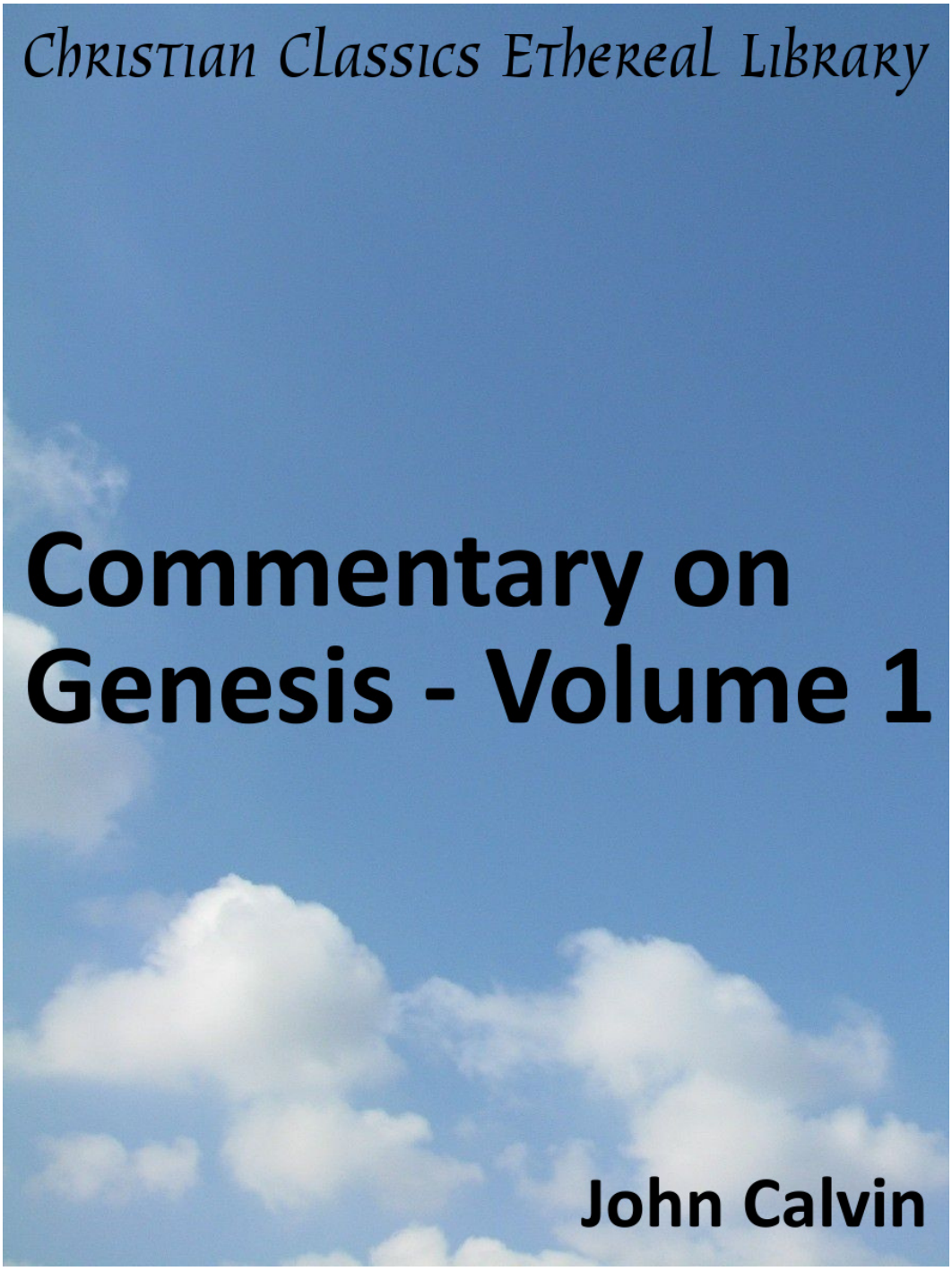
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Commentary on Genesis - Volume 1
John Calvin

Commentary on Genesis - Volume 1

Author(s): Calvin, John (1509-1564)
(Alternative)
(Translator)

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Description: In this volume, John Calvin provides an engaging commentary on the first 23 chapters of Genesis. Regarded as one of the Reformation's best interpreters of scripture, Calvin is an apt commentator. In particular, he frequently offers his own translations of a passage, explaining the subtleties and nuances of his translation. He has a penchant for incorporating keen pastoral insight into the text as well. He always interacts with other theologians, commentators, and portions of the Bible when interpreting a particular passage. Further, this volume also contains extensive, informative notes from the editor. After 400 years, Calvin's *Commentary on Genesis* remains instructive, engaging, and lively. It should not be ignored.
Tim Perrine
CCEL Staff Writer

Subjects: The Bible
Works about the Bible

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES

CALLED

GENESIS

BY JOHN CALVIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COMPARED WITH THE FRENCH EDITION,

BY THE REV. JOHN KING, M.A.,

OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, INCUMBENT OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, HULL

VOLUME FIRST

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Several of the Commentaries of Calvin on different portions of the Holy Scripture having been for some time before the public, through the labors of The Calvin Society; it is not improbable that the readers of the following pages will have already become in a great degree familiar with the writings of this celebrated Reformer.

It may, perhaps, therefore be thought an unnecessary, if not a presumptuous undertaking, to preface the present work with any general observations on the character of Calvin's Expository Writings. But though the Commentary on Genesis was neither the first which Calvin wrote, nor the first which the Calvin Society has republished; yet since, in the ultimate arrangement of the Commentaries it must take the foremost place, the Editor has determined to offer such preliminary remarks as may seem desirable for a reader who begins to read the Commentaries of Calvin, as he begins to read the Bible itself, at the Book of Genesis. If, in taking such a course, he is charged with repeating some things which have been said by others before him, he will not be extremely anxious either to defend himself from the charge or to meet it with a denial.

It seems to be now generally admitted that though, in the brilliant constellation formed by the master-spirits of the Reformation, there were those who, in some respects, shone with brighter lustre than Calvin, yet, as a Commentator on Holy Scripture, he far outshines them all.

There is scarcely anything in which the wisdom of God has been more conspicuous, than in his choice of instruments for carrying into execution the different parts of that mighty revolution of sentiment, which affected, more or less, every portion of Europe during the sixteenth century.

Long before the issue of the movement was seen or apprehended, we behold Erasmus, the most accomplished scholar of the age, acting unconsciously as the pioneer of a Reformation, which at length he not only opposed, but apparently hated. He had been raised up by God to lash the vices of the Clergy, to expose the ignorance, venality, and sloth of the Mendicant Orders, and to exhibit the follies of Romanism in sarcastic invectives rendered imperishable by the elegant Latinity in which they were clothed. But he did still more. The world is indebted to him for the first edition of the entire New Testament in the Original Greek.[1] He had also the honor of being the first modern translator of the New Testament into Latin.[2] He published a valuable critical Commentary on the New Testament, which was early translated into English, and ordered to be placed in the Churches.[3] Yet, great as the service

1 Horne's Introduction, vol. 5, Part I, chap. 1, sect. 4. London, 1846.

2 Ibid. vol. 5, Part I, chap. 1, sect.7.

3 The Editor has now before him "The first tome or volume of the paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Newe Testamente," printed in 1548, with a dedication to King Edward VI, and another to Queen Catherine Parr, by

undoubtedly was which he rendered to the cause of truth, he never dared to cast the yoke of Rome from his own neck, never stooped to identify himself with the Protestant Reformers; but lived and died, as there is reason to fear, a mean, trickling, time-serving Romanist, panting for preferment in a Church, the unsoundness of which he had so fearfully exposed. It is not, however, to be denied that God employed him as a most important instrument in shaking the foundations of the Papacy, and in preparing the way for the more successful efforts of more sincere and devoted servants of God.

Among these Luther and Melancthon in one field, Calvin and Zuinglius in another, occupy posts of the greatest responsibility and usefulness; but Luther and Calvin are manifestly the great leaders in this cause.

In qualifications necessary for the commencing of this great struggle, we readily yield the palm to Luther. His indomitable energy, his noble bearing, his contempt for danger, his transparent honesty of purpose, his fiery zeal, his generous frankness — though too often degenerating into peremptory vehemence of spirit and rudeness of manner — eminently fitted him to take the lead in a warfare where so much was to be braved, to be endured, and to be accomplished.

There was still another qualification, which perhaps no man ever possessed in so high a degree as the Saxon Reformer, and that consisted in the prodigious mastery he had over his own mother-tongue. He seized on the rude, yet nervous and copious German of his ancestors, and taught it to speak with a combination of melody and force, which it had never known before. And his vernacular translation of the Holy Scriptures, in opening to the millions of the German empire the Fount of eternal life, also revealed to them the hitherto hidden beauties and powers of their own masculine tongue.

Calvin, like Luther, was a man of courage; but he wanted Luther's fire, he wanted Luther's ardent frankness of disposition; he wanted, in short, the faculty which Luther possessed in a pre-eminent degree, of laying hold on the affections, and of kindling the enthusiasm of a mighty nation.

Calvin, like Luther too, was a Translator of the Scriptures, and it is worthy of remark, that he also wrote in a far purer and better style than any of his contemporaries, or than any writers of an age near his own. But he had not the honor, which God conferred on Luther, of sending forth the sacred volume as a whole, through that great nation in which his language was spoken, and of thus pouring, by one single act, a flood of light upon millions of his countrymen.

But whatever advantage may lie on the side of Luther in the comparison, so far as it has yet been carried, we shall find it on the side of Calvin in grasp of intellect, in discriminating

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Nicolas Udal. It appears that Udal translated the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John; and Thomas Key, that of St. Mark.

power, in calmness, clearness and force of argument, in patience of research, in solid learning, in every quality, in short, which is essential to an Expositor of Holy Writ. We are the better able to institute this comparison, because Luther himself wrote a Commentary on the Scriptures; but the slightest inspection of the two Commentaries will convince the Reader of Calvin's intellectual superiority; and will show, that as a faithful, penetrating, and judicious expounder of the Holy Spirit's meaning in the Scriptures, he left the great Leader of the Reformation at an immeasurable distance behind.[4]

The doctrinal system of Calvin is too well known to require explanation in this place. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that, on those points in which Calvinism is deemed peculiarly to consist, he went a single step farther than Luther himself, and the great majority of the Reformers. He states his views with calmness, clearness, and precision; he reasons on them dispassionately, and never shrinks from any consequences to which he perceives them to lead. But it would be the height of injustice to charge him with obtruding them at every turn upon his reader, or with attempting to force the language of Scripture to bear testimony to his own views.

No writer ever dealt more fairly and honestly by the Word of God. He is scrupulously careful to let it speak for itself, and to guard against every tendency of his own mind to put upon it a questionable meaning for the sake of establishing some doctrine which he feels to be important, or some theory which he is anxious to uphold. This is one of his prime excellencies. He will not maintain any doctrine, however orthodox and essential, by a text of Scripture which to him appears of doubtful application, or of inadequate force. For instance, firmly as he believed the doctrine of the Trinity, he refuses to derive an argument in its favor, from the plural form of the name of God in the first chapter of Genesis. It were easy to multiply examples of this kind, which, whether we agree in his conclusions or not, cannot fail to produce the conviction, that he is, at least, an honest Commentator, and will not make any passage of Scripture speak more or less than, according to his view, its Divine Author intended it to speak. Calvin has been charged with ignorance of the language in which the Old Testament was written. Father Simon says that he scarcely knew more of Hebrew than the letters! The charge is malicious and ill-founded. It may, however, be allowed that a critical examination of the text of Holy Scripture was not the end which Calvin proposed to himself; nor had he perhaps the materials or the time necessary for that accurate invest-

4 Nothing is farther from the Editor's intention than to speak slightingly of Luther's Commentaries. That on the Galatians alone has laid the Church of Christ under lasting obligation to its Author. But its excellencies are not of the same order with those which mark the expository writings of Calvin. As a defense of the Gospel of Christ against the prevailing errors of the day — and, alas! of our own day too — it stands forth a masterpiece of sound argument and energetic declamation; and as a balm to wounded consciences, it remains to the present hour without a rival.

igation of word and syllables to which the Scriptures have more recently been subjected. Still his verbal criticisms are neither few nor unimportant, though he lays comparatively little stress upon them himself.[5]

His great strength, however, is seen in the clear, comprehensive view he takes of the subject before him, in the facility with which he penetrates the meaning of his Author, in the lucid expression he gives to that meaning, in the variety of new yet solid and profitable thoughts which he frequently elicits from what are apparently the least promising portions of the sacred text, in the admirable precision with which he unfolds every doctrine of Holy Scripture, whether veiled under figures and types, or implied in prophetical allusions, or asserted in the records of the Gospel. As his own mind was completely imbued with the whole system of divine truth, and as his capacious memory never seemed to lose anything which it had once apprehended, he was always able to present a harmonized and consistent view of truth to his readers, and to show the relative position in which any given portion of it stood to all the rest. This has given a completeness and symmetry to his Commentaries which could scarcely have been looked for; as they were not composed in the order in which the Sacred Books stand in the Volume of Inspiration, nor perhaps in any order of which a clear account can now be given. He probably did not, at first, design to expound more than a single Book; and was led onwards by the course which his Expository Lectures in public took, to write first on one and then on another, till at length he traversed nearly the whole field of revealed truth.

That, in proceeding with such want of method, his work, instead of degenerating into a congeries of lax and unconnected observations constantly reiterated, should have maintained, to a great degree, the consistency of a regular and consecutive Commentary, is mainly to be imputed to the gigantic intellectual power by which he was distinguished. Through the whole of his writings, this power is everywhere visible, always in action, ingrafting upon every passing incident some forcible remark, which the reader no sooner sees than he wonders that it had not occurred to his own mind. A work so rich in thought is calculated to call into vigorous exercise the intellect of the reader; and, what is the best and highest use of reading, to compel him to think for himself. It is like seed-corn, the parent of the harvest.

It has been objected against Calvin by Bishop Horsley, — no mean authority in Biblical criticism, — that "by his want of taste, and by the poverty of his imagination, he was a most wretched Expositor of the Prophecies, — just as he would have been a wretched expositor

5 The reader is referred, for full information on this subject, to a small volume entitled, "The Merits of Calvin as an Interpreter of the Holy Scriptures," by Professor Tholuck of Halle. To which are added, "Opinions and Testimonies of Foreign and British Divines and Scholars as to the Importance of the Writings of John Calvin." With a Preface by the Revelation William Pringle. London, 1845.

of any secular poet."[6] It is true, this censure is qualified by the acknowledgment that Calvin was "a man of great piety, great talents, and great learning." Yet, after all, it would not, perhaps, be difficult to show that, as an expounder of the poetical portions of Holy Scripture, — the Psalms for instance, — Bishop Horsley more frequently errs through an excess of imagination, than Calvin does through the want of it. However this may be, it is not intended here to assert, either that Calvin possessed a high degree of poetical taste, or that he cultivated to any great extent the powers of the imagination. His mind was cast in the more severe mould of chastised, vigorous, and concentrated thought. They who seek for the flowers of poesy must go to some other master; they who would acquire habits of sustained intellectual exercise may spend their days and nights over the pages of Calvin.

But that which gives the greatest charm to these noble compositions is, the genuine spirit of piety which breathes through them. The mind of the writer turns with ease and with obvious delight to the spiritual application of his subject. Hence the heart of the reader is often imperceptibly raised to high and heavenly things. The rare combination of intellect so profound and reasoning so acute, with piety so fervent, inspires the reader with a calm and elevated solemnity, and strengthens his conviction of the excellence and dignity of true religion.

On the mode in which The Editor has executed his task he may be permitted to say, that he has attempted to be faithful as a translator, without binding himself to a servile rendering of word for word, unmindful of the idiomatic differences between one language and another. Yet it has been his determination not to sacrifice sense to sound, nor to depart from the Author's meaning for the sake of giving to any sentence a turn which might seem more agreeable to an English ear. He has occasionally softened an expression which appeared harsh in the original, and would appear harsher still in our own language and in our own times. But in such cases, he has generally placed the Latin expression before the reader in a note. He has done the same, when any sentence appeared capable of a different interpretation from that which is given in the translation. A few passages which justly offend against delicacy are left untranslated; and one it has been thought expedient entirely to omit. Some remarks are, however, made upon it in the proper place.

Clear as the Latin style of Calvin generally is, yet his sententious mode of expressing himself occasionally leaves some ambiguity in his expressions. Such difficulties, however, have generally been overcome by the aid of the valuable French Translation, published at Geneva in the year 1564, — the year of Calvin's death, — of which there is no reason to

6 See Horsley's Sermons, vol. 1, p.72. In opposition to this testimony, it may be well to refer to that of Father Simon, a Roman Catholic, who says, "Calvinus sublimin ingenio pollebat," Calvin possessed a sublime genius; and of Scaliger, who exclaims, "O quam Calvinus bene assequitur mentem prophetarum! — nemo melius," Oh! How well has Calvin reached the meaning of the prophets — no one better.

doubt that Calvin was the author. Frequent references to this translation in the notes will show to what extent assistance has been derived from it by the Editor.

An English Translation of this Commentary on Genesis, by Thomas Tymme, in black letter, was printed in the year 1578. It is, upon the whole, fairly executed; but nearly every criticism on Hebrew words is entirely passed over; and where the Translator has not had the sagacity to omit the whole of any such passage, he has betrayed his own ignorance of the language, and obscured the meaning of his author. Tymme claims for Calvin the credit of being the first foreign Protestant Commentator on Genesis who was made to speak in the English language.[7]

The reader will find Calvin's Latin Version of the sacred text placed side by side with our own excellent Authorised Translation.[8] This was thought the best method of meeting the wants of the public. The learned may see Calvin's own words, which they will much prefer to any translation of them, however accurate; the unlearned will have before them that version of the Scriptures which from their youth they have been taught to reverence. Where Calvin's version materially differs from our own, and especially where his comments are made on any such different rendering, ample explanation is given in the notes.

The Editor may be expected to say something respecting the notes generally, which he has ventured to append to this Commentary. Some may object that they are too few, others that they are superfluous. It would have been easy to have made them more numerous, had space permitted; and easier still to have omitted them altogether. But the writer of them thought it would hardly be doing justice to Calvin to leave everything exactly as he found it; for were the distinguished Author of the Commentary now alive to re-edit his own immortal work, there is no doubt that he would reject every error which the increased facilities for criticism would have enabled him to detect, and that he would throw fresh light on many topics which were, in his day, dimly seen, or quite misunderstood. And though it belongs not to an Editor to alter what is erroneous, or to incorporate in his Author's Work any

7 See page 42.

8 The translator has pleasure in adducing the following testimony to our Authorized version from the pen of that excellent Biblical scholar, Albert Barnes of Philadelphia. "No translation of the Bible was ever made under more happy auspices; and it would now be impossible to furnish another translation in our language under circumstances so propitious. Whether we contemplate the number, the learning, or the piety of the men employed in it; the cool deliberation with which it was executed; the care taken that it should secure the approbation of the most learned men in a country that embosomed a vast amount of literature; the harmony with which they conducted their work; or the comparative perfection of the translation; we see equal cause of gratitude to the great Author of the Bible, that we have so pure a translation of his Word... It has become the standard of our language; and nowhere can the purity and expressive dignity of this language be so fully found as in the Sacred Scriptures." — See Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Gospels, page 17. London, 1846.

thoughts of his own, or of other men; yet it is not beyond his province, — provided he does it with becoming modesty, and with adequate information, — to point out mistakes, to suggest such considerations as may have led him to conclusions different from those of his Author, and to quote from other Writers' passages, sometimes confirmatory of, sometimes adverse to, those advanced in the Work which he presents to the public. Within these limits the Editor has endeavored to confine himself. How far he has succeeded, it is not for him but for the candid and competent reader to determine.

As it was possible that a doubt might exist whether the version of Scripture used by Calvin was his own, or whether he had borrowed it from some other source; it was thought worth the labor to investigate the true state of the case, by having recourse to the excellent Library of the British Museum. For this purpose the several versions which Calvin was most likely to have adopted, had he not made one for himself, were subjected to examination. It was not necessary to refer to any made by Romanists; and those made by Protestants into the Latin language, which there was any probability he should use, were but two. One by Sebastian Munster, printed at Basle with the Hebrew Text, in 1534, from which the version of Calvin varies considerably; the other by Leo Juda and other learned men, printed at Zurich in 1543, and afterwards reprinted by Robert Stephens in 1545 and 1557. The last of these editions was made use of in comparing the versions of Leo Juda and Calvin; and though there certainly are differences, yet they are so slight as to leave the impression that Calvin took that of Leo Juda as his basis, and only altered it as he saw occasion. To give the reader, however, the opportunity of judging for himself, a few verses of the first chapter of Genesis are transcribed from each.

Genesis 1:1-6	
The Version of Leo Juda	The Version of John Calvin
1. In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram.	**1.** In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram.
2. Terra autem erat desolate et inanis, tenebraeque *erant* in superficie voraginis: et Spiritus Dei agitabat sese in superficie aquarum.	**2.** Terra autem erat informis et inanis, tenebraeque erant in superficie voraginis: et Spiritus Dei agitabat se in superficie aquarum.
3. Dixitque Deus, Sit Lux, et fuit lux.	**3.** Et dixit Deus, Sit Lux, et fuit lux.
4. Viditque Deus lucem quod *esset* bona, et divisit Deus lucem a tenebris.	**4.** Viditque Deus lucem quod bona esset, et divisit Deus lucem a tenebris.

5. Vocavitque Deus lucem Diem, et tenebras vocavit Noctem; fuitque vespera, et fuit mane dies unus.	**5.** Et vocavit Deus lucem Diem, et tenebras vocavit Noctem. Fuitque vespera, et fuit mane dies primus.
6. Dixit quoque Deus, Sit expansio, etc.	**6.** Et dixit Deus, Sit extensio, etc.

A similar examination was next resorted to, for the purpose of ascertaining the source of Calvin's French Version. The first printed version of the Scriptures into French was from the pen of Jacques Le Fevre d'Estaples; or, as he was more commonly called, Jacobus Faber Stapulensis. It was printed at Antwerp, by Martin L'Empereur. Though its author was in communion with the Church of Rome, yet the version is "said to be the basis of all subsequent French Bibles, whether executed by Romanists or Protestants."[9]

The first Protestant French Bible was published by Robert Peter Olivetan, with the assistance of his relative, the illustrious John Calvin, who corrected the Antwerp edition wherever it differed from the Hebrew.[10] It might have been expected that Calvin would have placed this version — made under his own eye, and perfected by his own assistance without alteration at the head of his Commentaries. But it appears that he has not done so, for though he departs but little from it, he not unfrequently alters a word or two in the translation.

While on the subject of Versions, it may be added, that in The Old English Translation by Tymme already alluded to, The Geneva Version is used. This translation was made by the learned exiles from England during the Marian Persecution, and is sometimes distinguished from others by the name of The Breeches Bible, on account of the rendering of Genesis 3:7.[11]

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9 Horne's Introduction, vol. 5, p. 116.

10 Ibid. p. 118.

11 Prejudice has existed in some quarters against this version of the Holy Scriptures, on the ground that its Authors were too deeply imbued with Calvin's sentiments. Bishop Horsley thus speaks of it: — "This English translation of the Bible, which is indeed upon the whole a very good one, and furnished with very edifying notes and illustrations, (except that in many points they savor too much of Calvinism,) was made and first published at Geneva, by the English Protestants, who fled thither from Mary's persecution. During their residence there, they contracted a veneration for the character of Calvin, which was no more than was due to his great piety and his great learning: but they unfortunately contracted also a veneration for his opinions — a veneration more than was due to the opinions of any uninspired teacher. The bad effects of this unreasonable partiality, the Church of England feels, in some points, to the present day." Such language, coming from such a quarter, furnishes strong testimony to the fact, (often very peremptorily and flippantly denied,) that the Church of England has, at least, some leaven of Calvinism in its composition. More accurate inquiry than Bishop Horsley's prejudice allowed him to make, would show how largely the Reformers as a body were indebted to Calvin, how conscious they were of their obligation, and how deeply their writings were tinctured with his doctrine. But this is not the

To give the reader some notion of the order in which Calvin's Commentaries succeeded each other, the following List, with the dates appended, taken from Senebier's Literary History of Geneva, is submitted to his consideration:

1540 Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans
1548 Commentary on all the Epistles of Paul[12]
1551 Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistles of Peter, John, Jude, and James
1551 Commentary on Isaiah
1552 Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles
1554 Commentary on Genesis
1557 Commentary on the Psalms
1557 Commentary on Hosea
1559 Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets
1561 Commentary on Daniel
1562 Commentary on Joshua[13]
1563 Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
1563 Commentary on Jeremiah
1563 Harmony of Three Gospels and Commentary on St John.[14]

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place for the discussion of such a subject. It is more to the purpose to observe, that the version of which we are now speaking, passed through more editions than any other, in the early periods of the Reformation; that it was mainly based upon that of the martyr Tyndale, that it was the ordinary Family Bible of the nation, and never was superseded till the present Authorized Version was produced in the reign of James the First. The version in question has generally been spoken of as the production of the Exiles in Geneva; but by an accurate investigation of the subject, Mr. Anderson has made it appear highly probable, that the chief, if not the sole author of this version, was William Whittingham, who married the sister of John Calvin; and who, after the Marian persecution had ceased, remained a year and a half in Geneva to finish the work. On his return to England, he first accompanied the Earl of Warwick on a mission to the Court of France, and afterwards was made Dean of Durham. His objection to wear the prescribed habits occasioned him some trouble. The circulation of this Bible in England was greatly promoted by the zealous exertions of John Bodley, Esq., a native of Exeter, an exile, during Mary's reign, at Geneva, and the father of Sir Thomas Bodley, the munificent founder of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. John Bodley obtained a patent for printing this Bible from Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1560. See "Annals of the English Bible," by Christopher Anderson, vol. 2, pp. 322-324.

12 Perfect accuracy is, perhaps, not to be expected in all these dates. Beza, in his Life of Calvin, says only that six of St. Paul's Epistles were published this year, which were the two to the Corinthians, that to the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians.

13 Beza places the Commentary on Joshua in 1563, and says it was the last which Calvin wrote.

14 Histoire Literaire de Geneve, par Jean Senebier. Tome I. pp. 254-256.

A *facsimile* of the title-page of the French Translation of 1563, and of the Dedication to the Duke of Vendome, as a specimen of the French style and spelling of the age,[15] and a further facsimile of the title-page of the English Translation of 1578, as well as of the Dedication to the Earl of Warwick by Thomas Tymme, prefixed to the latter, will be found in this edition. An accurate copy of the Map, roughly sketched by Calvin, for the purpose of explaining his hypothesis respecting the situation of the Garden of Eden, and which seems to have been the basis of the most approved theories on the subjects will be found in its proper place. The same Map is given in the French and English translations, and also in the Latin edition of Professor Hengstenberg, published at Berlin in the year 1838. It may be observed, as a coincidence, that the same sketch appears in the Anglo — Geneva Bible, to which reference has been made. A more elaborate Map accompanies the Amsterdam edition of Calvin's Works, published in 1671.

The edition now issuing from the press is also enriched by an engraving, in the first style of art, of facsimiles of various medals of Calvin never before submitted to the British public.[16]

Hull, *January* 1, 1847

15 The French title page is missing in the copy I have. The dedication in French has been omitted. — *Sg.*

16 The medals of Calvin are missing in the copy I have. — *Sg.*

A Commentarie of
John Caluine , vpon
the firſt booke of Moſes cal-
led *Geneſis* : Tranſlated out
of Latine into Engliſh, by Thomas
Tymme, *Miniſter.*

¶ *Imprinted at Lon-*
don, for *Iohn Hariſon* and
George Biſhop.

Anno. 1578.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY VERIE GOOD LORDE AMBROSE, EARLE OF WARWICKE,

BARON LISLE, MAISTER OF HER MAIESTIE'S ORDINANCE, KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER AND ONE OF HER HIGHNESSE PRIUIE COUNSELL, AND TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE LADIE HIS WIFE, ENCREASE OF HONOUR, AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE IN CHRIST IESVS.

If the Apostle Paule (right honorable) condemne the negligence of men, because they behold not the euident spectacle of the glorie of God which is set before their eyes in the workemanship of the worlde, by which they wickedly suppresse the light of trueth: no lesse foule and shameful was that ignorance of the original and creation of mankind which almost in euery age and time so greatly preuailed. The which ignorance immediately ensued. the building of Babylon by the forgetting of those things which ought to haue beene dayly and howerly spoken off. For at what time godlesse men were banishcd from their natiue soile and dispersed, they therewithall abandoned the pure worship of God: Insomuch that to what part of' the earth so euer they came, they had no care to bring with them that which they had heard of their forefathers, concerning the creating and repairing of the worlde. And so it came to passe, that no nation, except only the posteritie of Abraham, knew by the space of two thousand yeares, either from whence or when mankind had his originall. As for the labour which Ptolome bestowed in translating the books of. Moses into the Greeke tongue, it was at that time more laudable than fruitful: when as the light which he went about to bring out of darknes, was neuerthelesse through the carelesnesse of men extinguished. Whereby wee may perceiue, that they which ought to haue endeuored themselues, to knowe the workemaister of the worlde, sought rather by their vngod- linesse howe they might be wilfully blinde and ignorant. In the meane time the liberal Sciences florished, men's witts were sharpe and quicke, greate paines euery way was taken: and yet nothing was spoken of the creation of the worlde. Aristotle, the prince of philosophers, dreamed of the eternitie of the world. Plato, his schoolmaister, shooting somewhat more neere vnto the marke, wandered notwithstanding somewhat from the trueth. But whether they, and all other nations with them, were wilfully blinde, or whether they were ignorant through their owne negligence, this booke of Moses deserueth to be esteemed as a most precious iewell, which certifieth vs not only of the creation of the worlde, but also howe, after the mortall fall of man, God adopted a Church to him selfe: which was the true worship of him, and with what exercises of godlinesse the fathers occupied them selues: howe pure religion, through the wicked

negligence of men, was for a time decayed, and afterward restored to her former state: when God made a free couenant of eternall saluation with a certeine people: Howe, of one man withered, and almost halfe dead, there sprang seede, which sodainly grewe into a huge people: and, finally, by what wonderfull meanes God: aduanced and defended his chosen familie, though it were poore and destitute of al helpe, and enuironed with thousands of enemies on euery side. Howe necessarie the knowledge of these thinges is, your Honours by the vse and experience thereof may deeme. Therefore, the Argument being so diuine, and accordingly handled by that notable instrument of God's Church, Iohn Caluine, (whose workes proclaime his praise,) and no commentarie vpon the same afore this time englished, I haue thought good to set forth the same in our vulgar tongue, vnder your Honour's protection, that a more general profite being thereby reaped of my countrie men, it may bee somewhat the farther from obliuion. And because I knowe what godly delight your noble and vertuous Lady taketh in reading such bookes, I presume to ioyne her with your Honour herein, that others of her sex, hearing of her honorable name, may followe her godly steppes with like zeale in that religious exercise. For what Christian will not thinke it a Booke worthie the reading, which he seeth warranted by your names? Therefore partely the godly zeale found out in you by effect, and partely your Honour's courteous liking afore time of my pains this way taken, harteneth me to aduenture the offer of this poore present, as a token proceeding from a well-wishing minde. Thus hauing bene too tedious vnto your Honours, I most humbly take my leaue, beseeching the Lord God to defend you both with his shield, to sustein you with inuincible fortitude, to gouerne you with his spirit of prudence, and to powre vpon you all manner of blessings.

Your Honor's most humble

Thomas Tymme.

THE AUTHOR'S EPISTLE DEDICATORY

JOHN CALVIN

to the Most Illustrious Prince,

HENRY, DUKE OF VENDOME,

Heir to the Kingdom of Navarre.[17]

If many censure my design, most Illustrious Prince, in presuming to dedicate this work to you, that it may go forth to light sanctioned by your name, nothing new or unexpected will have happened to me. For they may object that by such dedication, the hatred of the wicked, who are already more than sufficiently incensed against you, will be still further inflamed. But since, at your tender age,[18] amid various alarms and threatenings, God has inspired you with such magnanimity that you have never swerved from the sincere and ingenuous profession of the faith; I do not see what injury you can sustain by having that profession, which you wish to be openly manifest to all, confirmed by my testimony. Since, therefore, you are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, this independence of yours has appeared to give me just ground of confidence to congratulate you on such an auspicious commencement, and to exhort you to invincible constancy in future. For that flexibility which belongs to superior natures is the common property of the young, until their character becomes more formed. But however displeasing my labor may be to some, yet if it be approved (as I trust it will) by your most noble mother, the Queen,[19] I can afford to despise

17 Afterwards the celebrated Henry IV, of France. A brave and noble — spirited Prince, addicted, however, to the frivolities, and enslaved by the licentiousness of the age. He was induced to renounce his Protestant principles for the Crown of France; and at length fell by the hand of an assassin, on account of his tolerance towards the Hugonots.

18 He was born in 1553, and therefore in 1563, the date of this dedication, he was ten years old.

19 Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, daughter of Henry d'Albret and of Margaret of Valois, sister to Francis the First, King of France. Henry was her third son, but the two former died in infancy. She and her husband, Antony of Bourbon, were both early favorers of the Reformation; but Antony, remarkable for his inconstancy, deserted the cause of Protestantism in the time of persecution, and at length took arms against its adherents, and perished in the contest. Jeanne remained constant to the faith she had professed, and proceeded to establish it in her dominions. In 1568 she left her capital Bearne, to join the French Protestants; and presented her son Henry to the Prince of Conde at the age of fifteen, together with her jewels, for the purpose of maintaining the war against the persecutors of the Reformed faith. She died in 1572, suddenly, at Paris, whither she had gone to

both their unjust judgments and their malicious slanders; at least I shall not be diverted by them from my purpose. In one thing I may have acted with too little consideration, namely, in not having consulted her, in order that I might attempt nothing but in accordance with her judgment and her wish; yet for this omission I have an excuse at hand. If, indeed, I had omitted to consult her through negligence, I should condemn myself as guilty not of imprudence only, but of rashness and arrogance. When, however, I had given up all hope of so early a publication, because the Printer would put me off till the next spring fairs, I thought it unnecessary, for certain reasons, to hasten my work. In the meantime, while others were urging him more vehemently on this point than I had done, I suddenly received a message, that the work might be finished within fifteen days, a thing which had before been pertinaciously refused to myself. Thus beyond my expectation, yet not contrary to my wish, I was deprived of the opportunity of asking her permission. Nevertheless, that most excellent Queen is animated by such zeal for the propagation of the doctrine of Christ and of pure faith and piety, that I am under no extreme anxiety respecting her willingness to approve of this service of mine, and to defend it with her patronage. She by no means dissembles her own utter estrangement from the superstitions and corruptions with which Religion has been disfigured and polluted. And in the midst of turbulent agitations,[20] it has been rendered evident by convincing proofs, that she carried a more than masculine mind in woman's breast. And I wish that at length even *men* may be put to shame, and that useful emulation may stimulate them to imitate her example. For she conducted herself with such peculiar modesty, that scarcely any one would have supposed her capable of thus enduring the most violent attacks, and, at the same time, of courageously repelling them. Besides, how keenly God exercised her with internal conflicts but few persons are witnesses, of whom, however, I am one.

You truly, most Illustrious Prince, need not seek a better example, for the purpose of moulding your own mind to the perfect pattern of all virtues. Regard yourself as bound in an especial manner to aspire after, to contend, and to labor for the attainment of this object. For, as the heroic disposition which shines forth in you, will leave you the less excusable, if you degenerate from yourself, so education, no common help to an excellent disposition, is like another bond to retain you in your duty. For liberal instruction has been superadded to chaste discipline. Already imbued with the rudiments of literature, you have not cast away (as nearly all are wont to do) these studies in disgust, but still advance with alacrity in the cultivation of your genius. Now, in sending forth this book to the public under your

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make arrangements for her son's projected marriage with the sister of Charles IX. It was suspected that she died of poison, but no positive proof of the fact has been adduced.

20 "Et entre les horribles tempestes dont le royaume de France a este agite." — And amid the horrible tempests with which the kingdom of France has been agitated. — French tr.

name, my desire is, that it may effectually induce you more freely to profess yourself a disciple of Christ; just as if God, by laying his hand upon you, were claiming you anew to himself. And truly, you can yield no purer gratification to the Queen your mother, who cannot be too highly estimated, than by causing her to hear that you are making continual progress in piety.

Although many things contained in this book are beyond the capacity of your age, yet I am not acting unreasonably in offering it to your perusal, and even to your attentive and diligent study. For since the knowledge of ancient things is pleasant to the young, you will soon arrive at those years in which the History of the creation of the World, as well as that of the most Ancient Church, will engage your thoughts with equal profit and delight. And, certainly, if Paul justly condemns the perverse stupidity of men, because with closed eyes they pass by the splendid mirror of God's glory which is constantly presented to them in the fabric of the world, and thus unrighteously suppress the light of truth; not less base and disgraceful has been that ignorance of the origin and creation of the human race which has prevailed almost in every age. It is indeed probable, that shortly after the building of Babel,[21] the memory of those things, which ought to have been discussed and celebrated by being made the subjects of continual discourse, was obliterated. For seeing that to profane men their dispersion would be a kind of emancipation from the pure worship of God, they took no care to carry along with them, to whatever regions of the earth they might visit, what they had heard from their fathers concerning the Creation of the World, or its subsequent restoration. Hence it has happened, that no nation, the posterity of Abraham alone excepted, knew for more than two thousand successive years, either from what fountain itself had sprung, or when the universal race of man began to exist. For Ptolemy, in providing at length that the Books of Moses should be translated into Greek, did a work which was rather laudable than useful, (at least for that period,) since the light which he had attempted to bring out of darkness was nevertheless stifled and hidden through the negligence of men. Whence it may easily be gathered, that they who ought to have stretched every nerve of their mind to attain a knowledge of The Creator of the world, have rather, by a malignant impiety, involved themselves in voluntary blindness. In the meantime the liberal sciences flourished, men of exalted genius arose, treatises of all kinds were published; but concerning the History of the Creation of the World there was a profound silence. Moreover, the greatest of philosophers,[22] who excelled all the rest in acuteness and erudition, applied whatever skill he possessed to defraud God of his glory, by disputing in favor of the eternity of the world. Although his master, Plato, was a little more religious, and showed himself to be imbued with some taste for richer knowledge, yet he corrupted and mingled with so many figments

21 Paulo post conditum Babylonem.

22 Aristotle. Mesme Aristotle le principal philosophe. — French tr.

the slender principles of truth which he received, that this fictitious kind of teaching would be rather injurious than profitable. They, moreover, who devoted themselves to the pursuit of writing history, ingenious and highly-cultivated men though they were, while they ostentatiously boast that they are about to become witnesses to the most remote antiquity, yet, before they reach so high as the times of David intermix their lucubrations with much turbid feculence;[23] and when they ascend still higher, heap together an immense mass of lies: so far are they from having arrived, by a genuine and clear connection of narrative, at the true origin of the world. The Egyptians also are an evident proof that men were willingly ignorant of things which they had not far to seek, if only they had been disposed to addict their minds to the investigation of truth; for though the lamp of God's word was shining at their very doors, they would yet without shame propagate the rank fables of their achievements, fifteen thousand years before the foundation of the world. Not less puerile and absurd is the fable of the Athenians, who boasted that they were born from their own soil,[24] maintaining for themselves a distinct origin from the rest of mankind, and thus rendering themselves ridiculous even to barbarians. Now, though all nations have been more or less implicated in the same charge of ingratitude, I have nevertheless thought it right to select those whose error is least excusable, because they have deemed themselves wiser than all others.

Now, whether all nations which formerly existed, purposely drew a veil over themselves, or whether their own indolence was the sole obstacle to their knowledge, the [First] Book of Moses deserves to be regarded as an incomparable treasure, since it at least gives an indisputable assurance respecting The Creation of the World, without which we should be unworthy of a place on earth. I omit, for the present, The History of the Deluge, which contains a representation of the Divine vengeance in the destruction of mankind, as tremendous, as that which it supplies of Divine mercy in their restoration is admirable. This one consideration stamps an inestimable value on the Book, that it alone reveals those things which are of primary necessity to be known; namely, in what manner God, after the destructive fall of man, adopted to himself a Church; what constituted the true worship of himself, and in what offices of piety the holy fathers exercised themselves; in which way pure religion, having for a time declined through the indolence of men, was restored as it were, to its integrity; we also learn, when God deposited with a special people his gratuitous covenant of eternal salvation; in what manner a small progeny gradually proceeding from one man, who was both barren and withering, almost half-dead, and (as Isaiah calls him) *solitary*,[25] yet suddenly grew to an immense multitude; by what unexpected means God both exalted and

23 Brouillent leurs escrits de tant des meslinges confus, que ceste lie ont oste toute clarte. — They intersperse their writings with such a confused mixture, that these dregs have deprived them of all clearness.

24 Qui se ἀυτόχθονας gloriati

25 Isaiah 51: 2, "I called him alone, and blessed him."

defended a family chosen by himself, although poor, destitute of protection, exposed to every storm, and surrounded on all sides by innumerable hosts of enemies. Let every one, from his own use and experience, form his judgment respecting the necessity of the knowledge of these things. We see how vehemently the Papists alarm the simple by their false claim of the title of The Church. Moses so delineates the genuine features of the Church as to take away this absurd fear, by dissipating these illusions. It is by an ostentatious display of splendor and of pomp that they (the Papists) carry away the less informed to a foolish admiration of themselves, and even render them stupid and infatuated. But if we turn our eyes to those marks by which Moses designates the Church, these vain phantoms will have no more power to deceive. We are often disturbed and almost disheartened at the paucity of those who follow the pure doctrine of God; and especially when we see how far and wide superstitions extend their dominion. And, as formerly, the Spirit of God, by the mouth of Isaiah the prophet, commanded the Jews to look to the Rock whence they were hewn,[26] so he recalls us to the same consideration, and admonishes us of the absurdity of measuring the Church by its numbers, as if its dignity consisted in its multitude. If sometimes, in various places, Religion is less flourishing than could be wished, if the body of the pious is scattered, and the state of a well-regulated Church has gone to decay, not only do our minds sink, but entirely melt within us. On the contrary, while we see in this history of Moses, the building of the Church out of ruins, and the gathering of it out of broken fragments, and out of desolation itself, such an instance of the grace of God ought to raise us to firm confidence. But since the propensity, not to say the wanton disposition, of the human mind to frame false systems of worship is so great, nothing can be more useful to us than to seek our rule for the pure and sincere worshipping of God, from those holy Patriarchs, whose piety Moses points out to us chiefly by this mark, that they depended on the Word of God alone. For however great may be the difference between them and us in external ceremonies, yet that which ought to flourish in unchangeable vigor is common to us both, namely that Religion should take its form from the sole will and pleasure of God.

