and let him not fail to seek until he can find those who are hidden. For the great virtues of the elect are almost always in secret, like the treasures of almighty God. For almighty God acts in the manner of fearful rich men: because, lest He lose the treasures of virtues, He both places them in elect minds and conceals those very minds through the secret. Let him, therefore, who desires to ordain, or rather to adorn, the head of the Church, seek for the hidden treasures. He yearns to adorn the spouse of Christ; but he cannot, unless he produces the hidden treasures of the

spouse for her adornment, and let him not desist until he finds those who are hidden. But why do I exhort pastors to seek, when they cannot be found unless God produces the hidden ones? For what else is: Thou shalt anoint whom I shall show thee? Yet they are to be sought, because, unless sought for a long time, they are by no means shown. For the Lord also promises that He will show him, and yet the prophet strives to seek, so that he may deserve to find. Whence also the Lord commands the persistence of seeking, saying: Seek and you shall find, ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened to you (Matt. 7:7). The prophet seeking, therefore, and persevering in seeking after so many had already been rejected, what does he suggest to us, if not that by no dispensation should the unworthy be permitted to come to the summit of religion? For while in many affairs of the holy Church dispensation is wholesome, it is surely lethal and death-dealing where either the blind through ignorance, or the irreligious wise, or those cast down into secular business are permitted to come to the primacy of others. For these by being ignorant, those by knowing and not doing, destroy the souls of their subjects: those likewise by neglecting spiritual things and following carnal and earthly ones. The former indeed labor with all their strength that what they say may be praised; the latter know not what they say; the former strive with all intention for this, that they may be more abundantly honored among the highest of the world: who surely are so much worse than the former, as those

wish to appear sublime in spiritual things, and these in carnal and secular ones. Their end is the desire to be supported by riches, to be extolled by honors, to be sublimated by the familiarities of the powerful of this world. From all which affections of a reprobate mind can arise negligence of the souls of subjects, contempt of Christ, and the dilapidation of the resources of the Church. Let the teacher seek, therefore, so that by no dispensation he prefers the unworthy: because that which is lethal ought never to be permitted. Whence also it is added:

And Samuel said to Jesse: Are here all thy sons?

What is it, that he seeks another, if not because he who seeks ought not to rest before he deserves to find? And because things rejected and vile without are often high within, it follows:

(Vers. 11.) And he answered: There remaineth yet a little one, and he keepeth the sheep.

15. What is remaining, if not cast down? I say cast down by himself, not by God: because one is cast down by God through pride; but he is cast down by himself who is esteemed vile and humble. Or he is called remaining who does not seem to be anything in comparison with others. The humble is therefore called cast down; because he sees himself despised, and endures it, and by no means cares to be shown, but keepeth the sheep; because he feeds simple thoughts in the contemplation of the eternal inheritance. Concerning these pastures of the elect it is said by the Lord: They shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures (John 10:9). For they have pastures of con-

templation within, and pastures of good work without. Within they fatten the mind with devotions, without they satisfy themselves with pious works. Meritedly is this little one said to feed the sheep, because every elect one is humble, and he is not sterile who daily does great things, but does not think great things of himself. Meritedly, therefore, he is asserted to be not only a little one, but a pastor: because those who are truly humble cast themselves down without, but through internal society they dwell in the highest and eternal pastures. For it is written: God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5). But what grace? If not that they may see and know the highest things, know and love them, and run to those very beloved things as if fat and strong. This one, therefore, because he is very fit, is commanded to be produced persistently. For it follows:

(Vers. 11.) And Samuel said to Jesse: Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

16. What is this, We will not sit down till he come? Whom does he require, if not because the sacraments of anointing are to be celebrated in the observation of a fast? But for us, not only the sacraments themselves, but the force of the sacraments is to be attended to. For there are certain foods which, if they are not avoided, by no means allow kings to be anointed well. The exterior business of the Church are indeed certain foods of the soul, which are devotedly administered by the elect. But if the soul be saturated

by a multitude of business, it is not permitted to enter spiritual things perfectly. When, therefore, spiritual things are urgent, let exterior things be deferred: because they are to be disposed with great quiet of mind. It follows:

(Vers. 12.) He sent therefore and brought him.

The future king is brought when the humble are produced from the hiding places of their concealment. They lie hidden, indeed, but in pastures; because, even if they cover themselves from men within the vile and weak things of the flesh, great is the latitude of heavenly contemplation in which they dwell. But let us see of what sort the prelate may now appear. For it follows, and says:

(Vers. 12.) Now he was ruddy and beautiful to behold, and of a comely face.

17. What is it, that such great beauty of the king is asserted, if not because the person of the teacher ought to be adorned with great splendors of virtues? For it was said of the Redeemer: His spirit hath adorned the heavens (Job 26:13). For the heavens are the sublime preachers. Which heavens are surely adorned by the Spirit, because they perceive from the Holy Spirit the virtues with which they shine. What is it, therefore, that he is asserted to be ruddy, if not because in red material the fervor of charity is often designated? Whence also in the garment of the pontiff twice-dyed scarlet is placed, that he may be clothed with double charity. He is therefore called ruddy through the ardor of charity, because while he exhibits the ardent precepts of charity, he reddens

as if through heat. What likewise is beautiful to behold, if not conspicuous in internal contemplation? For he has, as it were, a beautiful look, who radiates with the beauty of vision in internal contemplation. What, therefore, does the face designate, if not the outward glory of honesty? For because everyone is known by the face, the beauty of the face is the illustrious honesty of conversation. For he is seen, as it were, through the beauty of the face, who is found splendid in every gesture of the body. He is therefore ruddy through love, beautiful to behold on account of knowledge, of a comely face, splendid in honesty. Because indeed the fervor of charity is demonstrated through holy works, the labor of the work itself can be designated through redness. For he who labors much represents a redness of the face: because while he grows hot within, he draws redness without in his countenance. For so is all spiritual labor. Because everyone, the more he tries to labor for eternal life, the more fervently is he kindled to labor by the ardor of the Holy Spirit, as if in boiling he excites a redness which he carries without. The teacher is therefore ruddy by the labor of pious work, beautiful to behold in the splendor of contemplation. But the beauty of the face is the very beauty of charity. Through other virtues indeed we receive the form of sanctity; through charity itself, we clothe that very form for ourselves as if with a wonderful beauty. Those other virtues are the body of justice, but charity is rightly understood as the face of this body. For by the face, not by the body, is everyone known.

For if you see the body, and see not the face, you do not recognize him whose body only you behold. What else indeed is it, that is answered to the foolish virgins by the bridegroom: I know you not (Matt. 25:12)? Behold, through great labors virginity is preserved, and that virginity is recognized as a great and incomparable virtue. What is it, therefore, that the foolish virgins are not known by the bridegroom, if not because they have a body by which they may subsist, but they have not the beauty of the face which the bridegroom may recognize? They have indeed labor in preserving the body, they have not the beauty of the countenance in perfect charity. For these three, in the order in which they are placed, profit in the conversation of the elect. For one is not able to have beautiful looks of contemplation, unless he first exercises himself vehemently in the labor of pious work. For the joys of eternal light, the immensity of that highest light, that eternal vigor of ineffable splendor, the more laboriously it is sought, the more generously it opens itself to those seeking. He, therefore, who is already such, is indeed seen to be fit for teaching; but unless he shines with a comely face, unless he bears a mind illustrated by the rays of perfect charity, he is not proved worthy of such highness. Let the pastor be ruddy, therefore, and let him not be remiss in work; let him be beautiful to behold, namely, sublime in him the contemplation; let him be of a comely face, so that all the strength of work and the height of contemplation, known to the eyes of the heavenly majesty, may be through the ineffa-

ble beauty of charity. Because the teacher of the holy Church ought to have these three insignias of immense beauty, Peter is assumed for all, and is asked a third time if he loves the Redeemer. For first it is said to him: Peter, lovest thou me? (John 21:16) so that through love he may study to do strong things; secondly, so that in contemplating he may know high things; thirdly, so that by the affection of perfect charity, he may both glow toward his neighbor, and burn more fervently toward the beauty of the Creator. Of what sort therefore and how great so beautiful, so comely a boy is produced by testimony, let us hear. For it follows:

(Vers. 12.) Arise, and anoint him, for this is he.