I am not ignorant of the abundance of materials here supplied, and of the insufficiency of my language to reach the dignity of the subjects on which I briefly touch; but since each of them, on suitable occasions has been elsewhere more copiously discussed by me, although not with suitable brilliancy and elegance of diction, it is now enough for me briefly to apprise my pious readers how will it would repay their labor, if they would learn prudently to apply to their own use the example of The Ancient Church as it is described by Moses. And, in fact, God has associated us with the holy Patriarchs in the hope of the same inheritance, in order that we, disregarding the distance of time which separates us from them, may, in the

26 These words are here added in the French Translation — "C'est a dire, a leur pere Abraham, qui n'estoit qu'un, homme seul;" — that is to say, to their father Abraham, who was but one solitary man.

mutual agreement of faith and patience, endure the same conflicts. So much the more detestable, then are certain turbulent men, who, incited by I know not what rage of furious zeal, are assiduously endeavoring to rend asunder the Church of our own age, which is already more than sufficiently scattered. I do not speak of avowed enemies, who, by open violence, fall upon the pious to destroy them, and utterly to blot out their memory; but of certain morose professors of the Gospel, who not only perpetually supply new materials for fomenting discords, but by their restlessness disturb the peace which holy and learned men gladly cultivate. We see that with the Papists, although in some things they maintain deadly strife among themselves,[27] they yet combine in wicked confederacy against the Gospel. It is not necessary to say how small is the number of those who hold the sincere doctrine of Christ, when compared with the vast multitudes of these opponents. In the meantime, audacious scribblers arise, as from our own bosom, who not only obscure the light of sound doctrine with clouds of error, or infatuate the simple and the less experienced with their wicked ravings, but by a profane license of skepticism, allow themselves to uproot the whole of Religion. For, as if, by their rank ironies and cavils, they could prove themselves genuine disciples of Socrates, they have no axiom more plausible than, that faith must be free and unfettered, so that it may be possible, by reducing everything to a matter of doubt, to render Scripture flexible (so to speak) as a nose of wax.[28] Therefore, they who being captivated by the allurements of this new school, now indulge in doubtful speculations, obtain at length such proficiency, that they are always learning, yet never come to the knowledge of the truth.

Thus far I have treated briefly, as the occasion required, of the utility of this History.[29] As for the rest, I have labored — how skilfully I know not, but certainly faithfully — that the doctrine of the Law, the obscurity of which has heretofore repelled many, may become familiarly known. There will be readers, I doubt not, who would desire a more ample explication of particular passages. But I, who naturally avoid prolixity, have confined myself in this Work to narrow limits, for two reasons. First, whereas these Four Books [of Moses] already deter some by their length, I have feared lest, if in unfolding them, I were to indulge

27 Combien qu'en tout le reste, ils s'entrebatent comme chiens et chats. — Though in everything else they quarrel together like cats and dogs. — French Tr.

28 Ils n'ont nulle maxime plus agreable ques ceste — ci, que la foy doit estre libre, et que les esprits ne doyvent point estre tenus captifs. Et c'es afin qu'il leur soit loisible, en metant tout en doute en question, tourner et virer l'Escriture a leur post, et en faire un nez de cire, etc. — They have no maxim more agreeable than this, that faith ought to be free, and that minds ought not to be held captive. And this is in order that they may be permitted, by putting everything into doubt and question, to turn and twist the Scripture to their purpose, and to make of it a nose of wax, and etc. — French Tr.

29 Touchant l'utilite de l'histoire contenue au livre de Genese. — Touching the utility of the history contained in the Book of Genesis. — French Tr.

in a style too diffuse, I should but increase their disgust. Secondly, since in my progress I have often despaired of life, I have preferred giving a succinct Exposition to leaving a mutilated one behind me. Yet sincere readers, possessed of sound judgment, will see that I have taken diligent care, neither through cunning nor negligence, to pass over anything perplexed, ambiguous, or obscure. Since, therefore, I have endeavored to discuss all doubtful points, I do not see why any one should complain of brevity, unless he wishes to derive his knowledge exclusively from Commentaries. Now I will gladly allow men of this sort, whom no amount of verbosity can satiate, to seek for themselves some other master.

But if you, Sire, please to make trial, you will indeed know, and will believe for yourself, that what I declare is most true. You are yet a youth; but God, when he commanded Kings to write out the Book of the Law for their own use, did not exempt the pious Josiah from this class, but choose rather to present the most noble instance of pious instruction in a boy, that he might reprove the indolence of the aged. And your own example teaches the great importance of having habits formed from tender age. For the germ springing from the root which the principles of Religion received by you have taken, not only puts forth its flower, but also savours of a degree of maturity. Therefore labor, by indefatigable industry, to attain the mark set before you. And suffer not yourself to be retarded or disturbed by designing men, to whom it appears unseasonable that boys should be called to this precocious wisdom, (as they term it.) For what can be more absurd or intolerable, than that, when every kind of corruption surrounds you, this remedy should be prohibited? Since the pleasures of a Court corrupt even your servants, how much more dangerous are the snares laid for great Princes, who so abound in all luxury and delicacies, that it is a wonder if they are not quite dissolved in lasciviousness? For it is certainly contrary to nature to possess all the means of pleasure, and to refrain from enjoying them. The difficulty, however, of retaining chastity unpolluted amidst scenes of gaiety, is more than sufficiently evident in practice. But do you, O most Illustrious Prince, regard everything as poison which tends to produce a love of pleasures. For if that which stifles continence and temperance already allures you, what will you not covet when you arrive at adult age? The sentiment is perhaps harshly expressed, that great care for the body is great neglect of virtue, yet most truly does Cato thus speak. The following paradox also will scarcely be admitted in common life: "I am greater, and am born to greater things, than to be a slave to my body; the contempt of which is my true liberty." Let us then dismiss that excessive rigour, by which all enjoyment is taken away from life; still there are too many examples to show how easy is the descent from security and self-indulgence to the licentiousness of profligacy. Moreover; you will have to contend, not only with luxury, but also with many other vices. Nothing can be more attractive than your affability and modesty; but no disposition is so gentle and well-regulated, that it may not degenerate into brutality and ferociousness when intoxicated with flatteries. Now since there are flatterers without number, who will prove so many tempters to inflame your mind

with various lusts, how much more does it behave you vigilantly to beware of them? But while I caution you against the blandishments of a Court, I require nothing more than that, being endued with moderation, you should render yourself invincible. For one has truly said, He is not to be praised who has never seen Asia, but he who has lived modestly and continently in Asia. Seeing, therefore, that to attain this state is most desirable, David prescribes a compendious method of doing so — if you will but imitate his example — when he declares that the precepts of God are his counsellors. And truly, whatever counsel may be suggested from any other quarter will perish, unless you take your commencement of becoming wise from this point. It remains, therefore, most noble Prince, that what is spoken by Isaiah concerning the holy king Hezekiah should perpetually recur to your mind. For the Prophet, in enumerating his excellent qualities, especially honors him with this eulogy, that the fear of God shall be his treasure.

Farewell, most Illustrious Prince, may God preserve you in safety under His protection, may He adorn you more and more with spiritual gifts, and enrich you with every kind of benediction.

Geneva, *July 31st*, 1563.

ARGUMENT.

Since the infinite wisdom of God is displayed in the admirable structure of heaven and earth, it is absolutely impossible to unfold The History of the Creation of the World in terms equal to its dignity. For while the measure of our capacity is too contracted to comprehend things of such magnitude, our tongue is equally incapable of giving a full and substantial account of them. As he, however, deserves praise, who, with modesty and reverence, applies himself to the consideration of the works of God, although he attain less than might be wished, so, if in this kind of employment, I endeavor to assist others according to the ability given to me, I trust that my service will be not less approved by pious men than accepted by God. I have chosen to premise this, for the sake not only of excusing myself, but of admonishing my readers, that if they sincerely wish to profit with me in meditating on the works of God, they must bring with them a sober, docile, mild, and humble spirit. We see, indeed, the world with our eyes, we tread the earth with our feet, we touch innumerable kinds of God's works with our hands, we inhale a sweet and pleasant fragrance from herbs and flowers, we enjoy boundless benefits; but in those very things of which we attain some knowledge, there dwells such an immensity of divine power, goodness, and wisdom, as absorbs all our senses. Therefore, let men be satisfied if they obtain only a moderate taste of them, suited to their capacity. And it becomes us so to press towards this mark during our whole life, that (even in extreme old age) we shall not repent of the progress we have made, if only we have advanced ever so little in our course.

The intention of Moses in beginning his Book with the creation of the world, is, to render God, as it were, visible to us in his works. But here presumptuous men rise up, and scoffingly inquire, whence was this revealed to Moses? They therefore suppose him to be speaking fabulously of things unknown, because he was neither a spectator of the events he records, nor had learned the truth of them by reading. Such is their reasoning; but their dishonesty is easily exposed. For if they can destroy the credit of this history, because it is traced back through a long series of past ages, let them also prove those prophecies to be false in which the same history predicts occurrences which did not take place till many centuries afterwards. Those things, I affirm, are clear and obvious, which Moses testifies concerning the vocation of the Gentiles, the accomplishment of which occurred nearly two thousand years after his death. Was not he, who by the Spirit foresaw an event remotely future, and hidden at the time from the perception of mankind, capable of understanding whether the world was created by God, especially seeing that he was taught by a Divine Master? For he does not here put forward divinations of his own, but is the instrument of the Holy Spirit for the publication of those things which it was of importance for all men to know. They greatly err in deeming it absurd that the order of the creation, which had been previously unknown, should at length have been described and explained by him. For he does not transmit to memory things before unheard of, but for the first time consigns to

writing facts which the fathers had delivered as from hand to hand, through a long succession of years, to their children. Can we conceive that man was so placed in the earth as to be ignorant of his own origin, and of the origin of those things which he enjoyed? No sane person doubts that Adam was well-instructed respecting them all. Was he indeed afterwards dumb? Were the holy Patriarchs so ungrateful as to suppress in silence such necessary instruction? Did Noah, warned by a divine judgment so memorable, neglect to transmit it to posterity? Abraham is expressly honored with this eulogy that he was the teacher and the master of his family, (Genesis 18:19.) And we know that, long before the time of Moses, an acquaintance with the covenant into which God had entered with their fathers was common to the whole people. When he says that the Israelites were sprung from a holy race, which God had chosen for himself, he does not propound it as something new, but only commemorates what all held, what the old men themselves had received from their ancestors, and what, in short, was entirely uncontroverted among them. Therefore, we ought not to doubt that The Creation of the World, as here described was already known through the ancient and perpetual tradition of the Fathers. Yet, since nothing is more easy than that the truth of God should be so corrupted by men, that, in a long succession of time, it should, as it were, degenerate from itself, it pleased the Lord to commit the history to writing, for the purpose of preserving its purity. Moses, therefore, has established the credibility of that doctrine which is contained in his writings, and which, by the carelessness of men, might otherwise have been lost.

I now return to the design of Moses, or rather of the Holy Spirit, who has spoken by his mouth. We know God, who is himself invisible, only through his works. Therefore, the Apostle elegantly styles the worlds, τὰ μή εχ φαινομένων βλεπόμενα, as if one should say, "the manifestation of things not apparent,"[30] (Hebrews 11:3.) This is the reason why the Lord, that he may invite us to the knowledge of himself, places the fabric of heaven and earth before our eyes, rendering himself, in a certain manner, manifest in them. For his eternal power and Godhead (as Paul says) are there exhibited, (Romans 1:20.) And that declaration of David is most true, that the heavens, though without a tongue, are yet eloquent heralds of the glory of God, and that this most beautiful order of nature silently proclaims his admirable wisdom, (Psalm 19:1.) This is the more diligently to be observed, because so few pursue the right method of knowing God, while the greater part adhere to the creatures without any consideration of the Creator himself. For men are commonly subject to these two extremes; namely, that some, forgetful of God, apply the whole force of their mind to the consideration of nature; and others, overlooking the *works* of God, aspire with a foolish and insane curiosity to inquire into his *Essence*. Both labor in vain. To be so occupied in the investigation of the secrets of nature, as never to turn the eyes to its Author, is a most per-

30 "Acsi dicas, spectacula rerum non apparentium." — Comme si on disoit, Un regard, ou apparition de ce qui n'apparoist point. — French Tr.

verted study; and to enjoy everything in nature without acknowledging the Author of the benefit, is the basest ingratitude. Therefore, they who assume to be philosophers without Religion, and who, by speculating, so act as to remove God and all sense of piety far from them, will one day feel the force of the expression of Paul, related by Luke, that God has never left himself *without witness*, (Acts 14:17.) For they shall not be permitted to escape with impunity because they have been deaf and insensible to testimonies so illustrious. And, in truth, it is the part of culpable ignorance, never to see God, who everywhere gives signs of his presence. But if mockers now escape by their cavils, hereafter their terrible destruction will bear witness that they were ignorant of God, only because they were willingly and maliciously blinded. As for those who proudly soar above the world to seek God in his unveiled essence, it is impossible but that at length they should entangle themselves in a multitude of absurd figments. For God — by other means invisible — (as we have already said) clothes himself, so to speak, with the image of the world in which he would present himself to our contemplation. They who will not deign to behold him thus magnificently arrayed in the incomparable vesture of the heavens and the earth, afterwards suffer the just punishment of their proud contempt in their own ravings. Therefore, as soon as the name of God sounds in our ears, or the thought of him occurs to our minds, let us also clothe him with this most beautiful ornament; finally, let the world become our school if we desire rightly to know God.

Here also the impiety of those is refuted who cavil against Moses, for relating that so short a space of time had elapsed since the Creation of the World. For they inquire why it had come so suddenly into the mind of God to create the world; why he had so long remained inactive in heaven: and thus by sporting with sacred things they exercise their ingenuity to their own destruction. In the Tripartite History an answer given by a pious man is recorded, with which I have always been pleased. For when a certain impure dog was in this manner pouring ridicule upon God, he retorted, that God had been at that time by no means inactive because he had been preparing hell for the captious. But by what seasonings can you restrain the arrogance of those men to whom sobriety is professedly contemptible and odious? And certainly they who now so freely exult in finding fault with the inactivity of God will find, to their own great costs that his power has been infinite in preparing hell for them. As for ourselves, it ought not to seem so very absurd that God, satisfied in himself, did not create a world which he needed not, sooner than he thought good. Moreover, since his will is the rule of all wisdom, we ought to be contented with that alone. For Augustine rightly affirms that injustice is done to God by the Manichaeans, because they demand a cause superior to his will; and he prudently warns his readers not to push their inquiries respecting the infinity of duration, any more than respecting the infinity of space.[31] We indeed are not ignorant,

31 De Genesi contra Manich. Lib. 11, De Civit. Dei.

that the circuit of the heavens is finite, and that the earth, like a little globe, is placed in the center.[32] They who take it amiss that the world was not sooner created, may as well expostulate with God for not having made innumerable worlds. Yea, since they deem it absurd that many ages should have passed away without any world at all, they may as well acknowledge it to be a proof of the great corruption of their own nature, that, in comparison with the boundless waste which remains empty the heaven and earth occupy but a small space. But since both the eternity of God's existence and the infinity of his glory would prove a twofold labyrinth, let us content ourselves with modestly desiring to proceed no further in our inquiries than the Lord, by the guidance and instruction of his own works, invites us.

Now, in describing the world as a mirror in which we ought to behold God, I would not be understood to assert, either that our eyes are sufficiently clear-sighted to discern what the fabric of heaven and earth represents, or that the knowledge to be hence attained is sufficient for salvation. And whereas the Lord invites us to himself by the means of created things, with no other effect than that of thereby rendering us inexcusable, he has added (as was necessary) a new remedy, or at least by a new aid, he has assisted the ignorance of our mind. For by the Scripture as our guide and teacher, he not only makes those things plain which would otherwise escape our notice, but almost compels us to behold them; as if he had assisted our dull sight with spectacles.[33] On this point, (as we have already observed,) Moses insists. For if the mute instruction of the heaven and the earth were sufficient, the teaching of Moses would have been superfluous. This herald therefore approaches, who excites our attention, in order that we may perceive ourselves to be placed in this scene, for the purpose of beholding the glory of God; not indeed to observe them as mere witnesses but to enjoy all the riches which are here exhibited as the Lord has ordained and subjected them to our use. And he not only declares generally that God is the architect of the world, but through the whole chain of the history he shows how admirable is His power, His wisdom, His goodness, and especially His tender solicitude for the human race. Besides, since the eternal Word of God is the lively and express image of Himself, he recalls us to this point.

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32 The erroneous system of natural philosophy which had prevailed for ages was but just giving way to sounder views, at the time when Calvin wrote. Copernicus, in the close of the preceding century, had begun to suspect the current opinions on the subject; but the fear of being misunderstood and ridiculed caused him to withhold for some time the discoveries he was making; and it was not till 1543, a few hours before his death, that he himself saw a copy of his own published work. Up to that period, the earth had been regarded as the center of the system, and the whole heavens were supposed to revolve around it. — See Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Discoveries, Book I, chap. in.

33 "Non secus ac hebetes oculi specillis adjuvantur." — Tout ainsi comme si on baillot des lunettes ou miroirs a ceux qui ont la veue debile. Just as if one gave spectacles or mirrors to those who have weak sight. — French Tr. This is the translator's authority for rendering specillis spectacles.

And thus, the assertion of the Apostle is verified, that through no other means than faith can it be understood that the worlds were made by the word of God, (Hebrews 11:3.) For faith properly proceeds from this, that we being taught by the ministry of Moses, do not now wander in foolish and trifling speculations, but contemplate the true and only God in his genuine image.

It may, however, be objected, that this seems at variance with what Paul declares:

"After that, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, it seemed right to God, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them who believe," (1 Corinthians 1:21.)

For he thus intimates, that God is sought in vain under the guidance of visible things; and that nothing remains for us but to retake ourselves immediately to Christ; and that we must not therefore commence with the elements of this world, but with the Gospel, which sets Christ alone before us with his cross, and holds us to this one point. I answer, It is in vain for any to reason as philosophers on the workmanship of the world, except those who, having been first humbled by the preaching of the Gospel, have learned to submit the whole of their intellectual wisdom (as Paul expresses it) to the foolishness of the cross, (1 Corinthians 1:21.) Nothing shall we find, I say, above or below, which can raise us up to God, until Christ shall have instructed us in his own school. Yet this cannot be done, unless we, having emerged out of the lowest depths, are borne up above all heavens, in the chariot of his cross, that there by faith we may apprehend those things which the eye has never seen, the ear never heard, and which far surpass our hearts and minds.[34] For the earth, with its supply of fruits for our daily nourishment, is not there set before us; but Christ offers himself to us unto life eternal. Nor does heaven, by the shining of the sun and stars, enlighten our bodily eyes, but the same Christ, the Light of the World and the Sun of Righteousness, shines into our souls; neither does the air stretch out its empty space for us to breathe in, but the Spirit of God himself quickens us and causes us to live. There, in short, the invisible kingdom of Christ fills all things, and his spiritual grace is diffused through all. Yet this does not prevent us from applying our senses to the consideration of heaven and earth, that we may thence seek confirmation in the true knowledge of God. For Christ is that image in which God presents to our view, not only his *heart*, but also his *hands* and his *feet*. I give the name of his heart to that secret love with which he embraces us in Christ: by his hands and feet I understand those works of his which are displayed before our eyes. As soon as ever we depart from Christ, there is nothing, be it ever so gross or insignificant in itself, respecting which we are not necessarily deceived.

34 In this, and the following sentences, Calvin shows an intimate experimental acquaintance with the declaration of the Apostle, "And hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

And, in fact, though Moses begins, in this Book, with the Creation of the World, he nevertheless does not confine us to this subject. For these things ought to be connected together, that the world was founded by God, and that man, after he had been endued with the light of intelligence, and adorned with so many privileges, fell by his own fault, and was thus deprived of all the benefits he had obtained; afterwards, by the compassion of God, he was restored to the life he had forfeited, and this through the loving-kindness of Christ; so that there should always be some assembly on earth, which being adopted into the hope of the celestial life, might in this confidence worship God. The end to which the whole scope of the history tends is to this point, that the human race has been preserved by God in such a manner as to manifest his special care for his Church. For this is the argument of the look: After the world had been created, man was placed in it as in a theater, that he, beholding above him and beneath the wonderful works of God, might reverently adore their Author. Secondly, that all things were ordained for the use of man, that he, being under deeper obligation, might devote and dedicate himself entirely to obedience towards God. Thirdly, that he was endued with understanding and reason, that being distinguished from brute animals he might meditate on a better life, and might even tend directly towards God, whose image he bore engraved on his own person. Afterwards followed the fall of Adam, whereby he alienated himself from God; whence it came to pass that he was deprived of all rectitude. Thus Moses represents man as devoid of all good, blinded in understanding, perverse in heart, vitiated in every part, and under sentence of eternal death; but he soon adds the history of his restorations where Christ shines forth with the benefit of redemption. From this point he not only relates continuously the singular Providence of God in governing and preserving the Church, but also commends to us the true worship of God; teaches wherein the salvation of man is placed, and exhorts us, from the example of the Fathers, to constancy in enduring the cross. Whosoever, therefore, desires to make suitable proficiency in this book, let him employ his mind on these main topics. But especially, let him observe, that ever Adam had by his own desperate fall ruined himself and all his posterity, this is the basis of our salvation, this the origin of the Church, that we, being rescued out of profound darkness, have obtained a new life by the mere grace of God; that the Fathers (according to the offer made them through the word of God) are by faith made partakers of this life; that this word itself was founded upon Christ; and that all the pious who have since lived were sustained by the very same promise of salvation by which Adam was first raised from the fall.

Therefore, the perpetual succession of the Church has flowed from this fountain, that the holy Fathers, one after another, having by faith embraced the offered promise, were collected together into the family of God, in order that they might have a common life in Christ. This we ought carefully to notice, that we may know what is the society of the true Church, and what the communion of faith among the children of God. Whereas Moses was ordained the Teacher of the Israelites, there is no doubt that he had an especial reference

to them, in order that they might acknowledge themselves to be a people elected and chosen by God; and that they might seek the certainty of this adoption from the Covenant which the Lord had ratified with their fathers, and might know that there was no other God, and no other right faith. But it was also his will to testify to all ages, that whosoever desired to worship God aright, and to be deemed members of the Church, must pursue no other course than that which is here prescribed. But as this is the commencement of faith, to know that there is one only true God whom we worship, so it is no common confirmation of this faith that we are companions of the Patriarchs; for since they possessed Christ as the pledge of their salvation when he had not yet appeared, so we retain the God who formerly manifested himself to them. Hence we may infer the difference between the pure and lawful worship of God, and all those adulterated services which have since been fabricated by the fraud of Satan and the perverse audacity of men. Further, the Government of the Church is to be considered, that the reader may come to the conclusion that God has been its perpetual Guard and Ruler, yet in such a way as to exercise it in the warfare of the cross. Here, truly, the peculiar conflicts of the Church present themselves to view, or rather, the course is set as in a mirror before our eyes, in which it behaves us, with the holy Fathers to press towards the mark of a happy immortality.

Let us now hearken to Moses.

CHAPTER 1

Genesis 1:1-31	
1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.	**1.** In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.	**2.** Terra autem erat informis et inanis; tenebraeque erant in superficie voraginis, et Spiritus Dei agitabat se in superficie aquarum.
3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.	**3.** Et dixit Deus, Sit lux. Et fuit lux.
4. And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.	**4.** Viditque Deus lucem quod bona esset; et devisit Deus lucem a tenebris.
5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.	**5.** Et vocavit Deus lucem, Diem: et tenebras vocavit Noctem. Fuitque vespera, et fuit mane dies primus.
6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.	**6.** Et dixit Deus, Sit extensio in medio aquarum, et devidat aquas ab aquis.
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.	**7.** Et fecit Deus expansionem: et divisit aquas quae erant sub expansione, ab aquis quae erant super expansionem. Et fuit ita.
8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.	**8.** Vocavitque Deus expansionem Coelum. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies secundus.
9. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.	**9.** Postea dixit Deus, Congrentur aquae quae sunt sub coelo, in locum unum, et appareat arida. Et fuit ita.
10. And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.	**10.** Et vocavit Deus aridam, Terram: congregationem vero aquarum appellavit Maria. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit	**11.** Postea dixit Deus, Germinet terra germen, herbam seminificantem semen, arboram fructiferam, facientem fructum juxta

tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.	speciem suam cui insit semen suum super terram. Et fuit ita.
12. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.	**12.** Et protulit terra germen, herbam seminificantem semen juxta speciem suam, et arborem facientem fructum cui semen suum inesset juxta speciem suam. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.	**13.** Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies tertius.
14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:	**14.** Tunc dixit Deus, Sint luminaria in firmamentum coeli, ut dividant diem a nocte, et sint in signa, et stata tempora, et dies, et annos:
15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.	**15.** Et sint in luminaria in expansione coeli, ut illuminent terram. Et fuit ita.
16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.	**16.** Et fecit Deus duo luminaria magna: luminare majus in dominium diei, et luminare minu in dominium noctis, et stellas.
17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,	**17.** Posuitque ea Deus in expansione coeli, ut illuminarent terram:
18. And rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: amd God saw that *it was* good.	**18.** Et ut dominarentur diei ac nocti, et dividerent lucem a tenebris: et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.	**19.** Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies quartus.
20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.	**20.** Postea dixit Deus, Repere faciant aquae reptile animae viventis, et volatile volet super terram in superficie expansionis coeli.
21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind,	**21.** Et creavit Deus cetos magnos, et omnem animum viventem, repentem, quam repere fecerunt aquae juxta species suas: et omne

and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.	volatile alatum secundum speciem cujusque. Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.	**22.** Beneedixitque eis, dicendo, Crescite et multiplicate vos, et replete aquas in maribus; et volatile multiplicet se in terra.
23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.	**23.** Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies quintus.
24. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.	**24.** Postea dixit Deus, Producat terra animam viventem secundum speciem suam, jumentum et reptile, et bestias terrae secundum speciem suam. Et fuit ita.
25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.	**25.** Fecitque Deus bestiam terrae secundum speciem suam, et jumentum secundum speciem suam, et omne reptile terrae secundum speciem suam: et vidit Deus quod esset bonum.
26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.	**26.** Et dixit Deus, Faciamus hominem in imagine nostra, secundum similitudinem nostram; et dominetur piscibus maris, et volatili coeli, et jumento, et omni terrae, et omni reptili reptanti super terram.
27. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.	**27.** Creavit itaque Deus hominem ad imaginem suam, ad imaginem *inquam* Dei creavit illum: masculum et foeminam creavit eos.
28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.	**28.** Et benedixit illis Deus, dixitque ad eos Deus, Crescite, et multiplicate vos, et replete terram, et subjicite eam, et dominemini piscibus maris, et volatili coeli, et omni bestiae reptanti super terram.
29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the	**29.** Et dixit Deus, Ecce, dedi vobis omnum herbam seminificantem semen, quae est in superficie universa terrae, et omnem arbor-

which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.	em in qua est fructus arboris seminificans semen: ut vobis sit in escam.
30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so.	**30.** Et omni bestiae terrae, et omni volatili coeli, et omni reptanti super terram in quo est anima vivans, omne olus herbae *erit* in escam. Et fuit ita.
31. And God saw every thing that he had made, an behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.	**31.** Et vidit Deus omne quod fecerat, et ecce bonum valde. Et fuit vespera, et fuit mane dies sextus.

1. *In the beginning.* To expound the term "beginning," of Christ, is altogether frivolous. For Moses simply intends to assert that the world was not perfected at its very commencement, in the manner in which it is now seen, but that it was created an empty chaos of heaven and earth. His language therefore may be thus explained. When God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth, the earth was empty and waste.[35] He moreover teaches by the word "created," that what before did not exist was now made; for he has not used the term ⊠⊠⊠, (*yatsar,*) which signifies to frame or forms but ⊠⊠⊠, (*bara,*) which signifies to create.[36] Therefore his meaning is, that the world was made out of nothing. Hence the folly of those is refuted who imagine that unformed matter existed from eternity; and who gather nothing else from the narration of Moses than that the world was furnished with new ornaments, and received a form of which it was before destitute. This indeed was formerly a common fable among heathens,[37] who had received only an obscure report of the creation, and who, according to custom, adulterated the truth of God with strange figments; but for Christian men to labor (as Steuchus does[38]) in maintaining this gross error is absurd and intolerable. Let this, then be maintained in the first place,[39] that the world is not eternal but was created by God. There is no doubt that Moses gives the name of heaven and earth to

35 "La terre estoit vuide, et sans forme, et ne servoit a rien." — "The earth was aempty, and without form, and was of no use." — French Tr.

36 ⊠⊠⊠ It has a twofold meaning — 1. To create out of nothing, as is proved from these words, In the beginning, because nothing was made before them. 2. To produce something excellent out of pre-existent matter; as it is said afterwards, He created whales, and man. — See Fagius, Drusius, and Estius, in Poole's Synopsis.

37 Inter profanos homines.

38 Steuchus Augustinus was the Author of a work, "De Perennie Philosophia," Lugd. 1540, and is most likely the writer referred to by Calvin. The work, however, is very rare, and probably of little value.

39 "Sit igitur haec prima sententia. Que ceci dont soit premierement resolu." — French Tr.

that confused mass which he, shortly afterwards, (Genesis 1:2.) denominates *waters*. The reason of which is, that this matter was to be the seed of the whole world. Besides, this is the generally recognized division of the world.[40]

God. Moses has it *Elohim*, a noun of the plural number. Whence the inference is drawn, that the three Persons of the Godhead are here noted; but since, as a proof of so great a matter, it appears to me to have little solidity, will not insist upon the word; but rather caution readers to beware of violent glosses of this kind.[41] They think that they have testimony against the Arians, to prove the Deity of the Son and of the Spirit, but in the meantime they involve themselves in the error of Sabellius,[42] because Moses afterwards subjoins that the *Elohim* had spoken, and that the *Spirit of the Elohim* rested upon the waters. If we suppose three persons to be here denoted, there will be no distinction between them. For it will follow, both that the Son is begotten by himself, and that the Spirit is not of the Father, but of himself. For me it is sufficient that the plural number expresses those powers which God

40 Namely, into heaven and earth.

41 The reasoning of Calvin on this point is a great proof of the candor of his mind, and of his determination to adhere strictly to what he conceives to be the meaning of Holy Scripture, whatever bearing it might have on the doctrines he maintains. It may however be right to direct the reader, who wishes fully to examine the disputed meaning of the plural word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ which we translate God, to some sources of information, whence he may be able to form his own judgment respecting the term. Cocceius argues that the mystery of the Trinity in Unity is contained in the word; and many other writers of reputation take the same ground. Others contend, that though no clear intimation of the Trinity in Unity is given, yet the notion of plurality of Persons is plainly implied in the term. For a full account of all the arguments in favor of this hypothesis, the work of Dr. John Pye Smith, on the Scripture testimony of the Messiah — a work full of profound learning, and distinguished by patient industry and calmly courteous criticism — may be consulted. It must however be observed, that this diligent and impartial writer has not met the special objection adduced by Calvin in this place, namely, the danger of gliding into Sabellianism while attempting to confute Arianism. — *Ed*

42 The error of Sabellius (according to Theodoret) consisted in his maintaining, "that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one hypostasis, and one Person under three names," or, in the language of that eminent ecclesiastical scholar, the late Dr. Burton, "Sabellius divided the One Divinity into three, but he supposed the Son and the Holy Ghost to have no distinct personal existence, except when they were put forth for a time by the Father." — See Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 2, p. 365; and his Bampton Lectures, Note 103. This will perhaps assist the reader to understand the nature of Calvin's argument which immediately follows. Supposing the word Elohim to denote the Three Persons of the Godhead in the first verse, it also denotes the same Three Persons in the second verse. But in this second verse Moses says, the Spirit of Elohim, that is, the Spirit of the Three Persons rested on the waters. Hence the distinction of Persons is lost; for the Spirit is himself one of them; consequently the Spirit is sent from himself. The same reasoning would prove that the Son was begotten by himself; because he is one of the Persons of the Elohim by whom the Son is begotten. — *Ed.*

exercised in creating the world. Moreover I acknowledge that the Scripture, although it recites many powers of the Godhead, yet always recalls us to the Father, and his Word, and spirit, as we shall shortly see. But those absurdities, to which I have alluded, forbid us with subtlety to distort what Moses simply declares concerning God himself, by applying it to the separate Persons of the Godhead. This, however, I regard as beyond controversy, that from the peculiar circumstance of the passage itself, a title is here ascribed to God, expressive of that powers which was previously in some way included in his eternal essence.[43]

2. *And the earth was without form and void.* I shall not be very solicitous about the exposition of these two epithets, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, (*tohu,*) and ⊠⊠⊠⊠, (*bohu.*) The Hebrews use them when they designate anything empty and confused, or vain, and nothing worth. Undoubtedly Moses placed them both in opposition to all those created objects which pertain to the form,

43 The interpretation above given of the meaning of the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Elohim*) receives confirmation from the profound critical investigations of Dr. Hengstenberg, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, whose work, cast in a somewhat new form, and entitled "Dissertations on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch," appears in an English dress, under the superintendence of the Continental Translation Society, while these pages are passing through the press. With other learned critics, he concludes, that the word is derived from the Arabic root Allah, which means to worship, to adore, to be seized with fear. He, therefore, regards the title more especially descriptive of the awful aspect of the Divine character. On the plural form of the word he quotes from the Jewish Rabbis the assertion, that it is intended to signify 'Dominus potentiarum omnium,' 'The Lord of all powers'. He refers to Calvin and others as having opposed, though without immediate effect, the notion maintained by Peter Lombard, that it involved the mystery of the Trinity. He repels the profane intimation of Le Clerc, and his successors of the Noological school, that the name originated in polytheism; and then proceeds to show that "there is in the Hebrew language a widely extended use of the plural which expresses the intensity of the idea contained in the singular." After numerous references, which prove this point, he proceeds to argue, that "if, in relation to earthly objects, all that serves to represent a whole order of beings is brought before the mind by means of the plural form, we might anticipate a more extended application of this method of distinguishing in the appellations of God, in whose being and attributes there is everywhere a unity which embraces and comprehends all multiplicity." "The use of the plural," he adds, "answers the same purpose which elsewhere is accomplished by an accumulation of the Divine names; as in Joshua 22:22; the thrice holy in Isaiah 6:3; and ⊠⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠⊠ in Deuteronomy 10:17. It calls the attention to the infinite riches and the inexhaustible fullness contained in the one Divine Being, so that though men may imagine innumerable gods, and invest them with perfections, yet all these are contained in the one ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Elohim*)." See Dissertations, pp.268-273. It is, perhaps, necessary here to state, that whatever treasures of biblical learning the writings of this celebrated author contains, and they are undoubtedly great, the reader will still require to be on his guard in studying them. For, notwithstanding the author's general strenuous opposition to the and — supernaturalism of his own countrymen, he has not altogether escaped the contagion which he is attempting to resist. Occasions may occur in which it will be right to allude to some of his mistakes. — *Ed.*

the ornament and the perfection of the world. Were we now to take away, I say, from the earth all that God added after the time here alluded to, then we should have this rude and unpolished, or rather shapeless chaos.[44] Therefore I regard what he immediately subjoins that "darkness was upon the face of the abyss,"[45] as a part of that confused emptiness: because the light began to give some external appearance to the world. For the same reason he calls it the *abyss* and *waters*, since in that mass of matter nothing was solid or stable, nothing distinct.

And the Spirit of God Interpreters have wrested this passage in various ways. The opinion of some that it means the wind, is too frigid to require refutation. They who understand by it the Eternal Spirit of God, do rightly; yet all do not attain the meaning of Moses in the connection of his discourse; hence arise the various interpretations of the participle ⊠⊠⊠⊠, (*merachepeth.*) I will, in the first place, state what (in my judgment) Moses intended. We have already heard that before God had perfected the world it was an undigested mass; he now teaches that the power of the Spirit was necessary in order to sustain it. For this doubt might occur to the mind, how such a disorderly heap could stand; seeing that we now behold the world preserved by government, or order.[46] He therefore asserts that this mass, however confused it might be, was rendered stable, for the time, by the secret efficacy of the Spirit. Now there are two significations of the Hebrew word which suit the present place; either that the spirit moved and agitated itself over the waters, for the sake of putting forth vigor; or that He brooded over them to cherish them.[47] Inasmuch as it makes little difference in

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44 The words ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠ are rendered in Calvin's text informis et inanis, "shapeless and empty." They are, however, substantives, and are translated in Isaiah 34:11, "confusion" and "emptiness." The two words standing in connection, were used by the Hebrews to describe anything that was most dreary, waste, and desolate. The Septuagint has καὶ ἀκατασκευάστος, invisible and unfurnished. — *Ed*

45 It is to be remarked, that Calvin does not in his comment always adhere to his own translation. For instance, his version here is, "in superficiem voraginis;" but in his Commentary he has it, "super faciem abyssi," from the Latin Vulgate. — *Ed*.

46 "Temperamento servari." Perhaps we should say, "preserved by the laws of nature." — Ed.

47 The participle of the verb ⊠⊠ is here used instead of the regular tense. "The Spirit was moving," instead of "the Spirit moved." The word occurs in Deuteronomy 32:11, where the eagle is represented as fluttering over her young. Vatablus, whom Calvin here probably follows, says, the Holy Spirit cherished the earth "by his secret virtue, that it might remain stable for the time." — See Poole's Synopsis. The word, however, is supposed further to imply a vivifying power; as that of birds brooding over and hatching their young. Gesenius says that Moses here speaks, "Von der shaffenden und belebenden Kraft Gottes die uber der chaotischen wasserbedeckten Erde schwebt gleichsam bruetet" — "of the creative and quickening power of God, which hovered over the chaotic and water — covered earth, as if brooding." The same view is given by P. Martyr on Genesis; others, however, are opposed to this interpretation. Vide Johannes Clericus in loco. — *Ed*

the result, whichever of these explanations is preferred, let the reader's judgment be left free. But if that chaos required the secret inspiration of God to prevent its speedy dissolution; how could this order, so fair and distinct, subsist by itself, unless it derived strength elsewhere? Therefore, that Scripture must be fulfilled,

'Send forth thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth,' (Psalm 104:30;)

so, on the other hand, as soon as the Lord takes away his Spirit, all things return to their dust and vanish away, (Psalm 104:29.)

3. *And God said* Moses now, for the first time, introduces God in the act of *speaking*, as if he had created the mass of heaven and earth without the Word.[48] Yet John testifies that

'without him nothing was made of the things which were made,' (John 1:3.)

And it is certain that the world had been *begun* by the same efficacy of the Word by which it was *completed*. God, however, did not put forth his Word until he proceeded to originate light;[49] because in the act of distinguishing[50] his wisdom begins to be conspicuous. Which thing alone is sufficient to confute the blasphemy of Servetus. This impure caviler asserts,[51] that the first beginning of the Word was when God commanded the light to be; as if the cause, truly, were not prior to its effect. Since however by the Word of God things which were not came suddenly into being, we ought rather to infer the eternity of His essence. Wherefore the Apostles rightly prove the Deity of Christ from hence, that since he is the Word of God, all things have been created by him. Servetus imagines a new quality in God when he begins to speak. But far otherwise must we think concerning the Word of God, namely, that he is the Wisdom dwelling in God,[52] and without which God could never be; the effect of which, however, became apparent when the light was created.[53]

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48 "Sans sa Parole" — "without his Word." — French Tr.

49 "Sed Deus Verbum suum nonnisi in lucis origine, protulit." — "Mais Dieu n'a point mis sa Parole en avant, sinon en la creation de la lumiere." — "But God did not put his Word forward except in the creation of the light." — French Tr.

50 "In distinctione." The French is somewhat different: "Pource que la distinction de sa Sagesse commenca lors a apparoir evidemment." — "Because that the distinction of his Wisdom began then to appear evidently." The printing of the word Wisdom with a capital, renders it probable that by it Calvin means the Son of God, who is styled Wisdom in the eighth chapter of Proverbs and elsewhere. Whence it would seem that he intends the whole of what he here says as an argument in favor of the Deity of Christ. — *Ed.*

51 "Latrat hic obscoenus canis."

52 "Mais il faut bien autrement sentir de la Parole de Dieu, assavoir que c'est la Sapience residente en luy." — French Tr.

53 To understand this difficult and obscure passage, it will be necessary to know something of the ground taken by Servetus in his attempt to subvert the doctrine of the Trinity. He maintained that Christ was not the Son of God as to his divine nature, but only as to his human, and that this title belonged to him solely in con-

Let there be light It we proper that the light, by means of which the world was to be adorned with such excellent beauty, should be first created; and this also was the commencement of the distinction, (among the creatures.[54]) It did not, however, happen from inconsideration or by accident, that the light preceded the sun and the moon. To nothing are we more prone than to tie down the power of God to those instruments the agency of which he employs. The sun an moon supply us with light: And, according to our notions we so include this power to give light in them, that if they were taken away from the world, it would seem impossible for any light to remain. Therefore the Lord, by the very order of the creation, bears witness that he holds in his hand the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon. Further, it is certain from the context, that the light was so created as to be interchanged with darkness. But it may be asked, whether light and darkness succeeded each other in turn through the whole circuit of the world; or whether the darkness occupied one half of the circle, while light shone in the other. There is, however, no doubt that the order of their succession was alternate, but whether it was everywhere day at the

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sequence of His incarnation. Yet he professed to believe in the Word, as an emanation of some kind from the Deity; compounded — as he explains it — of the essence of God, of spirit, of flesh, and of three uncreated elements. These three elements appeared, as he supposes, in the first light of the world, in the cloud, and in the pillar of fire. (See Calvin's Institutes, Book II. c. xiv.) This illustrates what Calvin means when he says, that Servetus imagines a new quality in God when he begins to speak. The distinct personality of the Word being denied, qualities or attributes of Deity are put in his place. Against this Calvin contends. His argument seems to be to the following effect: — The creation of the indigested mass called heaven and earth, in the first verse, was apparently — though not really — without the Word, inasmuch as the Word is not mentioned. But when there began to be a distinction, (such as light developed,) then the Word existed before he acted — the cause was prior to its effect. We ought, therefore, to infer the eternal existence of the Word, as he contends the Apostles do, from the fact that all things were created by Him. Whatever quality God possessed when he began to speak, he must have possessed before. His Word, or his Wisdom, or his only-begotten Son, dwelt in Him, and was one with him from eternity; the same Word, or Wisdom, acted really in the creation of the chaotic mass, though not apparently. But in the creation of light, the very commencement of distinguishing, (exordium distinctionis,) this divine Word or Wisdom was manifest. Having given, to the best of my judgment, an explanation of Calvin's reasoning, truth obliges me to add, that it seems to be an involved and unsatisfactory argument to prove — **1st**, That the Second Person of the Trinity is distinctly referred to in the second verse of this chapter; and, **2nd**, That He is truly though not obviously the Creator of heaven and earth mentioned in the first verse. It furnishes occasion rather for regret than for surprise, that the most powerful minds are sometimes found attempting to sustain a good cause by inconclusive reasoning. — *Ed.*

54 "De la distinction des les creatures." — French Tr. That is, the beauties of nature could not be perceived, nor the distinction between different objects discerned without the light. — *Ed.*

same time, and everywhere night also, I would rather leave undecided; nor is it very necessary to be known.[55]

4 *And God saw the light* Here God is introduced by Moses as surveying his work, that he might take pleasure in it. But he does it for our sake, to teach us that God has made nothing without a certain reason and design. And we ought not so to understand the words of Moses as if God did not know that his work was good, till it was finished. But the meaning of the passage is, that the work, such as we now see it, was approved by God. Therefore nothing remains for us, but to acquiesce in this judgment of God. And this admonition is very useful. For whereas man ought to apply all his senses to the admiring contemplation of the works of God,[56] we see what license he really allows himself in detracting from them.