18. What is Arise, and anoint him? Was the little one so great that he could not be anointed while sitting? For by sitting, we cannot touch high things. Great, therefore, is the virtue, great the highness of the humble, if even prophets do not reach to their highest things. The prophet arises, therefore, when the pontiff raises himself in a wonderful veneration of the elect preacher. For without he beholds the humble one as if by seeing; but his merit within he does not recognize, unless he raises himself in internal contemplation. The teacher is commanded to arise, therefore: because to whom he wishes to bestow such great sacraments, his sublimity of merits he ought first to know. What is it, therefore, that is said: Arise, and anoint him, because this is he, if not: bestow high sacraments in a high manner upon the high one? For often indiscreet

pastors know the negligent and reprobate life of those approaching, and they do not fear to promote them. These surely anoint, and do not arise; because they do not behold those to whom they bestow the sacraments of anointing situated in a high place of merits. When, therefore, a sublime teacher is shown, his ordainer is admonished to arise; because the sacraments of anointing are then worthily bestowed through the ministry, when he who is to be anointed is beheld in a high sublimity of virtue. Concerning whom, indeed, it is said: Because this is he: If he is the one, therefore, it is no other; because, unless he shines with these virtues, it is necessary that he does not reach the order of such highness. Him, therefore, whom the Lord promised He would show, He showed as ruddy and beautiful to behold, and of a comely face, saying: For this is he. Because no one ought to undergo the summit of government who has not the strength of great work, namely the knowledge of contemplation, and the fervor of charity. Well, therefore, is it subjoined:

(Vers. 13.) Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren.

19. The horn of oil is taken, so that the whole life of the pontiff may be taught to be spiritual. The horn of oil is taken, so that in the excellent liquor the teacher of the Church may study to be a man of great mercy. The head of the king is anointed with oil, because he ought to shine above the candlestick through the flame of the word. The horn receives the oil, so that by rebuking he may purge, and by pitying he may draw

through allurement. The horn also receives in the highness of the order oil for the nourishments of virtue. But he is anointed with a full horn, so that the virtue of the pontiff may be taught to be full. For he has a full horn in his anointing, if he is perfect both in the virtue of mercy and of charity and of the word. He is also known to have a full horn in his anointing, whose whole power is dispensed through mercy. For the authority of the holy Church itself, when it is without mercy, is nothing; because the rigor of discipline is then spiritual, when it is not void of the liniment of mercy. The horn and the oil are therefore shown together, so that discipline may always be held with mercy. For the horn is said to be full of oil; so that wherever the horn exhibits sharpness, it may exhibit the anointing of infused grace. But while the anointing is led to anoint the king, the horn is seen without, the fullness of the oil is hidden within. Let the prophet carry the horn without, therefore, let him fill it with oil within; let him suggest the text without, let him declare the sacraments within. Let the prophet know, therefore, what he may bestow; let the anointed king know what he may do by receiving the things exhibited.

What is it, therefore, that the horn is without, the oil within, if not because for the most part the hardness of subjects deserves that they feel the pastor's rebuke, but they may not attend to anything of his mercy? A rector is therefore beheld as cruel, who so rebukes as one who does not love; as one who vehemently hates, so he chides.

What then is beheld by the compunctious, if not the sharpness of the horn, by which they may be more sharply struck? But because the pastor loves intensely within him whom he strikes without by arguing; what else does he show but the horn by rebuking, while he conceals the oil by loving? A full horn is therefore asserted in the anointing of the king, so that in the elect preacher both may be taught to be perfect. For he ought to be sharp for arguing, soft for pitying. Let him strike perfectly, so that he may perfectly pierce through every force of disease; let him anoint perfectly through mercy, so that he may lead back to health the wounds which he punctures. For if he strikes less violently than he ought, he does not eject the more that lies hidden. And if he strikes violently, and does not anoint abundantly, he kills the one struck through austerity, and does not restore him to health. Let there be therefore an integer horn, an integer fullness of oil, so that wounds may be austerely struck through the horn, and soothed through the oil. Let there be therefore an integer horn, an integer fullness of oil, so that wounds may be austerely struck through the horn, and soothed through the oil.

But what is it, that he is anointed in the midst of his brothers, if not because he is commanded to scatter examples of virtue all around? He is anointed in the midst of his brothers, so that all may be able to become partakers of so great an anointing. For he who is placed in the middle is seen from every part. Indeed, he is anointed with oil in the midst of others: because he who has

been placed as an example for others ought to have no part of himself obscure, so that all may gaze upon him, and take from him an example of light. Hence also the holy animals are described as having eyes round about (Ezek. 1): because while the elect doctor receives the ardor of charity, the virtue of mercy, and the zeal of rectitude from the gift of the Holy Spirit, he inhabits as it were a globe of light, which renders him shining from every part to those standing around. Or he is anointed in the midst of his brothers, so that he may always judge himself to be anointed and in the middle. Let him therefore acknowledge his dignity, and exercise the force of his dignity, because he is anointed. Let him see himself as in the middle, and a man of common condition, so that he may recognize those over whom he towers as being his equals. He is anointed, therefore, in the midst of his brothers, so that he may be humble and sublime. Sublime in order, humble in estimation. He is likewise anointed in the middle, so that he may not love himself with a private love, but may seek the gains of others from all in which he excels. Hence also Saul is asserted to have been anointed alone in the extreme part of the city (1 Sam. 9). For what is it, that he is anointed alone by one alone, if not because he was to swell with pride concerning the power of the summit through private love! For while he wished to love himself singularly concerning the received dignity, he alone carried as it were the foment of light. Hence also the boy, who was accompanying him, is sent ahead: because none

of the elect follows the examples of him who is reproved by divine authority. David, therefore, is anointed in the midst of his brothers: because the elect doctor by no means glories with a singular love in that by which he is uplifted with singular sublimity. And because through the ministry of men spiritual gifts are heaped up in elect rectors, it is added:

(Verse 13.) And the spirit of the Lord was directed into David from that day, and for the rest.

21. Indeed, the Spirit of the Lord is directed after the anointing: because we perceive the sacraments without, so that we may be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit within. For man operates without, but God, and not man, operates within. For man rises without, but the Spirit directs itself within: because man offers the order of religion to man, but the Spirit is directed into him to whom the order is given, so that he may receive the sublimity of order without, and the strength of the Holy Spirit within. Order is committed without, so that he ought to do those things which are of God; the Spirit is directed within, so that he may powerfully do what is enjoined. Indeed, the burden of order is great, the fragility of the flesh is great. Therefore, because so great a burden is committed to one who is weak, the Spirit is directed: so that the weak may be strengthened, and may bear so great a burden the more gracefully as the almighty Spirit helps him the more strongly to bear it. But the Spirit is said to be directed, so that he may be felt as turned away from the proud king. The Spirit therefore

directs himself into another, when the grace of the same Spirit flees the proud and the fictional. Hence also it is written: The Spirit of the Lord of discipline will flee the fictional (Wis. 1:5). Hence also He says through Himself in the Gospel: The Spirit breathes where He wills, and you hear His voice, and you do not know from where He comes or where He goes (John 3:8). The Spirit indeed comes and goes, because He deserts the reprobate and assumes the elect. And because the judgment of almighty God is inscrutable, man does not know from where He comes and where He goes: because it cannot be known whether one ought to persevere forever in the grace which he receives. Therefore, the Spirit is said to come from him who has failed, and to go to him who is to persevere: because He deserts some in time, and assumes others, and yet He does not desert. Hence also it is said of David in the type of the elect: The spirit of the Lord was directed into David from that day for the rest. In the day of anointing it is indeed directed, when we so perceive the sacraments of Christ without, that we may be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit within. And for the rest the Spirit is directed, who never recedes from the grace which he perceives. Indeed, we so ascribe this grace of the directed spirit to preachers that we attribute it to all orders of the holy Church. For whoever receives the faith of our Redeemer is reborn through the baptism of our redemption, and is redeemed from all sin by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Hence also the apostle Paul, suggesting the gift of the same

Holy Spirit to the elect who have been redeemed, says: In whom you were signed in the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). If therefore we consider that the people formerly proud in circumcision lose the Holy Spirit, we likewise see the direction of the same Spirit into the baptized. In which we indeed are directed, because they lost the grace of the Holy Spirit through pride. What is it, therefore, that is said, From that day and for the rest, if not because the grace of the Holy Spirit is so received that the elect may be taught to persevere in it until the end? Indeed, many after the remission of sins commit sins unto death, in whom the Spirit is clearly not seen to be directed for the rest. The Spirit is therefore directed in the elect alone from that day for the rest, because sins are forgiven to the reprobate in the rising of faith through the Holy Spirit, but they afterwards lose the grace of the Holy Spirit through iniquity. For it is directed for the rest, but into David, because he is interpreted as strong of hand. Indeed, he is strong of hand who prevails over the devil, and holds the good which he receives through perseverance until the end. Concerning whom the Lord certainly says: He who shall have persevered until the end will be saved (Matt. 10:22). But if the state of the universal Church is beheld, we see the Spirit of the Lord directed into David for the rest: because He began to fill the elect of the holy Church from the beginnings of the same Church with the grace of the Holy Spirit, whom He does not cease to guard until the end of the world.