5. *And God called the light* That is, God willed that there should be a regular vicissitude of days and nights; which also followed immediately when the first day was ended. For God removed the light from view, that night might be the commencement of another day. What Moses says however, admits a double interpretation; either that this was the evening and morning belonging to the first day, or that the first day consisted of the evening and the morning. Whichever interpretation be chosen, it makes no difference in the sense, for he simply understands the day to have been made up of two parts. Further, he begins the day, according to the custom of his nation, with the evening. It is to no purpose to dispute whether this be the best and the legitimate order or not. We know that darkness preceded time itself; when God withdrew the light, he closed the day. I do not doubt that the most ancient fathers, to whom the coming night was the end of one day and the beginning of another, followed this mode of reckoning. Although Moses did not intend here to prescribe a rule which it would be criminal to violate; yet (as we have now said) he accommodated his discourse to the received custom. Wherefore, as the Jews foolishly condemn all the reckonings of other people, as if God had sanctioned this alone; so again are they equally foolish who contend that this modest reckoning, which Moses approves, is preposterous.

The first day Here the error of those is manifestly refuted, who maintain that the world was made in a moment. For it is too violent a cavil to contend that Moses distributes the work which God perfected at once into six days, for the mere purpose of conveying instruction. Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men. We slightingly pass over the infinite glory of God, which here shines forth; whence arises this but from our excessive dullness in considering his greatness? In the meantime, the vanity of our minds carries us away elsewhere. For the correction of this fault, God applied the most suitable remedy when he distributed

55 See Note at p. 61.

56 "L'homme devroit estendere tous ses sens a considerer, et avoir en admiration les oeuvres de Dieu." — "Man ought to apply all his senses in considering and having in admiration the works of God." — French Tr.

the creation of the world into successive portions, that he might fix our attention, and compel us, as if he had laid his hand upon us, to pause and to reflect. For the confirmation of the gloss above alluded to, a passage from Ecclesiasticus is unskilfully cited. 'He who liveth for ever created all things at once,' (Ecclesiasticus 18:1.) For the Greek adverb κοινῶ which the writer uses, means no such thing, nor does it refer to time, but to all things universally.[57]

6 *Let there be a firmament*[58] The work of the second day is to provide an empty space around the circumference of the earth, that heaven and earth may not be mixed together. For since the proverb, 'to mingle heaven and earth,' denotes the extreme of disorder, this distinction ought to be regarded as of great importance. Moreover, the word ⊠⊠⊠ (*rakia*) comprehends not only the whole region of the air, but whatever is open above us: as the word heaven is sometimes understood by the Latins. Thus the arrangement, as well of the heavens as of the lower atmosphere, is called ⊠⊠⊠(*rakia*) without discrimination between them, but sometimes the word signifies both together sometimes one part only, as will appear more plainly in our progress. I know not why the Greeks have chosen to render the word ςτερέωμα, which the Latins have imitated in the term, *firmamentum*;[59] for literally it means *expanse*. And to this David alludes when he says that 'the heavens are stretched out by God like a curtain,' (Psalm 104:2.) If any one should inquire whether this vacuity did not previously exist, I answer, however true it may be that all parts of the earth were not overflowed by the waters; yet now, for the first time, a separation was ordained, whereas a confused admixture had previously existed. Moses describes the special use of this expanse, to divide the waters from the waters from which word arises a great difficulty. For it appears opposed to common sense, and quite incredible, that there should be waters above the heaven. Hence some resort to allegory, and philosophize concerning angels; but quite beside the purpose. For, to my mind, this is a certain principle, that nothing is here treated of but the visible

57 So the English translation: "He that liveth forever made all things in general."

58 "Sit extensio." In the next verse he changes the word to "expansio". "Fecit expansionem." — "He made an expanse."

59 See the Septuagint and Vulgate, which have both been followed by our English translators. Doubtless Calvin is correct in supposing the true meaning of the Hebrew word to be expanse; but the translators of the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and our own version, were not without reasons for the manner in which they rendered the word. The root, ⊠⊠⊠, signifies, according to Gesenius, Lee, Cocceius, etc., to stamp with the foot, to beat or hammer out any malleable substance; and the derivative, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, is the outspreading of the heavens, which, "according to ordinary observation, rests like the half of a hollow sphere over the earth." To the Hebrews, as Gesenius observes, it presented a crystal or sapphire-like appearance. Hence it was thought to be something firm as well as expanded — a roof of crystal or of sapphire. The reader may also refer to the note of Johannes Clericus, in his commentary on Genesis, who retains the word firmament, and argues at length in vindication of the term. — *Ed*

form of the world. He who would learn astronomy,[60] and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere. Here the Spirit of God would teach all men without exception; and therefore what Gregory declares falsely and in vain respecting statues and pictures is truly applicable to the history of the creation, namely, that it is the book of the unlearned.[61] The things, therefore, which he relates, serve as the garniture of that theater which he places before our eyes. Whence I conclude, that the waters here meant are such as the rude and unlearned may perceive. The assertion of some, that they embrace by faith what they have read concerning the waters above the heavens, notwithstanding their ignorance respecting them, is not in accordance with the design of Moses. And truly a longer inquiry into a matter open and manifest is superfluous. We see that the clouds suspended in the air, which threaten to fall upon our heads, yet leave us space to breathe.[62] They who deny that this is effected by the wonderful providence of God, are vainly inflated with the folly of their own minds. We know, indeed that the rain is naturally produced; but the deluge sufficiently shows how speedily we might be overwhelmed by the bursting of the clouds, unless the cataracts of heaven were closed by the hand of God. Nor does David rashly recount this among His miracles, that God layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, (Psalm 104:3;) and he elsewhere calls upon the celestial waters to praise God, (Psalm 148:4.) Since, therefore, God has created the clouds, and assigned them a region above us, it ought not to be forgotten that they are restrained by the power of God, lest, gushing forth with sudden violence, they should swallow us up: and especially since no other barrier is opposed to them than the liquid and yielding, air, which would easily give way unless this word prevailed, 'Let there be an expanse between the waters.' Yet Moses has not affixed to the work of this day the note that God saw that it was good: perhaps because there was no advantage from it till the terrestrial

60 Astrologia. This word includes, but is not necessarily confined to that empirical and presumptuous science, (falsely so-called,) which we now generally designate by the term astrology. As the word originally means nothing but the science of the stars, so it was among our own earlier writers applied in the same manner. Consequently, it comprehended the sublime and useful science of astronomy. From the double meaning of the word, Calvin sometimes speaks of it with approbation, and sometimes with censure. But attention to his reasoning will show, that what he commends is astronomy, and what he censures is astrology in the present acceptation of the word. — *Ed.*

61 The following are the words of Pope Gregory I: "Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibeter, ut hi qui literas nesciunt, saltem in parietibu videndo legant quae legere in codicibus non valent." Epis. cix. ad Lerenum.

62 "Capitibus nostris sic minari, ut spirandi locus nobis relinquant." The French is more diffuse: "Nous menacent, comme si elles devoyent tomber sur nos testes; et toutesfois elle nous laissent ici lieu our respirer." "They threaten us, as if they would fall upon our heads; and, nevertheless, they leave us here space to breathe."

waters were gathered into their proper place, which was done on the next day, and therefore it is there twice repeated.[63]

9. *Let the waters... be gathered together* This also is an illustrious miracle, that the waters by their departure have given a dwelling-place to men. For even philosophers allow that the natural position of the waters was to cover the whole earth, as Moses declares they did in the beginning; first, because being an element, it must be circular, and because this element is heavier than the air, and lighter than the earth, it ought cover the latter in its whole circumference.[64] But that the seas, being gathered together as on heaps, should give place for man, is seemingly preternatural; and therefore Scripture often extols the goodness of God in this particular. See Psalm 33:7,

'He has gathered the waters together on a heap,
and has laid them up in his treasures.'

Also Psalm 78:13,

'He has collected the waters as into a bottle.'[65]

Jeremiah 5:22,

'Will ye not fear me? will ye not tremble at my presence,
who have placed the sand as the boundary of the sea?'

Job 38:8,

'Who has shut up the sea with doors? Have not I surrounded it with gates and bars?
I have said,
Hitherto shalt thou proceed; here shall thy swelling waves be broken.'

Let us, therefore, know that we are dwelling on dry ground, because God, by his command, has removed the waters that they should not overflow the whole earth.

11. *Let the earth bring forth grass* Hitherto the earth was naked and barren, now the Lord fructifies it by his word. For though it was already destined to bring forth fruit, yet till new virtue proceeded from the mouth of God, it must remain dry and empty. For neither was it naturally fit to produce anything, nor had it a germinating principle from any other

63 The Septuagint here inserts the clause, "God saw that it was good;" but, as it is found neither in the Hebrew nor in any other ancient version, it must be abandoned. The Rabbis say that the clause was omitted, because the angels fell on that day; but this is to cut the knot rather than to untie it. There is more probability in the conjecture of Picherellus, who supposes that what follows in the ninth and tenth verses all belonged to the work of the second day, though mentioned after it; and, in the same way, he contends that the formation of the beasts, recorded in the 24th verse, belonged to the fifth day, though mentioned after it. Examples of this kind, of Hysteron proteron, are adduced in confirmation of this interpretation. See Poole's Synopsis in loco. — *Ed.*

64 This reasoning is to be explained by reference to the philosophical theories of the age. — *Ed.*

65 "Velut in utrem;" "from the Vulgate." The English version is, "He made the waters to stand as an heap."

source, till the mouth of the Lord was opened. For what David declares concerning the heavens, ought also to be extended to the earth; that it was

'made by the word of the Lord, and was adorned and furnished by the breath of his mouth,' (Psalm 33:6.)

Moreover, it did not happen fortuitously, that herbs and trees were created before the sun and moon. We now see, indeed, that the earth is quickened by the sun to cause it to bring forth its fruits; nor was God ignorant of this law of nature, which he has since ordained: but in order that we might learn to refer all things to him he did not then make use of the sun or moon.[66] He permits us to perceive the efficacy which he infuses into them, so far as he uses their instrumentality; but because we are wont to regard as part of their nature properties which they derive elsewhere, it was necessary that the vigor which they now seem to impart to the earth should be manifest before they were created. We acknowledge, it is true, in words, that the First Cause is self-sufficient, and that intermediate and secondary causes have only what they borrow from this First Cause; but, in reality, we picture God to ourselves as poor or imperfect, unless he is assisted by second causes. How few, indeed, are there who ascend higher than the sun when they treat of the fecundity of the earth? What therefore we declare God to have done designedly, was indispensably necessary; that we may learn from the order of the creation itself, that God acts through the creatures, not as if he needed external help, but because it was his pleasure. When he says, 'Let the earth bring forth the herb which may produce seed, the tree whose seed is in itself,' he signifies not only that herbs and trees were then created, but that, at the same time, both were endued with the power of propagation, in order that their several species might be perpetuated. Since, therefore, we daily see the earth pouring forth to us such riches from its lap, since we see the herbs producing seed, and this seed received and cherished in the bosom of the earth till it springs forth, and since we see trees shooting from other trees; all this flows from the same Word. If therefore we inquire, how it happens that the earth is fruitful, that the germ is produced from the seed, that fruits come to maturity, and their various kinds are annually reproduced; no other cause will be found, but that God has once spoken, that is, has issued his eternal decree; and that the earth, and all things proceeding from it, yield obedience to the command of God, which they always hear.

14. *Let there be lights*[67] Moses passes onwards to the fourth day, on which the stars were made. God had before created the light, but he now institutes a new order in nature, that the sun should be the dispenser of diurnal light, and the moon and stars should shine by

66 "Nullas tunc soli et lunae partes concessit." — "Il ne s'est point servi en cest endroit du soleil ni de la lune." — French Tr.

67 "Luminaria" — "Luminaries." Hebrew ⊠⊠⊠⊠. Instruments of light, from ⊠⊠⊠, light, in verse 3. "Lighters; that is lightsome bodies, or instruments that show light." — *Ainsworth*

night. And He assigns them this office, to teach us that all creatures are subject to his will, and execute what he enjoins upon them. For Moses relates nothing else than that God ordained certain instruments to diffuse through the earth, by reciprocal changes, that light which had been previously created. The only difference is this, that the light was before dispersed, but now proceeds from lucid bodies; which in serving this purpose, obey the command of God.

To divide the day from the night He means the artificial day, which begins at the rising of the sun and ends at its setting. For the natural day (which he mentions above) includes in itself the night. Hence infer, that the interchange of days and nights shall be continual: because the word of God, who determined that the days should be distinct from the nights, directs the course of the sun to this end.

Let them be for signs It must be remembered, that Moses does not speak with philosophical acuteness on occult mysteries, but relates those things which are everywhere observed, even by the uncultivated, and which are in common use. A twofold advantage is chiefly perceived from the course of the sun and moon; the one is natural, the other applies to civil institutions. [68] Under the term nature, I also comprise agriculture. For although sowing and reaping require human art and industry; this, nevertheless, is natural, that the sun, by its nearer approach, warms our earth, that he introduces the vernal season, that he is the cause of summer and autumn. But that, for the sake of assisting their memory, men number among themselves years and months; that of these, they form *lustra* and olympiads; that they keep stated days; this I say, is peculiar to civil polity. Of each of these mention is here made. I must, however, in a few words, state the reason why Moses calls them signs; because certain inquisitive persons abuse this passages to give color to their frivolous predictions: I call those men Chaldeans and fanatics, who divine everything from the aspects of the stars.[69] Because Moses declares that the sun and moon were appointed for *signs*, they think themselves entitled to elicit from them anything they please. But confutation is easy: for they are called signs of certain things, not signs to denote whatever is according to our fancy. What indeed does Moses assert to be signified by them, except things belonging to the order of nature? For the same God who here ordains signs testifies by Isaiah that he 'will dissipate the signs of the diviners,' (Isaiah 44:25;) and forbids us to be 'dismayed at the signs of heaven,' (Jeremiah 10:2.) But since it is manifest that Moses does not depart from the ordinary custom of men, I desist from a longer discussion. The word ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*moadim,)* which they translate 'certain times', is variously understood among the Hebrews: for it signifies both time and place, and also assemblies of persons. The Rabbis commonly explain the passage as referring to their festivals. But I extend it further to mean, in the first place, the opportun-

68 "Altera ad ordinaem politicum spectat."

69 "Ex siderum praesagiis nihil non divinant."

ities of time, which in French are called saisons, (seasons;) and then all fairs and forensic assemblies.[70] Finally, Moses commemorates the unbounded goodness of God in causing the sun and moon not only to enlighten us, but to afford us various other advantages for the daily use of life. It remains that we, purely enjoying the multiplied bounties of God, should learn not to profane such excellent gifts by our preposterous abuse of them. In the meantime, let us admire this wonderful Artificer, who has so beautifully arranged all things above and beneath, that they may respond to each other in most harmonious concert.

15. *Let them be for lights* It is well again to repeat what I have said before, that it is not here philosophically discussed, how great the sun is in the heaven, and how great, or how little, is the moon; but how much light comes to us from them.[71] For Moses here addresses himself to our senses, that the knowledge of the gifts of God which we enjoy may not glide away. Therefore, in order to apprehend the meaning of Moses, it is to no purpose to soar above the heavens; let us only open our eyes to behold this light which God enkindles for us in the earth. By this method (as I have before observed) the dishonesty of those men is sufficiently rebuked, who censure Moses for not speaking with greater exactness. For as it became a theologian, he had respect to us rather than to the stars. Nor, in truth, was he ignorant of the fact, that the moon had not sufficient brightness to enlighten the earth, unless it borrowed from the sun; but he deemed it enough to declare what we all may plainly perceive, that the moon is a dispenser of light to us. That it is, as the astronomers assert, an *opaque* body, I allow to be true, while I deny it to be a *dark* body. For, first, since it is placed above the element of fire, it must of necessity be a fiery body. Hence it follows, that it is also luminous; but seeing that it has not light sufficient to penetrate to us, it borrows what is wanting from the sun. He calls it a lesser light by comparison; because the portion of light which it emits to us is small compared with the infinite splendor of the sun.[72]

16. *The greater light* I have said, that Moses does not here subtilely descant, as a philosopher, on the secrets of nature, as may be seen in these words. First, he assigns a place in the expanse of heaven to the planets and stars; but astronomers make a distinction of spheres, and, at the same time, teach that the fixed stars have their proper place in the firmament. Moses makes two great luminaries; but astronomers prove, by conclusive reasons that the

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70 See the Lexicons of Schindler, Lee, and Gesenius, and Dathe's Commentary on the Pentateuch. The two latter writers explain the terms "signs and seasons" by the Figure Hendiadys, for "signs of seasons." "Zu Zeichen der Zeiten." The word stands — **1**. For the year. **2**. For an assembly. **3**. For the place of assembling. **4**. For a signal. — *Ed*

71 "Great lights;" that is, in our eyes, "to which the sun and moon are nearer than the fixed stars and the greater planets." — Johannes Clericus in Genesin, p.10. — *Ed.*

72 The reader will be in no danger of being misled by the defective natural philosophy of the age in which this was written.

star of Saturn, which on account of its great distance, appears the least of all, is greater than the moon. Here lies the difference; Moses wrote in a popular style things which without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand; but astronomers investigate with great labor whatever the sagacity of the human mind can comprehend. Nevertheless, this study is not to be reprobated, nor this science to be condemned, because some frantic persons are wont boldly to reject whatever is unknown to them. For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known: it cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God. Wherefore, as ingenious men are to be honored who have expended useful labor on this subject, so they who have leisure and capacity ought not to neglect this kind of exercise. Nor did Moses truly wish to withdraw us from this pursuit in omitting such things as are peculiar to the art; but because he was ordained a teacher as well of the unlearned and rude as of the learned, he could not otherwise fulfill his office than by descending to this grosser method of instruction. Had he spoken of things generally unknown, the uneducated might have pleaded in excuse that such subjects were beyond their capacity. Lastly since the Spirit of God here opens a common school for all, it is not surprising that he should chiefly choose those subjects which would be intelligible to all. If the astronomer inquires respecting the actual dimensions of the stars, he will find the moon to be less than Saturn; but this is something abstruse, for to the sight it appears differently. Moses, therefore, rather adapts his discourse to common usage. For since the Lord stretches forth, as it were, his hand to us in causing us to enjoy the brightness of the sun and moon, how great would be our ingratitude were we to close our eyes against our own experience? There is therefore no reason why janglers should deride the unskilfulness of Moses in making the moon the second luminary; for he does not call us up into heaven, he only proposes things which lie open before our eyes. Let the astronomers possess their more exalted knowledge; but, in the meantime, they who perceive by the moon the splendor of night, are convicted by its use of perverse ingratitude unless they acknowledge the beneficence of God.

To rule[73] He does not ascribe such dominion to the sun and moon as shall, in the least degree, diminish the power of God; but because the sun, in half the circuit of heaven, governs the day, and the moon the night, by turns; he therefore assigns to them a kind of government. Yet let us remember, that it is such a government as implies that the sun is still a servant, and the moon a handmaid. In the meantime, we dismiss the reverie of Plato who ascribes reason and intelligence to the stars. Let us be content with this simple exposition, that God governs the days and nights by the ministry of the sun and moon, because he has them as his charioteers to convey light suited to the season.

73 "In dominum." For dominion.

20. *Let the waters bring forth... the moving creature*[74] On the fifth day the birds and fishes are created. The blessing of God is added, that they may of themselves produce offspring. Here is a different kind of propagation from that in herbs and trees: for there the power of fructifying is in the plants, and that of germinating is in the seed; but here generation takes place. It seems, however, but little consonant with reason, that he declares birds to have proceeded from the waters; and, therefore this is seized upon by captious men as an occasion of calumny. But although there should appear no other reason but that it so pleased God, would it not be becoming in us to acquiesce in his judgment? Why should it not be lawful for him, who created the world out of nothing, to bring forth the birds out of water? And what greater absurdity, I pray, has the origin of birds from the water, than that of the light from darkness? Therefore, let those who so arrogantly assail their Creator, look for the Judge who shall reduce them to nothing. Nevertheless if we must use physical reasoning in the contest, we know that the water has greater affinity with the air than the earth has. But Moses ought rather to be listened to as our teacher, who would transport us with admiration of God through the consideration of his works.[75] And, truly, the Lord, although he is the Author of nature, yet by no means has followed nature as his guide in the creation of the world, but has rather chosen to put forth such demonstrations of his power as should constrain us to wonder.

21. *And God created* A question here arises out of the word *created*. For we have before contended, that because the world was created, it was made out of nothing; but now Moses says that things formed from other matter were created. They who truly and properly assert that the fishes were created because the waters were in no way sufficient or suitable for their production, only resort to a subterfuge: for, in the meantime, the fact would remain that

74 "Repere faciant aquae reptile animae viventis." — "Let the waters cause to creep forth the reptile, (or creeping thing,) having a living soul." This is a more literal translation of the original than that of the English version; yet it does not express more accurately the sense. The word ⊠⊠⊠, (*sheretz*,) as a substantaive, signifies any worm or reptile, generally of the smaller kind, either in land or water; and the corresponding verb rendered "to creep forthe" signifies also "to multiply." It is well known that this class of animals multiply more abundantly than any other. The expression ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, (*nepesh chayah*,) "a living soul," does not refer (as the word soul in English often does) to the immortal principle, but to the animal life or breath, and the words might here be rendered "the breath of life." — *Ed*

75 For other opinions respecting the origin of birds, see Poole's Synopsis. Some argue from Genesis 2:19, that fowls were made of the earth; and would propose an alteration in the translation of the verse before us to the following effect, — "and let the fowl fly above the heaven." — See Notes on Genesis, etc., by Professor Bush, *in loco*. But Calvin's view is more generally approved. "Natantium et volatilium unam originem ponit Moses. 1. Quia aer, (locus avium,) et aqua, (locus piscium,) elementa cognata sunt," etc. — Castalio, Lyra, Menochius, and others, in Poole. — *Ed*.

the material of which they were made existed before; which, in strict propriety, the word created does not admit. I therefore do not restrict the creation here spoken of to the work of the fifth day, but rather suppose it to refer to that shapeless and confused mass, which was as the fountain of the whole world.[76] God then, it is said, created *whales* (balaenas) and other fishes, not that the beginning of their creation is to be reckoned from the moment in which they receive their form; but because they are comprehended in the universal matter which was made out of nothing. So that, with respect to species, form only was then added to them; but creation is nevertheless a term truly used respecting both the whole and the parts. The word commonly rendered whales (*cetos vel cete*) might in my judgment be not improperly translated *thynnus* or *tunny fish*, as corresponding with the Hebrew word *thaninim*.[77]

When he says that "the waters brought forth,"[78] he proceeds to commend the efficacy of the word, which the waters hear so promptly, that, though lifeless in themselves, they suddenly teem with a living offspring, yet the language of Moses expresses more; namely, that fishes innumerable are daily produced from the waters, because that word of God, by which he once commanded it, is continually in force.

22. *And God blessed them* What is the force of this benediction he soon declares. For God does not, after the manner of men, pray that we may be blessed; but, by the bare intimation of his purpose, effects what men seek by earnest entreaty. He therefore blesses his creatures when he commands them to increase and grow; that is, he infuses into them fecundity by his word. But it seems futile for God to address fishes and reptiles. I answer, this mode of speaking was no other than that which might be easily understood. For the experiment itself teaches, that the force of the word which was addressed to the fishes was not transient, but rather, being infused into their nature, has taken root, and constantly bears fruit.

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76 "Ego vero ad opus diei quinti non restringo creationem; sed potius ex illa infermi et confusa massa pendere dico, quae fuit veluti scaturigo totius mundi." The passage seems to be obscure; and if the translation above given is correct, the Old English version by Tymme has not hit the true meaning. The French version is as follows: — "Je ne restrain point la creation a l'ouvrage du cinquieme jour; plustost je di qu'elle depend de cette masse confuse qui a este comme la source de tout le monde." — *Ed.*

77 ⊠⊠⊠⊠. "Significat omnia ingentia animalia tam terrestria ut dracones, quam aquatica ut balaenas." "It signifies all large animals, both terrestrial, as dragons, and aquatic, as whales." — Poole's Synopsis. Sometimes it refers to the crocodile, and seems obviously of kindred signfication with the word Leviathan. Schindler gives this meaning among others, — serpents, dragons, great fishes, whales, thinni. — See also Patrick's Commentary, who takes it for the crocodile. — *Ed*

78 "Aquas fecisse reptare," that "the waters caused to creep forth." — *Ed.*

24. *Let the earth bring forth* He descends to the sixth day, on which the animals were created, and then man. 'Let the earth,' he says, 'bring forth living creatures.' But whence has a dead element life? Therefore, there is in this respect a miracle as great as if God had begun to create out of nothing those things which he commanded to proceed from the earth. And he does not take his material from the earth, because he needed it, but that he might the better combine the separate parts of the world with the universe itself. Yet it may be inquired, why He does not here also add his benediction? I answer, that what Moses before expressed on a similar occasion is here also to be understood, although he does not repeat it word for word. I say, moreover, it is sufficient for the purpose of signifying the same thing,[79] that Moses declares animals were created 'according to their species:' for this distribution carried with it something stable. It may even hence be inferred, that the offspring of animals was included. For to what purpose do distinct species exist, unless that individuals, by their several kinds, may be multiplied?[80]

Cattle[81] Some of the Hebrews thus distinguish between "cattle" and "beasts of the earth," that the cattle feed on herbage, but that the beasts of the earth are they which eat flesh. But the Lord, a little while after, assigns herbs to both as their common food; and it may be observed, that in several parts of Scripture these two words are used indiscriminately. Indeed, I do not doubt that Moses, after he had named *Behemoth*, (cattle,) added the other, for the sake of fuller explanation. By 'reptiles,'[82] in this place, understand those which are of an earthly nature.

26. *Let us make man*[83] Although the tense here used is the future, all must acknowledge that this is the language of one apparently deliberating. Hitherto God has been introduced simply as *commanding* ; now, when he approaches the most excellent of all his works, he enters into *consultation*. God certainly might here command by his bare word what he wished to be done: but he chose to give this tribute to the excellency of man, that he would, in a manner, enter into consultation concerning his creation. This is the highest honor with which he has dignified us; to a due regard for which, Moses, by this mode of speaking would excite our minds. For God is not now first beginning to consider what form he will give to

79 Namely, that God's benediction was virtually added, though no expressed in terms. See verse 22. — *Ed.*

80 The reader is referred to Note 1, p. 81, for another mode of interpreting these verses; and also to Poole's Synopsis on verse 24, where the opinion of Pichrellus is fully stated, namely, that verses 24, 25, contain part of the work of the fifth day. — *Ed.*

81 Cattle, ⊠⊠⊠, (*Behemah*); plural, ⊠⊠⊠⊠, (*Behemoth*).

82 "Reptiles." In the English version, "creeping things," the same expression which occurs in verse 20. But the Hebrew word is different. In the twentieth verrse it is ⊠⊠⊠, (sharetz,) in the twenty-fourth it is ⊠⊠⊠, (remes). The latter word is generally, (though not always,) as here, referred to land animals. — *Ed*

83 "Faciamus hominem."

man, and with what endowments it would be fitting to adorn him, nor is he pausing as over a work of difficulty: but, just as we have before observed, that the creation of the world was distributed over six days, for our sake, to the end that our minds might the more easily be retained in the meditation of God's works: so now, for the purpose of commending to our attention the dignity of our nature, he, in taking counsel concerning the creation of man, testifies that he is about to undertake something great and wonderful. Truly there are many things in this corrupted nature which may induce contempt; but if you rightly weigh all circumstances, man is, among other creatures a certain preeminent specimen of Divine wisdom, justice, and goodness, so that he is deservedly called by the ancients μικρίκοσμος, "a world in miniature." But since the Lord needs no other counsellor, there can be no doubt that he consulted with himself. The Jews make themselves altogether ridiculous, in pretending that God held communication with the earth or with angels.[84] The earth, forsooth, was a most excellent adviser! And to ascribe the least portion of a work so exquisite to angels, is a sacrilege to be held in abhorrence. Where, indeed, will they find that we were created after the image of the earth, or of angels? Does not Moses directly exclude all creatures in express terms, when he declares that Adam was created after the image of God? Others who deem themselves more acute, but are doubly infatuated, say that God spoke of himself in the plural number, according to the custom of princes. As if, in truth, that barbarous style of speaking, which has grown into use within a few past centuries, had, even then, prevailed in the world. But it is well that their canine wickedness has been joined with a stupidity so great, that they betray their folly to children. Christians, therefore, properly contend, from this testimony, that there exists a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. God summons no foreign counsellor; hence we infer that he finds within himself something distinct; as, in truth, his eternal wisdom and power reside within him.[85]

In our image, etc Interpreters do not agree concerning the meaning of these words. The greater part, and nearly all, conceive that the word *image* is to be distinguished from likeness. And the common distinction is, that image exists in the substance, *likeness* in the accidents of anything. They who would define the subject briefly, say that in the image are contained those endowments which God has conferred on human nature at large, while they expound

84 For the various opinions of Jewish writers on this subject, see Poole's Synopsis in loco. See also Bishop Patrick's Commentary on this verse. — *Ed.*

85 "Ut certe aeterna ejus sapientia et virtus in ipso resident." The expression is ambiguous; but the French translation renders it, "Comme a la verite, sa Sapience eternelle, et Vertu reside en luy;" which translation is here followed. By beginning the words rendered Wisdom and Power with capitals, it would appear that the second and third Persons of the Trinity were in the mind of the writer when the passage was written. And perhaps this is the only view of it which renders the reasoning of Calvin intelligible. See Notes 2 and 5, at page 75. — *Ed.*

likeness to mean gratuitous gifts.[86] But Augustine, beyond all others, speculates with excessive refinement, for the purpose of fabricating a Trinity in man. For in laying hold of the three faculties of the soul enumerated by Aristotle, the intellect, the memory, and the will, he afterwards out of one Trinity derives many. If any reader, having leisure, wishes to enjoy such speculations, let him read the tenth and fourteenth books on the Trinity, also the eleventh book of the "City of God." I acknowledge, indeed, that there is something in man which refers to the Father and the Son, and the Spirit: and I have no difficulty in admitting the above distinction of the faculties of the soul: although the simpler division into two parts, which is more used in Scripture, is better adapted to the sound doctrine of piety; but a definition of the image of God ought to rest on a firmer basis than such subtleties. As for myself, before I define the image of God, I would deny that it differs from his likeness. For when Moses afterwards repeats the same things he passes over the *likeness*, and contents himself with mentioning the image. Should any one take the exception, that he was merely studying brevity; I answer,[87] that where he twice uses the word image, he makes no mention of the likeness. We also know that it was customary with the Hebrews to repeat the same thing in different words. besides, the phrase itself shows that the second term was added for the sake of explanation, 'Let us make,' he says, 'man in our image, according to our likeness,' that is, that he may be like God, or may represent the image of God. Lastly, in the fifth chapter, without making any mention of *image*, he puts likeness in its place, (Genesis 5:1.) Although we have set aside all difference between the two words we have not yet ascertained what this image or likeness is. The *Anthropomorphites* were too gross in seeking this resemblance in the human body; let that reverie therefore remain entombed. Others proceed with a little more subtlety, who, though they do not imagine God to be corporeal, yet maintain that the image of God is in the body of man, because his admirable workmanship there shines brightly; but this opinion, as we shall see, is by no means consonant with Scripture. The exposition of Chrysostom is not more correct, who refers to the dominion which was given to man in order that he might, in a certain sense, act as God's vicegerent in the government of the world. This truly is some portion, though very small, of the image of God. Since the image of God had been destroyed in us by the fall, we may judge from its restoration what it originally had been. Paul says that we are transformed into the image of God by the gospel. And, according to him, spiritual regeneration is nothing else than the restoration of the same image. (Colossians 3:10, and Ephesians 4:23.) That he made this image to consist in righteousness and true holiness, is by the figure *synecdochee* ;[88] for

86 Some here distinguish, and say the image is in what is natural, the likeness in what is gratuitous. — *Lyra*. Others blend them together, and say there is an Hendiadys, that is, according to the image most like us. — *Tirinus*. — See Poole's Synopsis. — *Ed*.

87 "I answer," is not in the original, but is taken from the French translation. — *Ed*.

88 Synecdoche is the figure which puts a part for the whole, or the whole for a part. — *Ed*.

though this is the chief part, it is not the whole of God's image. Therefore by this word the perfection of our whole nature is designated, as it appeared when Adam was endued with a right judgment, had affections in harmony with reason, had all his senses sound and well-regulated, and truly excelled in everything good. Thus the chief seat of the Divine image was in his mind and heart, where it was eminent: yet was there no part of him in which some scintillations of it did not shine forth. For there was an attempering in the several parts of the soul, which corresponded with their various offices.[89] In the mind perfect intelligence flourished and reigned, uprightness attended as its companion, and all the senses were prepared and moulded for due obedience to reason; and in the body there was a suitable correspondence with this internal order. But now, although some obscure lineaments of that image are found remaining in us; yet are they so vitiated and maimed, that they may truly be said to be destroyed. For besides the deformity which everywhere appears unsightly, this evil also is added, that no part is free from the infection of sin.

In our image, after our likeness I do not scrupulously insist upon the particles ⊠, (*beth,*) and ⊠, (*caph*[90]) I know not whether there is anything solid in the opinion of some who hold that this is said, because the image of God was only shadowed forth in man till he should arrive at his perfection. The thing indeed is true; but I do not think that anything of the kind entered the mind of Moses.[91] It is also truly said that Christ is the only image of the Fathers but yet the words of Moses do not bear the interpretation that "in the image" means "in Christ." It may also be added, that even man, though in a different respects is called the image of God. In which thing some of the Fathers are deceived who thought that they could defeat the Arians with this weapon that Christ alone is God's, image. This further difficulty is also to be encountered, namely, why Paul should deny the *woman* to be the image of God, when Moses honors both, indiscriminately, with this title. The solution is short; Paul there alludes only to the domestic relation. He therefore restricts the image of God to *government*, in which the man has superiority over the wife and certainly he meant nothing more than that man is superior in the degree of honor. But here the question is respecting that glory of God which peculiarly shines forth in human nature, where the mind, the will, and all the senses, represent the Divine order.

And let them have dominion[92] Here he commemorates that part of dignity with which he decreed to honor man, namely, that he should have authority over all living creatures.

89 "Erat erim in singulis animae partibus temperatura quae suis numeris constabat."

90 The two prefixes to the Hebrew words signifying image and likeness; the former of which is translated in, the latter after, or still more correctly, according to. This sentence is not translated either in the French or Old English version. — *Ed.*

91 "Innuit in homine esse imaginem Dei, sed imperfectam et qualem umbrae." — Oleaster in Poli Synopsi.

92 "Dominetur."

He appointed man, it is true, lord of the world; but he expressly subjects the animals to him, because they having an inclination or instinct of their own,[93] seem to be less under authority from without. The use of the plural number intimates that this authority was not given to Adam only, but to all his posterity as well as to him. And hence we infer what was the end for which all things were created; namely, that none of the conveniences and necessaries of life might be wanting to men. In the very order of the creation the paternal solicitude of God for man is conspicuous, because he furnished the world with all things needful, and even with an immense profusion of wealth, before he formed man. Thus man was rich before he was born. But if God had such care for us before we existed, he will by no means leave us destitute of food and of other necessaries of life, now that we are placed in the world. Yet, that he often keeps his hand as if closed is to be imputed to our sins.

27. *So God created man* The reiterated mention of the image of God is not a vain repetition. For it is a remarkable instance of the Divine goodness which can never be sufficiently proclaimed. And, at the same time, he admonishes us from what excellence we have fallen, that he may excite in us the desire of its recovery. When he soon afterwards adds, that God created them male and female, he commends to us that conjugal bond by which the society of mankind is cherished. For this form of speaking, God created man, male and female created he them, is of the same force as if he had said, that the man himself was incomplete.[94] Under these circumstances, the woman was added to him as a companion that they both might be one, as he more clearly expresses it in the second chapter. Malachi also means the same thing when he relates, (Genesis 2:15,) that one man was created by God, whilst, nevertheless, he possessed the fullness of the Spirit.[95] For he there treats of conjugal fidelity, which the Jews were violating by their polygamy. For the purpose of correcting this fault, he calls that pair, consisting of man and woman, which God in the beginning had joined together, *one man*, in order that every one might learn to be content with his own wife.

28. *And God blessed them* This blessing of God may be regarded as the source from which the human race has flowed. And we must so consider it not only with reference to the whole, but also, as they say, in every particular instance. For we are fruitful or barren in respect of offspring, as God imparts his power to some and withholds it from others. But here Moses would simply declare that Adam with his wife was formed for the production of offspring, in order that men might replenish the earth. God could himself indeed have covered the earth with a multitude of men; but it was his will that we should proceed from one fountain, in order that our desire of mutual concord might be the greater, and that each

93 "Quae quum habeant proprium nutum."

94 "Acsi virum dixisset esse dimidium hominem."

95 On this difficult passage see Lowth, Archbishop Newcome, and Scott, who confirm in the main the interpretation of Calvin. — *Ed.*

might the more freely embrace the other as his own flesh. Besides, as men were created to occupy the earth, so we ought certainly to conclude that God has mapped, as with a boundary, that space of earth which would suffice for the reception of men, and would prove a suitable abode for them. Any inequality which is contrary to this arrangement is nothing else than a corruption of nature which proceeds from sin. In the meantime, however, the benediction of God so prevails that the earth everywhere lies open that it may have its inhabitants, and that an immense multitude of men may find, in some part of the globe, their home. Now, what I have said concerning marriage must be kept in mind; that God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation indeed, but not, as in brute animals, by promiscuous intercourse. For he has joined the man to his wife, that they might produce a divine, that is, a legitimate seed. Let us then mark whom God here addresses when he commands them to increase, and to whom he limits his benediction. Certainly he does not give the reins to human passions,[96] but, beginning at holy and chaste marriage, he proceeds to speak of the production of offspring. For this is also worthy of notice, that Moses here briefly alludes to a subject which he afterwards means more fully to explain, and that the regular series of the history is inverted, yet in such a way as to make the true succession of events apparent. The question, however, is proposed, whether fornicators and adulterers become fruitful by the power of God; which, if it be true, then whether the blessing of God is in like manner extended to them? I answer, this is a corruption of the Divine institute; and whereas God produces offspring from this muddy pool, as well as from the pure fountain of marriage, this will tend to their greater destruction. Still that pure and lawful method of increase, which God ordained from the beginning, remains firm; this is that law of nature which common sense declares to be inviolable.

Subdue it He confirms what he had before said respecting dominion. Man had already been created with this condition, that he should subject the earth to himself; but now, at length, he is put in possession of his right, when he hears what has been given to him by the Lord: and this Moses expresses still more fully in the next verse, when he introduces God as granting to him the herbs and the fruits. For it is of great importance that we touch nothing of God's bounty but what we know he has permitted us to do; since we cannot enjoy anything with a good conscience, except we receive it as from the hand of God. And therefore Paul teaches us that, in eating and drinking we always sin, unless faith be present, (Romans 14:23.) Thus we are instructed to seek from God alone whatever is necessary for us, and in the very use of his gifts, we are to exercise ourselves in meditating on his goodness and paternal care. For the words of God are to this effect: 'Behold, I have prepared food for thee before thou wast formed; acknowledge me, therefore, as thy Father, who have so diligently

96 "Certe fraenum viris et muliebris non laxavit, ut in vagas libidines ruierent, absque delectu et pudore: sed a sancto castoque conjugio incipiens, descendit ad generationem."

provided for thee when thou wast not yet created. Moreover, my solicitude for thee has proceeded still further; it was thy business to nurture the things provided for thee, but I have taken even this charge also upon myself. Wherefore, although thou art, in a sense, constituted the father of the earthly family,[97] it is not for thee to be overanxious about the sustenance of animals.'[98]

Some infer, from this passage that men were content with herbs and fruits until the deluge, and that it was even unlawful for them to eat flesh. And this seems the more probable, because God confines, in some way, the food of mankind within certain limits. Then after the deluge, he expressly grants them the use of flesh. These reasons, however are not sufficiently strong: for it may be adduced on the opposite side, that the first men offered sacrifices from their flocks.[99] This, moreover, is the law of sacrificing rightly, not to offer unto God anything except what he has granted to our use. Lastly men were clothed in skins; therefore it was lawful for them to kill animals. For these reasons, I think it will be better for us to assert nothing concerning this matter. Let it suffice for us, that herbs and the fruits of trees were given them as their common food; yet it is not to be doubted that this was abundantly sufficient for their highest gratification. For they judge prudently who maintain that the earth was so marred by the deluge, that we retain scarcely a moderate portion of the original benediction. Even immediately after the fall of man, it had already begun to bring forth degenerate and noxious fruits, but at the deluge, the change became still greater. Yet, however this may be, God certainly did not intend that man should be slenderly and sparingly sustained; but rather, by these words, he promises a liberal abundance, which should leave nothing wanting to a sweet and pleasant life. For Moses relates how beneficent the Lord had been to them, in bestowing on them all things which they could desire, that their ingratitude might have the less excuse.