22. Now indeed, according to our purpose, the book ought to be closed at the end; but it returns to memory that we referred the principles of the volume to the conversation of the Redeemer. And because through John the same Redeemer of ours is asserted as the beginning and the end, the book is closed with the best end if it is consumed in the narration of our Redeemer (Rev. 1:8). David, therefore, strong of hand, suggests the Redeemer Himself of the human race, who prevailed over the ancient enemy, and took the elect from his power. Who is called the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, because He wished to be born of that people whom the science of the Holy Scriptures saturated as if with bread. For Judea was the house of bread, which had the solid food of the Scriptures in spiritual intelligence, as if from bread. But what does Samuel signify, if not, as we have already often said, the order of new preachers? But what does David signify, if not the Redeemer? Samuel is therefore sent to anoint him. For to anoint him is to preach his incomparable sanctification to those who are ignorant of it. For he is as it were anointed when the odor of his reputation is opened to those who do not know it. For he was anointing him, who said: Because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). But why do we receive only the new preachers for his anointing, when we see even the ancients to have anointed him so venerably? For what smells better and sweeter than that which the prophet Isaiah poured out concerning him, saying: The

Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him (Isa. 11:2)? Hence likewise, he who is held in the hands, David speaking to him, says: Beautiful in form beyond the sons of men, grace is diffused in your lips (Ps. 45:3). And after a few things: Your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your fellows. But Daniel anointed him, and offered the sacrament of all anointing to the Jews, saying: When the Holy of Holies shall come, your anointing shall cease (Dan. 9). Therefore the prophet is sent to anoint; because his odor is never captured by little ones, unless it is opened through the mouths of preachers. Hence also those three women prepare spices, and anoint the Redeemer in the sepulcher (Mark 16). Jesus is indeed anointed in the sepulcher when the glory of His resurrection is preached. Hence also when they come, Jesus is not found; because while they discuss well concerning the Lord's death, they show Him as already risen from the dead, and as if by coming they do not find Him; because when they well understand the cause of death, they find that life was restored through His death.

23. But what is it, that the horn is commanded to be filled with oil? For what was the austerity of the law, if not the sharpness of the horn? For it struck as if with a horn, while it did not indulge sins through mercy, but avenged them by inflicting punishment. The horn is therefore filled with oil; because such a King is anointed, who

may mercifully dismiss the sins of men, and not punish them through the austerity of the law. For they were preferring the horn of Moses, who were saying to the Lord concerning her who had been caught in adultery: Moses commands to stone such as these; what do You say of her (John 8:5)? But He who had been anointed with a full horn says: He among you who is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone at her. He who was saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind this woman is who touches him, for she is a sinner (Luke 7:39), had assumed as it were a horn for striking. But Jesus, who had been anointed from the fullness of the horn, forgave everything, saying: Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much. Hence He says to those murmuring concerning the assumption of sinners: I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt. 9:13). Therefore the prophet is sent to anoint David with a full horn, because now the doctors preach Him, who loosed the hardness of the law, and repaired every thing which presented a rigid front, through the fomentations of His grace. Was he not anointing Him, he who was sent to anoint Him, of whom it is said: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John: he came for a testimony, to bear testimony concerning the light (John 1:6)? But we have heard how he was sent, let us hear how he anoints: Behold, he says, the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world (Ibid., 29).

24. Through the horn, namely of His kingdom, the sublimity of the holy Church can be desig-

nated, which is great, but is not austere and proud. Concerning which horn indeed it is said above through Anna, the mother of Samuel: He will sublime the horn of His Christ (1 Sam. 2:10). For hence it is said through Zechariah: He has raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of David His servant (Luke 1:69). What indeed is the horn of salvation, if not the sublimity of ecclesiastical power? For that which is never said to the ancients, is now said to the universal Church: Whatever you shall have bound upon earth, will be bound also in the heavens; and whatever you shall have loosed upon earth, will be loosed also in the heavens (Matt. 16:19). Which horn indeed is said to be erect and full of oil, because the holy Church, with the sublimity of power, extends the bowels of commiseration. And because through the vice of damned humanity, we can more easily be uplifted into the authority of power than be bent to the softness of piety; well is he commanded not to prepare the horn, but the oil. For he who says, 'fill your horn with oil', signified that the horn was without oil. What is this, if not because we can even be angry and argue unadvisedly, but we cannot be bent to mercy, unless from great meditation? As if he should say: Fill the zeal, which you have naturally, with oil, which if you do not have from yourself, you can have from virtue. Which certainly is said to him who is sent to anoint the Redeemer; so that he who is placed in the office of preaching, may always endeavor to be rich in mercy.