31. *And God saw everything* Once more, at the conclusion of the creation, Moses declares that God approved of everything which he had made. In speaking of God as *seeing*, he does it after the manner of men; for the Lord designed this his judgment to be as a rule and example to us; that no one should dare to think or speak otherwise of his works. For it is not lawful for us to dispute whether that ought to be approved or not which God has already

97 "Paterfamilias in mundo."

98 See verses 29, 30, in which God promises the herbs and fruits of the earth, and every green herb, to the beasts of the earth for food. The reader will perceive that the subsequent observations of Calvin refer more especially to these verses. — *Ed.*

99 It does not appear that there is much force in Calvin's objections to the opinion, that flesh was not allowed for human food till after the deluge. For if the sacrifices offered were holocausts, then the skin only would be left for the use of man. See notes on the offerings of Cain and Abel in the fourth chapter; and, especially, Dr. Magee's work on the Atonement, Dissertation LII, On the date of the permission of animal food to man. — *Ed.*

approved; but it rather becomes us to acquiesce without controversy. The repetition also denotes how wanton is the temerity of man: otherwise it would have been enough to have said, once for all, that God approved of his works. But God six times inculcates the same thing, that he may restrain, as with so many bridles, our restless audacity. But Moses expresses more than before; for he adds ⌧⌧⌧, (*meod*,) that is, *very*. On each of the days, simple approbation was given. But now, after the workmanship of the world was complete in all its parts, and had received, if I may so speak, the last finishing touch, he pronounces it perfectly good; that we may know that there is in the symmetry of God's works the highest perfection, to which nothing can be added.

CHAPTER 2.

Genesis 2:1-25	
1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.	**1.** Perfecti fuerunt igitur coeli et terra, et omnis exercitus eorum.
2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.	**2.** Perfeceratque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat, et quievit die septimo ab omni opere suo quod fecerat.
3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.	**3.** Benedixit autem diei septimo, et sanctificavit illum: quod in illo quievisset abomni opere suo quod creaverat Deus ut faceret.
4. These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,	**4.** Istae sunt generationes coeli et terrae, quando creati sunt, in die qua fecit Jehova Deus terram et coelos,
5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground.	**5.** Et omne virgultum agri antequam esset in terra, et omnem herbam agri antequam germinaret: quia nondum pluere fecerat Jehova Deus super terram, et homo non erat qui coleret terram:
6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.	**6.** Sed vapot ascendebat e terra, et irrigabat universam superficiem terrae.
7. And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.	**7.** Formaverat autem Jehova Deus hominem e pulvere terrae; et inspiaverat in faciem ejus spiraculum vitae, et fuit homo in animam viventem.
8. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.	**8.** Plantaverat quoque Jehova Deus hortum in Heden ab Oriente: et posuit ibi hominem quem formaverat.
9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.	**9.** Et germinare fecerat Jehova Deus e terra omnem arborem concupiscibilem visu, et bonam ad vescendum; et arborem scientiae boni et mali.

10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.	**10.** Et fluvius egrediebatur ex Heden ad irrigandum hortum; et inde dividebatur, eratque in quatuor capita.
11. The name of the first *is* Pison: that *is* it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold;	**11.** Nomen unius, Pison: ipse circuit totam terram Havila, ubi est aurum:
12. And the gold of that land *is* good: there *is* bdellium and the onyx stone.	**12.** Et aurum terrae illius bonum: ibi est bdellium, et lapis onychinus.
13. And the name of the second river *is* Gihon: the same *is* it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.	**13.** Nomen vero fluvii secundi Gihon: ipse circuit omnem terram Aethipiae.
14. And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel: that *is* it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.	**14.** Et nomen fluvii tertii Hiddekel; ipse tendit ad orientem Assur; et flumen quartum est Perath.
15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.	**15.** tulit itaque Jehova Deus hominem, et posuit eum in horto Heden, ut coleret eum, et custodiret eum.
16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:	**16.** Praecepitque Jehova Deus homini, dicendo, De omni arbore horti comedendo comedes:
17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	**17.** At de arbore scientiae boni et mali ne comedas ex illa: quia in die quo comederis ex ea, moriendo morieris.
18. And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.	**18.** Et dixit Jehova Deus, Non est bonum esse hominem solum: faciam ei adjutorium quod sit coram ipso.
19. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.	**19.** Formaverat autem Jehova Deus e terra omnem bestiam agri et omne volatile coeli; et adduxerat ad Adam ut videret quomodo vocaret illud: et omne quod vocavit illi, *illi inquum*, animae viventi, est nome ejus.

20. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.	**20.** Vocavit itaque Adam nomina cuique jumento, et volatili coeli omnique bestiae agri: Adae vero non invenerat adjutorium quod esset coram se.
21. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;	**21.** Cadere igitur fecit Jehova Deus soporem super Adam, et dormivit: et tulit unam e costis ejus, et clausit carnem pro ea.
22. And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.	**22.** Et aedificavit Jehova Deus costam quam tulerat ex Adam in mulierem, et adduxit eam ad Adam.
23. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.	**23.** Et dixit Adam, Hac vice os est ex ossibus meis, et caro ex carne mea: et vocabitur Virissa, quia ex viro sumpta est ista.
24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.	**24.** Idcirco relinquet unusquisque paterm suum et matrem suam, et adhaerebit uxori suae, eruntque in carnem unam.
25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.	**25.** Erant autem ambo nudi, Adam et uxor ejus: et non pudebat eos.

1. *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished*[100] Moses summarily repeats that in six days the fabric of the heaven and the earth was completed. The general division of the world is made into these two parts, as has been stated at the commencement of the first chapter. But he now adds, all the host of them, by which he signifies that the world was furnished with all its garniture. This epilogue, moreover, with sufficient clearness entirely refutes the error of those who imagine that the world was formed in a moment; for it declares that all end was only at length put to the work on the sixth day. Instead of *host* we might not improperly render the term *abundance* ;[101] for Moses declares that this world was in every

100 The three verses at the commencement of this chapter evidently belong to the first, being a summing up of the preceding history of the creation, and an account of the sabbatical institution on the seventh day. The remark of Dathe is, "Male capita hoc loco sunt divisa. Tres versus priores ad primum caput sunt referendi." — *Ed.*

101 "Copiam," a questionable rendering, surely of the word ⊠⊠⊠. The Septuagint gives the word κόσμος, and the Vulgate, ornatus; the meaning of both words is "ornaments," or garniture. The other versions in Walton translate it exercitus, host or army. Fagius, in Poli Synopsi, seems the chief maintainer of Calvin's interpretation.

sense completed, as if the whole house were well supplied and filled with its furniture. The heavens without the sun, and moon, and stars, would be an empty and dismantled palace: if the earth were destitute of animals, trees, and plants, that barren waste would have the appearance of a poor and deserted house. God, therefore, did not cease from the work of the creation of the world till he had completed it in every part, so that nothing should be wanting to its suitable abundance.

2. *And he rested on the seventh day* The question may not improperly be put, what kind of rest this was. For it is certain that inasmuch as God sustains the world by his power, governs it by his providence, cherishes and even propagates all creatures, he is constantly at work. Therefore that saying of Christ is true, that the Father and he himself had worked from the beginning hitherto,[102] because, if God should but withdraw his hand a little, all things would immediately perish and dissolve into nothing, as is declared in Psalm 104:29[103] And indeed God is rightly acknowledged as the Creator of heaven and earth only whilst their perpetual preservation is ascribed to him.[104] The solution of the difficulty is well known, that God ceased from all his work, when he desisted from the creation of new kinds of things. But to make the sense clearer, understand that the last touch of God had been put, in order that nothing might be wanting to the perfection of the world. And this is the meaning of the words of Moses, *From all his work which he had made* ; for he points out the actual state of the work as God would have it to be, as if he had said, then was completed what God had proposed to himself. On the whole, this language is intended merely to express the perfection of the fabric of the world; and therefore we must not infer that God so ceased from his works as to desert them, since they only flourish and subsist in him. Besides, it is to be observed, that in the works of the six days, those things alone are comprehended which tend to the lawful and genuine adorning of the world. It is subsequently that we shall find God saying, Let the earth bring forth thorns and briers, by which he intimates that the appearance of the earth should be different from what it had been in the beginning. But the explanation is at hand; many things which are now seen in the world are rather corruptions of it than any part of its proper furniture. For ever since man declined from his high original, it became necessary that the world should gradually degenerate from its nature. We must come to this conclusion respecting the existence of fleas, caterpillars, and other noxious in-

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The words of Poole are, "Alii, virtus, copia eorum, quia eis declarat Deus (sicutrex copiis suis,) potentiam et sapientiam." — *Ed*

102 John 5:17. This sentence is omitted in Tymme's English version. — *Ed.*

103 "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust."

104 The word translated preservation is vegetationem, which means an enlivening or a quickening motion; to explain this the Old English translation here adds, though without authority, "According to this saying of the apostle, In him we live, and move, and have our being." — *Ed.*

sects. In all these, I say, there is some deformity of the world, which ought by no means to be regarded as in the order of nature, since it proceeds rather from the sin of man than from the hand of God. Truly these things were created by God, but by God as an avenger. In this place, however, Moses is not considering God as armed for the punishment of the sins of men; but as the Artificer, the Architect, the bountiful Father of a family, who has omitted nothing essential to the perfection of his edifice. At the present time, when we look upon the world corrupted, and as if degenerated from its original creation, let that expression of Paul recur to our mind, that the creature is liable to vanity, not willingly, but through our fault, (Romans 8:20,) and thus let us mourn, being admonished of our just condemnation.

3. *And God blessed the seventh day* It appears that God is here said to bless according to the manner of men, because they bless him whom they highly extol. Nevertheless, even in this sense, it would not be unsuitable to the character of God; because his blessing sometimes means the favor which he bestows upon his people, as the Hebrews call that man the blessed of God, who, by a certain special favor, has power with God. (See Genesis 24:31.) Enter thou blessed of God. Thus we may be allowed to describe the day as blessed by him which he has embraced with love, to the end that the excellence and dignity of his works may therein be celebrated. Yet I have no doubt that Moses, by adding the word sanctified, wished immediately to explain what he had said, and thus all ambiguity is removed, because the second word is exegetical of the former. For ⊠⊠ (*kadesh*,) with the Hebrews, is to separate from the common number. God therefore sanctifies the seventh day, when he renders it illustrious, that by a special law it may be distinguished from the rest. Whence it also appears, that God always had respect to the welfare of men. I have said above, that six days were employed in the formation of the world; not that God, to whom one moment is as a thousand years, had need of this succession of time, but that he might engage us in the consideration of his works. He had the same end in view in the appointment of his own *rest*, for he set apart a day selected out of the remainder for this special use. Wherefore, that benediction is nothing else than a solemn consecration, by which God claims for himself the meditations and employments of men on the seventh day. This is, indeed, the proper business of the whole life, in which men should daily exercise themselves, to consider the infinite goodness, justice, power, and wisdom of God, in this magnificent theater of heaven and earth. But, lest men should prove less sedulously attentive to it than they ought, every seventh day has been especially selected for the purpose of supplying what was wanting in daily meditation. First, therefore, God rested; then he blessed this rest, that in all ages it might be held sacred among men: or he dedicated every seventh day to rest, that his own example might be a perpetual rule. The design of the institution must be always kept in memory: for God did not command men simply to keep holiday every seventh day, as if he delighted in their indolence; but rather that they, being released from all other business, might the more readily

apply their minds to the Creator of the world. Lastly, that is a sacred rest,[105] which withdraws men from the impediments of the world, that it may dedicate them entirely to God. But now, since men are so backward to celebrate the justice, wisdom, and power of God, and to consider his benefits, that even when they are most faithfully admonished they still remain torpid, no slight stimulus is given by God's own example, and the very precept itself is thereby rendered amiable. For God cannot either more gently allure, or more effectually incite us to obedience, than by inviting and exhorting us to the imitation of himself. Besides, we must know, that this is to be the common employment not of one age or people only, but of the whole human race. Afterwards, in the Law, a new precept concerning the Sabbath was given, which should be peculiar to the Jews, and but for a season; because it was a legal ceremony shadowing forth a spiritual rest, the truth of which was manifested in Christ. Therefore the Lord the more frequently testifies that he had given, in the Sabbath, a symbol of sanctification to his ancient people.[106] Therefore when we hear that the Sabbath was abrogated by the coming of Christ, we must distinguish between what belongs to the perpetual government of human life, and what properly belongs to ancient figures, the use of which was abolished when the truth was fulfilled. Spiritual rest is the mortification of the flesh; so that the sons of God should no longer live unto themselves, or indulge their own inclination. So far as the Sabbath was a figure of this rest, I say, it was but for a season; but inasmuch as it was commanded to men from the beginning that they might employ themselves in the worship of God, it is right that it should continue to the end of the world.

Which God created and made[107] Here the Jews, in their usual method, foolishly trifle, saying, that God being anticipated in his work by the last evening, left certain animals im-

105 Both in the Amsterdam edition of 1761, and Hengstenberg's, the word is vocatio; but as the French translation gives reste, and the Old English one rest, there can be little doubt that the original word was vacatio, as the sense of the passage seems to require. — *Ed.*

106 "Sanctificationis symbolum." — "A symbol or sign of santification;" that is, a sign that God had set them apart as a holy and peculiar people to himself. "Moreover, also, I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezekiel 20:12. — *Ed.*

107 "Quod creavarat Deus ut faceret." Hebrew [illegible]. "Which God created to make." For the various opinions and fancies of learned men on this passage, the reader is referred to Poole's Synopsis. The more respectable commentators mainly agree with Calvin. Ainsworth says: "created to make, that is, to exist and be, and that perfectly and gloriously, as by divine power of creation. Or rather, created and made perfectly and excellently: for so the Hebrew phrase may be explained." The version of Dathe is "creando perfecerat," — "he had perfected in creating." See also Professor Bush in loco. Le Clerc, whose extraordinary learning and industry render his opinion on merely critical questions of great value, notwithstanding his lamentable scepticism, would rather translate the expression, "which he had begun to make." But the other translation is to be preferred. Vide Johannes Clericus in Genesin. — *Ed*

perfect, of which kind are fauns and satyrs, as though he had been one of the ordinary class of artifices who have need of time. Ravings so monstrous prove the authors of them to have been delivered over to a reprobate mind, as a dreadful example of the wrath of God. As to the meaning of Moses, some take it thus: that God created his Works in order to make them, inasmuch as from the time he gave them being, he did not withdraw his hand from their preservation. But this exposition is harsh. Nor do I more willingly subscribe to the opinion of those who refer the word make to man, whom God placed over his works, that he might apply them to use, and in a certain sense perfect them by his industry. I rather think that the perfect form of God's works is here noted; as if he had said God so created his works that nothing should be wanting to their perfection; or the creation has proceeded to sucks a point, that the work is in all respects perfect.

4. *These are the generations*[108] The design of Moses was deeply to impress upon our minds the *origin* of the heaven and the earth, which he designates by the word *generation*.

108 A new section of the history of Moses commences at this point; and, from the repetition which occurs of some facts — such as the creation of man — which had been recorded in the preceding chapter, as well as from certain peculiarities of phraseology, many learned men have inferred, that the early portion of the Mosaic history is older than the time of Moses, and that he, under the infallible direction of the Spirit of God, collected and arranged the several fragments of primeval annals in one consistent narrative. One chief argument on which such a conclusion rests is, that from the commencement of the first chapter to the end of the third verse of the second chapter, God is spoken of only under the name of Elohim; from the fourth verse of the second to the end of the third chapter, he is uniformly styled Jehovah Elohim; and in the fourth and fifth chapters, the name of Elohim or of Jehovah stands alone. This, it is argued, could scarcely have occurred without some cause; and the inference has been drawn, that different records had different forms of expression, which Moses did not alter, unless truth required him to do so. See Dathe on the Pentateuch, Professor Bush on Genesis, and Robertson's Clavis Pentateuchi, where reference will be found to Vitringa and others. Against this view, however, Hengstenberg argues with considerable force, in his Dissertation "on the Names of God in the Pentateuch;" and if some of his reasonings in the use of these names seem too refined for the simplicity of the Holy Scriptures, and for the comprehension of those to whom the Scriptures are chiefly addressed, yet we may discover the germ of very important truths, thought they may be, in some degree, hidden beneath a variety of fanciful developments. By a very careful examination of the passages in which the terms ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Elohim*), ⊠⊠⊠ (*Jehovah*), and ⊠⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠ (*Jehovah Elohim*), occur, he thinks he has ascertained a reason for the use of each in its place, so that, with some exceptions, in which he allows that one term might have been exchanged for the other, the sense of the passage absolutely requires the introduction of the very appellation, and no other, which is there employed. Believing that a theory so general cannot, with all the author's ingenuity and learning, be applied in every case, we may still admit the importance of the distinction he makes, and may readily allow that these names are intended to present the Divine character under different aspects to our view. For instance, we may suppose that Elohim and Jehovah have different meanings, arising from their derivations; but we are not to infer, that, in reading the Scriptures, we must have this diversity, or any diversity at all, in our view, when we meet with these different

For there have always been ungrateful and malignant men, who, either by feigning, that the world was eternal or by obliterating the memory of the creations would attempt to obscure the glory of God. Thus the devil, by his guile, turns those away from God who are more ingenious and skillful than others in order that each may become a god unto himself. Wherefore, it is not a superfluous repetition which inculcates the necessary fact, that the world existed only from the time when it was created since such knowledge directs us to its Architect and Author. Under the names of heaven and earth, the whole is, by the figure *synecdochee*, included. Some of the Hebrews thinks that the essential name of God is here at length expressed by Moses, because his majesty shines forth more clearly in the completed world.[109]

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names of Deity. "These are the generations." ⌧⌧⌧⌧⌧, (*toledoth*), "modo origines ejus rei de qua sermo est, modo posteros eorum de quibus agitur, significat. Priori sensu hoc loco sumitur posteriori, cap. 5:1." "The term signifies, sometimes, the origin of the thing spoken of, sometimes the posterity of those who are mentioned. It is taken here in the former of those senses; and in chap. 5:1, in the latter." — *Dathe*

109 The word ⌧⌧⌧, *Jehovah*, here first occurs, — that most sacred and incommunicable name of Deity, called tetragrammaton, because it consisted of four letters, which the Jews, through reverence or superstition, refuse to pronounce. The principal meaning of the term is self-existence; which is, in truth, necessary existence, as opposed to that which is derived from, or is dependent upon, another. It has been supposed by some that Moses here introduces this title of Deity by anticipation; because, in Exodus 6:3, God declares that he had not been previously known by the name of Jehovah. But this, as Dathe forcibly reasons, is to increase difficulties rather than to remove them; for the patriarchs, Abraham and Jacob, are represented as using the name; and God himself, in speaking to them, also makes use of it. The true solution of the passage in Exodus seems to be, that God had not made known to the patriarchs the full import of his name, as he was now about to do. An elaborate investigation of the origin and import of the name ⌧⌧⌧ (*Jehovah*,) will be found in the work of Hengstenberg, referred to in the preceding note. He begins with putting aside the notion of an Egyptian origin, which has been put forth with much confidence by those who would trace all the religious peculiarities of the Israelites to their connection with Egypt. He then disposes of the fancied Phoenician pedigree of the name, founded upon spurious fragments ascribed to Sanchoniathon; and concludes the negative part of his argument, by showing that the name was not derived from any heathen source whatever. Consequently, it is to be traced to "a Hebrew etymology." We need not follow him into the discussion on the right pronunciation of the word, and the use of the vowel points belonging to ⌧⌧⌧, (*Adonai*); it may suffice to state, that he deduces the name ⌧⌧⌧(*Jehovah*,) from the future of the verb ⌧⌧⌧ or ⌧⌧⌧, *to be*. Hence the meaning of the appellation may be expressed in the words, "He who is to be (for ever)." This derivation of the name Jehovah he regards as being confirmed "by all the passages of Scripture, in which a derivation of the name is either expressly given or simply hinted." And, beginning with the Book of Revelation, at the title ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ερχόμενος, "who is, and was, and is to come," he goes upward through the sacred volume, quoting the passages which bear upon the question, till he comes to the important passage in Exodus in. 13-16, in which God declares his name to be, "I am that I am." "Everything created," he adds, "remains not like itself, but is continually changing under circumstances, God only, because

5. *And every plant* This verse is connected with the preceding, and must be read in continuation with it; for he annexes the plants and herbs to the earth, as the garment with which the Lord has adorned it, lest its nakedness should appear as a deformity. The noun ⌧⌧⌧ (*sicah*,[110]) which we translate plant, sometimes signifies trees, as below, (Genesis 21:15[111]) Therefore, some in this place translate it *shrub*, to which I have no objection. Yet the word *plant* is not unsuitable; because in the former place, Moses seems to refer to the genus, and here to the species.[112] But although he has before related that the herbs were created on the third day, yet it is not without reason that here again mention is made of them, in order that we may know that they were then produced, preserved, and propagated, in a manner different from that which we perceive at the present day. For herbs and trees are produced from seed; or grafts are taken from another roots or they grow by putting forth shoots: in all this the industry and the hand of man are engaged. But, at that time, the method was different: God clothed the earth, not in the same manner as now, (for there was no seed, no root, no plant, which might germinate,) but each suddenly sprung into existence at the command of God, and by the power of his word. They possessed durable vigor, so that they might stand by the force of their own nature, and not by that quickening influence which is now perceived, not by the help of rain, not by the irrigation or culture of man; but by the vapor with which God watered the earth. For he excludes these two things, the rain whence the earth derives moisture, that it may retain its native sap; and human culture, which is the assistant of nature. When he says, that God had 'not yet caused it to rain,' he at the same time intimates that it is God who opens and shuts the cataracts of heaven, and that rain and drought are in his hand.

7. *And the Lord God formed man* He now explains what he had before omitted in the creation of man, that his body was taken out of the earth. He had said that he was formed after the image of God. This is incomparably the highest nobility; and, lest men should use it as an occasion of pride, their first origin is placed immediately before them; whence they may learn that this advantage was adventitious; for Moses relates that man had been, in the beginning, dust of the earth. Let foolish men now go and boast of the excellency of their

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he is the being, is always the same; and because he is always the same, is the being." See Dissertations, p. 231-265. "The Lord God."-Jehovah Elohim. The two titles of Deity are here combined. "Elohim," says Hengstenberg, "is the more general, and Jehovah the deep and more discriminating name of the Godhead." This may well be admitted, without accepting all the inferences which the author deduces. — *Ed.*

110 ⌧⌧⌧ Frutex, stirps; a shrub — "cujus pulluli in summa tellure expatiantur," — "whose shoots are spread abroad over the surface of the earth." — Robertson's Clavis Pentateuch. — *Ed*

111 "And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs." — English version.

112 It seems remarkable that Calvin should himself translate the word "virgultum," and then reason, in his commentary, as if he preferred the word "planta." — *Ed.*

nature! Concerning other animals, it had before been said, Let the earth produce every living creature;[113] but, on the other hand, the body of Adam is formed of clay, and destitute of sense; to the end that no one should exult beyond measure in his flesh. He must be excessively stupid who does not hence learn humility. That which is afterwards added from another quarter, lays us under just so much obligation to God. Nevertheless, he, at the same time, designed to distinguish man by some mark of excellence from brute animals: for these arose out of the earth in a moment; but the peculiar dignity of man is shown in this, that he was gradually formed. For why did not God command him immediately to spring alive out of the earth, unless that, by a special privilege, he might outshine all the creatures which the earth produced?

And breathed into his nostrils[114] Whatever the greater part of the ancients might think, I do not hesitate to subscribe to the opinion of those who explain this passage of the animal life of man; and thus I expound what they call the vital spirits by the word *breath*. Should any one object, that if so, no distinction would be made between man and other living creatures, since here Moses relates only what is common alike to all: I answer, though here mention is made only of the lower faculty of the soul, which imparts breath to the body, and gives it vigor and motion: this does not prevent the human soul from having its proper rank, and therefore it ought to be distinguished from others.[115] Moses first speaks of the breath; he then adds, that a soul was given to man by which he might live, and be endued with sense and motion. Now we know that the powers of the human mind are many and various. Wherefore, there is nothing absurd in supposing that Moses here alludes only to one of them; but omits the intellectual part, of which mention has been made in the first chapter. Three gradations, indeed, are to be noted in the creation of man; that his dead body was formed out of the dust of the earth; that it was endued with a soul, whence it should receive vital motion; and that on this soul God engraved his own image, to which immortality is annexed.

Man became a living soul[116] I take ⌧⌧⌧ (*nepesh*,) for the very essence of the soul: but the epithet *living* suits only the present place, and does not embrace generally the powers of the soul. For Moses intended nothing more than to explain the animating of the clayey figure, whereby it came to pass that man began to live. Paul makes an antithesis between this living soul and the quickening spirit which Christ confers upon the faithful, (1 Corinthians 15:45,)

113 "Omnem animam viventum," — "every living soul." The word is applied here, and frequently in the Holy Scriptures, to describe only the sensitive and animal life, that by which a created being breathes; and thus distinguishes the animal from the vegetative life. — *Ed.*

114 "Inspiraverat in faciem."

115 "Non tamen obstare quin gradum suum obtineat anima, ideoque seorsum poni debuerit."

116 "Factus est in animam viventem."

for no other purpose than to teach us that the state of man was not perfected in the person of Adam; but it is a peculiar benefit conferred by Christ, that we may be renewed to a life which is *celestial*, whereas before the fall of Adams man's life was only earthly, seeing it had no firm and settled constancy.

8. *And the Lord God planted*[117] Moses now adds the condition and rule of living which were given to man. And, first, he narrates in what part of the world he was placed, and what a happy and pleasant habitation was allotted to him. Moses says, that God had *planted* accommodating himself, by a simple and uncultivated style, to the capacity of the vulgar. For since the majesty of God, as it really is, cannot be expressed, the Scripture is wont to describe it according to the manner of men. God, then, had planted Paradise in a place which he had especially embellished with every variety of delights, with abounding fruits and with all other most excellent gifts. For this reason it is called a garden, on account of the elegance of its situation, and the beauty of its form. The ancient interpreter has not improperly translated it Paradise;[118] because the Hebrews call the more highly cultivated gardens ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠(*Pardaisim*,[119]) and Xenophon pronounces the word to be Persian, when he treats of the magnificent and sumptuous gardens of kings. That region which the Lord assigned to Adam, as the firstborn of mankind, was one selected out of the whole world.

In Eden That Jerome improperly translates this, from the beginning,[120] is very obvious: because Moses afterwards says, that Cain dwelt in the southern region of this place. Moreover it is to be observed, that when he describes paradise as in the east, he speaks in reference to the Jews, for he directs his discourse to his own people. Hence we infer, in the first place, that there was a certain region assigned by God to the first man, in which he might have his home. I state this expressly, because there have been authors who would extend this garden over all regions of the world. Truly, I confess, that if the earth had not been cursed on account of the sin of man, the whole — as it had been blessed from the beginning — would have remained the fairest scene both of fruitfulness and of delight; that it would have been, in short, not dissimilar to Paradise, when compared with that scene of deformity which we now behold. But when Moses here describes particularly the situation of the region, they absurdly transfer what Moses said of a certain particular place to the whole world. It is not indeed doubtful (as I just now hinted) that God would choose the most fertile and pleasant

117 "Plantaverat quoque Dominus." — "The Lord had also planted."

118 "Paradisum." — *Vulgate*.

119 ⊠⊠⊠ Baumgarten, Park, etc. "Wahrschenlich aus der Persichen Sprache, wo es die Lustparks der Koenige bezeichnet." — "Orchard, Park, etc. — probably from the Persian, where it signifies the pleasure — parks of kings." — *Gesenius*

120 "Plantaverat autem Dominus Deus Paradisum voluptatis a principio." — "But the Lord God had planted a paradise from the beginning." — *Vulgate*.

place, the first-fruits (so to speak) of the earth, as his gift to Adam, whom he had dignified with the honor of primogeniture among men, in token of his special favor. Again, we infer, that this garden was situated on the earth, not as some dream in the air; for unless it had been a region of our world, it would not have been placed opposite to Judea, towards the east. We must, however, entirely reject the allegories of Origin, and of others like him, which Satan, with the deepest subtlety, has endeavored to introduce into the Church, for the purpose of rendering the doctrine of Scripture ambiguous and destitute of all certainty and firmness. It may be, indeed, that some, impelled by a supposed necessity, have resorted to an allegorical sense, because they never found in the world such a place as is described by Moses: but we see that the greater part, through a foolish affectation of subtleties, have been too much addicted to allegories. As it concerns the present passage, they speculate in vain, and to no purpose, by departing from the literal sense. For Moses has no other design than to teach man that he was formed by God, with this condition, that he should have dominion over the earth, from which he might gather fruit, and thus learn by daily experience that the world was subject unto him. What advantage is it to fly in the air, and to leave the earth, where God has given proof of his benevolence towards the human race? But some one may say, that to interpret this of celestial bliss is more skillful. I answer, since the eternal inheritance of man is in heaven, it is truly right that we should tend thither; yet must we fix our foot on earth long enough to enable us to consider the abode which God requires man to use for a time. For we are now conversant with that history which teaches us that Adam was, by Divine appointment, an inhabitant of the earth, in order that he might, in passing through his earthly life, meditate on heavenly glory; and that he had been bountifully enriched by the Lord with innumerable benefits, from the enjoyment of which he might infer the paternal benevolence of God. Moses, also, will hereafter subjoin that he was commanded to cultivate the fields and permitted to eat certain fruits: all which things neither suit the circle of the moon, nor the aerial regions. But although we have said, that the situation of Paradise lay between the rising of the sun and Judea, yet something more definite may be required respecting that region. They who contend that it was in the vicinity of Mesopotamia, rely on reasons not to be despised; because it is probable that the sons of Eden were contiguous to the river Tigris. But as the description of it by Moses will immediately follow, it is better to defer the consideration of it to that place. The ancient interpreter has fallen into a mistake in translating the proper name Eden by the word pleasure.[121] I do not indeed deny that the place was so called from its delights; but it is easy to infer that the name was imposed upon the place to distinguish it from others.

9 *And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow* The production here spoken of belongs to the third day of the creation. But Moses expressly declares the place to have been

121 The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠ signifies pleasure, delight, loveliness. — *Ed*

richly replenished with every kind of fruitful trees, that there might be a full and happy abundance of all things. This was purposely done by the Lord, to the end that the cupidity of man might have the less excuse if, instead of being contented with such remarkable affluence, sweetness, and variety, it should (as really happened) precipitate itself against the commandment of God. The Holy Spirit also designedly relates by Moses the greatness of Adam's happiness, in order that his vile intemperance might the more clearly appear, which such superfluity was unable to restrain from breaking forth upon the forbidden fruit. And certainly it was shameful ingratitude, that he could not rest in a state so happy and desirable: truly, that was more than brutal lust which bounty so great was not able to satisfy. No corner of the earth was then barren, nor was there even any which was not exceedingly rich and fertile: but that benediction of God, which was elsewhere comparatively moderate, had in this place poured itself wonderfully forth. For not only was there an abundant supply of food, but with it was added sweetness for the gratification of the palate, and beauty to feast the eyes. Therefore, from such benignant indulgence, it is more than sufficiently evident, how inexplicable had been the cupidity of man.

The tree of life also It is uncertain whether he means only two individual trees, or two kinds of trees. Either opinion is probable, but the point is by no means worthy of contention; since it is of little or no concern to us, which of the two is maintained. There is more importance in the epithets, which were applied to each tree from its effect, and that not by the will of man but of God.[122] He gave the tree of life its name, not because it could confer on man that life with which he had been previously endued, but in order that it might be a symbol and memorial of the life which he had received from God. For we know it to be by no means unusual that God should give to us the attestation of his grace by external symbols.[123] He does not indeed transfer his power into outward signs; but by them he stretches out his

122 The above passage is wholly omitted in the Old English translation by Tymme. — *Ed.*

123 "Scimus minime esse insolens ut virtutem suam Deus externis symbolis testatam nobis reddat." — "Nous savons que ce n'est point chose nouvelle, que Dieu nous testifie sa vertu par signes exterieurs." — French Trans. Virtus in Latin, and vertu in French, may both signify power, virtue, efficacy; but it seems that the term grace more correctly conveys to an English ear the meaning of the Author. — *Ed.* On the sacramental character of the tree of life, which Calvin here maintains, but which Dr. Kennicott, in his first Dissertation, endeavors, with more learning than sound judgment, to set aside, the generality of commentators seem to be agreed. See Patrick, Scott, etc. Patrick says, — "This garden being a type of heaven, perhaps God intended by this tree to represent that immortal life which he meant to bestow upon man with himself, (Revelation 22:2). And so St. Austin, in that famous saying of his, 'Erat ei in caeteris lignis Alimentum, in isto autem Sacrcramentum.' In other trees there was nourishment for man; but in this also a sacrament. For it was both a symbol of that life which God had already bestowed upon man, and of that life which he was to hope for in another world, if he proved obedient." — *Ed.*

hand to us, because, without assistance, we cannot ascend to him. He intended, therefore, that man, as often as he tasted the fruit of that tree, should remember whence he received his life, in order that he might acknowledge that he lives not by his own power, but by the kindness of God alone; and that life is not (as they commonly speak) an intrinsic good, but proceeds from God. Finally, in that tree there was a visible testimony to the declaration, that 'in God we are, and live, and move.' But if Adams hitherto innocent, and of an upright nature, had need of monitory signs to lead him to the knowledge of divine grace, how much more necessary are signs now, in this great imbecility of our nature, since we have fallen from the true light? Yet I am not dissatisfied with what has been handed down by some of the fathers, as Augustine and Eucherius, that the tree of life was a figure of Christ, inasmuch as he is the Eternal Word of God: it could not indeed be otherwise a symbol of life, than by representing him in figure. For we must maintain what is declared in the first chapter of John (John 1:1-3,) that the life of all things was included in the Word, but especially the life of men, which is conjoined with reason and intelligence. Wherefore, by this sign, Adam was admonished, that he could claim nothing for himself as if it were his own, in order that he might depend wholly upon the Son of God, and might not seek life anywhere but in him. But if he, at the time when he possessed life in safety, had it only as deposited in the word of God, and could not otherwise retain it, than by acknowledging that it was received from Him, whence may we recover it, after it has been lost? Let us know, therefore, that when we have departed from Christ, nothing remains for us but death.

I know that certain writers restrict the meaning of the expression here used to corporeal life. They suppose such a power of quickening the body to have been in the tree, that it should never languish through age; but I say, they omit what is the chief thing in life, namely, the grace of intelligence; for we must always consider for what end man was formed, and what rule of living was prescribed to him. Certainly, for him to live, was not simply to have a body fresh and lively, but also to excel in the endowments of the soul.

Concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we must hold, that it was prohibited to man, not because God would have him to stray like a sheep, without judgment and without choice; but that he might not seek to be wiser than became him, nor by trusting to his own understanding, cast off the yoke of God, and constitute himself an arbiter and judge of good and evil. His sin proceeded from an evil conscience; whence it follows, that a judgment had been given him, by which he might discriminate between virtues and vices. Nor could what Moses relates be otherwise true, namely, that he was created in the image of God; since the image of God comprises in itself the knowledge of him who is the chief good. Thoroughly insane, therefore, and monsters of men are the libertines, who pretend that we are restored to a state of innocence, when each is carried away by his own lust without judgment. We now understand what is meant by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; namely, that Adam might not, in attempting one thing or another, rely upon his own

prudence; but that, cleaving to God alone, he might become wise only by his obedience. Knowledge is here, therefore, taken disparagingly, in a bad sense, for that wretched experience which man, when he departed from the only fountain of perfect wisdom, began to acquire for himself. And this is the origin of freewill, that Adam wished to be independent,[124] and dared to try what he was able to do.

10. *And a river went out* Moses says that one river flowed to water the garden, which afterwards would divide itself into four heads. It is sufficiently agreed among all, that two of these heads are the Euphrates and the Tigris; for no one disputes that חדקל (*Hiddekel*) is the Tigris. But there is a great controversy respecting the other two. Many think, that Pison and Gihon are the Ganges and the Nile; the error, however, of these men is abundantly refuted by the distance of the positions of these rivers. Persons are not wanting who fly across even to the Danube; as if indeed the habitation of one man stretched itself from the most remote part of Asia to the extremity of Europe. But since many other celebrated rivers flow by the region of which we are speaking, there is greater probability in the opinion of those who believe that two of these rivers are pointed out, although their names are now obsolete. Be this as it may, the difficulty is not yet solved. For Moses divides the one river which flowed by the garden into four heads. Yet it appears, that the fountains of the Euphrates and the Tigris were far distant from each other. From this difficulty, some would free themselves by saying, that the surface of the globe may have been changed by the deluge; and, therefore, they imagine it might have happened that the courses of the rivers were disturbed and changed, and their springs transferred elsewhere; a solution which appears to me by no means to be accepted. For although I acknowledge that the earth, from the time that it was accursed, became reduced from its native beauty to a state of wretched defilement, and to a garb of mourning, and afterwards was further laid waste in many places by the deluge; still, I assert, it was the same earth which had been created in the beginning. Add to this, that Moses (in my judgment) accommodated his topography to the capacity of his age. Yet nothing is accomplished, unless we find that place where the Tigris and Euphrates proceed from one river. Observe, first, that no mention is made of a spring or fountain, but only that it is said, there was one river. But the four heads I understand to mean, both the beginnings from which the rivers are produced, and the mouths[125] by which they discharge themselves into the sea. Now the Euphrates was formerly so joined by confluence with the Tigris, that it might justly be said, one river was divided into four heads; especially if what is manifest to all be conceded, that Moses does not speak acutely, nor in a philosophical manner, but popularly, so that every one least informed may understand him. Thus, in the

124 "Dum Adam per se esse voluit, et quid valeret tentare ausus est." — *Lat.*

125 It appears that by the beginnings (principia) and the mouths (ostia) of the rivers, Calvin simply means the streams above, and the streams below, the site of the garden. — *Ed.*

first chapter, he called the sun and moon two great luminaries; not because the moon exceeded other planets in magnitude, but because, to common observation, it seemed greater. Add further, that he seems to remove all doubt when he says, that the river had four heads, because it was divided from that place. What does this mean, except that the channels were divided, out of one confluent stream, either above or below Paradise? I will now submit a plan to view, that the readers may understand where I think Paradise was placed by Moses.[126]

Pliny indeed relates, in his Sixth Book, that the Euphrates was so stopped in its course by the Orcheni, that it could not flow into the sea, except through the Tigris.[127] And Pomponius Mela, in his Third Book, denies that it flowed by any given outlet, as other rivers, but says that it failed in its course. Nearchus, however, (whom Alexander had made commander of his fleet, and who, under his sanction, had navigated all these regions,) reckons the distance from the mouth of the Euphrates to Babylon, three thousand three hundred stadia.[128] But he places the mouths of the Tigris at the entrance of Susiana; in which region, returning from that long and memorable voyage, he met the king with his fleet, as Adrian relates in his Eighth Book of the Exploits of Alexander. This statement Strabo also confirms by his testimony in his Fifteenth Book. Nevertheless, wherever the Euphrates either submerges or mingles its stream, it is certain, that it and the Tigris, below the point of their confluence, are again divided. Adrian, however, in his Seventh Book, writes that not one channel only of the Euphrates runs into the Tigris, but also many rivers and ditches, because waters naturally descend from higher to lower ground. With respect to the confluence, which I have noted in the plate, the opinion of some was, that it had been effected be the labor of the Praefect Cobaris, lest the Euphrates, by its precipitate course, should injure Babylon. But he speaks of it as of a doubtful matter. It is more credible, that men, by art and industry, followed the guidance of Nature in forming ditches, when they saw the Euphrates any where flowing of its own accord from the higher ground into the Tigris. Moreover, if confidence is placed in Pomponius Mela, Semiramis conducted the Tigris and Euphrates into Mesopotamia, which was previously dry; a thing by no means credible. There is more truth in the statement of Strabo, — a diligent and attentive writer, — in his Eleventh Book, that at Babylon these two rivers unite: and then, that each is carried separately, in its own bed, into the Red Sea.[129] He understands that junction to have taken place above Babylon, not far

126 This is a facsimile from the Old English translation; and the same, with Latin and French names, are introduced in the early editions of each language. — *Ed.*

127 "The Orcheni inhabiting a city name Orchoe, caused the diminution of the Euphrates, by derving it through their lands, which could not otherwise be watered." — D'Anville's Ancient Geography.

128 About 420 miles.

129 Mare Rubrum. By the Red Sea, in this place, is not meant the Gulf of Suez, which is called by that name in sacred history, and over which the Israelites passed in their journey from Egypt to Canaan; but the Indian

from the town Massica, as we read in the Fifth Book of Pliny. Thence one river flows through Babylon, the other glides by Seleucia, two of the most celebrated and opulent cities. If we admit this confluence, by which the Euphrates was mixed with the Tigris, to have been natural, and to have existed from the beginning, all absurdity is removed. If there is anywhere under heaven a region preeminent in beauty, in the abundance of all kinds of fruit, in fertility, in delicacies, and in other gifts, that is the region which writers most celebrate. Wherefore, the eulogies with which Moses commends Paradise are such as properly belong to a tract of this description. And that the region of Eden was situated in those parts is probable from Isaiah 37:12 Ezekiel 27:23. Moreover, when Moses declares that a river went forth, I understand him as speaking of the flowing of the stream; as if he had said, that Adam dwelt on the bank of the river, or in that land which was watered on both sides if you choose to take Paradise for both banks of the river. However, it makes no great difference whether Adam dwelt below the confluent stream towards Babylon and Seleucia, or in the higher part; it is enough that he occupied a well-watered country. How the river was divided into four heads is not difficult to understand. For there are two rivers which flow together into one, and then separate in different directions; thus, it is one at the point of confluence, but there are two heads[130] in its upper channels, and two towards the sea; afterwards, they again begin to be more widely separated.