25. This horn can be shown to be the affection of the mind. Which horn indeed is commanded to be filled, because the anointing of our Redeemer, that is, his sanctification, ought to be perfectly known before it can sufficiently avail to be preached. The horn is therefore filled when the holiness of the Redeemer is well acknowledged. And he is anointed with a full horn, when he is preached most excellently. For John, because he had come to anoint by preaching, as it were filled the horn by knowing; so that he might have been able to anoint him by speaking well. But if we wish to know the filling well, let us hear what is said in the Gospel: The word was made upon John the son of Zechariah in the desert (Luke 3:2). Therefore he anointed him with a full horn, who was perfectly taught by the Word before he could have spoken of the divinity of the Word and the assumed nature of man. But coming, he had a calf in his hand; because, that he might become a worthy herald of the Redeemer, he slaughtered his flesh to God through abstinence. The Lord Himself can also be designated by the appellation of the calf. What then is it, that the prophet carried a calf in his hand, if not because he who wishes to show Jesus by preaching, ought through the mortification of the flesh to imitate the passions of Him whom he preaches? Indeed, to hold the calf in the hand is to show the likeness of the passion of Christ in the virtue of operation. For otherwise, he who comes to anoint the king is killed; because indeed the preacher of truth is made into a danger to his own salva-

tion, who tramples with depraved operation the word which he preaches with his mouth. And so Samuel, coming to anoint the king, carried a calf in his hand; because the precursor of the Lord first offered himself as wonderful through the brightness of supernal conversation, and thus indicated the good of so great grace to those who were ignorant of it.

26. But what is it, that he is commanded to be sought among the sons of Jesse, if not because He was to be born of the ancient people, and was to have no equal? It is therefore commanded to be sought, so that we may reasonably believe in Him. And because He says through Himself: No one comes to Me, unless the Father, who sent Me, shall have drawn him (John 6:44), well is it said to Samuel by the father: You shall anoint whom I shall have shown to you. For he had as it were anointed one shown before, who was hearing from Him whom he had anointed: Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but My Father, who is in the heavens (Matt. 16:17). He is therefore sent to Bethlehem, because when Christ is sought according to the flesh, He is found born of the people of the Jews. He came also to Bethlehem, because the order of preachers studied to convert Judea first, and afterwards preached the faith of the Redeemer to the gentiles. But what is it, that the elders of the city wonder, if not because they who had arrived at the sense of maturity, were amazed at the preaching of so great novelty? But wondering they run to meet him, because they

willingly hear the preaching of truth. Indeed, to run to meet preachers is to hear desirously the word of faith which they preach. Why do they interrogate concerning his peaceful entry? What is a peaceful entry, if not when the presence of peace shall have come? He likewise shows this peace, who says: He is our peace, who made both one (Eph. 2:14). What is it, therefore, that they interrogate concerning the peaceful entry, if not because the hearts of the elect Jews were desirously expecting the promise of the fathers? As if wavering, they who were expecting might say: Has the peace indeed come, which predicted that it would come, so great a space of times preceding it? And because the new doctors narrate as exhibited what the ancient fathers had promised, they say: It is peaceful. As if he should say: We do not promise future things, but we show the present gifts of peace. In our entry it is present, in our word it is not future. Now the righteous Simeon saw, now he held and adored, saying: Now You dismiss Your servant, Lord, according to Your word in peace (Luke 2:29). Now he appeared to the shepherds, now the long-expected peace having been sent from the heavens, the multitude of angels sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2:14). And because he had come not only to preach peace, but also to persuade it, he adds, saying: I have come to sacrifice.