The question remains concerning the names Pison and Gihon. For it does not seem consonant with reason, to assign a double name to each of the rivers. But it is nothing new

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Ocean, the Mare Erythraeum of the ancients, into which the Tigris and Euphrates flowed, through the Persian Gulf. — *Ed.*

130 Or "principal streams." "The river, or single channel, must be looked upon as a highway, crossing over a forest, and which may be said from thence to divide itself into four ways, whether the division be made above or below the forest." — Well's Geography of the Old and New Test., vol. 1, p. 19. The reader is referred to the first chapter of that useful work, for an account agreeing in many points with Calvin, though differing from it in others. The principal difference in the two accounts lies in this, that Wells places the site of Paradise near the Persian Gulf into which the Tigris and Euphrates discharge themselves, while Calvin fixes it higher up the streams, in the vicinity of ancient Babylon. Wells derives his account mainly from the celebrated French Bishop, Peter Daniel Huet, who had been the intimate friend of the famous Protestant traveler Bochart. The following extract from a note in the Clavis Pentateuchi of Robertson is added for the reader's satisfaction: — "Eden est regio sen in Mesopotamio, sen non procul inde. Observandum est hancce sententiam Calvini, quam parum emendaverat clarissimus Huetis, verissimam omnium videri: Hoc demonstravit calrissimus Vitringa, qui paululum in quibusdam circumstantis etiam Huetium emendaverat." — "Eden is a region either in Mesopotamia, or near it. It is to be observed, that this opinion of Calvin, which the celebrated Huet has slightly amended, seems to be the most true of all. The celebrated Vitringa has demonstrated this; who also, in some circumstances, has slightly amended Huet." — Robertson's Clavis, p. 177. — *Ed.*

for rivers to change their names in their course, especially where there is any special mark of distinction. The Tigris itself (by the authority of Pliny) is called *Diglito* near its source; but after it has formed many channels, and again coalesces, it takes the name of *Pasitigris*. There is, therefore, no absurdity in saying, that after its confluence it had different names. Further there is some such affinity between Pasin and Pison, as to render it not improbable, that the name Pasitigris is a vestige of the ancient appellation. In the Fifth Book of Quintus Curtius, concerning the Exploits of Alexander, where mention is made of Pasitigris, some copies read, that it was called by the inhabitants Pasin. Nor do the other circumstances, by which Moses describes three of these rivers, in accord with this supposition. Pison surrounds[131] the land of Havila, where gold is produced. Surrounding is rightly attributed to the Tigris, on account of its winding course below Mesopotamia. The land of Havila, in my judgment, is here taken for a region adjoining Persia. For subsequently, in the twenty-fifth chapter (Genesis 25:1,) Moses relates, that the Ishmaelites dwelt from Havila unto Shur, which is contiguous to Egypt, and through which the road lies into Assyria. Havila, as one boundary, is opposed to Shur as another, and this boundary Moses places near Egypt, on the side which lies towards Assyria. Whence it follows, that Havila (the other boundary) extends towards Susia and Persia. For it is necessary that it should lie below Assyria towards the Persian Sea; besides, it is placed at a great distance from Egypt; because Moses enumerates many nations which dwelt between these boundaries.[132] Then it appears that the Nabathaeans,[133] of whom mention is there made, were neighbors to the Persian. Every thing which Moses asserts respecting gold and precious stones is most applicable to this district.[134]

The river Gihon still remains to be noticed, which, as Moses declares, waters the land of *Chus*. All interpreters translate this word *Ethiopia*; but the country of the Midianites, and the conterminous country of Arabia, are included under the same name by Moses; for which reason, his wife is elsewhere called an Ethiopian woman. Moreover, since the lower course

131 Circuit. It is observed, that the word surrounds, or "compasses," conveys, to an English reader, more than is meant by the sacred writer. He only intends to say, that the river sweeps round in that direction, so as to embrace, by its winding, a part of the region of Havila. Flexuoso cursu alluit. — Johannes Clericus in loco. — *Ed.*

132 That is, the nations peopled by the twelve sons of Ishmael. See Genesis 25:13-16. — *Ed.*

133 The descendants of Nebajoth, the eldest son of Ishmael. Yet, as they inhabited the western side of the great desert of Arabia, which lay between them and the Euphrates, they cannot, with much propriety, be called neighbors to the Persians. — *Ed.*

134 "There is bdellium and the onyx-stone." It is a question among the learned, whether bdellium is an aromatic gum of great value, or a pearl. Dathe, however, renders this word "crystal," and the next, "emerald." — *Ed.*

of the Euphrates tends toward that region, I do not see why it should be deemed absurd, that it there receives the name of Gihon. And thus the simple meaning of Moses is, that the garden of which Adam was the possessor was well watered, the channel of a river passing that way, which was afterwards divided into four heads.[135]

15. *And the Lord God took the man* Moses now adds, that the earth was given to man, with this condition, that he should occupy himself in its cultivation. Whence it follows that men were created to employ themselves in some work, and not to lie down in inactivity and idleness. This labor, truly, was pleasant, and full of delight, entirely exempt from all trouble and weariness; since however God ordained that man should be exercised in the culture of the ground, he condemned in his person, all indolent repose. Wherefore, nothing is more contrary to the order of nature, than to consume life in eating, drinking, and sleeping, while in the meantime we propose nothing to ourselves to do. Moses adds, that the custody of the garden was given in charge to Adam, to show that we possess the things which God has committed to our hands, on the condition, that being content with a frugal and moderate use of them, we should take care of what shall remain. Let him who possesses a field, so partake of its yearly fruits, that he may not suffer the ground to be injured by his negligence; but let him endeavor to hand it down to posterity as he received it, or even better cultivated. Let him so feed on its fruits that he neither dissipates it by luxury, nor permits to be marred or ruined by neglect. Moreover, that this economy, and this diligence, with respect to those good things which God has given us to enjoy, may flourish among us; let every one regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved.

16. *And the Lord God commanded* Moses now teaches, that man was the governor of the world, with this exception, that he should, nevertheless, be subject to God. A law is imposed upon him in token of his subjection; for it would have made no difference to God, if he had eaten indiscriminately of any fruit he pleased. Therefore the prohibition of one tree was a test of obedience. And in this mode, God designed that the whole human race should be accustomed from the beginning to reverence his Deity; as, doubtless, it was necessary that man, adorned and enriched with so many excellent gifts, should be held under restraint,

135 It would be wrong to omit all mention of the work of Adrian Reland on this subject; who devoted to it the most profound learning and diligent investigation. An abstract of his description is given in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary. He places Eden in Armenia, near the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris, which flow into the Persian Gulf, the Phasis (*Pison*,) which empties itself into the Euxine, where Chabala, corresponding with Havila, is famous for its gold; and the Araxes, (*Gihon*,) which runs into the Caspian. The objection to this locality is, that these rivers do not actually meet together; so that they cannot be said to divide into four heads, or principal streams in Eden. The learned reader may see Dathe's Commentary on the Pentateuch, p. 23, note (k.) — *Ed.*

lest he should break forth into licentiousness. There was, indeed, another special reason, to which we have before alluded, lest Adam should desire to be wise above measure; but this is to be kept in mind as God's general design, that he would have men subject to his authority. Therefore, abstinence from the fruit of one tree was a kind of first lesson in obedience, that man might know he had a Director and Lord of his life, on whose will he ought to depend, and in whose commands he ought to acquiesce. And this, truly, is the only rule of living well and rationally, that men should exercise themselves in obeying God. It seems, however, to some as if this did not accord with the judgment of Paul, when he teaches, that the law was not made for the righteous, (1 Timothy 1:9.) For if it be so, then, when Adam was yet innocent and upright, he had no need of a law. But the solution is ready. For Paul is not there writing controversially; but from the common practice of life, he declares, that they who freely run, do not require to be compelled by the necessity of law; as it is said, in the common proverb, that 'Good laws spring from bad manners.' In the meantime, he does not deny that God, from the beginning, imposed a law upon man, for the purpose of maintaining the right due to himself. Should any one bring, as an objection, another statement of Paul, where he asserts that the "law is the minister of death," (2 Corinthians 3:7,) I answer, it is so accidentally, and from the corruption of our nature. But at the time of which we speak, a precept was given to man, whence he might know that God ruled over him. These minute things, however I lightly pass over. What I have before said, since it is of far greater moment, is to be frequently recalled to memory, namely, that our life will then be rightly ordered, if we obey God, and if his will be the regulator of all our affections.

Of every tree To the end that Adam might the more willingly comply, God commends his own liberality. 'Behold,' he says, 'I deliver into thy hand whatever fruits the earth may produce, whatever fruits every kind of tree may yield: from this immense profusion and variety I except only one tree.' Then, by denouncing punishment, he strikes terror, for the purpose of confirming the authority of the law. So much the greater, then, is the wickedness of man, whom neither that kind commemoration of the gifts of God, nor the dread of punishment, was able to retain in his duty.

But it is asked, what kind of death God means in this place? It appears to me, that the definition of this death is to be sought from its opposite; we must, I say, remember from what kind of life man fell. He was, in every respect, happy; his life, therefore, had alike respect to his body and his soul, since in his soul a right judgment and a proper government of the affections prevailed, there also life reigned; in his body there was no defect, wherefore he was wholly free from death. His earthly life truly would have been temporal; yet he would have passed into heaven without death, and without injury. Death, therefore, is now a terror to us; first, because there is a kind of annihilation, as it respects the body; then, because the soul feels the curse of God. We must also see what is the cause of death, namely alienation from God. Thence it follows, that under the name of death is comprehended all those

miseries in which Adam involved himself by his defection; for as soon as he revolted from God, the fountain of life, he was cast down from his former state, in order that he might perceive the life of man without God to be wretched and lost, and therefore differing nothing from death. Hence the condition of man after his sin is not improperly called both the privation of life, and death. The miseries and evils both of soul and body, with which man is beset so long as he is on earth, are a kind of entrance into death, till death itself entirely absorbs him; for the Scripture everywhere calls those dead who, being oppressed by the tyranny of sin and Satan, breath nothing but their own destruction. Wherefore the question is superfluous, how it was that God threatened death to Adam on the day in which he should touch the fruit, when he long deferred the punishment? For then was Adam consigned to death, and death began its reign in him, until supervening grace should bring a remedy.

18. *It is not good that the man should be alone*[136] Moses now explains the design of God in creating the woman; namely, that there should be human beings on the earth who might cultivate mutual society between themselves. Yet a doubt may arise whether this design ought to be extended to progeny, for the words simply mean that since it was not expedient for man to be alone, a wife must be created, who might be his helper. I, however, take the meaning to be this, that God begins, indeed, at the first step of human society, yet designs to include others, each in its proper place. The commencement, therefore, involves a general principle, that man was formed to be a social animal.[137] Now, the human race could not exist without the woman; and, therefore, in the conjunction of human beings, that sacred bond is especially conspicuous, by which the husband and the wife are combined in one body, and one soul; as nature itself taught Plato, and others of the sounder class of philosophers, to speak. But although God pronounced, concerning Adam, that it would not be profitable for him to be alone, yet I do not restrict the declaration to his person alone, but rather regard it as a common law of man's vocation, so that every one ought to receive it as said to himself, that solitude is not good, excepting only him whom God exempts as by a special privilege. Many think that celibacy conduces to their advantage,[138] and therefore, abstain from marriage, lest they should be miserable. Not only have heathen writers defined that to be a happy life which is passed without a wife, but the first book of Jerome, against Jovinian, is stuffed with petulant reproaches, by which he attempts to render hallowed

136 "Non est bonum ut sit Adam solus." This is a variation from Calvin's text, which has man instead of Adam; as the English version has. The word ⊠⊠ stands for both. As a proper name, it means Adam; as an appellation, it belongs to the human species; as an adjective, it means red; and, with a slight alteration, it signifies the ground. — *Ed*

137 "Principium ergo generale est, conditum esse hominem ut sit sociale animal."

138 "Putant multi suisrationibus conducere coelibatum." — "Plusieurs estiment que le celibat — leur est plus profitable." — French Tr.

wedlock both hateful and infamous. To these wicked suggestions of Satan let the faithful learn to oppose this declaration of God, by which he ordains the conjugal life for man, not to his destruction, but to his salvation.

I will make him an help It may be inquired, why this is not said in the plural number, *Let us make*, as before in the creation of man. Some suppose that a distinction between the two sexes is in this manner marked, and that it is thus shown how much the man excels the woman. But I am better satisfied with an interpretation which, though not altogether contrary, is yet different; namely, since in the person of the man the human race had been created, the common dignity of our whole nature was without distinction, honored with one eulogy, when it was said, Let us make man; nor was it necessary to be repeated in creating the woman, who was nothing else than an accession to the man. Certainly, it cannot be denied, that the woman also, though in the second degree, was created in the image of God; whence it follows, that what was said in the creation of the man belongs to the female sex. Now, since God assigns the woman as a help to the man, he not only prescribes to wives the rule of their vocation to instruct them in their duty, but he also pronounces that marriage will really prove to men the best support of life. We may therefore conclude, that the order of nature implies that the woman should be the helper of the man. The vulgar proverb, indeed, is, that she is a necessary evil; but the voice of God is rather to be heard, which declares that woman is given as a companion and an associate to the man, to assist him to live well. I confess, indeed, that in this corrupt state of mankind, the blessing of God, which is here described, is neither perceived nor flourishes; but the cause of the evil must be considered, namely, that the order of nature, which God had appointed, has been inverted by us. For if the integrity of man had remained to this day such as it was from the beginning, that divine institution would be clearly discerned, and the sweetest harmony would reign in marriage; because the husband would look up with reverence to God; the woman in this would be a faithful assistant to him; and both, with one consent, would cultivate a holy, as well as friendly and peaceful intercourse. Now, it has happened by our fault, and by the corruption of nature, that this happiness of marriage has, in a great measure, perished, or, at least, is mixed and infected with many inconveniences. Hence arise strifes, troubles, sorrows, dissensions, and a boundless sea of evils; and hence it follows, that men are often disturbed by their wives, and suffer through them many discouragements. Still, marriage was not capable of being so far vitiated by the depravity of men, that the blessing which God has once sanctioned by his word should be utterly abolished and extinguished. Therefore, amidst many inconveniences of marriage, which are the fruits of degenerate nature, some residue of divine good remains; as in the fire apparently smothered, some sparks still glitter. On this main point hangs another, that women, being instructed in their duty of helping their husbands, should study to keep this divinely appointed order. It is also the part of men to consider what they owe in return to the other half of their kind, for the obligation of both sexes is mutual, and

on this condition is the woman assigned as a help to the man, that he may fill the place of her head and leader. One thing more is to be noted, that, when the woman is here called the help of the man, no allusion is made to that necessity to which we are reduced since the fall of Adam; for the woman was ordained to be the man's helper, even although he had stood in his integrity. But now, since the depravity of appetite also requires a remedy, we have from God a double benefit: but the latter is accidental.

Meet for him[139] In the Hebrew it is ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*kenegedo*,) "as if opposite to," or "over against him." ⊠ (*Caph*) in that language is a note of similitude. But although some of the Rabbies think it is here put as an affirmative, yet I take it in its general sense, as though it were said that she is a kind of counterpart, (ἀντίστοικον, or ἀντίστροφον;[140]) for the woman is said to be *opposite* to or *over against* the man, because she responds to him. But the particle of similitude seems to me to be added because it is a form of speech taken from common usage.[141] The Greek translators have faithfully rendered the sense, Κατ" αὐτόν;[142] and Jerome, "Which may be like him,"[143] for Moses intended to note some equality. And hence is refitted the error of some, who think that the woman was formed only for the sake of propagation, and who restrict the word "good," which had been lately mentioned, to the production of offspring. They do not think that a wife was personally necessary for Adam, because he was hitherto free from lust; as if she had been given to him only for the companion of his chamber, and not rather that she might be the inseparable associate of his life. Wherefore the particle ⊠ (*caph*) is of importance, as intimating that marriage extends to all parts and usages of life. The explanation given by others, as if it were said, Let her be ready to obedience, is cold; for Moses intended to express more, as is manifest from what follows.

19. *And out of the ground the Lord God formed, etc*[144] This is a more ample exposition of the preceding sentence, for he says that, of all the animals, when they had been placed in order, not one was found which might be conferred upon and adapted to Adam; nor was there such affinity of nature, that Adam could choose for himself a companion for life out

139 "Coram ipso," before him. — "Pour luy assister," to help him. — French Tr.

140 Quod "ex adverso ei" respondet. Lud. de Dieu. His counterpart.

141 "Quia sit translatitia loquutio."

142 A help according to him. See Septuagint.

143 "Adjutorium simile sibi," a help like himself. — Vulgate. Meet for him. "In whose company he shall take delight; so the Hebrew phrase, as before him, imports, being as much answerable to him, every way fitted for him, not only in likeness of body, but of mind, disposition, and affection, which laid the foundation of perpetual familiarity and friendship." — *Patrick*.

144 "Formaverat autem Deus," — "God had formed," plainly referring to what had already taken place. The Hebrew language has not the same distinction of times in its verbs which is common to more modern tongues." — *Ed.*

of any one species. Nor did this occur through ignorance, for each species had passed in review before Adam, and he had imposed names upon them, not rashly but from certain knowledge; yet there was no just proportion between him and them. Therefore, unless a wife had been given him of the same kind with himself, he would have remained destitute of a suitable and proper help. Moreover, what is here said of God's bringing the animals to Adam[145] signifies nothing else than that he endued them with the disposition to obedience, so that they would voluntarily offer themselves to the man, in order that he, having closely inspected them, might distinguish them by appropriate names, agreeing with the nature of each. This gentleness towards man would have remained also in wild beasts, if Adam, by his defection from God, had not lost the authority he had before received. But now, from the time in which he began to be rebellious against God, he experienced the ferocity of brute animals against himself; for some are tamed with difficulty, others always remain unsubdued, and some, even of their own accord, inspire us with terror by their fierceness. Yet some remains of their former subjection continue to the present time, as we shall see in the second verse of the ninth chapter (Genesis 9:2.) Besides, it is to be remarked that Moses speaks only of those animals which approach the nearest to man, for the fishes live as in another world. As to the names which Adam imposed, I do not doubt that each of them was founded on the best reason; but their use, with many other good things, has become obsolete.

21. *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall, etc.* Although to profane persons this method of forming woman may seem ridiculous, and some of these may say that Moses is dealing in fables, yet to us the wonderful providence of God here shines forth; for, to the end that the conjunction of the human race might be the more sacred he purposed that both males and females should spring from one and the same origin. Therefore he created human nature in the person of Adam, and thence formed Eve, that the woman should be only a portion of the whole human race. This is the import of the words of Moses which we have had before, (Genesis 1:28,) "God created man... he made them male and female." In this manner Adam was taught to recognize himself in his wife, as in a mirror; and Eve, in her turn, to submit herself willingly to her husband, as being taken out of him. But if the two sexes had proceeded from different sources, there would have been occasion either of mutual contempt, or envy, or contentions. And against what do perverse men here object? 'The narration does not seem credible, since it is at variance with custom.' As if, indeed, such an objection would have more color than one raised against the usual mode of the production of mankind, if the latter were not known by use and experience.[146] But they object that either the rib which was taken from Adam had been superfluous, or that his body had been mutilated by the absence of the rib. To either of these it may be answered, that they find out

145 "Porro istud adducere Dei."

146 "Ex putrido semine quotidie gigni homines."

a great absurdity. If, however, we should say that the rib out of which he would form another body had been prepared previously by the Creator of the world, I find nothing in this answer which is not in accordance with Divine Providence. Yet I am more in favor of a different conjecture, namely, that something was taken from Adam, in order that he might embrace, with greater benevolence, a part of himself. He lost, therefore, one of his ribs; but, instead of it, a far richer reward was granted him, since he obtained a faithful associate of life; for he now saw himself, who had before been imperfect, rendered complete in his wife.[147] And in this we see a true resemblance of our union with the Son of God; for he became weak that he might have members of his body endued with strength. In the meantime, it is to be noted, that Adam had been plunged in a sleep so profound, that he felt no pain; and further, that neither had the rupture been violent, nor was any want perceived of the lost rib, because God so filled up the vacuity with flesh, that his strength remained unimpaired; only the hardness of bone was removed. Moses also designedly used the word *built*,[148] to teach us that in the person of the woman the human race was at length complete, which had before been like a building just begun. Others refer the expression to the domestic economy, as if Moses would say that legitimate family order was then instituted, which does not differ widely from the former exposition.

22. *And brought her, etc* Moses now relates that marriage was divinely instituted, which is especially useful to be known; for since Adam did not take a wife to himself at his own will, but received her as offered and appropriated to him by God, the sanctity of marriage hence more clearly appears, because we recognize God as its Author. The more Satan has endeavored to dishonor marriage, the more should we vindicate it from all reproach and abuse, that it may receive its due reverence. Thence it will follow that the children of God may embrace a conjugal life with a good and tranquil conscience, and husbands and wives may live together in chastity and honor. The artifice of Satan in attempting the defamation of marriage was twofold: first, that by means of the odium attached to it he might introduce the pestilential law of celibacy; and, secondly, that married persons might indulge themselves in whatever license they pleased. Therefore, by showing the dignity of marriage, we must remove superstition, lest it should in the slightest degree hinder the faithful from chastely using the lawful and pure ordinance of God; and further, we must oppose the lasciviousness of the flesh, in order that men may live modestly with their wives. But if no other reason influenced us, yet this alone ought to be abundantly sufficient, that unless we think and speak honorably of marriage, reproach is attached to its Author and Patron, for such God is here described as being by Moses.

147 "Quum se integrum vidit in uxore, qui prius tantum dimidius erat."

148 "Et aedificavit Jehova Deus costam quam tulerat ex Adam, in mulierem." — And Jehovah God built the rib which he had taken out of Adam into a woman. ⊠⊠⊠⊠, from ⊠⊠⊠, to build.

23. *And Adam said, etc* It is demanded whence Adam derived this knowledge since he was at that time buried in deep sleep. If we say that his quickness of perception was then such as to enable him by conjecture to form a judgment, the solution would be weak. But we ought not to doubt that God would make the whole course of the affair manifest to him, either by secret revelation or by his word; for it was not from any necessity on God's part that He borrowed from man the rib out of which he might form the woman; but he designed that they should be more closely joined together by this bonds which could not have been effected unless he had informed them of the fact. Moses does not indeed explain by what means God gave them this information; yet unless we would make the work of God superfluous, we must conclude that its Author revealed both the fact itself and the method and design of its accomplishment. The deep sleep was sent upon Adam, not to hide from him the origin of his wife, but to exempt him from pain and trouble, until he should receive a compensation so excellent for the loss of his rib.

This is now bone of, etc[149] In using the expression ⊠⊠⊠ (*hac vice*,) Adam indicates that something had been wanting to him; as if he had said, Now at length I have obtained a suitable companion, who is part of the substance of my flesh, and in whom I behold, as it were, another self. And he gives to his wife a name taken from that of man, [150] that by this testimony and this mark he might transmit a perpetual memorial of the wisdom of God. A deficiency in the Latin language has compelled the ancient interpreter to render ⊠⊠ (*ishah*,) by the word *virago*. It is, however, to be remarked, that the Hebrew term means nothing else than the female of the man.

24. *Therefore shall a man leave* It is doubted whether Moses here introduces God as speaking, or continues the discourse of Adam, or, indeed, has added this, in virtue of his office as teacher, in his own person.[151] The last of these is that which I most approve. Therefore, after he has related historically what God had done, he also demonstrates the

149 "Hac vice os est ex ossibus meis." ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠, (*zot haphaam*.) These words are rendered in the English version by "This now," which very feebly and imperfectly expresses the sense of the original; nor does the version of Calvin, "At this turn," give the true emphasis of the words. It is perhaps scarcely possible to do so without a paraphrase. The two words of the original are both intended to be emphatic. "This living creature (⊠⊠) which at the present time (⊠⊠⊠, *hac vice*) passes before me, is the companion which I need, for it is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." — Vide Dathe in loco. — *Ed*

150 "Nomen uxori a viro imponit." ⊠⊠, (*ishah*,) from ⊠⊠, (*ish*,) which is the Hebrew word man with a feminine termination; as if we should say, "She shall be called manness, because she was taken out of the man." Calvin uses the word virissa; Dathe, after Le Clerc, the word vira; and though neither of them are strictly classical, yet are they far preferable to the term virago in the Vulgate, which Calvin justly rejects, and which means a woman of masculine character. The English word woman is a contraction of womb-man. — *Ed*

151 See Le Clerc on this verse, who takes the same view as Calvin.

end of the divine institution. The sum of the whole is, that among the offices pertaining to human society, this is the principal, and as it were the most sacred, that a man should cleave unto his wife. And he amplifies this by a superadded comparison, that the husband ought to prefer his wife to his father. But the father is said to be *left* not because marriage severs sons from their fathers, or dispenses with other ties of nature, for in this way God would be acting contrary to himself. While, however, the piety of the son towards his father is to be most assiduously cultivated and ought in itself to be deemed inviolable and sacred, yet Moses so speaks of marriage as to show that it is less lawful to desert a wife than parents. Therefore, they who, for slight causes, rashly allow of divorces, violate, in one single particular, all the laws of nature, and reduce them to nothing. If we should make it a point of conscience not to separate a father from his son, it is a still greater wickedness to dissolve the bond which God has preferred to all others.

They shall be one flesh[152] Although the ancient Latin interpreter has translated the passage 'in one flesh,' yet the Greek interpreters have expressed it more forcibly: 'They two shall be *into* one flesh,' and thus Christ cites the place in Matthew 19:5. But though here no mention is made of *two*, yet there is no ambiguity in the sense; for Moses had not said that God has assigned many wives, but only one to one man; and in the general direction given, he had put the wife in the singular number. It remains, therefore, that the conjugal bond subsists between two persons only, whence it easily appears, that nothing is less accordant with the divine institution than polygamy. Now, when Christ, in censuring the voluntary divorces of the Jews, adduces as his reason for doing it, that 'it was not so in the beginning,' (Matthew 19:5,) he certainly commands this institution to be observed as a perpetual rule of conduct. To the same point also Malachi recalls the Jews of his own time:

'Did he not make them one from the beginning? and yet the Spirit was abounding in him.'[153] (Malachi 2:15.)

Wherefore, there is no doubt that polygamy is a corruption of legitimate marriage.

25. *They were both naked* That the nakedness of men should be deemed indecorous and unsightly, while that of cattle has nothing disgraceful, seems little to agree with the dignity of human nature. We cannot behold a naked man without a sense of shame; yet at the sight of an ass, a dog, or an ox, no such feeling will be produced. Moreover, every one is ashamed of his own nakedness, even though other witnesses may not be present. Where then is that dignity in which we excel? The cause of this sense of shame, to which we are now alluding, Moses will show in the next chapter. He now esteems it enough to say, that in our uncorrupted nature, there was nothing but what was honorable; whence it follows, that whatsoever

152 "Erunt in carnem unam." — "In carne una." — Vulgate. Εἰς σάρκα μίαν. — Sept.

153 "Spiritus abundans in eo erat" The word abundans has in English the force of superabounding. — *Ed*

is opprobrious in us, must be imputed to our own fault, since our parents had nothing in themselves which was unbecoming until they were defiled with sin.

CHAPTER 3.

Genesis 3:1-24	
1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?	**1.** Porro serpens erat callidior omni bestia agri, quam fecerat Jehova Deus: et dixit ad mulierem, Etiamne dixit Deus, Non comedetis ex omni arbore horti?
2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:	**2.** Et dixit mulier ad serpentem, De fructu arborum horti vescimur.
3. But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.	**3.** At de fructu arboris quae est in medio horti, dixit Deus, Non comedetis ex ea, neque contingetis eam, ne forte moriamini.
4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:	**4.** Tunc dixit serpens ad mulierem, Non moriendo moriemini.
5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.	**5.** Scit enim Deus quod in die qua comedeits ex ea, aperientur oculi vestri, et eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum.
6. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.	**6.** Et vidit mulier quod bona esset arbor ad vescendum, et quod delectabilis esset oculis, et desiderabilis arbor ad intelligendum: et tulit de fructu ipsius, et comedit: deditque etiam viro suo qui erat cum ea, et ipse comedit.
7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.	**7.** Et aperti sunt oculi amborumipsorum, et cognoverunt quod nudi essent: et consuerunt folia ficus, feceruntque sibi cingula.
8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.	**8.** Audierunt autem vocem Jehovae Dei deambulantis per hortum ad auram diei: et abscondit se Adam et uxor ejus a facie Jehovae Dei, in medio arborum horti.
9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?	**9.** Vocavitque Jehova Deus Adam, et dixit ei Ubi es tu?

10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.	**10.** Et ait, Vocem tuam audivi in horto, et timui, quia nudus eram, et abscondi me.
11. And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?	**11.** Tunc dixit, Quis indicavit tibi quod nudus esses? nonne ex ipsa arbore de qua praeceperam tibi ne comederes, comedisti?
12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.	**12.** Et ait Adam, Mulier quam dedisti ut esset mecum, ipsa dedit mihi de arbore, et comedi.
13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.	**13.** Dixitque Jehova Deus ad mulierem, Cur hoc fecisti? Et ait mulier, Serpens seduxit me, et comedi.
14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:	**14.** Et dixit Jehova ad serpentem, Quia fecisti hoc, maledicuts eris prae omni animali, et prae omni bestia agri: super ventrem tuum gradieris, et pulverem comedes omnibus diebus vitae tuae.
15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.	**15.** Et inimicitias ponam inter to et inter mulierem, et inter semen tuum et inter semen ejus: ipsum vulnerabit to in capite, et tu vulnerabis ipsum in calcaneo.
16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.	**16.** Ad mulierem dixit, Multiplicando multiplicabo dolorem tuum, et conceptum tuum: cum dolore paries filios, et ad virum tuum erit desiderium tuum, ipseque dominabitur tibi.
17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;	**17.** Adae vero ait, Quia paruisti voci uxoris tuae, et comedisti ex arbore de qua praeceperam tibi, dicens, Non comedes ex ea: maledicta terra propter to: in labore comedes eam cunctis diebus vitae tuae.

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;	**18.** Et spinam et tribulum germinabit tibi, et comedes herbam agri.
19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.	**19.** In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram: quia ex ea sumptus es: nam pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.
20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.	**20.** Et vocavit Adam nomen uxoris suae Hava, quia ipsa est mater omnis viventis.
21. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.	**21.** Fecitque Jehova Deus Adae et uxori ejus tunicas pelliceas, et induit eos.
22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:	**22.** Tunc dixit Jehova Deus, Ecce, Adam factus est tanquam unus ex nobis, sciendo bonum et malum: nunc autem ne forte mittat manum suam, et accipiat etiam de arbore vitae, et comedat, et vivat in seculum.
23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.	**23.** Et emisit eum Jehova de horto Heden, ad colendum terram ex qua sumptus fuerat.
24. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.	**24.** Et ejecit Adam, et collocavit ab Oriente horti Heden cherubim, et laminam gladii versatilis, ad custodiendum viam arboris vitae.

1. *Now the serpent was more subtil* In this chapter, Moses explains, that man, after he had been deceived by Satan revolted from his Maker, became entirely changed and so degenerate, that the image of God, in which he had been formed, was obliterated. He then declares, that the whole world, which had been created for the sake of man, fell together with him from its primary original; and that in this ways much of its native excellence was destroyed. But here many and arduous questions arise. For when Moses says that the serpent was crafty beyond all other animals, he seems to intimate, that it had been induced to deceive man, not by the instigation of Satan, but by its own malignity. I answer, that the innate subtlety of the serpent did not prevent Satan from making use of the animal for the purpose of effecting the destruction of man. For since he required an instrument, he chose from

among animals that which he saw would be most suitable for him: finally, he carefully contrived the method by which the snares he was preparing might the more easily take the mind of Eve by surprise. Hitherto, he had held no communication with men; he, therefore, clothed himself with the person of an animal, under which he might open for himself the way of access. Yet it is not agreed among interpreters in what sense the serpent is said to be ⊠⊠⊠ (*aroom, subtle*,) by which word the Hebrews designate the *prudent* as well as the *crafty*. Some, therefore, would take it in a good, others in a bad sense. I think, however, Moses does not so much point out a fault as attribute praise to nature because God had endued this beast with such singular skill, as rendered it acute and quick-sighted beyond all others. But Satan perverted to his own deceitful purposes the gift which had been divinely imparted to the serpent. Some captiously cavil, that more acuteness is now found in many other animals. To whom I answer, that there would be nothing absurd in saying, that the gift which had proved so destructive to the human race has been withdrawn from the serpent: just, as we shall hereafter see, other punishments were also inflicted upon it. Yet, in this description, writers on natural history do not materially differ from Moses, and experience gives the best answer to the objection; for the Lord does not in vain command his own disciples to be 'prudent as serpents,' (Matthew 10:16.) But it appears, perhaps, scarcely consonant with reason, that the serpent only should be here brought forward, all mention of Satan being suppressed. I acknowledge, indeed, that from this place *alone* nothing more can be collected than that men were deceived by the serpent. But the testimonies of Scripture are sufficiently numerous, in which it is plainly asserted that the serpent was only the mouth of the devil; for not the serpent but the devil is declared to be 'the father of lies,' the fabricator of imposture, and the author of death. The question, however, is not yet solved, why Moses has kept back the name of Satan. I willingly subscribe to the opinion of those who maintain that the Holy Spirit then purposely used obscure figures, because it was fitting that full and clear light should be reserved for the kingdom of Christ. In the meantime, the prophets prove that they were well acquainted with the meaning of Moses, when, in different places, they cast the blame of our ruin upon the devil. We have elsewhere said, that Moses, by a homely and uncultivated style, accommodates what he delivers to the capacity of the people; and for the best reason; for not only had he to instruct an untaught race of men, but the existing age of the Church was so puerile, that it was unable to receive any higher instruction. There is, therefore, nothing absurd in the supposition, that they, whom, for the time, we know and confess to have been but as infants, were fed with milk. Or (if another comparison be more acceptable) Moses is by no means to be blamed, if he, considering the office of schoolmaster as imposed upon him, insists on the rudiments suitable to children. They who have an aversion to this simplicity, must of necessity condemn the whole economy of God in governing the Church. This, however, may suffice us, that the Lord, by the secret illumination of his Spirit, supplied whatever was wanting of clearness in outward expressions; as

appears plainly from the prophets, who saw Satan to be the real enemy of the human race, the contriver of all evils, furnished with every kind of fraud and villainy to injure and destroy. Therefore, though the impious make a noise, there is nothing justly to offend us in this mode of speaking by which Moses describes Satan, the prince of iniquity, under the person of his servant and instrument, at the time when Christ, the Head of the Church, and the Sun of Righteousness, had not yet openly shone forth. Add to this, the baseness of human ingratitude is more clearly hence perceived, that when Adam and Eve knew that all animals were given, by the hand of God, into subjection to them, they yet suffered themselves to be led away by one of their own slaves into rebellion against God. As often as they beheld any one of the animals which were in the world, they ought to have been reminded both of the supreme authority, and of the singular goodness of God; but, on the contrary, when they saw the serpent an apostate from his Creator, not only did they neglect to punish it, but, in violation of all lawful order, they subjected and devoted themselves to it, as participators in the same apostasy. What can be imagined more dishonorable than this extreme depravity? Thus, I understand the name of the serpent, not allegorically, as some foolishly do, but in its genuine sense.

Many persons are surprised that Moses simply, and as if abruptly, relates that men have fallen by the impulse of Satan into eternal destruction, and yet never by a single word explains how the tempter himself had revolted from God. And hence it has arisen, that fanatical men have dreamed that Satan was created evil and wicked as he is here described. But the revolt of Satan is proved by other passages of Scripture; and it is an impious madness to ascribe to God the creation of any evil and corrupt nature; for when he had completed the world, he himself gave this testimony to all his works, that they were very good. Wherefore, without controversy, we must conclude, that the principle of evil with which Satan was endued was not from nature, but from defection; because he had departed from God, the fountain of justice and of all rectitude. But Moses here passes over Satan's fall, because his object is briefly to narrate the corruption of human nature; to teach us that Adam was not created to those multiplied miseries under which all his posterity suffer, but that he fell into them by his own fault. In reflecting on the number and nature of those evils to which they are obnoxious, men will often be unable to restrain themselves from raging and murmuring against God, whom they rashly censure for the just punishment of their sin. These are their well-known complaints that God has acted more mercifully to swine and dogs than to them. Whence is this, but that they do not refer the miserable and ruined state, under which we languish, to the sin of Adam as they ought? But what is far worse, they fling back upon God the charge of being the cause of all the inward vices of the mind, (such as its horrible blindness, contumacy against God, wicked desires, and violent propensities to evil;) as if

the whole perverseness of our disposition had not been adventitious.[154] The design, therefore, of Moses was to show, in a few words, how greatly our present condition differs from our first original, in order that we may learn, with humble confession of our fault, to bewail our evils. We ought not then to be surprised, that, while intent on the history he purposed to relate, he does not discuss every topic which may be desired by any person whatever.

We must now enter on that question by which vain and inconstant minds are greatly agitated; namely, Why God permitted Adam to be tempted, seeing that the sad result was by no means hidden from him? That He now relaxes Satan's reins, to allow him to tempt us to sin, we ascribe to judgment and to vengeance, in consequence of man's alienation from himself; but there was not the same reason for doing so when human nature was yet pure and upright. God, therefore,[155] permitted Satan to tempt man, who was conformed to His own image, and not yet implicated in any crime, having, moreover, on this occasion, allowed Satan the use of an animal[156] which otherwise would never have obeyed him; and what else was this, than to arm an enemy for the destruction of man? This seems to have been the ground on which the Manichaeans maintained the existence of two principles.[157] Therefore, they have imagined that Satan, not being in subjection to God, laid snares for man in opposition to the divine will, and was superior not to man only, but also to God himself. Thus, for the sake of avoiding what they dreaded as an absurdity, they have fallen into execrable prodigies of error; such as, that there are two Gods, and not one sole Creator of the world, and that the first God has been overcome by his antagonist. All, however, who think piously and reverently concerning the power of God, acknowledge that the evil did not take place except by his permission. For, in the first place, it must be conceded, that God was not in ignorance of the event which was about to occur; and then, that he could have prevented it, had he seen fit to do so. But in speaking of permission, I understand that he had appointed whatever he wished to be done. Here, indeed, a difference arises on the part of many, who suppose Adam to have been so left to his own free will, that God would not

154 "Quasi non accidentalis esset." As if it had not been accidental, where the word accidental is used in the sense of the schoolmen and logicians, as opposed to the word essential. — *Ed.*

155 The reader will observe that Calvin is here putting forward the argument of an objector. — *Ed.*

156 "Mesme il luy a preste le serpent." — French Tr.

157 On the intricate subject of Manichaeism, and its various cognate heresies, the reader may refer to the Bampton Lectures of the late Dr. Burton, who, with incredible erudition and industry, has searched the records of ancient and modern times, and has examined, with the greatest candor, the various conflicting sentiments which have been entertained by learned men in reference to this question. The fundamental error of Manes seems to have been, that, with nearly all the Oriental philosophers of antiquity, he held the necessary and independent existence of matter, which, in his view, was the origin of all evil. — See Burton's Bampton Lectures, p. 294; and Lardner's Credibility, etc. part 2, c. 63.

have him fall. They take for granted, what I allow them, that nothing is less probable than that God should he regarded as the cause of sin, which he has avenged with so many and such severe penalties. When I say, however, that Adam did not fall without the ordination and will of God, I do not so take it as if sin had ever been pleasing to Him, or as if he simply wished that the precept which he had given should be violated. So far as the fall of Adam was the subversion of equity, and of well-constituted order, so far as it was contumacy against the Divine Law-giver, and the transgression of righteousness, certainly it was against the will of God; yet none of these things render it impossible that, for a certain cause, although to us unknown, he might will the fall of man. It offends the ears of some, when it is said God *willed* this fall; but what else, I pray, is the *permission* of Him, who has the power of preventing, and in whose hand the whole matter is placed, but his will? I wish that men would rather suffer themselves to be judged by God, than that, with profane temerity, they should pass judgment upon him; but this is the arrogance of the flesh to subject God to its own test. I hold it as a settled axiom, that nothing is more unsuitable to the character of God than for us to say that man was created by Him for the purpose of being placed in a condition of suspense and doubt; wherefore I conclude, that, as it became the Creator, he had before determined with himself what should be man's future condition. Hence the unskilful rashly infer, that man did not sin by free choice. For he himself perceives, being convicted by the testimony of his own conscience, that he has been too free in sinning. Whether he sinned by necessity, or by contingency, is another question; respecting which see the Institution,[158] and the treatise on Predestination.

And he said unto the woman The impious assail this passage with their sneers, because Moses ascribes eloquence to an animal which only faintly hisses with its forked tongue. And first they ask, at what time animals began to be mute, if they then had a distinct language, and one common to ourselves and them. The answer is ready; the serpent was not eloquent by nature, but when Satan, by divine permission, procured it as a fit instrument for his use, he uttered words also by its tongue, which God himself permitted. Nor do I doubt that Eve perceived it to be extraordinary, and on that account received with the greater avidity what she admired. Now, if men decide that whatever is unwonted must be fabulous, God could work no miracle. Here God, by accomplishing a work above the ordinary course of nature, constrains us to admire his power. If then, under this very pretext, we ridicule the power of God, because it is not familiar to us, are we not excessively preposterous? Besides, if it seems incredible that beasts should speak at the command of God, how has man the power of speech, but because God has formed his tongue? The Gospel declares, that voices were uttered in the air, without a tongue, to illustrate the glory of Christ; this is less probable to carnal reason, than that speech should be elicited from the mouth of brute animals. What

158 Calvin's Institutes, Book III c. 1 Vol. 2, p. 73, of the Calvin Society's edition.

then can the petulance of impious men find here deserving of their invective? In short, whosoever holds that God in heaven is the Ruler of the world, will not deny his power over the creatures, so that he can teach brute animals to speak when he pleases, just as he sometimes renders eloquent men speechless. Moreover the craftiness of Satan betrays itself in this, that he does not directly assail the man, but approaches him, as through a mine, in the person of his wife. This insidious method of attack is more than sufficiently known to us at the present day, and I wish we might learn prudently to guard ourselves against it. For he warily insinuates himself at that point at which he sees us to be the least fortified, that he may not be perceived till he should have penetrated where he wished. The woman does not flee from converse with the serpent, because hitherto no dissension had existed; she, therefore, accounted it simply as a domestic animal.