27. What is it for a priest to sacrifice, if not to join the hearts of the elect to our Redeemer through love? As if he should say: You wish to

know whether He has come, but it does not profit to be known, unless it profits to be loved. I have come therefore to sacrifice to the Lord. Hence it is, that Paul expels those in whom he could not sacrifice, saying: If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema (1 Cor. 16:22). But it is said to those invited to the victim: Be sanctified, and come. The Jews for that reason cannot come with us to the sacrifice of faith, because they do not wish to judge the Lord Jesus from the Scriptures, but from hatred alone they flee from hearing His preaching. Hence the Lord complains through Himself, saying: If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse, because they have both seen and hated Me, and My Father (John 15:24). What is it therefore, that is said: Be sanctified, and come? But for hearers to be sanctified, is to prepare the secret of a pure mind for hearing. Indeed, for them to be sanctified is to cast out hatred from the heart, and to prepare the purity of intention for hearing the word of preaching. He therefore commands those who are sanctified to come, because it profits nothing to come for those who do not have the intention of purity in hearing. And because the Holy Spirit speaks through holy doctors, He says: Come with me: as if He should say: Attend to me speaking in such a way, that you may believe Me to be hearing with you, because I so speak that I may hear, while I myself am He who speaks and administers the speech. And because in the beginning of the nascent Church many of the Jews

both devoutly heard and faithfully believed, it is well said that Jesse and his sons were sanctified by Samuel, and invited to the victim.

28. But among the seven sons of Jesse a king is not found. For what are the seven sons of Jesse, if not all the perfect ones of the Synagogue? Who come to the prophet, but none of them is chosen: because the elect preacher both beholds the perfect sons of the Synagogue, and believes none of them to be the Redeemer of the human race. He therefore brings forward all the prior sons, so that when we behold all the perfect ones, we may reflect upon the excellence of the Redeemer. In whom indeed, unless the little one is brought forward, he is not shown by the Lord to be king: because indeed when we compare great men to our Redeemer, it is seen how much His dignity excels. He is therefore not found in others, because they are pure men. Therefore the boy who feeds the sheep is sought in the pastures, because He subjects Himself to the Father by obeying even unto death: yet who shall declare His generation (Isa. 53:8)? Indeed He is called a little one, because the grace of His humility is commended. He is therefore called a little one, who is asserted by the Psalmist to have been made lower than the angels (Ps. 8:5). But the little one feeds the sheep, because through humility He is humble, and through majesty He is sublime. Here He labors and hungers, but there He feeds the angels from the glory of His majesty. For while all receive from the fullness of His glory, they are as it were saturated by the boy in those

most blessed pastures. He is also asserted to be a little shepherd: because concerning the assumption of His flesh, the supernal citizens ineffably rejoice. Indeed, that ineffable joy of the blessed citizens is as it were the food of the sheep. He is therefore commanded to be brought forward urgently, and here until He comes, it is necessary that the reclining at table be deferred. Indeed, the people would have reclined before He came, if they had believed in another. Therefore He ought to have been expected, who was the singular and only food of blessed souls. Hence also He says through Himself: I am the living bread, who came down from heaven (John 6:51). But because He who ascended is the same as He who descended (Eph. 4:10), he is sent thither, so that He may be brought forward. For to send to the pastures is to extend the mind above the angels even to the equality of the eternal Father. And to find Him is to believe Him to be equal in all things to the supreme Father. But he brings Him forward, who already asserts Him to have come through assumed humanity for the redemption of the human race. For he had sent, and had brought Him forward here, to whom he is sent in His type, when he was saying: He who comes from heaven, is above all (John 3:31). Isaiah was bringing forward the little one feeding the sheep, when he was saying: A little one is born to us, and a son is given to us, and his name shall be called, Admirable, Counselor, God, Strong, Father of the future age, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). But because the faith of the doctor profits for salvation to

himself alone, and not also to his hearers, He is commanded to be sent and brought forward, so that each one may have faith in Him, through which he may merit to be saved. For individuals ought to go, and to bring Him forward, because they ought firmly to believe Him equal to the eternal Father through His divinity, and a partaker of our nature through His humanity.

29. But it must be seen, what kind he is who is brought to be anointed. For he was ruddy, and beautiful in appearance, and fair of face. For he was ruddy, who bore the type of our Redeemer: because He had the fervor of charity in Himself, who grew red with shed blood for our sins. He therefore stood out as ruddy: because He fervently loved those for whom He laid down His life. He was beautiful in appearance: because He knew all things. Fair of face: because He did all good things. But what is that beauty of appearance? No one knows the Father, except the Son (Matt. 11:27). Therefore this ineffable appearance, which our Redeemer had in His divinity, He also made wonderful to men in the unity of His person. But what is His face, if not the manifestation of the same divinity through the assumed flesh? For as we become known to men through our face, so through the flesh assumed in the unity of person, the Word of God became known to men, of whom John says: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Therefore His face was fair, because both the full brightness of

divinity appeared through our Redeemer, and He disposed all things which He did most rightly and justly. Therefore these things which are to be seen in David, ought also to be in his type, who is sent into his office. For he who preaches the anointing of sanctification ought to be ruddy: because he ought to have the fire of charity in himself, that he may be able to demonstrate the light to others. He ought also to be beautiful in appearance, that is, erudite in the knowledge of the Scriptures: so that he may not only do good things, but also teach others what things are good. Likewise he ought to be of fair face, that is, endowed with the splendor of all virtues: so that what he speaks with words, he may prove by works. For he is ruddy through the ardor of charity, beautiful in appearance through the knowledge of truth, fair of face through the splendor of good operation. He is therefore brought forward, and after he is brought forward, he is anointed: because then the preacher worthily comes to office, when he is brought forward as such that the splendor of virtues is not lacking in him.

30. The apostle Peter also, not only a prophet but the highest patriarch, saw the ineffable light poured from above, the cloud overshadowing, the Father crying out: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Pet 1:17). There it is said: For it is He. Here it is said: This is My beloved Son. There, because He was shown in types, He is discerned as if more absent, while it is said: It is He. But here, because His brightness was already revealed, He

is discerned as more present, because it says: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. He therefore is to be anointed here, here He is to be praised, and to be soothed with perpetual favors. But who may suffice to praise worthily, when it does not suffice to see the glory which he praises? Why is it, that Peter falls, when he hears the voice sounding the words of so great a herald? But he was a little one, he still saw what he was not sufficient to see. He saw, and because by seeing he was falling, it signifies that he could not reach to that which he merited to see. No one can say, Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). Therefore, because Peter had not yet received that fullness of the Spirit, he was not able to preach Jesus, being as it were a little one. therefore he is first commanded to rise, and to tell the vision to no one, until He had risen from the dead. For after the resurrection he was to receive the Holy Spirit. Hence it is written: The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:39). Therefore Peter ought not to have spoken of the vision before the resurrection, since indeed he saw well, but before he had the Spirit, he did not understand.

31. What is it therefore that the Lord says to Samuel: Arise, and anoint him? What is it, that he is commanded to rise, that he may anoint, if not because it is necessary for him to be much uplifted to supernal things, who desires to preach the sublimity of the Lord? But how much was Peter uplifted, who was being raised up to see such great things? But if he still expects a higher

state of perfection, who would not fear to undergo the office of so great preaching? If the Lord admonishes the prophet to rise, does he dare to preach the Lord, who lies through the lapse of depravity? For hence it is, that it is commanded to every preacher through Isaiah: Get yourself up into a high mountain, you who evangelize Zion (Isa. 40:9). The high mountain is the perfection of doctrine and of work. Let him therefore rise, who is commanded to anoint the king, let him extend himself into sublime things. Let him rise in high work, let him rise in high contemplation, let him rise in the wisdom of the word, let him rise in the virtue of charity. He indeed, who is anointed by preaching, is so great that He is scarcely reached by those who are sublime. And perhaps Paul was able to anoint Him for this reason, because he says: Our conversation is in the heavens (Phil. 3:20). He was able to anoint Him for this reason, because he had uplifted himself to the secrets of the third heaven, and was hearing arcane words in paradise. Because therefore the Lord Jesus ought to be preached sublimely by those who are sublime, the prophet is commanded to rise: because he is commanded to anoint Him, by whom he himself is signified. Indeed this virtue of perfect conversation is high, nay most high, but it is perfectly perfected by many. Indeed this sublimity is great, but yet the holy Church has many who are sublime. For since He rejected the Synagogue, He has sublimed the holy Church into an innumerable loftiness of virtue. Therefore it is well said: And the spirit of the Lord was

directed into David from that day for the rest. The day indeed is the faith of the Redeemer: in which indeed the holy Church is illuminated, and the rejected Synagogue is depressed in a wondrous blindness. In that day therefore the Holy Spirit is directed into David: because His grace is taken from the Synagogue, and is given to the elect of the holy Church. For He is directed, because He deserts those, and assumes these. But He is directed in the day, because he who is not illuminated in the faith of the Redeemer, cannot have the spirit directing itself in him. Therefore the Spirit is directed in the day, because He is given to those who have the light of faith. But He is directed into David, because the holy Church alone receives Him, which is the body of the Redeemer. But because, by the authority of God, we have completed those things which we proposed to treat concerning the book of Kings, the supreme and almighty Spirit is to be prayed to, that He who brought forth the words through whom He willed, may grant the affection of virtue both to him who writes and to him who reads. Amen.