The question occurs, what had impelled Satan to contrive the destruction of man? Curious sophists have feigned that he burned with envy, when he foresaw that the Son of God was to be clothed in human flesh; but the speculation is frivolous. For since the Son of God was made man in order to restore us, who were already lost, from our miserable over throw, how could that be foreseen which would never have happened unless man had sinned? If there be room for conjectures, it is more probable that he was driven by a kind of fury, (as the desperate are wont to be,) to hurry man away with himself into a participation of eternal ruin. But it becomes us to be content with this single reasons that since he was the adversary of God, he attempted to subvert the order established by Him. And, because he could not drag God from his throne, he assailed man, in whom His image shone. He knew that with the ruin of man the most dreadful confusion would be produced in the whole world, as indeed it happened, and therefore he endeavored, in the person of man, to obscure the glory of God.[159] Rejecting, therefore, all vain figments, let us hold fast this doctrine, which is both simple and solid.

Yea, has God said? This sentence is variously expounded and even distorted, partly because it is in itself obscure, and partly because of the ambiguous import of the Hebrew particle. The expression ☒☒ ☒☒ (*aph ki*,) sometimes signifies "although" or "indeed," and sometimes, "how much more."[160] David Kimchi takes it in this last sense, and thinks that many words had passed between them on both sides, before the serpent descended to this point; namely, that having calumniated God on other accounts, he at length thus concludes, Hence it *much more* appears how envious and malignant he is towards you, because he has

159 "Being under a final and irreversible doom, he looked on God as an irreconcileable enemy; and, not being able to injure his essence, he struck at his image. He singled out Adam as the mark of his malice, that by seducing him from his duty, he might defeat God's design, which was to be honored by man's obedience, and so obscure his glory, as if he had made man in vain." — Bates' Harmony of the Divine Attributes.

160 ☒☒ ☒☒, "Hebraeis tantundem valet interdum ac Latinis, Etiamsi, vel enimvero; interdum, quanto magis."

interdicted you from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But this exposition is not only forced, it is proved to be false by the reply of Eve. More correct is the explanation of the Chaldean paraphrast, 'Is it true that God has forbidden? etc.'[161] Again, to some this appears a *simple*, to others an *ironical* interrogation. It would be a *simple* interrogation, if it injected a doubt in the following manner: 'Can it be, that God should forbid the eating of any tree whatever?' but it would be ironical, if used for the purpose of dissipating vain fear; as, 'It greatly concerns God, indeed, whether you eat of the tree or not! It is, therefore, ridiculous that you should think it to be forbidden you!' I subscribe the more freely to the former opinion, because there is greater probability that Satan, in order to deceive more covertly, would gradually proceed with cautious prevarications to lead the woman to a contempt of the divine precept. There are some who suppose that Satan expressly denies the word which our first parents had heard, to have been the word of God. Others think, (with whom I rather agree,) that, under the pretext of inquiring into the cause, he would indirectly weaken their confidence in the word. And certainly the old interpreter has translated the expression, 'Why has God said?'[162] which, although I do not altogether approve, yet I have no doubt that the serpent urges the woman to seek out the cause, since otherwise he would not have been able to draw away her mind from God. Very dangerous is the temptation, when it is suggested to us, that God is not to be obeyed except so far as the reason of his command is apparent. The true rule of obedience is, that we being content with a bare command, should persuade ourselves that whatever he enjoins is just and right. But whosoever desires to be wise beyond measure, him will Satan, seeing he has cast off all reverence for God, immediately precipitate into open rebellion. As it respects grammatical construction, I think the expression ought to be translated, 'Has God even said?' or, 'Is it so that God has said?'[163] Yet the artifice of Satan is to be noticed, for he wished to inject into the woman a doubt which might induce her to believe that not to be the word of God, for which a plausible reason did not manifestly appear.

Of every tree of the garden Commentators offer a double interpretation of these words. The former supposes Satan, for the sake of increasing envy, to insinuate that all the trees had been forbidden. "Has God indeed enjoined that you should not dare to touch any tree?" The other interpretation, however, is, "Have you not then the liberty granted you of eating promiscuously from whatever tree you please?" The former more accords with the disposition of the devil, who would malignantly amplify the prohibitions and seems to be sanctioned

161 See the Chaldee paraphrase in Walton's Polyglott. The Latin translation is as follows: "Verumne est quod dixit Deus, non comedatis ex omni arbore horti?" Gesenius gives the same explanation: "Solte denn das wahr seyn, dass Gott gesagt haette?" "Can it be true, that God has said?" etc. — *Ed.*

162 "Cur praecepit vobis Deus," etc. — *Vulgate*.

163 "Vertendum censeo, Etiamne, vel Itane?"

by Eve's reply. For when she says, We do eat of all, one only excepted, she seems to repel the calumny concerning a general prohibition. But because the latter sense of the passage, which suggests the question concerning the simple and bare prohibition of God, was more apt to deceive, it is more credible that Satan, with his accustomed guile, should have begun his temptation from this point, 'Is it possible for God to be unwilling that you should gather the fruit of any tree whatever?' The answer of the woman, that only one tree was forbidden, she means to be a defense of the command; as if she would deny that it ought to seem harsh or burdensome, since God had only excepted one single tree out of so great an abundance and variety as he had granted to them. Thus, in these words there will be a concession, that one tree was indeed forbidden; then, the refutation of a calumny, because it is not arduous or difficult to abstain from one tree, when others, without number are supplied, of which the use is permitted. It was impossible for Eve more prudently or more courageously to repel the assault of Satan, than by objecting against him, that she and her husband had been so bountifully dealt with by the Lord, that the advantages granted to them were abundantly sufficient, for she intimates that they would be most ungrateful if, instead of being content with such affluence they should desire more than was lawful. When she says, God has forbidden them to eat or to touch, some suppose the second word to be added for the purpose of charging God with too great severity, because he prohibited them even from the *touch*[164] But I rather understand that she hitherto remained in obedience, and expressed her pious disposition by anxiously observing the precept of God; only, in proclaiming the punishment, she begins to give ways by inserting the adverb "perhaps,"[165] when God has certainly pronounced, "Ye shall die the death."[166] For although with the Hebrews ⊠⊠ (*pen*) does not always imply doubt, yet, since it is generally taken in this sense, I willingly embrace the opinion that the woman was beginning to waver. Certainly, she had not death so immediately before her eyes, should she become disobedient to God, as, she ought to have had. She clearly proves that her perception of the true danger of death was distant and cold.

4. *And the serpent said unto the woman* Satan now springs more boldly forward; and because he sees a breach open before him, he breaks through in a direct assault, for he is never wont to engage in open war until we voluntarily expose ourselves to him, naked and unarmed. He cautiously approaches us at first with blandishments; but when he has stolen in upon us, he dares to exalt himself petulantly and with proud confidence against God; just as he now seizing upon Eve's doubt, penetrates further, that he may turn it into a direct negative. It behaves us to be instructed, by much examples, to beware of his snares, and, by

164 "Neither shall ye touch it." "The woman herself adds this, which certainly in the divine law we are not permitted to do." — Peter Martyr's Commentary on Genesis.

165 "Ne forte moriamini," lest perhaps ye may die.

166 "Moriendo moriemini." ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠. (*Mot tamoot.*)

making timely resistance, to keep him far from us, that nearer access may not be permitted to him. He now, therefore, does not ask doubtingly, as before, whether or not the command of God, which he opposes, be true, but openly accuses God of falsehood, for he asserts that the word by which death was denounced is false and delusive. Fatal temptation! when while God is threatening us with death, we not only securely sleep, but hold God himself in derision!

5. *For God doth know.* There are those who think that God is here craftily praised by Satan, as if He never would prohibit men from the use of wholesome fruit. But they manifestly contradict themselves, for they at the some time confess that in the preceding member of the sentence he had already declared God to be unworthy of confidence, as one who had lied. Others suppose that he charges God with malignity and envy, as wishing to deprive man of his highest perfection; and this opinion is more probable than the other. Nevertheless, (according to my judgments) Satan attempts to prove what he had recently asserted, reasoning, however, from contraries:[167] God, he says, has interdicted to you the tree, that he may not be compelled to admit you to the participation of his glory; therefore, the fear of punishment is quite needless. In short, he denies that a fruit which is useful and salutary can be injurious. When he says, God does know, he censures God as being moved by jealousy: and as having given the command concerning the tree, for the purpose of keeping man in an inferior rank.

Ye shall be as gods. Some translate it, 'Ye shall be like angels.' It might even be rendered in the singular number, 'Ye shall be as God.' I have no doubt that Satan promises them *divinity* ; as if he had said, For no other reason does God defraud you of the tree of knowledge, than because he fears to have you as companions. Moreover, it is not without some show of reason that he makes the Divine glory, or equality with God, to consist in the perfect knowledge of good and evil; but it is a mere pretense, for the purpose of ensnaring the miserable woman. Because the desire of knowledge is naturally inherent in and happiness is supposed to be placed in it; but Eve erred in not regulating the measure of her knowledge by the will of God. And we all daily suffer under the same disease, because we desire to know more than is right, and more than God allows; whereas the principal point of wisdom is a well-regulated sobriety in obedience to God.

6. *And when the woman saw* This impure look of Eve, infected with the poison of concupiscence, was both the messenger and the witness of an impure heart. She could previously behold the tree with such sincerity, that no desire to eat of it affected her mind; for the faith

167 "Sumpta a contraria ratione." The meaning of the passage seems to be this: Satan had first said in plain terms, "Ye shall not surely die;" and then, to confirm his position, had argued that, supposing God had forbidden the tree, he must have done it out of envy, lest he should be compelled to raise them to an equality with himself, and therefore on no possible supposition had they any ground to fear; for they had only to eat in order to be beyond the reach of his vengeance. — *Ed.*

she had in the word of God was the best guardian of her heart, and of all her senses. But now, after the heart had declined from faith, and from obedience to the word, she corrupted both herself and all her senses, and depravity was diffused through all parts of her soul as well as her body. It is, therefore, a sign of impious defection, that the woman now judges the tree to be good for food, eagerly delights herself in beholding it, and persuades herself that it is desirable for the sake of acquiring wisdom; whereas before she had passed by it a hundred times with an unmoved and tranquil look. For now, having shaken off the bridle, her mind wanders dissolutely and intemperately, drawing the body with it to the same licentiousness. The word ⌧⌧⌧⌧⌧ (*lehaskil*,) admits of two explanations: That the tree was desirable either to be *looked upon* or to impart *prudence*. I prefer the latter sense, as better corresponding with the temptation.

And gave also unto her husband with her From these words, some conjecture that Adam was present when his wife was tempted and persuaded by the serpent, which is by no means credible. Yet it might be that he soon joined her, and that, even before the woman tasted the fruit of the tree, she related the conversation held with the serpent, and entangled him with the same fallacies by which she herself had been deceived. Others refer the particle ⌧⌧ (*immah*,) "with her," to the conjugal bond, which may be received. But because Moses simply relates that he ate the fruit taken from the hands of his wife, the opinion has been commonly received, that he was rather captivated with her allurements than persuaded by Satan's impostures.[168] For this purpose the declaration of Paul is adduced,

'Adam was not deceived, but the woman.'
(1 Timothy 2:14.)

But Paul in that place, as he is teaching that the origin of evil was from the woman, only speaks comparatively. Indeed, it was not only for the sake of complying with the wishes of his wife, that he transgressed the law laid down for him; but being drawn by her into fatal ambition, he became partaker of the same defection with her. And truly Paul elsewhere states that sin came not by the woman, but by Adam himself, (Romans 5:12.) Then, the reproof which soon afterwards follows 'Behold, Adam is as one of us,' clearly proves that he also foolishly coveted more than was lawful, and gave greater credit to the flatteries of the devil than to the sacred word of God.

It is now asked, What was the sin of both of them? The opinion of some of the ancients, that they were allured by intemperance of appetite, is puerile. For when there was such an abundance of the choicest fruits what daintiness could there be about one particular kind?

168 So our great Poet: — ***He scrupled not to eat***
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Paradise Lost, Book IX

Augustine is more correct, who says, that pride was the beginning of all evils, and that by pride the human race was ruined. Yet a fuller definition of the sin may be drawn from the kind of temptation which Moses describes. For first the woman is led away from the word of God by the wiles of Satan, through unbelief.[169] Wherefore, the commencement of the ruin by which the human race was overthrown was a defection from the command of God. But observe, that men then revolted from God, when, having forsaken his word, they lent their ears to the falsehoods of Satan. Hence we infer, that God will be seen and adored in his word; and, therefore, that all reverence for him is shaken off when his word is despised. A doctrine most useful to be known, for the word of God obtains its due honor only with few so that they who rush onward with impunity in contempt of this word, yet arrogate to themselves a chief rank among the worshippers of God. But as God does not manifest himself to men otherwise than through the word, so neither is his majesty maintained, nor does his worship remain secure among us any longer than while we obey his word. Therefore, unbelief was the root of defection; just as faith alone unites us to God. Hence flowed ambition and pride, so that the woman first, and then her husband, desired to exalt themselves against God. For truly they did exalt themselves against God, when, honor having been divinely conferred upon them, they not contented with such excellence, desired to know more than was lawful, in order that they might become equal with God. Here also monstrous ingratitude betrays itself. They had been made in the *likeness* of God; but this seems a small thing unless *equality* be added. Now, it is not to be endured that designing and wicked men should labor in vain, as well as absurdly, to extenuate the sin of Adam and his wife. For apostasy is no light offense, but detestable wickedness, by which man withdraws himself from the authority of his Creator, yea, even rejects and denies him. Besides it was not simple apostasy, but combined with atrocious contumelies and reproaches against God himself. Satan accuses God of falsehoods of envy, and of malignity, and our first parents subscribe to a calumny thus vile and execrable. At length, having despised the command of God, they not only indulge their own lust, but enslave themselves to the devil. If any one prefers a shorter explanation, we may say unbelief has opened the door to ambition, but ambition has proved the parent of rebellion, to the end that men, having cast aside the fear of God, might shake off his yoke. On this account, Paul teaches use that by the disobedience of Adam sin entered into the world. Let us imagine that there was nothing worse than the transgression of the command; we shall not even thus have succeeded far in extenuating the fault of Adam. God, having both made him free in everything, and appointed him as king of the world, chose to put his obedience to the proof, in requiring abstinence from one tree alone. This condition did not please him. Perverse declaimers may plead in excuse, that the woman was allured by the beauty of the tree, and the man ensnared by the blandishments of Eve. Yet the milder

169 "Per infidelitatem."

the authority of God, the less excusable was their perverseness in rejecting it. But we must search more deeply for the origin and cause of sin. For never would they have dared to resist God, unless they had first been incredulous of his word. And nothing allured them to covet the fruit but mad ambition. So long as they firmly believing in God's word, freely suffered themselves to be governed by Him, they had serene and duly regulated affections. For, indeed, their best restraint was the thoughts which entirely occupied their minds, that God is just, that nothing is better than to obey his commands and that to be loved by him is the consummation of a happy life. But after they had given place to Satan's blasphemy, they began, like persons fascinated, to lose reason and judgment; yea, since they were become the slaves of Satan; he held their very senses bound. Still further, we know that sins are not estimated in the sight of God by the external appearance, but by the inward disposition.

Again, it appears to many absurd, that the defection of our first parents is said to have proved the destruction of the whole race; and, on this accounts they freely bring an accusation against God. Pelagius, on the other hand, lest, as he falsely feared, the corruption of human nature should be charged upon God, ventured to deny original sin. But an error so gross is plainly refuted, not only by solid testimonies of Scripture, but also by experience itself. The corruption of our nature was unknown to the philosophers who, in other respects, were sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, acute. Surely this stupor itself was a signal proof of original sin. For all who are not utterly blinds perceive that no part of us is sound; that the mind is smitten with blindness, and infected with innumerable errors; that all the affections of the heart are full of stubbornness and wickedness; that vile lusts, or other diseases equally fatal, reign there; and that all the senses burst forth[170] with many vices. Since, however none but God alone is a proper judge in this cause, we must acquiesce in the sentence which he has pronounced in the Scriptures. In the first place, Scripture clearly teaches us that we are born vicious and perverse. The cavil of Pelagius was frivolous, that sin proceeded from Adam by imitation. For David, while still enclosed in his mother's womb, could not be an imitator of Adam, yet he confesses that he was conceived in sin, (Psalm 51:5.) A fuller proof of this matter, and a more ample definition of original sin, may be found in the Institutes;[171] yet here, in a single word, I will attempt to show how far it extends. Whatever in our nature is vicious — since it is not lawful to ascribe it to God — we justly reject as sin.[172] But Paul (Romans 3:10) teaches that corruption does not reside in one part only, but pervades the whole soul, and each of its faculties. Whence it follows, that they childishly err who regard original sin as consisting only in lust, and in the inordinate motion of the appetites, whereas

170 "Scatere," send forth as from a fountain.

171 Calvin's Institutes, Book II, chap. 1, 2, 3.

172 "Merito in peccatum rejicimus."

it seizes upon the very seat of reason, and upon the whole heart. To sin is annexed condemnation,[173] or, as Paul speaks,

'By man came sin, and by sin, death,' (Romans 5:12.)

Wherefore he elsewhere pronounces us to be 'the children of wrath;' as if he would subject us to an eternal curse, (Ephesians 2:3.) In short, that we are despoiled of the excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit, of the light of reason, of justice, and of rectitude, and are prone to every evil; that we are also lost and condemned, and subjected to death, is both our hereditary condition, and, at the same time, a just punishments which God, in the person of Adam, has indicted on the human race. Now, if any one should object, that it is unjust for the innocent to bear the punishment of another's sin, I answer, whatever gifts God had conferred upon us in the person of Adams he had the best right to take away, when Adam wickedly fell. Nor is it necessary to resort to that ancient figment of certain writers, that souls are derived by descent from our first parents.[174] For the human race has not naturally derived corruption through its descent from Adam; but that result is rather to be traced to the appointment of God, who, as he had adorned the whole nature of mankind with most excellent endowments in one man, so in the same man he again denuded it. But now, from the time in which we were corrupted in Adam, we do not bear the punishment of another's offense, but are guilty by our own fault.

A question is mooted by some, concerning the *time* of this fall, or rather ruin. The opinion has been pretty generally received, that they fell on the day they were created; and, therefore Augustine writes, that they stood only for six hours. The conjecture of others, that the temptation was delayed by Satan till the Sabbath, in order to profane that sacred day, is but weak. And certainly, by instances like these, all pious persons are admonished sparingly to indulge themselves in doubtful speculations. As for myself, since I have nothing to assert positively respecting the time, so I think it may be gathered from the narration of Moses, that they did not long retain the dignity they had received; for as soon as he has said they were created, he passes, without the mention of any other thing, to their fall. If Adam had lived but a moderate space of time with his wife, the blessing of God would not have been unfruitful in the production of offspring; but Moses intimates that they were deprived of God's benefits before they had become accustomed to use them. I therefore readily subscribe to the exclamation of Augustine, 'O wretched freewill, which, while yet entire, had so little

173 "Peccato annexus est reatus."

174 "Quod animae ex traduce oriuntur." — "Que les ames procedent de celle d'Adam." That souls proceed from that of Adam. — French Tr. It can be scarcely necessary to inform the reader, that a controversy of some magnitude engaged the attention of the learned, on the subject to which Calvin here alludes; namely, whether the souls of men are, like their bodies, propagated by descent from Adam, or whether they proceed immediately from God. The supposed descent of the soul from Adam was said to be ex traduce, by traduction. — *Ed.*

stability!' And, to say no more respecting the shortness of the time, the admonition of Bernard is worthy of remembrance: 'Since we read that a fall so dreadful took place in Paradise, what shall we do on the dunghill?' At the same time, we must keep in memory by what pretext they were led into this delusion so fatal to themselves, and to all their posterity. Plausible was the adulation of Satan, 'Ye shall know good and evil;' but that knowledge was therefore accursed, because it was sought in preference to the favor of God. Wherefore, unless we wish, of our own accord, to fasten the same snares upon ourselves, let us learn entirely to depend upon the sole will of God, whom we acknowledge as the Author of all good. And, since the Scripture everywhere admonishes us of our nakedness and poverty, and declares that we may recover in Christ what we have lost in Adams let us, renouncing all self-confidence, offer ourselves empty to Christ, that he may fill us with his own riches.

7. *And the eyes of them both were opened*. It was necessary that the eyes of Eve should be veiled till her husband also was deceived; but now both, being alike bound by the chain of an unhappy consent, begin to be sensible of their wretchedness although they are not yet affected with a deep knowledge of their fault. They are ashamed of their nakedness, yet, though convinced, they do not humble themselves before God, nor fear his judgements as they ought; they even do not cease to resort to evasions. Some progress, however, is made; for whereas recently they would, like giants, assault heaven by storm; now, confounded with a sense of their own ignominy, they flee to hiding-places. And truly this opening of the eyes in our first parents to discern their baseness, clearly proves them to have been condemned by their own judgment. They are not yet summoned to the tribunal of God; there is none who accuses them; is not then the sense of shame, which rises spontaneously, a sure token of guilt? The eloquence, therefore, of the whole world will avail nothing to deliver those from condemnation, whose own conscience has become the judge to compel them to confess their fault. It rather becomes us all to open our eyes, that, being confounded at our own disgrace, we may give to God the glory which is his due. God created man flexible; and not only permitted, but willed that he should be tempted. For he both adapted the tongue of the serpent beyond the ordinary use of nature, to the devil's purpose, just as if any one should furnish another with a sword and armor; and then, though the unhappy event was foreknown by him, he did not apply the remedy, which he had the power to do. On the other hand, when we come to speak of man, he will be found to have sinned voluntarily, and to have departed from God, his Maker, by a movement of the mind not less free than perverse. Nor ought we to call that a light fault, which, refusing credit to the word of God, exalted itself against him by impious and sacrilegious emulation, which would not be subject to his authority, and which, finally, both proudly and perfidiously revolted from him. Therefore, whatever sin and fault there is in the fall of our first parents remains with themselves; but there is sufficient reason why the eternal counsel of God preceded it, though that reason is concealed from us. We see, indeed, some good fruit daily springing from a ruin so dreadful,

inasmuch as God instructs us in humility by our miseries and then more clearly illustrates his own goodness; for his grace is more abundantly poured forth, through Christ, upon the world, than it was imparted to Adam in the beginning. Now, if the reason why this is so lies beyond our reach, it is not wonderful that the secret counsel of God should be to us like a labyrinth.[175]

And they sewed fig - leaves together. What I lately said, that they had not been brought either by true shame or by serious fear to repentance, is now more manifest. They sew together for themselves girdles of leaves.[176] For what end? That they may keep God at a distance, as by an invincible barrier! Their sense of evil, therefore, was only confused, and combined with dulness, as is wont to be the case in unquiet sleep. There is none of us who does not smile at their folly, since, certainly, it was ridiculous to place such a covering before the eyes of God. In the meanwhile, we are all infected with the same disease; for, indeed, we tremble, and are covered with shame at the first compunctions of conscience; but self-indulgence soon steals in, and induces us to resort to vain trifles, as if it were an easy thing to delude God. Therefore unless conscience be more closely pressed there is no shadow of excuse too faint and fleeting to obtain our acquiescence; and even if there be no pretext whatever, we still make pleasures for ourselves, and, by an oblivion of three days' duration, we imagine that we are well covered.[177] In short, the cold and faint[178] knowledge of sin, which is inherent in the minds of men, is here described by Moses, in order that they may be rendered inexcusable.[179] Then (as we have already said) Adam and his wife were yet ignorant of their

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175 To the question, 'Why God did not create man without a possibility of sinning', Peter Martyr replies: "Because such a state could not be suitable to the nature of any rational creature; since the creature, as a creature, remains infirm and feeble; whereas, also, he is not entirely one with the rule by which he is to be directed, (otherwise he would be God, the chief good, and chief rectitude,) it follows, that his nature may diverge from that rule. It was, however, possible for grace to confirm him so that he should not sin, which is believed to be the state of angels and of saints in heaven. But that dignity or reward would not be so highly esteemed, if this fallible and inconstant state of man had not preceded it." — Peter Martyr, in Gen., fol. 14. Tiguri, 1579. — *Ed.*

176 "Ex foliis perizomata."

177 "Imo si nullus fucus suppetat, facimus tamen nobis delicias, et tridui oblivione putamus nos bene esse tectos."

178 "Semimortua."

179 What immediately follows is here given in the original:

"Quaeritamen potest, si tota natura peccati sordibus infecta est, cur tantum una in parte corporis deformitas appareat. Neque enim faciem vel pectus operiunt Adam et Heva: sed tantum pudenda quae vocamus. Hac occasione factum esse arbitror ut vulgo non aliam vitae corruptelam agnoscerent quam in libidine venerea. Atqui expendere debebant, non minorem fuisse in oculis et auribus verecundiae causam, quam in parte genitali, quae peccato nondum foedata erat: quum aures et oculi inquinassent Adam et Heva, et diabolo quasi arma

own vileness, since with a covering so light they attempted to hide themselves from the presence of God.

8. *And they heard the voice of the Lord God*. As soon as the voice of God sounds, Adam and Eve perceive that the leaves by which they thought themselves well protected are of no avail. Moses here relates nothing which does not remain in human nature, and may be clearly discerned at the present day. The difference between good and evil is engraven on the hearts of all, as Paul teaches, (Romans 2:15;) but all bury the disgrace of their vices under flimsy leaves till God, by his voice, strikes inwardly their consciences. Hence, after God had shaken them out of their torpor, their alarmed consciences compelled them to hear his voice. Moreover, what Jerome translates, 'at the breeze after midday,'[180] is, in the Hebrew, 'at the wind of the day;'[181] the Greeks, omitting the word 'wind,' have put 'at the evening.'[182] Thus the opinion has prevailed, that Adam, having sinned about noon, was called to judgment about sunset. But I rather incline to a different conjecture, namely, that being covered with their garment, they passed the night in silence and quiet, the darkness aiding their hypocrisy; then, about sunrise, being again thoroughly awakened, they recollected themselves. We know that at the rising of the sun the air is naturally excited; together, then, with this gentle breeze, God appeared; but Moses would improperly have called the *evening* air that of the *day*. Others take the word as describing the southern part or region; and certainly ⊠⊠⊠ (*ruach*) sometimes among the Hebrews signifies one or another region of the world.[183] Others think that the time is here specified as one least exposed to terrors, for in the clear light there is the greater security; and thus, they conceive, is fulfilled what the Scripture declares that they who have accusing consciences are always anxious and disquieted, even without any danger. To this point they refer what is added respecting the wind, as if Adam was terrified at the sound of a falling leaf. But what I have advanced is more true and simple, that what was hid under the darkness of the night was detected at the rising of the sun. Yet I do not doubt that some notable symbol of the presence of God was in that gentle breeze; for although (as I have lately said) the rising sun is wont daily to stir up some breath of air, this is not opposed

praebuissent. Sed Deo fuit satis, extare in corpore humano aliquam pudendam notam, quae nos peccati commonefaciat."

180 "Ad auram post meridiem." Vulgate.

181 ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, (*leruach hayom*).

182 Τὸ δειλινόν. Sept.

183 This criticism, it is presumed, cannot be maintained. It seems to derive no countenance whatever but from some passages of Scripture, which speak of God as scattering his people to the four winds of heaven. (See Jeremiah 49:32, and Jeremiah 52:23.) The common interpretation given in our version, "the cool of the day," as applied to evening, is supported by the highest authorities, such as Cocceius, Schindler, Gesenius, and Lee. Le Clerc, however, adopts the same interpretation as Calvin. — *Ed.*

to the supposition that God gave some extraordinary sign of his approach, to arouse the consciences of Adam and his wife. For, since he is in himself incomprehensible, he assumes, when he wishes to manifest himself to men, those marks by which he may be known. David calls the winds the messengers of God, on the wings of which he rides, or rather flies, with incredible velocity. (Psalm 104:3.) But, as often as he sees good, he uses the winds, as well as other created things, beyond the order of nature, according to his own will. Therefore, Moses, in here mentioning the wind, intimates (according to my judgment) that some unwonted and remarkable symbol of the Divine presence was put forth which should vehemently affect the minds of our first parents. This resource, namely, that of fleeing from God's presence, was nothing better than the former; since God, with his voice alone, soon brings back the fugitives. It is. written,

'Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I traverse the sea, if I take wings and ascend above the clouds, if I descend into the profound abyss, thou, Lord, wilt be everywhere,' (Psalm 139:7.)

This we all confess to be true; yet we do not, in the meantime, cease to snatch at vain subterfuges; and we fancy that shadows of any kind will prove a most excellent defense. Nor is it to be here omitted, that he, who had found a few leaves to be unavailing, fled to whole trees; for so we are accustomed, when shut out from frivolous cavils, to frame new excuses, which may hide us as under a denser shade. When Moses says that Adam and his wife hid themselves 'in the midst of the *tree*[184] of Paradise,' I understand that the singular member is put for the plural; as if he had said, among the *trees*.

9. *And the Lord God called unto Adam.* They had been already smitten by the voice of God, but they lay confounded under the trees, until another voice more effectually penetrated their minds. Moses says that Adam was called by the Lord. Had he not been called before? The former, however, was a confused sound, which had no sufficient force to press upon the conscience. Therefore God now approaches nearer, and from the tangled thicket of trees[185] draws him, however unwilling and resisting, forth into the midst. In the same manner we also are alarmed at the voice of God, as soon as his law sounds in our ears; but presently we snatch at shadows, until he, calling upon us more vehemently, compels us to come forward, arraigned at his tribunal. Paul calls this the life of the Law,[186] when it slays us by charging us with our sins. For as long as we are pleased with ourselves, and are inflated

184 ⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Betok aitz haggan.*) "In medio ligni Paradisi." — Vulgate. Εν μέσω του ξύλου του παραδείσου — Sept. Where the singular number is used in each case. It may be translated, "in the midst of the wood of Paradise;" and wood may be, as in English, used collectively for a number of trees, a forest, or a thicket. Calvin, in his version, translates the clause, "in medio arborum horti."

185 "Ex multiplici arborum complexu."

186 "Vitam Legis." The life or power of the law. — See Romans 7:6.

with a false notion that we are alive, the law is dead to us, because we blunt its point by our hardness; but when it pierces us more sharply, we are driven into new terrors.

10. *And he said, I heard thy voice*. Although this seems to be the confession of a dejected and humbled man, it will nevertheless soon appear that he was not yet properly subdued, nor led to repentance. He imputes his fear to the voice of God, and to his own nakedness, as, if he had never before heard God speaking without being alarmed, and had not been even sweetly exhilarated by his speech. His excessive stupidity appears in this, that he fails to recognize the cause of shame in his sin; he, therefore, shows that he does not yet so feel his punishment, as to confess his fault. In the meantime, he proves what I said before to be true, that original sin does not reside in one part of the body only, but holds its dominion over the whole man, and so occupies every part of the soul, that none remains in its integrity; for, notwithstanding his fig-leaves, he still dreads the presence of God.

11. *Who told thee that thou wast naked ?* An indirect reprimand to reprove the sottishness of Adam in not perceiving his fault in his punishment, as if it had been said, not simply that Adam was afraid at the voice of God, but that the voice of his judge was formidable to him because he was a sinner. Also, that not his nakedness, but the turpitude of the vice by which he had defiled himself, was the cause of fear; and certainly he was guilty of intolerable impiety against God in seeking the origin of evil in nature. Not that he would accuse God in express terms; but deploring his own misery, and dissembling the fact that he was himself the author of it, he malignantly transfers to God the charge which he ought to have brought against himself. What the Vulgate translates, 'Unless it be that thou hast eaten of the tree,'[187] is rather an interrogation.[188] God asks, in the language of doubt, not as if he were searching into some disputable matter, but for the purpose of piercing more acutely the stupid man, who, laboring under fatal disease, is yet unconscious of his malady; just as a sick man, who complains that he is burning, yet thinks not of fever. Let us, however remember that we shall profit nothing by any prevarications but that God will always bind us by a most just accusation in the sin of Adam. The clause, "whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat," is added to remove the pretext of ignorance. For God intimates that Adam was admonished in time; and that he fell from no other cause than this, that he knowingly and voluntarily brought destruction upon himself. Again, the atrocious nature of sin is marked in this transgression and rebellion; for, as nothing is more acceptable to God than obedience, so nothing is more intolerable than when men, having spurned his commandments, obey Satan and their own lust.

187 "Nisi quod de arbore," are the words which Calvin gives. The expression of the Vulgate really is — "Nisi quod ex ligno." There is no difference in the sense. — *Ed.*

188 "Nonne ex ipsa arbore... comedisti?" as in our own version.

12. *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me*. The boldness of Adam now more clearly betrays itself; for, so far from being subdued, he breaks forth into coarser blasphemy. He had before been tacitly expostulating with God; now he begins *openly* to contend with him, and triumphs as one who has broken through all barriers. Whence we perceive what a refractory and indomitable creature man began to be when he became alienated from God; for a lively picture of corrupt nature is presented to us in Adam from the moment of his revolt.

'Every one,' says James, 'is tempted by his own concupiscence,' (James 1:14;)

and even Adam, not otherwise than knowingly and willingly, had set himself, as a rebel, against God. Yet, just as if conscious of no evil, he puts his wife as the guilty party in his place. 'Therefore I have eaten,' he says, 'because she gave.' And not content with this, he brings, at the same time, an accusation against God; objecting that the wife, who had brought ruin upon him, had been given by God. We also, trained in the same school of original sin, are too ready to resort to subterfuges of the same kind; but to no purpose; for howsoever incitements and instigations from other quarters may impel us, yet the unbelief which seduces us from obedience to God is within us; the pride is within which brings forth contempt.

13. *And the Lord God said unto the woman*. God contends no further with the man, nor was it necessary; for he aggravates rather than diminishes his crime, first by a frivolous defense, then by an impious disparagement of God, in short, though he rages he is yet held convicted. The Judge now turns to the woman, that the cause of both being heard, he may at length pronounce sentence. The old interpreter thus renders God's address: 'Why hast thou done this?'[189] But the Hebrew phrase has more vehemence; for it is the language of one who wonders as at something prodigious. It ought therefore rather to be rendered, 'How hast thou done this?'[190] as if he had said, 'How was it possible that thou shouldst bring thy mind to be so perverse a counsellor to thy husband?'

The serpent beguiled me. Eve ought to have been confounded at the portentous wickedness concerning which she was admonished. Yet she is not struck dumb, but, after the example of her husband, transfers the charge to another; by laying the blame on the serpent, she foolishly, indeed, and impiously, thinks herself absolved. For her answer comes at length to this: 'I received from the serpent what thou hadst forbidden; the serpent, therefore, was the impostor.' But who compelled Eve to listen to his fallacies, and even to place confidence in them more readily than in the word of God? Lastly, how did she admit them, but by throwing open and betraying that door of access which God had sufficiently fortified? But the fruit of original sin everywhere presents itself; being blind in its own hy-

189 "Quare hoc fecisti?" — *Vulgate*.

190 "Quomodo hoc fecisti?" □□□□ □□□-□□

pocrisy, it would gladly render God mute and speechless. And whence arise daily so many murmurs, but because God does not hold his peace whenever we choose to blind ourselves?

14. *And the Lord God said unto the serpent*. He does not interrogate the serpent as he had done the man and the woman; because, in the animal itself there was no sense of sin, and because, to the devil he would hold out no hope of pardon. He might truly, by his own authority, have pronounced sentence against Adam and Eve, though unheard. Why then does he call them to undergo examination, except that he has a care for their salvation? This doctrine is to be applied to our benefit. There would be no need of any trial of the cause, or of any solemn form of judgment, in order to condemn us; wherefore, while God insists upon extorting a confession from us, he acts rather as a physician than as a judge. There is the same reason why the Lords before he imposes punishment on man, begins with the serpent. For corrective punishments (as we shall see) are of a different kind, and are inflicted with the design of leading us to repentance; but in this there is nothing of the sort.

It is, however, doubtful to whom the words refer, whether to the serpent or to the devil. Moses, indeed, says that the serpent was a skillful and cunning animal; yet it is certain, that, when Satan was devising the destruction of man, the serpent was guiltless of his fraud and wickedness. Wherefore, many explain this whole passage allegorically, and plausible are the subtleties which they adduce for this purpose. But when all things are more accurately weighed, readers endued with sound judgment will easily perceive that the language is of a mixed character; for God so addresses the serpent that the last clause belongs to the devil. If it seem to any one absurd, that the punishment of another's fraud should be exacted from a brute animal, the solution is at hand; that, since it had been created for the benefit of man, there was nothing improper in its being accursed from the moment that it was employed for his destruction. And by this act of vengeance God would prove how highly he estimates the salvation of man; just as if a father should hold the sword in execration by which his son had been slain. And here we must consider, not only the kind of authority which God has over his creatures, but also the end for which he created them, as I have recently said. For the equity of the divine sentence depends on that order of nature which he has sanctioned; it has, therefore, no affinity whatever with blind revenge. In this manner the reprobate will be delivered over into eternal fire with their bodies; which bodies, although they are not self-moved, are yet the instruments of perpetrating evil. So whatever wickedness a man commits is ascribed to his hands, and, therefore, they are deemed polluted; while yet they do not more themselves, except so far as, under the impulse of a depraved affection of the heart, they carry into execution what has been there conceived. According to this method of reasoning, the serpent is said to have done what the devil did by its means. But if God so severely avenged the destruction of man upon a brute animal, much less did he spare Satan, the author of the whole evil, as will appear more clearly in the concluding part of the address.

Thou art cursed above all cattle This curse of God has such force against the serpents as to render it despicable, and scarcely tolerable to heaven and earth, leading a life exposed to, and replete with, constant terrors. Besides, it is not only hateful to us, as the chief enemy of the human race, but, being separated also from other animals, carries on a kind of war with nature; for we see it had before been so gentle that the woman did not flee from its familiar approach. But what follows has greater difficulty because that which God denounces as a punishment seems to be natural; namely, that it should creep upon its belly and eat dust. This objection has induced certain men of learning and ability to say, that the serpent had been accustomed to walk with an erect body before it had been abused by Satan.[191] There will, however, be no absurdity in supposing, that the serpent was again consigned to that former condition, to which he was already naturally subject. For thus he, who had exalted himself against the image of God, was to be thrust back into his proper rank; as if it had been said, 'Thou, a wretched and filthy animal, hast dared to rise up against man, whom I appointed to the dominion of the whole world; as if, truly, thou, who art fixed to the earth, hadst any right to penetrate into heaven. Therefore, I now throw thee back again to the place whence thou hast attempted to emerge, that thou mayest learn to be contented with thy lot, and no more exalt thyself, to man's reproach and injury.' In the meanwhile he is recalled from his insolent motions to his accustomed mode of going, in such a way as to be, at the same time, condemned to perpetual infamy. To eat dust is the sign of a vile and sordid nature. This (in my opinion) is the simple meaning of the passage, which the testimony of Isaiah also confirms, (Isaiah 65:25;) for while he promises under the reign of Christ, the complete restoration of a sound and well-constituted nature, he records, among other things, that dust shall be to the serpent for bread. Wherefore, it is not necessary to seek for any fresh change in each particular which Moses here relates.

15. *I will put enmity*. I interpret this simply to mean that there should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents, which is now apparent; for, by a secret feeling of nature, man abhors them. It is regarded, as among prodigies, that some men take pleasure in them; and as often as the sight of a serpent inspires us with horrors the memory of our fall is renewed. With this I combine in one continued discourse what immediately follows: 'It shall wound thy head, and thou shalt wound its heel.' For he declares that there shall be such hatred that on both sides they shall be troublesome to each other; the serpent shall be vexatious towards men, and men shall be intent on the destruction of serpents. Meanwhile, we see that the Lord acts mercifully in chastising man, whom he does not suffer Satan to touch except in the *heel* ; while he subjects the *head* of the serpent to be wounded by him. For in the terms *head* and *heel* there is a distinction between the superior and the inferior. And thus God leaves some remains of dominion to man; because he so places the

191 See Bishop Patrick's Commentary.

mutual disposition to injure each other, that yet their condition should not be equal, but man should be superior in the conflict. Jerome, in turning the first member of the sentence, 'Thou shalt bruise the head;'[192] and the second, "Thou shalt be ensnared in the heel",[193] does it without reason, for the same verb is repeated by Moses; the difference is to be noted only in the head and the heel, as I have just now said. Yet the Hebrew verb whether derived from ⊠⊠⊠ (*shooph*,) or from ⊠⊠⊠ (*shapha*,) some interpret to *bruise* or to *strike*, others to *bite*[194] I have, however, no doubt that Moses wished to allude to the name of the serpent which is called in Hebrew ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*shipiphon*,) from ⊠⊠⊠ (*shapha*,) or ⊠⊠⊠ (*shooph*).[195]

We must now make a transition from the serpent to the author of this mischief himself; and that not only in the way of comparison, for there truly is a literal *anagogy*;[196] because God has not so vented his anger upon the outward instrument as to spare the devil, with whom lay all the blame. That this may the more certainly appear to us, it is worth the while first to observe that the Lord spoke not for the sake of the serpent but of the man; fur what end could it answer to thunder against the serpent in unintelligible words? Wherefore respect was had to men; both that they might be affected with a greater dread of sin, seeing how highly displeasing it is to God, and that hence they might take consolation for their misery, because they would perceive that God is still propitious to them. But now it is obvious to and how slender and insignificant would be the argument for a good hope, if mention were here made of a serpent only; because nothing would be then provided for, except the fading and transient life of the body. Men would remain, in the meanwhile, the slaves of Satan, who would proudly triumph over them, and trample on their heads. Wherefore, that God might revive the fainting minds of men, and restore them when oppressed by despair, it became necessary to promise them, in their posterity victory over Satan, through whose

192 "Conteres caput." The version of the Vulgate is, "conteret caput." But this does not affect the validity of Calvin's criticism, his object being to show the inpropriety of translating the same Hebrew word by Latin words of such different meaning as contero and insidior. — *Ed*.

193 "Insidiaberis calcaneo."

194 See Cocceius, Gesenius, and Professor Lee, sub voce ⊠⊠⊠. — *Ed*

195 There would appear greater force in Calvin's criticism if this had been the name given to the serpent in the narrative of Moses. The word here used, however, is ⊠⊠⊠, (*nachash*,) which gives no countenance to the supposed reference; besides, the word quoted by Calvin only refers to a particular kind of serpent, not to the whole species. — *Ed*

196 *Anagogy*. This word is inserted from the original for want of a more generally intelligible term in our own language to express the author's meaning. It is from the Greek Αναγωγή, which signifies "a raising on high, especially elevation of the mind above earthly things to abstract speculations, (in ecclesiastical writings,) to the contemplation of the sublime truths and mysteries of Holy Scripture." The meaning of Calvin is, that there was an intentional transition from the serpent to the spiritual being who made use of it. — *Ed*

wiles they had been ruined. This, then, was the only salutary medicine which could recover the lost, and restore life to the dead. I therefore conclude, that God here chiefly assails Satan under the name of the serpent, and hurls against him the lightning of his judgment. This he does for a twofold reason: first, that men may learn to beware of Satan as of a most deadly enemy; then, that they may contend against him with the assured confidence of victory.

Now, though all do not dissent in their minds from Satan yea, a great part adhere to him too familiarly — yet, in reality, Satan is their enemy; nor do even those cease to dread him whom he soothes by his flatteries; and because he knows that the minds of men are set against him, he craftily insinuates himself by indirect methods, and thus deceives them under a disguised form.[197] In short, it is in grafted in us by nature to flee from Satan as our adversary. And, in order to show that he should be odious not to one generation only, God expressly says, 'between thee and the seed of the woman,' as widely indeed, as the human race shall be propagated. He mentions the woman on this account, because, as she had yielded to the subtlety of the devils and being first deceived, had drawn her husband into the participation of her ruin, so she had peculiar need of consolation.

It shall bruise[198] This passage affords too clear a proof of the great ignorance, dullness, and carelessness, which have prevailed among all the learned men of the Papacy. The feminine gender has crept in instead of the masculine or neuter. There has been none among them who would consult the Hebrew or Greek *codices*, or who would even compare the Latin copies with each other.[199] Therefore, by a common error, this most corrupt reading has been received. Then, a profane exposition of it has been invented, by applying to the mother of Christ what is said concerning her seed.

There is, indeed no ambiguity in the *words* here used by Moses; but I do not agree with others respecting their *meaning*; for other interpreters take the seed for *Christ*, without controversy; as if it were said, that some one would arise from the seed of the woman who should wound the serpent's head. Gladly would I give my suffrage in support of their opinion, but that I regard the word *seed* as too violently distorted by them; for who will concede that a *collective* noun is to be understood of one man *only*? Further, as the perpetuity of the contest is noted, so victory is promised to the human race through a continual succession

197 "Et les decoit en se masquant de la personne d'autruy." — *French Trans.*

198 "Ipsum vulnerabit."

199 See the Vulgate. "Ipsa conteret," — She shall bruise. The following judicious note from Professor Lee's Hebrew Lexicon confirms the criticism of Calvin: — "The attempt that has been made gravely to justify a blunder of the Vulgate, which here reads ipsa for ipse, is a melancholy proof of the great neglect of the study of Hebrew in this country. Any one acquainted with the first elements of the grammar would see that, to make the Vulgate correct, we must substitute ⬚⬚⬚⬚ for ⬚⬚⬚⬚, and ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚ for ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚," — that is, both the form and the affixes of the verb would require alteration, in order to accommodate themselves to the change of gender. — *Ed*

of ages. I explain, therefore, the *seed* to mean the posterity of the woman generally. But since experience teaches that not all the sons of Adam by far, arise as conquerors of the devil, we must necessarily come to one head, that we may find to whom the victory belongs. So Paul, from the seed of Abraham, leads us to Christ; because many were degenerate sons, and a considerable part adulterous, through infidelity; whence it follows that the unity of the body flows from the head. Wherefore, the sense will be (in my judgment) that the human race, which Satan was endeavoring to oppress, would at length be victorious.[200] In the meantime, we must keep in mind that method of conquering which the Scripture describes. Satan has, in all ages, led the sons of men "captive at his will", and, to this day, retains his lamentable triumph over them, and for that reason is called the prince of the world, (John 12:31.) But because one stronger than he has descended from heaven, who will subdue him, hence it comes to pass that, in the same manner, the whole Church of God, under its Head, will gloriously exult over him. To this the declaration of Paul refers,

"The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly,"
(Romans 16:20.)

By which words he signifies that the power of bruising Satan is imparted to faithful men, and thus the blessing is the common property of the whole Church; but he, at the same time, admonishes us, that it only has its commencement in this world; because God crowns none but well-tried wrestlers.

16. *Unto the woman he said.* In order that the majesty of the judge may shine the more brightly, God uses no long disputation; whence also we may perceive of what avail are all our tergiversations with him. In bringing the serpent forward, Eve thought she had herself escaped. God, disregarding her cavils, condemns her. Let the sinner, therefore, when he comes to the bar of God, cease to contend, lest he should more severely provoke against himself the anger of him whom he has already too highly offended. We must now consider the kind of punishment imposed upon the woman. When he says, 'I will multiply thy pains,' he comprises all the trouble women sustain during pregnancy[201]

It is credible that the woman would have brought forth without pain, or at least without such great suffering, if she had stood in her original condition; but her revolt from God subjected her to inconveniences of this kind. The expression, 'pains and conception,' is to be taken by the figure *hypallage*,[202] for the pains which they endure in consequence of

200 The judicious reader will hardly acknowledge the reasoning of Calvin to be valid. The whole subject here referred to is discussed with great learning and acuteness, as well as with great force of language, by Bishop Horsley, in his second Sermon on Peter 1:20, 21. — *Ed.*

201 "Quum dicit, Multiplicabo dolores, complecitur quicquid molestiae sustinent mulieres, ex quo gravidae esse incipiunt, fastidium cibi, deliquia, lassitudines, aliaque innumera, usque dum ventum est ad partum, qui acerbissima tormenta secum affert. Est enim credibile," etc.

202 The use of one word for another.

conception. The second punishment which he exacts is *subjection*. For this form of speech, "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband," is of the same force as if he had said that she should not be free and at her own command, but subject to the authority of her husband and dependent upon his will; or as if he had said, 'Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband wishes.' As it is declared afterwards, Unto thee shall be his desire, (Genesis 4:7.) Thus the woman, who had perversely exceeded her proper bounds, is forced back to her own position. She had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; now, however, she is cast into servitude.

17. *And unto Adam he said*. In the first place, it is to be observed, that punishment was not inflicted upon the first of our race so as to rest on those two alone, but was extended generally to all their posterity, in order that we might know that the human race was cursed in their person; we next observe, that they were subjected only to temporal punishment, that, from the moderation of the divine anger, they might entertain hope of pardon. God, by adducing the reason why he thus punishes the man, cuts off from him the occasion of murmuring. For no excuse was left to him who had obeyed his wife rather than God; yea, had despised God for the sake of his wife, placing so much confidence in the fallacies of Satan, — whose messenger and servant she was, — that he did not hesitate perfidiously to deny his Maker. But, although God deals decisively and briefly with Adam, he yet refutes the pretext by which he had tried to escape, in order the more easily to lead him to repentance. After he has briefly spoken of Adam's sin, he announces that the earth would be cursed for his sake. The ancient interpreter has translated it, 'In thy work;' [203] but the reading is to be retained, in which all the Hebrew copies agree, namely, the earth was cursed *on account of Adam*. Now, as the *blessing* of the earth means, in the language of Scripture, that fertility which God infuses by his secret power, so the curse is nothing else than the opposite privation, when God withdraws his favor. Nor ought it to seem absurd, that, through the sin of man, punishment should overflow the earth, though innocent. For as the *primum mobile*[204] rolls all the celestial spheres along with it, so the ruin of man drives headlong all those creatures which were formed for his sake, and had been made subject to him. And we see how constantly the condition of the world itself varies with respect to men, according as God is angry with them, or shows them his favor. We may add, that, properly speaking, this whole punishment is exacted, not from the earth itself, but from man alone. For the earth does not bear fruit for itself, but in order that food may be supplied to us out of its bowels.

203 "In opere tuo." — *Vulgate*. The Septuagint makes the same mistake; Εν τοῖς ἔργοις σου. In thy works.

204 The primum mobile of ancient astronomy was held to be the ninth heaven, which surrounded those of the fixed stars, planets, and the atmosphere, and was regarded as the first mover of all the heavenly bodies. These bodies were at that time supposed to be carried round the earth by this powerful agent, while the earth itself remained as the center of the system. The Newtonian philosophy put all such theories to flight. — *Ed.*

The Lord, however, determined that his anger should like a deluge, overflow all parts of the earth, that wherever man might look, the atrocity of his sin should meet his eyes. Before the fall, the state of the world was a most fair and delightful mirror of the divine favor and paternal indulgence towards man. Now, in all the elements we perceive that we are cursed. And although (as David says) the earth is still full of the mercy of God, (Psalm 33:5,) yet, at the same time, appear manifest signs of his dreadful alienation from us, by which if we are unmoved, we betray our blindness and insensibility. Only, lest sadness and horror should overwhelm us, the Lord sprinkles everywhere the tokens of his goodness. Moreover although the blessing of God is never seen pure and transparent as it appeared to man in innocence yet, if what remains behind be considered in itself, David truly and properly exclaims, 'The earth is full of the mercy of God.'

Again, by 'eating of the earth,' Moses means 'eating of the *fruits'* which proceed from it. The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*itsabon*,) which is rendered *pain*,[205] is also taken for *trouble* and *fatigue*. In this place, it stands in antithesis with the pleasant labor in which Adam previously so employed himself, that in a sense he might be said to play; for he was not formed for idleness, but for action. Therefore the Lord had placed him over a garden which was to be cultivated. But, whereas in that labor there had been sweet delight; now servile work is enjoined upon him, as if he were condemned to the mines. And yet the asperity of this punishment also is mitigated by the clemency of God, because something of enjoyment is blended with the labors of men, lest they should be altogether ungrateful, as I shall again declare under the next verse.

18. *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth*. He more largely treats of what he has already alluded to, namely, the participation of the fruits of the earth with labor and trouble. And he assigns as the reason, that the earth will not be the same as it was before, producing perfect fruits; for he declares that the earth would degenerate from its fertility, and bring forth briers and noxious plants. Therefore we may know, that whatsoever unwholesome things may be produced, are not natural fruits of the earth, but are corruptions which originate from sin. Yet it is not our part to expostulate with the earth for not answering to our wishes, and to the labors of its cultivators as if it were maliciously frustrating our purpose; but in its sterility let us mark the anger of Gods and mourn over our own sins. It here been falsely maintained by some that the earth is exhausted by the long succession of time, as if constant bringing forth had wearied it. They think more correctly who acknowledge that, by the increasing wickedness of men, the remaining blessing of God is gradually diminished and impaired; and certainly there is danger, unless the world repent, that a great part of men should shortly perish through hunger, and other dreadful miseries. The words imme-

205 "Quod vertunt dolorem." In Calvin's own text it is, "In labore"; in the Vulgate, "In laboribus." Gesenius renders the word "Saure Arbeit," severe labor. — *Ed.*

diately following, Thou shalt eat the herb of the field, are expounded too strictly (in my judgment) by those who think that Adam was thereby deprived of all the fruits which he had before been permitted to eat. God intends nothing more than that he should be to such an extent deprived of his former delicacies as to be compelled to use, in addition to them, the herbs which had been designed only for brute animals. For the mode of living at first appointed him, in that happy and delightful abundance, was far more delicate than it afterwards became. God, therefore, describes a part of this poverty by the word *herbs*, just as if a king should send away any one of his attendants from the upper table, to that which was plebeian and mean; or, as if a father should feed a son, who had offended him, with the coarse bread of servants; not that he interdicts man from all other food, but that he abates much of his accustomed liberality. This, however might be taken as added for the purpose of consolation, as if it had been said, 'Although the earth, which ought to be the mother of good fruits only, be covered with thorns and briers, still it shall yield to thee sustenance whereby thou mayest be fed.'

19. *In the sweat of thy face*. Some indeed, translate it 'labor;' the translation, however, is forced. But by "sweat" is understood hard labor and full of fatigue and weariness, which, by its difficulty produces sweat. It is a repetition of the former sentence, where it was said, 'Thou shalt eat it in labor.' Under the cover of this passage, certain ignorant persons would rashly impel all men to manual labor; for God is not here teaching as a master or legislator, but only denouncing punishment as a judge. And, truly, if a *law* had been here prescribed, it would be necessary for all to become husband men, nor would any place be given to mechanical arts; we must go out of the world to seek for clothing and other necessary conveniences of life. What, then, does the passage mean? Truly God pronounces, as from his judgment-seat, that the life of man shall henceforth be miserable, because Adam had proved himself unworthy of that tranquil, happy and joyful state for which he had been created. Should any one object that there are many inactive and indolent persons, this does not prevent the curse from having spread over the whole human race. For I say that no one lies torpid in such a degree of sloth as not to be under the necessity of experiencing that this curse belongs to all. Some flee from troubles, and many more do all they can to grasp at immunity from them; but the Lord subjects all, without exception, to this yoke of imposed servitude. It is, nevertheless, to be, at the same time, maintained that labor is not imposed equally on each, but on some more, on others less. Therefore, the labor common to the whole body is here described; not that which belongs peculiarly to each member, except so far as it pleases the Lord to divide to each a certain measure from the common mass of evils. It is, however, to be observed, that they who meekly submit to their sufferings, present to God an acceptable obedience, if, indeed, there be joined with this bearing of the cross, that knowledge of sin which may teach them to be humble. Truly it is faith alone which can offer such a sacrifice to God; but the faithful the more they labor in procuring a livelihood, with

the greater advantage are they stimulated to repentance, and accustom themselves to the mortification of the flesh; yet God often remits a portion of this curse to his own children, lest they should sink beneath the burden. To which purpose this passage is appropriate,

'Some will rise early and go late to rest, they will eat the bread of carefulness, but the Lord will give to his beloved sleep,'
(Psalm 127:2.)

So far, truly, as those things which had been polluted in Adam are repaired by the grace of Christ, the pious feel more deeply that God is good, and enjoy the sweetness of his paternal indulgence. But because, even in the best, the flesh is to be subdued, it not infrequently happens that the pious themselves are worn down with hard labors and with hunger. There is, therefore, nothing better for us than that we, being admonished of the miseries of the present life, should weep over our sins, and seek that relief from the grace of Christ which may not only assuage the bitterness of grief, but mingle its own sweetness with it.[206] Moreover, Moses does not enumerate all the disadvantages in which man, by sin, has involved himself; for it appears that all the evils of the present life, which experience proves to be innumerable, have proceeded from the same fountain. The inclemency of the air, frost, thunders, unseasonable rains, drought, hail, and whatever is disorderly in the world, are the fruits of sin. Nor is there any other primary cause of diseases. This has been celebrated in poetical fables, and was doubtless handed down, by tradition, from the fathers. Hence that passage in Horace: —

"When from Heaven's fane the furtive hand
Of man the sacred fire withdrew,
A countless host — at God's command —
To earth of fierce diseases flew;
And death — till now kept far away
Hastened his step to seize his prey.[207]

But Moses, who, according to his custom, studies a brevity adapted to the capacity of the common people, was content to touch upon what was most apparent, in order that, from one example, we may learn that the whole order of nature was subverted by the sin of

206 "Sed etiam dulci temperamento condiat." "Laquelle non seulement appaise l'aigreur des douleurs, mais aussi leur donne saveur, meslant le sucre parmi le vinaigre." — Which not only relieves the sourness of griefs, but also gives them savor, mixing sugar with the vinegar. — French Trans.

207 ***"Post ignem aetheria domo***
Subductum, macies et nova febrium
Terris incubuit cohors;
Semotique prius tarda necessitas
Leti corripuit gradum." — Hor. Carm. in. Lib. I.

man. Should any one again object, that no suffering was imposed on men which did not also belong to women: I answer, it was done designedly, to teach us, that from the sin of Adam, the curse flowed in common to both sexes; as Paul testifies, that 'all are dead in Adam,' (Romans 5:12.)

One question remains to be examined — 'When God had before shown himself propitious to Adam and his wife, — having given them hope of pardon, — why does he begin anew to exact punishment from them? Certainly in that sentence, 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent,' the remission of sins and the grace of eternal salvation is contained. But it is absurd that God, after he has been reconciled, should actually prosecute his anger. To untie this knot, some have invented a distinction of a twofold remission, namely, a remission of the *fault* and a remission of the *punishment*, to which the figment of *satisfactions* was afterwards annexed. They have feigned that God, in absolving men from the fault, still retains the punishment; and that, according to the rigour of his justice, he will inflict at least a temporal punishment. But they who imagined that punishments are required as *compensations*, have been preposterous interpreters of the judgments of God. For God does not consider, in chastising the faithful, what they deserve; but what will be useful to them in future; and fulfils the office of a physician rather than of a judge.[208] Therefore, the absolution which he imparts to his children is complete and not by halves. That he, nevertheless, punishes those who are received into favor, is to be regarded as a kind of chastisement which serves as medicine for future time, but ought not properly to be regarded as the vindictive punishment of sin committed. If we duly consider how great is the torpor of the human mind, then, how great its lasciviousness, how great its contumacy, how great its levity, and how quick its forgetfulness, we shall not wonder at God's severity in subduing it. If he admonishes in words, he is not heard; if he adds stripes, it avails but little; when it happens that he is heard, the flesh nevertheless perversely spurns the admonition. That obstinate hardness which, with all its power opposes itself to God, is worse than lasciviousness. If any one is naturally endued with such a gentle disposition that he does not disown the duty of submission to God, yet, having escaped from the hand of God, after one allowed sin, he will soon relapse, unless he be drawn back as by force. Wherefore, this general axiom is to be maintained, that all the sufferings to which the life of men is subject and obnoxious, are necessary exercises, by which God partly invites us to repentance, partly instructs us in humility, and partly renders us more cautious and more attentive in guarding against the allurements of sin for the future.

Till thou return. He denounces that the termination of a miserable life shall be death; as if he would say, that Adam should at length come, through various and continued kinds

208 "The punishments inflicted by God are the remedies and the restraints of our vitiated nature." — Peter Martyr, in Genesis fol. 17.

of evil, to the last evil of all. Thus is fulfilled what we said before, that the death of Adam had commenced immediately from the day of his transgression. For this accursed life of man could be nothing else than the beginning of death. 'But where then is the victory over the serpent, if death occupies the last place? For the words seem to have no other signification, than that man must be ultimately crushed by death. Therefore, since death leaves nothing to Adam, the promise recently given fails; to which may be added, that the hope of being restored to a state of salvation was most slender and obscure.' Truly I do not doubt that these terrible words would grievously afflict minds already dejected, from other causes, by sorrow. But since, though astonished by their sudden calamity, they were yet not deeply affected with the knowledge of sin; it is not wonderful that God persisted the more in reminding them of their punishment, in order that he might beat them down, as with reiterated blows. Although the consolation offered be in itself obscure and feeble, God caused it to be sufficient for the support of their hope, lest the weight of their affliction should entirely overwhelm them. In the meantime, it was necessary that they should be weighed down by a mass of manifold evils, until God should have reduced them to true and serious repentance. Moreover, whereas death is here put as the final issue,[209] this ought to be referred to man; because in Adam himself nothing but death will be found; yet, in this way, he is urged to seek a remedy in Christ.

For dust thou art. Since what God here declares belongs to man's *nature*, not to his *crime* or *fault*, it might seem that death was not superadded as adventitious to him. And therefore some understand what was before said, 'Thou shalt die,' in a spiritual sense; thinking that, even if Adam had not sinned, his body must still have been separated from his soul. But, since the declaration of Paul is clear, that

'all die in Adams as they shall rise again in Christ,'
(1 Corinthians 15:22,)

this wound also was inflicted by sin. Nor truly is the solution of the question difficult, — 'Why God should pronounce, that he who was taken from the dust should return to it.' For as soon as he had been raised to a dignity so great, that the glory of the Divine Image shone in him, the terrestrial origin of his body was almost obliterated. Now, however, after he had been despoiled of his divine and heavenly excellence, what remains but that by his very departure out of life, he should recognize himself to be earth? Hence it is that we dread death, because dissolution, which is contrary to nature, cannot naturally be desired. Truly the first man would have passed to a better life, had he remained upright; but there would have been no separation of the soul from the body, no corruption, no kind of destruction, and, in short, no violent change.

209 "Quasi ultima linea." "Comme le bout." — *French Trans.*

20. *And Adam called, etc.* There are two ways in which this may be read. The former, in the *pluperfect* tense, 'Adam had called.' If we follow this reading, the sense of Moses will be, that Adam had been greatly deceived, in promising *life* to himself and to his posterity, from a wife, whom he afterwards found by experience to be the introducer of *death*. And Moses (as we have seen) is accustomed, without preserving the order of the history, to subjoin afterwards things which had been prior in point of time. If, however we read the passage in the *preterite* tense, it may be understood either in a good or bad sense. There are those who think that Adam, animated by the hope of a more happy condition, because God had promised that the head of the serpent should be wounded by the seed of the woman, called her by a name implying life.'[210] This would be a noble and even heroic fortitude of mind; since he could not, without an arduous and difficult struggle, deem *her* the mother of the living, who, before any man could have been born, had involved all in eternal destruction. But, because I fear lest this conjecture should be weak, let the reader consider whether Moses did not design rather to tax Adam with thoughtlessness, who being himself immersed in death, yet gave to his wife so proud a name. Nevertheless, I do not doubt that, when he heard the declaration of God concerning the prolongation of life, he began again to breathe and to take courage; and then, as one revived, he gave his wife a name derived from *life* ; but it does not follow, that by a faith accordant with the word of God, he triumphed, as he ought to have done, over death. I therefore thus expound the passage; as soon as he had escaped present death, being encouraged by a measure of consolation, he celebrated that divine benefit which, beyond all expectation, he had received, in the name he gave his wife.[211]

21. *Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make, etc.* Moses here, in a homely style, declares that the Lord had undertaken the labor of making garments of skins for Adam and his wife. It is not indeed proper so to understand his words, as if God had been a furrier, or a servant to sew clothes. Now, it is not credible that skins should have been presented to them by chance; but, since animals had before been destined for their use, being now impelled by a new necessity, they put some to death, in order to cover themselves with their skins, having been divinely directed to adopt this counsel; therefore Moses calls God the Author of it. The reason why the Lord clothed them with garments of skin appears to me to be this: because garments formed of this material would have a more degrading appearance than those made of linen or of woolen.[212] God therefore designed that our first parents should,

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210 "Vocasse eam vivificam."

211 It is probable, however, that more than this is here meant. The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠, (*chavah*,) Eve, is in the Septuagint rendered ζωή, *life* ; and, as Fagius observes, Adam comforted himself in his wife, because he should, through Eve, produce a posterity in which (as parents in their children) they should be permanently victorious. — Pol. Syn. — *Ed*

212 "Quia [vestes] ex ea materia confectae, belluinum quiddam magis saperent, quam linae vel laneae."

in such a dress, behold their own vileness, — just as they had before seen it in their nudity, — and should thus be reminded of their sin.[213] In the meantime, it is not to be denied, that he would propose to us an example, by which he would accustom us to a frugal and inexpensive mode of dress. And I wish those delicate persons would reflect on this, who deem no ornament sufficiently attractive, unless it exceed in magnificence. Not that every kind of ornament is to be expressly condemned; but because when immoderate elegance and splendor is carefully sought after, not only is that Master despised, who intended clothing to be a sign of shame, but war is, in a certain sense, carried on against nature.

22. *Behold, the man is become as one of us*[214] An ironical reproof, by which God would not only prick the heart of man, but pierce it through and through. He does not, however, cruelly triumph over the miserable and afflicted; but, according to the necessity of the disease, applies a more violent remedy. For, though Adam was confounded and astonished at his calamity, he yet did not so deeply reflect on its cause as to become weary of his pride, that he might learn to embrace true humility. We may add, that God inveighed, by this irony,[215] not more against Adam himself then against his posterity, for the purpose of commending modesty to all ages. The particle, "Behold," denotes that the sentence is pronounced upon the cause then in hand. And, truly, it was a sad and horrid spectacle; that he, in whom recently the glory of the Divine image was shining, should lie hidden under fetid skins to cover his own disgrace, and that there should be more comeliness in a dead animal than in a living man! The clause which is immediately added, "To know good and evil," describes the cause of so great misery, namely, that Adam, not content with his condition, had tried to ascend higher than was lawful; as if it had been said, 'See now whither thy ambition and thy perverse appetite for illicit knowledge have precipitated thee.' Yet the Lord does not even deign to hold converse with him, but contemptuously draws him forth, for the sake of exposing him to greater infamy. Thus was it necessary for his iron pride to be beaten down, that he might at length descend into himself, and become more and more displeased with himself.

One of us. Some refer the plural number here used to the angels, as if God would make a distinction between man, who is an earthly and despised animal, and celestial beings; but this exposition seems farfetched. The meaning will be more simple if thus resolved, 'After

213 "As the prisoner, looking on his irons, thinketh on his theft, so we, looking on our garments, should think on our sins." — *Trapp*. For an ample discussion of the reasons why a more comprehensive view should be taken of this subject than Calvin here adopts, the reader may turn to Dr. Magee's learned "Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice;" where he will see, that the origin of the clothing with skins was most probably connected with a previous appointment of the sacrifice of animals. — See *Magee*, note 52:— *Ed.*

214 "Adam quasi unus."

215 "Hac subsannatione."

this, Adam will be so like Me, that we shall become companions for each other.' The argument which Christians draw from this passage for the doctrine of the three Persons in the Godhead is, I fear, not sufficiently firm.[216] There is not, indeed, the same reason for it as in the former passage, "Let us make man in our image," since here Adam is included in the word Us; but, in the other place, a certain distinction in the essence of God is expressed.

And now, lest, etc. There is a defect in the sentence which I think ought to be thus supplied: 'It now remains that in future, he be debarred from the fruit of the tree of life;' for by these words Adam is admonished that the punishment to which he is consigned shall not be that of a moment, or of a few days, but that he shall always be an exile from a happy life. They are mistaken who think this also to be an irony; as if God were denying that the tree would prove advantageous to man, even though he might eat of it; for he rather, by depriving him of the symbol, takes also away the thing signified. We know what is the efficacy of sacraments; and it was said above that the tree was given as a pledge of life. Wherefore, that he might understand himself to be deprived of his former life, a solemn excommunication is added; not that the Lord would cut him off from all hope of salvation, but, by taking away what he had given, would cause man to seek new assistance elsewhere. Now, there remained an expiation in sacrifices, which might restore him to the life he had lost. Previously, direct communication with God was the source of life to Adam; but, from the moment in which he became alienated from God, it was necessary that he should recover life by the death of Christ, by whose life he then lived. It is indeed certain, that man would not have been able, had he even devoured the whole tree, to enjoy life against the will of God; but God, out of respect to his own institution, connects life with the external sign, till the promise should be taken away from it; for there never was any intrinsic efficacy in the tree; but God made it life-giving, so far as he had sealed his grace to man in the use of it, as, in truths he represents nothing to us with false signs, but always speaks to us, as they say, with effect. In short, God resolved to wrest out of the hands of man that which was the occasion or ground of confidence, lest he should form for himself a vain hope of the perpetuity of the life which he had lost.

23. *Therefore the Lord God sent him forth*[217] Here Moses partly prosecutes what he had said concerning the punishment inflicted on man, and partly celebrates the goodness of God, by which the rigour of his judgment was mitigated. God mercifully softens the exile of Adam, by still providing for him a remaining home on earth, and by assigning to him a

216 Bishop Patrick, who contends for the interpretation here opposed, says, "Like one of us. These words plainly insinuate a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, and all other explications of them seem forced and unnatural; that of Mr. Calvin's being as disagreeable to the Hebrew phrase as that of Socinus to the excellency of the Divine nature." — *Ed.*

217 ⊠⊠⊠, (*gairesh*,) to expel, drive out, or eject by force.

livelihood from the culture — although the labourious culture — of the ground; for Adam thence infers that the Lord has some care for him, which is a proof of paternal love. Moses, however, again speaks of punishment, when he relates that man was expelled and that cherubim were opposed with the blade of a turning sword,[218] which should prevent his entrance into the garden. Moses says that the cherubim were placed in the eastern region, on which side, indeed, access lay open to man, unless he had been prohibited. It is added, to produce terror, that the sword was turning or sharpened on both sides. Moses, however, uses a word derived from *whiteness* or *heat*[219] Therefore, God having granted life to Adam, and having supplied him with food, yet restricts the benefit, by causing some tokens of Divine wrath to be always before his eyes, in order that he might frequently reflect that he must pass through innumerable miseries, through temporal exile, and through death itself, to the life from which he had fallen; for what we have said must be remembered, that Adam was not so dejected as to be left without hope of pardon. He was banished from that royal palace of which he had been the lord, but he obtained elsewhere a place in which he might dwell; he was bereft of his former delicacies, yet he was still supplied with some kind of food; he was excommunicated from the tree of life, but a new remedy was offered him in sacrifices. Some expound the 'turning sword' to mean one which does not always vibrate with its point directed against man, but which sometimes shows the side of the blade, for the purpose of giving place for repentance. But allegory is unseasonable, when it was the determination of God altogether to exclude man from the garden, that he might seek life elsewhere. As soon, however, as the happy fertility and pleasantness of the place was destroyed, the terror of the sword became superfluous. By cherubim, no doubt, Moses means angels and in this accommodates himself to the capacity of his own people. God had commanded two cherubim to be placed at the ark of the covenant, which should overshadow its covering, with their wings; therefore he is often said to sit between the cherubim. That he would have angels depicted in this form, was doubtless granted as an indulgence to the rudeness of that ancient people; for that age needed puerile instructions, as Paul teaches, (Galatians 4:3;) and Moses borrowed thence the name which he ascribed to angels, that he might accustom men to that kind of revelation which he had received from God, and faithfully handed down; for God designed, that what he knew would prove useful to the people, should be revealed in the sanctuary. And certainly this method is to be observed by us, in order that we, conscious of one own infirmity may not attempt, without assistance, to soar to heaven; for otherwise it will happen that, in the midst of our course, all our senses will fail. The ladders and vehicles, then, were the sanctuary, the ark of the covenants the altar, the table and its furniture. Moreover, I call them vehicles and ladders, because symbols of this kind were by no means ordained that

218 "Cum lamina gladii versatilis." □□□□ □□□, (*lahat hacherab*.)

219 "A candore, vel adore."

the faithful might shut up God in a tabernacle as in a prison, or might attach him to earthly elements; but that, being assisted by congruous and apt means, they might themselves rise towards heaven. Thus David and Hezekiah, truly endued with spiritual intelligence, were far from entertaining those gross imaginations, which would fix God in a given place. Still they do not scruple to call upon God, who sitteth or dwelleth between the cherubim, in order that they may retain themselves and others under the authority of the law.

Finally, In this place angels are called cherubim, for the same reason that the name of the *body of Christ* is transferred to the sacred bread of the Lord's Supper. With respect to the etymology, the Hebrews themselves are not agreed. The most generally received opinion is, that the first letter, כ(*caf*) is a servile letter, and a note of similitude, and, therefore, that the word cherub is of the same force as if it were said, 'like a boy.'[220] But because Ezekiel, who applies the word in common to different figures, is opposed to this signification; they think more rightly, in my judgment, who declare it to be a general name. Nevertheless, that it is referred to angels is more than sufficiently known. Whence also Ezekiel (Ezekiel 28:14) signalizes the proud king of Tyre with this title, comparing him to a chief angel.[221]

220 "כרוב, (*cherub.*) An image like a youth, which the Chaldeans call כרב, (*rabia.*)" — *Schindler*. Other writers give a different derivation, and consequently a different meaning to the word. But Professor Lee says, "It would be idle to offer anything on the etymology; nothing satisfactoroy having yet been discovered." — See Lexicon. — *Ed*

221 Primario angelo. It is clear that Ezekiel, in the chapter referred to, has both the garden of Eden and the ark of the covenant in his view, when speaking of the king of Tyre. Thus, in the 17th verse, it is said, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God;" and, in the next verse, "Thou art the anointed cherub that acovereth;" (namely, that covereth the ark,) "and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God." — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 4.

Genesis 4:1-26	
1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.	**1.** Et Adam cognovit Hava uxorem suam: quae concepit, et peperit Cain: et dixit, Acquisivi virum a Jehova.
2. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.	**2.** Et addidit parere fratrem ejus Ebel: fuit autem Ebel pastor ovium, et Cain fuit cultor terrae:
3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.	**3.** Et fuit, a fine dierum adduxit Cain de fructu terrae oblationem Jehovae.
4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:	**4.** Et Ebel etiam ipse adduxit de primogenitis pecudum suarum, et de adipe earum: et respexit Jehova ad Ebel, et ad oblationem ejus:
5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.	**5.** Ad Cain vero et ad oblationem ejus non respexit: iratus est itaque Cain valde, et concidit vultus ejus.
6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?	**6.** Et dixit Jehova ad Cain, Utquid excanduisti? et utquid concidit vultus tuus?
7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.	**7.** Annon si recte egeris, erit acceptatio? et si non bene egeris, in foribus peccatum cubat: et ad to erit appetitus ejus, et tu dominaberis ei.
8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.	**8.** Et loquutus est Cain ad Ebel fratrem suum: et accidit quum essent in agro, insurrexit Cain contra Ebel fratrem suum, et occidit eum.
9. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?	**9.** Et dixit Jehova ad Cain, Ubi est Ebel frater tuus? Et ait, nescio: nunquid custos fratris mei sum ego?

10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.	**10.** Et dixit, Quid fecisti? vox sanguinis fratris tui clamat ad me e terra.
11. And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;	**11.** nuc itaque maledictus eris e terra, quae aperuit os suum ut exciperet sanuinem fratris tui e manu tua.
12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.	**12.** Quando coles terram, non addet ut det vim suam tibi: vagus et profugus eris in terra.
13. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.	**13.** Et dixit Cain ad Jehovam, Major est punitio mea quam ut feram.
14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.	**14.** Ecce, ejecisti me hodie a facie terrae, et a facie tua abscondar, eroque vagus et profugus in terra: et erit, ut quicunque invenerit me, occidat me.
15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.	**15.** Et dixit ei Jehova, Propterea quicunque occiderit Cain, septuplum vindicabitur. Et posuit Jehova signum in Cain, ne percuteret eum ullus qui inveniret eum.
16. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.	**16.** Et egressus est Cain a facie Jehovae, et habitavit in terra Nod ad Orientem Heden.
17. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.	**17.** Cognovit autem Cain uxorem suam: quae concepit, et peperit Hanoch: aedificavitque civitatem, et vocavit nomen civitatis nomine filii sui Hanoch.
18. And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.	**18.** Porro natus est ipsi Hanoch Hirad, et Hirad genuit Mehujael, et Mehujael genuit Methusael: et Methusael genuit Lemech.

19. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.	**19.** Et accepit sibi Lemech duas uxores: nomen unius, Hada, et nomen secundae, Silla.
20. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle.	**20.** Et genuit Hada Jabel, ipse fuit pater inhabitantis tentorium, et pecoris.
21. And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.	**21.** Et nomen fratris ejus, Jubal: ipse fuit pater omnis contrectantis citharam et organum.
22. And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain *was* Naamah.	**22.** Et Silla etiam ipsa peperit Thubal — Cain, polientem omne opificium aereum et ferreum: et soror Thubal — Cain, fuit Nahama.
23. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.	**23.** Et dixit Lemech uxoribus suis Hada et Silla, Audite vocem meam uxores Lemech, auscultate semonem meum, Quoniam virum occidero in vulnere meo, et adolescentem in livore meo.
24. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.	**24.** Quia septuplo vindicabitur Cain, et Lemech septuagies septies.
25. And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she,* hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.	**25.** Cognovit autem Adam rursum uxorem suam: quae peperit filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Seth, Quia posuit mihi, *inquit*, Deus semen alterum pro Ebel: quia occidit eum Cain.
26. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.	**26.** Et ipsi Seth etiam natus est filius, et vocavit nomen ejus Enos: tunc coeptum est invocari nomen Domini.

1. *And Adam knew his wife Eve*. Moses now begins to describe the propagation of mankind; in which history it is important to notice that this benediction of God, "Increase and multiply," was not abolished by sin; and not only so, but that the heart of Adam was divinely confirmed so that he did not shrink with horror from the production of offspring. And as Adam recognised, in the very commencement of having offspring, the truly paternal

moderation of God's anger, so was he afterwards compelled to taste the bitter fruits of his own sin, when Cain slew Abel. But let us follow the narration of Moses.[222] Although Moses does not state that Cain and Abel were twins it yet seems to me probable that they were so; for, after he has said that Eve, by her first conception, brought forth her firstborn, he soon after subjoins that she also bore another; and thus, while commemorating a double birth, he speaks only of one conception.[223] Let those who think differently enjoy their own opinion; to me, however it appears accordant with reason, when the world had to be replenished with inhabitants, that not only Cain and Abel should have been brought forth at one births but many also afterwards, both males and females.

I have gotten a man. The word which Moses uses signifies both to acquire and to *possess* ; and it is of little consequence to the present context which of the two you adopt. It is more important to inquire why she says that she has received, ☒☒☒ ☒☒ (*eth Yehovah*.) Some expound it, 'with the Lord;' that is, 'by the kindness, or by the favor, of the Lord;' as if Eve would refer the accepted blessing of offspring to the Lord, as it is said in Psalm 127:3, "The fruit of the womb is the gift of the Lord." A second interpretation comes to the same point, 'I have possessed a man from the Lord;' and the version of Jerome is of equal force, 'Through the Lord.'[224] These three readings, I say, tend to this point, that Eve gives thanks to God for having begun to raise up a posterity through her, though she was deserving of perpetual barrenness, as well as of utter destruction. Others, with greater subtlety, expound the words, 'I have gotten the man of the Lord;' as if Eve understood that she already possessed that conqueror of the serpent, who had been divinely promised to her. Hence they celebrate the faith of Eve, because she embraced, by faith, the promise concerning the bruising of the head of the devil through her seed; only they think that she was mistaken in the person or the individual, seeing that she would restrict to Cain what had been promised concerning Christ. To me, however, this seems to be the genuine sense, that while Eve congratulates herself on the birth of a son, she offers him to God, as the first-fruits of his race. Therefore, I think it ought to be translated, 'I have obtained a man from the Lord', which approaches more nearly the Hebrew phrase. Moreover, she calls a newborn infant a man, because she saw the human race renewed, which both she and her husband had ruined by their own fault.[225]

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222 The following passage here occurs in the original: — "Cognoscendi verbo congressum viri cum uxore, rem per se pudendam, verecunde insinuat: quanquam coitus foeditas inter peccati fructus numeranda est; quia nascitur ex libidinis intemperie: porro licet," etc.

223 "Ita duplicem partum commemorans, nonnisi de uno concubitu loquitur."

224 "Possedi hominem per Deum." — *Vulgate*. "Εκτησάμην ἄνθρωπον διὰ τον Θεοῦ." — *Sept*

225 The reader will find a discussion of this remarkable passage worthy of his attention in Dr. J. P. Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. 1, p. 228. Third edition. 1837. This learned, indefatigable, and candid writer, argues with considerable force in favor of the translation, 'I have obtained a man, Jehovah,' and supposes

2. *And she again bare his brother Abel*[226] It is well known whence the name of Cain is deduced, and for what reason it was given to him. For his mother said, ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*kaniti*,) I have gotten a man; and therefore she called his name Cain.[227] The same explanation is not given with respect to Abel.[228] The opinion of some, that he was so called by his mother out of contempt, as if he would prove superfluous and almost useless, is perfectly absurd; for she remembered the end to which her fruitfulness would lead; nor had she forgotten the benediction, "Increase and multiply." We should (in my judgment) more correctly infer that whereas Eve had testified, in the name given to her firstborn, the joy which suddenly burst upon her, and celebrated the grace of God; she afterwards, in her other offspring, returned to the recollection of the miseries of the human race. And certainly, though the new blessing of God was an occasion for no common joy; yet, on the other hand, she could not look upon a posterity devoted to so many and great evils, of which she had herself been the cause, without the most bitter grief. Therefore, she wished that a monument of her sorrow should exist in the name she gave her second son; and she would, at the same time, hold up a common mirror, by which she might admonish her whole progeny of the *vanity* of man. That some censure the judgment of Eve as absurd, because she regarded her just and holy sons as worthy to be rejected in comparison with her other wicked and abandoned son, is what I do not approve. For Eve had reason why she should congratulate herself in her firstborn; and no blame attaches to her for having proposed, in her second son, a memorial to herself and to all others, of their own vanity, to induce them to exercise themselves in diligent reflection on their own evils.

And Abel was a keeper of sheep. Whether both the brothers had married wives, and each had a separate home, Moses does not relate. This therefore, remains to us in uncertainty, although it is probable that Cain was married before he slew his brother; since Moses soon after adds, that he knew his wife, and begot children: and no mention is there made of his marriage. Both followed a kind of life in itself holy and laudable. For the cultivation of the earth was commanded by God; and the labor of feeding sheep was not less honorable than useful; in short, the whole of rustic life was innocent and simple, and most of all accommod-

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that Eve really believed her first-born to be the incarnate Jehovah. There is, however, great difficulty in allowing that she could know so much as is here presupposed; and the remark of Dathe seems fatal to this interpretation: — 'Si scivit, Messiam esse debere Jovam, quomodo existimare potuit, Cainam esse Messiam, quem sciebat esse ab Adamo genitum.' If Eve knew that Messiah must be Jehovah, how could she think that Cain was the Messiah, when she knew him to be the offspring of Adam? — *Ed*.

226 "Et addidit parere fratrem ejus Ebel;" and she added to bring forth (or she brought forth in addition) his brother Abel. — *Ed*.

227 That is, "obtained," or "gotten." — *Ed*.

228 ⊠⊠⊠, (*Hebel*,) signifies vanity. — *Ed*

ated to the true order of nature. This, therefore, is to be maintained in the first place, that both exercised themselves in labors approved by God, and necessary to the common use of human life. Whence it is inferred, that they had been well instructed by their father. The rite of sacrificing more fully confirms this; because it proves that they had been accustomed to the worship of God. The life of Cain, therefore, was, in appearance, very well regulated; inasmuch as he cultivated the duties of piety towards God, and sought a maintenance for himself and his, by honest and just labor, as became a provident and sober father of a family. Moreover, it will be here proper to recall to memory what we have before said, that the first men, though they had been deprived of the sacrament of divine love, when they were prohibited from the tree of life, had yet been only so deprived of it, that a hope of salvation was still left to them, of which they had the signs in sacrifices. For we must remember, that the custom of sacrificing was not rashly devised by them, but was divinely delivered to them. For since the Apostle refers the dignity of Abel's accepted sacrifice to *faith*, it follows, first, that he had not offered it without the command of God, (Hebrews 11:4.) Secondly, it has been true from the beginning, of the world, that obedience is better than any sacrifices, (1 Samuel 15:22,) and is the parent of all virtues. Hence it also follows that man had been taught by God what was pleasing to Him. Thirdly, since God has been always like himself, we may not say that he was ever delighted with mere carnal and external worship. Yet he deemed those sacrifices of the first age acceptable. It follows, therefore, further, that they had been spiritually offered to him: that is, that the holy fathers did not mock him with empty ceremonies, but comprehended something more sublime and secret; which they could not have done without divine instruction.[229] For it is interior truth alone[230] which, in the external signs, distinguishes the genuine and rational worship of God from that which is gross and superstitious. And, certainly, they could not sincerely devote their mind to the worship of God, unless they had been assured of his benevolence; because voluntary reverence springs from a sense of, and confidence in, his goodness; but, on the other hand, whosoever regards God hostile to himself, is compelled to flee from him with very fear and horror. We see then that God, when he takes away the tree of life, in which he had first given the pledge of his grace, proves and declares himself to be propitious to man by other means. Should anyone object, that all nations have had their own sacrifices, and that in these there was no pure and solid religion, the solution is ready: namely, that mention is here made of such sacrifices as are lawful and approved by God; of which nothing but an adulterated imitation afterwards descended to the Gentiles. For although nothing but the word ⊠⊠⊠(*minchah*,[231]) is here

229 "Absque verbo." Literally "without the word." — *Ed.*

230 That is, "truth received into the heart." — *Ed.*

231 Mincha usually, though not invariably, signifies an "unbloody oblation," in opposition to ⊠⊠⊠, (*zeba*,) a "bloody sacrifice." — See Gesenius, Lee, etc. — *Ed*

placed, which properly signifies a *gift*, and therefore is extended generally to every kind of oblation; yet we may infer, for two reasons, that the command respecting sacrifice was given to the fathers from the beginning; first, for the purpose of making the exercise of piety common to all, seeing they professed themselves to be the property of God, and esteemed all they possessed as received from him; and, secondly, for the purpose of admonishing them of the necessity of some expiation in order to their reconciliation with God. When each offers something of his property, there is a solemn giving of thanks, as if he would testify by his present act that he owes to God whatever he possesses. But the sacrifice of cattle and the effusion of blood contains something further, namely, that the offerer should have death before his eyes; and should, nevertheless, believe in God as propitious to him. Concerning the sacrifices of Adam no mention is made.

4. *And the Lord had respect unto Abel, etc*. God is said to have respect unto the man to whom he vouchsafes his favor. We must, however, notice the order here observed by Moses; for he does not simply state that the *worship* which Abel had paid was pleasing to God, but he begins with the *person* of the offerer; by which he signifies, that God will regard no works with favor except those the doer of which is already previously accepted and approved by him. And no wonder; for man sees things which are apparent, but God looks into the heart, (1 Samuel 16:7;) therefore, he estimates works no otherwise than as they proceed from the fountain of the heart. Whence also it happens, that he not only rejects but abhors the sacrifices of the wicked, however splendid they may appear in the eyes of men. For if he, who is polluted in his soul, by his mere touch contaminates, with his own impurities, things otherwise pure and clean, how can that but be impure which proceeds from himself? When God repudiates the feigned righteousness in which the Jews were glorying, he objects, through his Prophet, that their hands were "full of blood," (Isaiah 1:15.) For the same reason Haggai contends against the hypocrites. The external appearance, therefore, of works, which may delude our too carnal eyes, vanishes in the presence of God. Nor were even the heathens ignorant of this; whose poets, when they speak with a sober and well-regulated mind of the worship of God, require both a clean heart and pure hands. Hence, even among all nations, is to be traced the solemn rite of washing before sacrifices. Now seeing that in another place, the Spirit testifies, by the mouth of Peter, that 'hearts are purified by faith,' (Acts 15:9;) and seeing that the purity of the holy patriarchs was of the very same kind, the apostle does not in vain infer, that the offering of Abel was, by faith, more excellent than that of Cain. Therefore, in the first place, we must hold, that all works done before faith, whatever splendor of righteousness may appear in them, were nothing but mere sins, being defiled from their roots, and were offensive to the Lord, whom nothing can please without inward purity of heart. I wish they who imagine that men, by their own motion of freewill, are rendered meet to receive the grace of God, would reflect on this. Certainly, no controversy would then remain on the question, whether God justifies men gratuitously, and that by faith? For this

must be received as a settled point, that, in the judgment of God, no respect is had to works until man is received into favor. Another point appears equally certain; since the whole human race is hateful to God, there is no other way of reconciliation to divine favor than through faith. Moreover, since faith is a gratuitous gift of God, and a special illumination of the Spirit, then it is easy to infer, that we are *prevented*[232] by his mere grace, just as if he had raised us from the dead. In which sense also Peter says, that it is God who purifies the hearts by faith. For there would be no agreement of the fact with the statement, unless God had so formed faith in the hearts of men that it might be truly deemed his gift. It may now be seen in what way purity is the effect of faith. It is a vapid and trifling philosophy, to adduce this as the cause of purity, that men are not induced to seek God as their rewarder except by faith. They who speak thus entirely bury the grace of God, which his Spirit chiefly commends. Others also speak coldly, who teach that we are purified by faiths only on account of the gift of regenerations in order that we may be accepted of God. For not only do they omit half the truth, but build without a foundation; since, on account of the curse on the human race, it became necessary that gratuitous reconciliation should precede. Again, since God never so regenerates his people in this world, that they can worship him perfectly; no work of man can possibly be acceptable without expiation. And to this point the ceremony of legal washing belongs, in order that men may learn, that as often as they wish to draw near unto God, purity must be sought elsewhere. Wherefore God will then at length have respect to our obedience, when he looks upon us in Christ.

5. *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect*. It is not to be doubted, that Cain conducted himself as hypocrites are accustomed to do; namely, that he wished to appease God, as one discharging a debt, by external sacrifices, without the least intention of dedicating himself to God. But this is true worship, to offer ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God. When God sees such hypocrisy, combined with gross and manifest mockery of himself; it is not surprising that he hates it, and is unable to bear it; whence also it follows, that he rejects with contempt the works of those who withdraw *themselves* from him. For it is his will, first to have us devoted to himself; he then seeks our works in testimony of our obedience to him, but only in the second place. It is to be remarked, that all the figments by which men mock both God and themselves are the fruits of unbelief: To this is added pride, because unbelievers, despising the Mediator's grace, throw themselves fearlessly into the presence of God. The Jews foolishly imagine that the oblations of Cain were unacceptable, because he defrauded God of the full ears of corn, and meanly offered him only barren or half-filled ears. Deeper and more hidden was the evil; namely that impurity of heart of which I have

232 The word prevented is here used in the sense now rendered somewhat obsolete, though retained in the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England. We have, in fact, no other word which so well describes the effect of that prevenient grace, which anticipates and goes before every thing that is good in man. — *Ed.*

been speaking; just as, on the other hand, the strong scent of burning fat could not conciliate the divine favor to the sacrifices of Abel; but, being pervaded by the good odour of faith, they had a sweet-smelling savor.

And Cain was very wroth. In this place it is asked, whence Cain understood that his brother's oblations were preferred to his? The Hebrews, according to their manner, report to divinations and imagine that the sacrifice of Abel was consumed by celestial fire; but, since we ought not to allow ourselves so great a license as to invent miracles, for which we have no testimony of Scripture, let Jewish fables be dismissed.[233] It is, indeed, more probable, that Cain formed the judgement which Moses records, from the events which followed. He saw that it was better with his brother than with himself; thence he inferred, that God was pleased with his brother, and displeased with himself. We know also, that to hypocrites nothing seems of greater value, nothing is more to their heart's content, then earthly blessing. Moreover, in the person of Cain is portrayed to us the likeness of a wicked man, who yet desires to be esteemed just, and even arrogates to himself the first place among saints. Such persons truly, by external works, strenuously labor to deserve well at the hands of God; but, retaining a heart inwrapped in deceit, they present to him nothing but a mask; so that, in their labourious and anxious religious worship, there is nothing sincere, nothing but mere pretense. When they afterwards see that they gain no advantage, they betray the venom of their minds; for they not only complain against God, but break forth in manifest fury, so that, if they were able, they would gladly tear him don from his heavenly throne. Such is the innate pride of all hypocrites, that, by the very appearance of obedience, they would hold God as under obligation to them; because they cannot escape from his authority, they try to sooth him with blandishments, as they would a child; in the meantime, while they count much of their fictitious trifles, they think that God does them great wrong if he does not applaud them; but when he pronounces their offerings frivolous and of no value in his sight, they first begin to murmur, and then to rage. Their impiety alone hinders God from being reconciled unto them; but they wish to bargain with God on their own terms. When this is denied, they burn with furious indignation, which, though conceived against God, they cast forth upon his children. Thus, when Cain was angry with God, his fury was poured forth on his unoffending brother. When Moses says, "his countenance fell," (the word countenance is in Hebrew put in the plural number for the singular,) he means, that not only was he

233 It will, perhaps, be admitted that Calvin here deals too hardly with the opinions of the Jews. That God did in some way bear public testimony to his acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, is recorded by St. Paul; and there is surely nothing unreasonable in the supposition that he did it, as in several other instances, by fire from heaven. The reader may see several authorities adduced in Poole; he may also consult Ainsworth on the Pentateuch, Dr. P. Smith on the Atonement; and especially, Faber's "Treatise of the Origin of Expiatory Sacrifice." — *Ed.*

seized with a sudden vehement anger, but that, from a lingering sadness, he cherished a feeling so malignant that he was wasting with envy.

6. *And the Lord said unto Cain*. God now proceeds against Cain himself, and cites him to His tribunal, that the wretched man may understand that his rage can profit him nothing. He wishes honor to be given him for his sacrifices; but because he does not obtain it, he is furiously angry. Meanwhile, he does not consider that through his own fault he had failed to gain his wish; for had he but been conscious of his inward evil, he would have ceased to expostulate with God, and to rage against his guiltless brother. Moses does not state in what manner God spoke. Whether a vision was presented to him, or he heard an oracle from heaven, or was admonished by secret inspiration, he certainly felt himself bound by a divine judgment. To apply this to the person of Adam, as being the prophet and interpreter of God in censuring his son, is constrained and even frigid. I understand what it is which good men, not less pious than learned, propose, when they sport with such fancies. Their intention is to honor the external ministry of the word, and to cut off the occasion which Satan takes to insinuate his illusions under the color of revelation.[234] Truly I confess, nothing is more useful than that pious minds should be retained, under the order of preaching, in obedience to the Scripture, that they may not seek the mind of God in erratic speculations. But we may observe, that the word of God was delivered from the beginning by oracles, in order that afterwards, when administered by the hands of men, it might receive the greater reverence. I also acknowledge that the office of teaching was enjoined upon Adam, and do not doubt that he diligently admonished his children: yet they who think that God only spoke through his ministers, too violently restrict the words of Moses. Let us rather conclude, that, before the heavenly teaching was committed to public records, God often made known his will by extraordinary methods, and that here was the *foundation* which supported reverence for the word; while the doctrine delivered through the hands of men was like the *edifice* itself. Certainly, though I should be silent, all men would acknowledge how greatly such an imagination as that to which we refer, abates the force of the divine reprimand. Therefore, as the voice of God had previously so sounded in the ears of Adam, that he certainly perceived God to speak; so is it also now directed to Cain.

7. *If thou does well*. In these words God reproves Cain for having been unjustly angry, inasmuch as the blame of the whole evil lay with himself. For foolish indeed was his complaint and indignation at the rejection of sacrifices, the defects of which he had taken no care to amend. Thus all wicked men, after they have been long and vehemently enraged against God, are at length so convicted by the Divine judgment, that they vainly desire to transfer to others the cause of the evil. The Greek interpreters recede, in this place, far from the

234 "Et retrancher les occasions que prend Satan, pour faire illusion aux hommes, en s'insinuant sous couleur des revelations." — *French Tr.*

genuine meaning of Moses. Since, in that age, there were none of those marks or points which the Hebrews use instead of vowels, it was more easy, in consequence of the affinity of words to each other, to strike into an extraneous sense. I however, as any one, moderately versed in the Hebrew language, will easily judge of their error, I will not pause to refute it.[235] Yet even those who are skilled in the Hebrew tongue differ not a little among themselves, although only respecting a single word; for the Greeks change the whole sentence. Among those who agree concerning the context and the substance of the address, there is a difference respecting the word ⊠⊠⊠(*seait*,) which is truly in the imperative mood, but ought to be resolved into a noun substantive. Yet this is not the real difficulty; but, since the verb ⊠⊠⊠ (*nasa*,[236]) signifies sometimes to *exalt*, sometimes to *take away* or remit, sometimes to *offer*, and sometimes to *accept*, interpreters very among themselves, as each adopts this or the other meaning. Some of the Hebrew Doctors refer it to the *countenance* of Cain, as if God promised that he would lift it up though now cast down with sorrow. Other of the Hebrews apply it to the remission of sins; as if it had been said, 'Do well, and thou shalt obtain pardon'. But because they imagine a satisfaction, which derogates from free pardon, they dissent widely from the meaning of Moses. A third exposition approaches more nearly to the truth, that *exaltation* is to be taken for honor, in this way, 'There is no need to envy thy brother's honor, because, if thou conductest thyself rightly, God will also raise thee to the same degree of honor; though he now, offended by thy sins, has condemned thee to ignominy.' But even this does not meet my approbation. Others refine more philosophically, and say, that Cain would find God propitious and would be assisted by his grace, if he should by faith bring purity of heart with his outward sacrifices. These I leave to enjoy their own opinion, but I fear they aim at what has little solidity. Jerome translates the word, 'Thou shalt receive;' understanding that God promises a reward to that pure and lawful worship which he requires. Having recited the opinions of others, let me now offer what appears to me more suitable. In the first place, the word ⊠⊠⊠ means the same thing as *acceptance*, and stands opposed to *rejection*. Secondly, since the discourse has respect to the matter in hand,[237] I explain the saying as referring to sacrifices, namely, that God will accept them when rightly offered. They who are skilled in the Hebrew language know that here is nothing forced, or remote from the genuine signification of the word. Now the very order of things leads us to the same point: namely, that God pronounces those sacrifices repudiated and rejected, as being

235 The version of the Septuagint is, Οὐκ ἐα<n ojrqw~v prosene>γκ῎Υς ορθῶς δὲ μὴ διελης ἥμαρτες; "If thou shouldst rightly offer, but yet not rightly divide, wouldst thou not sin?" See Archbishop Magee's Discourses, etc, No. lxv., where he ingeniously accounts for the manner in which the translators of the Septuagint version may have misunderstood the original. — *Ed*

236 See Schindler, sub voce, No. in.; and the Discourses before referred to, No. lxv.

237 "De re subjecta habitur sermo."

of no value, which are offered improperly; but that the oblation will be accepted, as pleasant and of good odour, if it be pure and legitimate. We now perceive how unjustly Cain was angry that his sacrifices were not honored seeing that God was ready to receive them with outstretched hands, provided they ceased to be faulty. At the same time, however; what I before said must be recalled to memory, that the chief point of well-doing is, for pious persons, relying on Christ the Mediator, and on the gratuitous reconciliation procured by him, to endeavor to worship God sincerely and without dissimulation. Therefore, these two things are joined together by a mutual connection: that the faithful, as often as they enter into the presence of God, are commended by the grace of Christ alone, their sins being blotted out; and yet that they bring thither true purity of heart.

And if thou does not well. On the other hand, God pronounces a dreadful sentence against Cain, if he harden his mill in wickedness and indulge himself in his crime; for the address is very emphatical, because God not only repels his unjust complaint, but shows that Cain could have no greater adversary than that sin of his which he inwardly cherished. He so binds the impious man, by a few concise words, that he can find no refuge, as if he had said, 'Thy obstinacy shall not profit thee; for, though thou shouldst have nothing to do with me, thy sin shall give thee no rest, but shall drive thee on, pursue thee, and urge thee, and never suffer thee to escape.' Hence it follows, that he not only raged in vain and to no profit; but was held guilty by his own inward conviction, even though no one should accuse him; for the expression, 'Sin lieth at the door', relates to the interior judgement of the conscience, which presses upon the man convinced of his sin, and besieges him on every side. Although the impious may imagine that God slumbers in heaven, and may strive, as far as possible, to repel the fear of his judgment; yet sin will be perpetually drawing them back, though reluctant and fugitives, to that tribunal from which they endeavor to retire. The declarations even of heathens testify that they were not ignorant of this truth; for it is not to be doubted that, when they say, 'Conscience is like a thousand witnesses,' they compare it to a most cruel executioner. There is no torment more grievous or severe than that which is hence perceived; moreover, God himself extorts confessions of this kind. Juvenal says: —

"Heaven's high revenge on human crimes behold;
Though earthly verdicts may be bought and sold,
His judge the sinner in his bosom bears,
And conscience racks him with tormenting cares.[238]

But the expression of Moses has peculiar energy. Sin is said to *lie*, but it is at the *door*; for the sinner is not immediately tormented with the fear of judgment; but, gathering around him whatever delights he is able, in order to deceive himself; he walks as in free space, and

238 "Prima est ultio quod se Judice, nemo nocens absolvitur, improba quamvis Gratia fallacis Praetoris vicerit urnam."

even revels as in pleasant meadows; when, however, he comes to the door, there he meets with sin, keeping constant guard; and then conscience, which before thought itself at liberty, is arrested, and receives, double punishment for the delay.[239]

And unto thee shall be his desire. Nearly all commentators refer this to sin, and think that, by this admonition, those depraved hosts are restrained which solicit and impel the mind of man. Therefore, according to their view, the meaning will be of this kind, 'If sin rises against thee to subdue thee, why dost thou indulge it, and not rather labor to restrain and control it? For it is thy part to subdue and bring into obedience those affections in thy flesh which thou perceivest to be opposed to the will of God, and rebellious against him.' But I suppose that Moses means something entirely different. I omit to notice that to the Hebrew word for sin is affixed the mark of the feminine gender, but that here two masculine relative pronouns are used. Certainly Moses does not treat particularly of the sin itself which was committed, but of the guilt which is contracted from it, and of the consequent condemnation. How, then, do these words suit, 'Unto thee shall be his desire?'[240] There will, however be no need for long refutation when I shall produce the genuine meaning of the expression. It rather seems to be a reproof, by which God charges the impious man with ingratitude, because he held in contempt the honor of primogeniture. The greater are the divine benefits with which any one of us is adorned, the more does he betray his impiety unless he endeavors earnestly to serve the Author of grace to whom he is under obligation. When Abel was re-

239 The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠ (*chatath*,) which primarily means sin, is also frequently used for sin-offering, and is so translated in various passages of our version. The learned Dr. Lightfoot was the first who proposed that it should be so rendered in the present instance. His interpretation has been controverted, especially by the Socinians; but not be them only; the justly celebrated Dr. Davison has also attempted to set it aside, in his Inquiry into the Origin and Intent of Primitive Sacrifice. But the more profound learning of Dr. Magee and of Mr. Faber has placed the interpretation of Lightfoot on a basis not easily to be shaken. The translation of the passage will, on this supposition, be, 'If thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth or coucheth at the door'; and the import of the address will be to this effect, 'Thou hast only to offer up a sacrifice of atonement, and then the defect of thy offering will be supplied, and the pardon of thy sin granted.' — See Magee's Second Discourse, and the Dissertations connected with it; also Faber's Treatise on the Origin of Expiatory Sacrifice. — *Ed*

240 Faber contends the expression, "Unto thee shall be his (or its) desire," refers to the victim which was to be offered as a sin-offering. — See his Treatise, p.129. He also gives the following poetical arrangement of God's address to Cain: — ***"Why is there hot anger unto thee;***
And why hath fallen thy countenance?
If thou doest well, shall there not be exaltation?
And if thou doest not well, at the door a sin-offering is couching.
And unto thee is its desire,
And thou shalt rule over it." — *Ed.*

garded as his brother's inferior, he was, nevertheless, a diligent worshipper of God. But the firstborn worshipped God negligently and perfunctorily, though he had, by the Divine kindness, arrived at so high a dignity; and, therefore, God enlarges upon his sin, because he had not at least imitated his brother, whom he ought to have surpassed as far in piety as he did in the degree of honor. Moreover, this form of speech is common among the Hebrews, that the desire of the inferior should be towards him to whose will he is subject; thus Moses speaks of the woman, (Genesis 3:16,) that her desire should be to her husband. They, however, childishly trifle, who distort this passage to prove the freedom of the will; for if we grant that Cain was admonished of his duty in order that he might apply himself to the subjugation of sin, yet no inherent power of man is to be hence inferred; because it is certain that only by the grace of the Holy Spirit can the affections of the flesh be so mortified that they shall not prevail. Nor, truly, must we conclude, that as often as God commands anything we shall have strength to perform it, but rather we must hold fast the saying of Augustine, 'Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.'

8. *And Cain talked with Abel his brother*. Some understand this conversation to have been general; as if Cain, perfidiously dissembling his anger, spoke in a fraternal manner. Jerome relates the language used, 'Come, let us go without.'[241] In my opinion the speech is elliptical, and something is to be understood, yet what it is remains uncertain. Nevertheless, I am not dissatisfied with the explanation, that Moses concisely reprehends the wicked perfidy of the hypocrite, who, by speaking familiarly, presented the appearance of fraternal concord, until the opportunity of perpetrating the horrid murder should be afforded. And by this example we are taught that hypocrites are never to be more dreaded than when they stoop to converse under the pretext of friendship; because when they are not permitted to injure by open violence as much as they please, suddenly they assume a feigned appearance of peace. But it is by no means to be expected that they who are as savage beasts towards God, should sincerely cultivate the confidence of friendship with men. Yet let the reader consider whether Moses did not rather mean, that although Cain was rebuked by God, he, nevertheless, contended with his brother, and thus this saying of his would depend on what had preceded. I certainly rather incline to the opinion that he did not keep his malignant feelings within his own breast, but that he broke forth in accusation against his brother, and angrily declared to him the cause of his dejection.

When they were in the field. Hence we gather that although Cain had complained of his brother at home, he had yet so covered the diabolical fury with which he burned, that Abel suspected nothing worse; for he deferred vengeance to a suitable time. Moreover, this single deed of guilt clearly shows whither Satan will hurry men, when they harden their mind in

241 "Egrediamur foras." — *Vulgate*.

wickedness, so that in the end, their obstinacy is worthy of the utmost extremes of punishment.

9. *Where is Abel ?* They who suppose that the father made this inquiry of Cain respecting his son Abel, enervate the whole force of the instruction which Moses here intended to deliver; namely, that God, both by secret inspiration, and by some extraordinary method, cited the parricide[242] to his tribunal, as if he had thundered from heaven. For, what I have before said must be firmly maintained that, as God now speaks until us through the Scriptures, so he formerly manifested himself to the Fathers through oracles; and also in the same meaner, revealed his judgements to the reprobate sons of the saints. So the angel spoke to Agar in the wood, after she had fallen away from the Church,[243] as we shall see in the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter: Genesis 16:8. It is indeed possible that God may have interrogated Cain by the silent examinations of his conscience; and that he, in return, may have answered, inwardly fretting, and murmuring. We must, however, conclude, that he was examined, not barely by the external voice of man, but by a Divine voice, so as to make him feel that he had to deal directly with God. As often, then as the secret compunctions of conscience invite us to reflect upon our sins, let us remember that God himself is speaking, with us. For that interior sense by which we are convicted of sin is the peculiar judgement-seat of God, where he exercises his jurisdiction. Let those, therefore, whose consciences accuse them, beware lest, after the example of Cain, they confirm themselves in obstinacy. For this is truly to kick against God, and to resist his Spirit; when we repel those thoughts, which are nothing else than incentives to repentance. But it is a fault too common, to add at length to former sins such perverseness, that he who is compelled, whether he will or not, to feel sin in his mind, shall yet refuse to yield to God. Hence it appears how great is the depravity of the human mind; since, when convicted and condemned by our own conscience, we still do not cease either to mock, or to rage against our Judge. Prodigious was the stupor of Cain, who, having committed a crime so great, ferociously rejected the reproof of God, from whose hand he was nevertheless unable to escape. But the same thing daily happens to all the wicked; every one of whom desires to be deemed ingenious in catching at excuses. For the human heart is so entangled in winding labyrinths, that it is easy for the wicked to add obstinate contempt of God to their crimes; not because their contumacy is sufficiently firm to withstand the judgment of God, (for, although they hide themselves in the deep recesses of which I have spoken, they are, nevertheless, always secretly burned, as with a hot iron,) but because, by a blind obstinacy they render themselves callous. Hence, the force of the Divine judgment is clearly perceived; for it so pierces into the iron hearts of the wicked, that they are inwardly

242 "Parricidam citaverit." The word parricide is contrary to its original import, applied to the murderer of any near relative. — *Ed.*

243 By leaving the family of Abraham, in which alone the true service of God was maintained. — *Ed.*

compelled to be their own judges; nor does it suffer them so to obliterate the sense of guilt which it has extorted, as not to leave the trace or scar of the searing. Cain, in denying that he was the keeper of his brother's life, although, with ferocious rebellion, he attempts violently to repel the judgment of God, yet thinks to escape by this cavil, that he was not required to give an account of his murdered brother, because he had received no express command to take care of him.

10. *What hast thou done ? The voice of thy brother's blood* Moses shows that Cain gained nothing by his tergiversation. God first inquired where his brother was; he now more closely urges him, in order to extort an unwilling confession of his guilt; for in no racks or tortures of any kind is there so much force to constrain evildoers, as there was efficacy in the thunder of the Divine voice to cast down Cain in confusion to the ground. For God no longer asks whether he had done it; but, pronouncing in a single word that he was the doer of it, he aggravates the atrocity of the crime. We learn, then, in the person of one man, what an unhappy issue of their cause awaits those, who desire to extricate themselves by contending against God. For He, the Searcher of hearts, has no need of a long, circuitous course of investigation; but, with one word, so fulminates against those whom he accuses, as to be sufficient, and more than sufficient, for their condemnation. Advocates place the first kind of defense in the denial of the fact; where the fact cannot be denied, they have recourse to the qualifying circumstances of the case.[244] Cain is driven from both these defenses; for God both pronounces him guilty of the slaughter, and, at the same time, declares the heinousness of the crime. And we are warned by his example, that pretexts and subterfuges are heaped together in vain, when sinners are cited to the tribunal of God.

The voice of thy brother's blood crieth. God first shows that he is cognizant of the deeds of men, though no one should complain of or accuse them; secondly that he holds the life of man too dear, to allow innocent blood to be shed with impunity; thirdly, that he cares for the pious not only while they live, but even after death. However earthly judges may sleep, unless an accuser appeals to them; yet even when he who is injured is silent the injuries themselves are alone sufficient to arouse God to inflict punishment. This is a wonderfully sweet consolation to good men, who are unjustly harassed, when they hear that their own sufferings, which they silently endure, go into the presence of God of their own accord, to demand vengeance. Abel was speechless when his throat was being cut, or in whatever other manner he was losing his life; but after death the voice of his blood was more vehement than any eloquence of the orator. Thus oppression and silence do not hinder God from judging, or the cause which the world supposes to be buried. This consolation affords us most abundant reason for patience when we learn that we shall lose nothing of our right, if

244 "Ubi negari factum non potest, ad statum qualitatis confugiunt." — "Ils ont recours aux qualitez et circonstances." — *French Trans.*

we bear injuries with moderation and equanimity; and that God will be so much the more ready to vindicate us, the more modestly we submit ourselves to endure all things; because the placid silence of the soul raises effectual cries, which fill heaven and earth. Nor does this doctrine apply merely to the state of the present life, to teach us that among the innumerable dangers by which we are surrounded, we shall be safe under the guardianship of God; but it elevates us by the hope of a better life; because we must conclude that those for whom God cares shall survive after death. And, on the other hand, this consideration should strike terror into the wicked and violent, that God declares, that he undertakes the causes deserted by human patronage, not in consequence of any foreign impulse, but from his own nature; and that he will be the sure avenger of crimes, although the injured make no complaint. Murderers indeed often exult, as if they had evaded punishment; but at length God will show that innocent blood has not been mute, and that he has not said in vain, 'the death of the saints is precious in his eyes,' (Psalm 115:17.) Therefore, as this doctrine brings relief to the faithful, lest they should be too anxious concerning their life, over which they learn that God continually watches; so does it vehemently thunder against the ungodly who do not scruple wickedly to injure and to destroy those whom God has undertaken to preserve.

11. *And now art thou cursed from the earth.* Cain, having been convicted of the crime, judgment is now pronounced against him. And first, God constitutes the earth the minister of his vengeance, as having been polluted by the impious and horrible parricide: as if he had said, 'Thou didst just now deny to me the murder which thou hast committed, but the senseless earth itself will demand thy punishment.' He does this, however, to aggravate the enormity of the crime, as if a kind of contagion flowed from it even to the earth, for which the execution of punishment was required. The imagination of some, that cruelty is here ascribed to the earth, as if God compared it to a wild beast, which had drunk up the blood of Abel, is far from the true meaning. Clemency is rather, in my judgment, by personification,[245] imputed to it; because, in abhorrence of the pollution, it had opened its mouth to cover the blood which had been shed by a brother's hand. Most detestable is the cruelty of this man, who does not shrink from pouring forth his neighbor's blood, of which the bosom of the earth becomes the receptacle. Yet we must not here imagine any miracle, as if the blood had been absorbed by any unusual opening of the earth; but the speech is figurative, signifying that there was more humanity in the earth than in man himself. Moreover, they who think that, because Cain is now cursed in stronger words than Adam had previously been, God had dealt more gently with the first man, from a design to spare the human race; have some color for their opinion. Adam heard the words, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake:" but now the shaft of divine vengeance vibrates against, and transfixes the person of Cain. The opinion of others, that temporal punishment is intended, because it is said, Thou

245 "Κατὰ προσωποποιΐαν"

art cursed from the "earth," rather than from "heaven," lest the posterity of Cain, being cut off from the hope of salvation, should rush the more boldly on their own damnation, seems to me not sufficiently confirmed. I rather interpret the passage thus: Judgment was committed to the earth, in order that Cain might understand that his judge had not to be summoned from a distance; that there was no need for an angel to descend from heaven, since the earth voluntarily offered itself as the avenger.

12. *When thou tillest the ground*. This verse is the exposition of the former; for it expresses more clearly what is meant by being cursed *from* the earth, namely, that the earth defrauds its cultivators of the fruit of their toil. Should any one object that this punishment had before been alike inflicted on all mortals, in the person of Adam; my answer is, I have no doubt that something of the benediction which had hitherto remained, was now further withdrawn with respect to the murderer, in order that he might privately feel the very earth to be hostile to him. For although, generally, God causes his sun daily to rise upon the good and the evil, (Matthew 5:45,) yet, in the meantime, (as often as he sees good,) he punished the sins, sometimes of a whole nation, and sometimes of certain men, with rain and hail, and clouds, so far, at least, as is useful to give determinate proof of future judgment; and also for the purpose of admonishing the world, by such examples, that nothing can succeed when God is angry with and opposed to them. Moreover in the first murder, God designed to exhibit a singular example of malediction, the memory of which should remain in all ages.

A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be[246] Another punishment is now also inflicted; namely, that he never could be safe, to whatever place he might come. Moses uses two words, little differing from each other, except that the former is derived from ⌧⌧⌧*noa*, which is to *wander*, the other from ⌧⌧⌧*nadad*, which signifies to *flee*. The distinction which some make, that ⌧⌧*na* is he who never has a settled habitations but ⌧⌧*nad*, he who knows not which way he ought to turn; as it is defective in proof, is with me of no weight. The genuine sense then of the words is, that wherever Cain might come, he should be *unsettled* and a *fugitive* ; as robbers are wont to be, who have no quiet and secure resting-place; for the face of every man strikes terror into them; and, on the other hand, they have a horror of solitude. But this seems to some by no means a suitable punishment for a murderer, since it is rather the destined condition of the sons of God; for they, more than all others, feel themselves to be strangers in the world. And Paul complains that both he and his companions are without a certain dwelling-place, (1 Corinthians 4:11[247]) To which I answer, that Cain was not only condemned to personal exile, but was also subjected to still more severe punishment; namely, that he should find no region of the earth where he would not be of a restless and fearful mind; for as a good conscience is properly called 'a brazen walls' so neither a hundred walls,

246 "στένων κάι τρέμων." "Groaning and trembling." — *Sept*

247 "Instabiles esse conqueritur."

nor as many fortresses, can free the wicked from disquietude. The faithful are strangers upon the earth, yet, nevertheless, they enjoy a tranquil temporary abode. Often, constrained by necessity, they wander from place to place, but wheresoever the tempest bears them, they carry with them a sedate mind; till finally by perpetual change of place, they so run their course, and pass through the world, that they are everywhere sustained by the supporting hand of God. Such security is denied to the wicked, whom all creatures threaten; and should even all creatures favor them, still the mind itself is so turbulent that it does not suffer them to rest. In this manner, Cain, even if he bad not changed his place, could not have shaken off the trepidation which God had fixed in his mind; nor did the fact, that he was the first man who built a city, prevent him from being always restless even in his own nest.

13. *My punishment is greater, etc*. Nearly all commentators agree that this is the language of desperation; because Cain, confounded by the judgment of God, had no remaining hope of pardon. And this, indeed, is true, that the reprobate are never conscious of their evils, till a ruin, from which they cannot escape, overtakes them; yea, truly, when the sinner, obstinate to the last, mocks the patience of God, this is the due reward of his late repentance that he feels a horrible torment for which there is no remedy, — if, truly, that blind and astonished dread of punishments which is without any hatred of sin, or any desire to return to God, can be called repentance; — so even Judas confesses his sin, but, overwhelmed with fear, flies as far as possible from the presence of God. And it is certainly true, that the reprobates have no medium; as long as any relaxation is allowed them, they slumber securely; but when the anger of God presses upon them, they are broken rather than corrected. Therefore their fear stuns them, so that they can think of nothing but of hell and eternal destruction. However, I doubt not, that the words have another meaning. For I rather take the term ⌧⌧⌧ *aoon* in its proper signification; and the word ⌧⌧⌧ *nasa*, I interpret by the word *to bear*. 'A greater punishment (he says) is imposed upon me than I can bear.' In this manner, Cain, although he does not excuse his sin, having been driven from every shift; yet complains of the intolerable severity of his judgement. So also the devils, although they feel that they are justly tormented, yet do not cease to rage against God their judge, and to charge him with cruelty. And immediately follows the explanation of these words: 'Behold, thou hast driven me from the face of the earth, and I am hidden from thy face.'[248] In which expression he openly expostulates with God, that he is treated more hardly than is just, no clemency or moderation being shown him. For it is precisely as if he had said, 'If a safe habitation is denied me in the world, and thou dost not deign to care for me, what dost thou leave me? Would it not be better to die at once than to be constantly exposed to a thousand deaths?' Whence we infer, that the reprobate, however clearly they may be convicted, make no end of storming; insomuch that through their impatience and fury, they seize on occasions of contest; as if

248 "Ecce repulisti me a facie terrae, et a facie tua abscondar."

they were able to excite enmity against God on account of the severity of their own sufferings. This passage also clearly teaches what was the nature of that wandering condition, or exile, which Moses had just mentioned; namely, that no corner of the earth should be left him by God, in which he might quietly repose. For, being excluded from the common rights of mankind, so as to be no more reckoned among the legitimate inhabitants of the earth, he declares that he is cast out from the face of the earth, and therefore shall become a fugitive, because the earth will deny him a habitation; hence it would be necessary, that he should occupy as a robber, what he did not possess by right. To be 'hidden from the face of God,' is to be not regarded by God, or not protected by his guardian care. This confession also, which God extorted from the impious murderer, is a proof that there is no peace for men, unless they acquiesce in the providence of God, and are persuaded that their lives are the object of his care; it is also a proof, that they can only quietly enjoy any of God's benefits so long as they regard themselves as placed in the world, on this condition, that they pass their lives under his government. How wretched then is the instability of the wicked, who know that not a foot of earth is granted to them by God!

14. *Every one that findeth me*. Since he is no longer covered by the protection of God, he concludes that he shall be exposed to injury and violence from all men. And he reasons justly; for the hand of God alone marvelously preserves us amid so many dangers. And they have spoken prudently who have said, not only that our life hangs on a thread, but also that we have been received into this fleeting life, out of the womb, from a hundred deaths. Cain, however, in this place, not only considers himself as deprived of God's protection, but also supposes all creatures to be divinely armed to take vengeance of his impious murder. This is the reason why he so greatly fears for his life from any one who may meet him; for as man is a social animal, and all naturally desire mutual intercourse, this is certainly to be regarded as a portentous fact, that the meeting with any man was formidable to the murderer.

15. *Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain*. They who think that it was Cain's wish to perish immediately by one death, in order that he might not be agitated by continual dangers, and that the prolongation of his life was granted him only as a punishment, have no reason, that I can see, for thus speaking. But far more absurd is the manner in which many of the Jews mutilate this sentence. First, they imagine, in this clause, the use of the figure ἀποσιώπησις, according to which something not expressed is understood; then they begin a new sentence, 'He shall be punished sevenfold,' which they refer to Cain. Still, however, they do not agree together about the sense. Some trifle respecting Lamech, as we shall soon declare. Others expound the passage of the deluge, which happened in the seventh generation. But that is frivolous, since the latter was not a private punishment of one family only, but a common punishment of the human race. But this sentence ought to be read continuously, thus, 'Whosoever killeth Cain, shall on this account, be punished sevenfold.' And the causal particle ⊠⊠⊠ (*lekon,*) indicates that God would take care to prevent any one from easily

breaking in upon him to destroy him; not because God would institute a privilege in favor of the murderer, or would hearken to his prayers but because he would consult for posterity, in order to the preservation of human life. The order of nature had been awfully violated; what might be expected to happen in future, when the wickedness and audacity of man should increase, unless the fury of others had been restrained by a violent hand? For we know what pestilent and deadly poison Satan presents to us in evil examples, if a remedy be not speedily applied. Therefore, the Lord declares, if any will imitate Cain, not only shall they have no excuse in his example, but shall be more grievously tormented; because they ought, in his person, to perceive how detestable is their wickedness in the sight of God. Wherefore, they are greatly deceived who suppose that the anger of God is mitigated when men can plead custom as an excuse for sinning; whereas it is from that cause the more inflamed.

And the Lord set a mark. I have lately said, that nothing was granted to Cain for the sake of favoring him; but for the sake of opposing, in future, cruelty and unjust violence. And therefore, Moses now says, that a mark was set upon Cain, which should strike terror into all; because they might see, as in a mirror, the tremendous judgment of God against bloody men. As Scripture does not describe what kind of mark it was, commentators have conjectured, that his body became tremulous. It may suffice for us, that there was some visible token which should repress in the spectators the desire and the audacity to inflict injury.

16. *And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord*. Cain is said to have departed from the presence of God, because, whereas he had hitherto lived in the earth as in an abode belonging to God, now, like an exile removed far from God's sight, he wanders beyond the limits of His protection. Or certainly, (which is not less probable,) Moses represents him as having stood at the bar of judgment till he was condemned: but now, when God ceased to speak with him, being freed from the sense of His presence, he hastens elsewhere and seeks a new habitation, where he may escape the eyes of God. The land of Nod[249] without doubt obtained its name from its inhabitant. From its being situated on the eastern side of Paradise, we may infer the truth of what was before stated, that a certain place, distinguished by its pleasantness and rich abundance of fruits, had been given to Adam for a habitation; for, of necessity, that place must be limited, which has opposite aspects towards the various regions of the world.

17. *And Cain knew his wife*. From the context we may gather that Cain, before he slew his brother, had married a wife; otherwise Moses would now have related something respecting his marriage; because it would be a fact worthy to be recorded, that any one of his sisters could be found, who would not shrink with horror from committing herself into the hand

249 "□□ signifies motion, flight, wandering, exile, and is the name of the region into which Cain was exiled." — *Schindler*

of one whom she knew to be defiled with a brother's blood; and while a free choice was still given her, should rather choose spontaneously to follow an exile and a fugitive, than to remain in her father's family. Moreover, he relates it as a prodigy that Cain, having shaken off the terror he had mentioned, should have thought of having children:[250] for it is remarkable, that he who imagined himself to have as many enemies as there were men in the world, did not rather hide himself in some remote solitude. It is also contrary to nature, that he being astounded with fear; and feeling that God was opposed to him, could enjoy any pleasure. Indeed, it seems to me doubtful, whether he had previously had any children; for there would be nothing absurd in saying, that reference is here made especially to those who were born after the crime was committed, as to a detestable seed who would fully participate in the sanguinary disposition, and the savage manners of their father. This, however, is without controversy, that many persons, as well males as females, are omitted in this narrative; it being the design of Moses only to follow one line of his progeny, until he should come to Lamech. The house of Cain, therefore, was more populous than Moses states; but because of the memorable history of Lamech, which he is about to subjoin, he only adverts to one line of descendents, and passes over the rest in silence.

He built a city. This, at first sight, seems very contrary, both to the judgment of God, and to the preceding sentence. For Adam and the rest of his family, to whom God had assigned a fixed station, are passing their lives in hovels, or even under the open heaven, and seek their precarious lodging under trees; but the exile Cain, whom God had commanded to rove as a fugitive, not content with a private house, builds himself a city. It is, however, probable, that the man, oppressed by an accusing conscience, and not thinking himself safe within the walls of his own house, had contrived a new kind of defense: for Adam and the rest live dispersed through the fields for no other reason, than that they are less afraid. Wherefore, it is a sign of an agitated and guilty mind, that Cain thought of building a city for the purpose of separating himself from the rest of men; yet that pride was mixed with his diffidence and anxiety, appears, from his having called the city after his son. Thus different affections often contend with each other in the hearts of the wicked. Fear, the fruit of his iniquity, drives him within the walls of a city, that he may fortify himself in a manner before unknown; and, on the other hand, supercilious vanity breaks forth. Certainly he ought rather to have chosen that his name should be buried for ever; for how could his memory be transmitted, except to beheld in execration? Yet, ambition impels him to erect a monument to his race in the name of his city. What shall we here say, but that he had hardened himself against punishment, for the purpose of holding out, in inflated obstinacy, against God? Moreover although it is lawful to defend our lives by the fortifications of cities and of fortresses, yet the first origin of them is to be noted, because it is always profitable for us to behold

250 "Ad sobolem gignendam animum applicuisse."

our faults in their very remedies. When captious men sneeringly inquire, whence Cain had brought his architects and workmen to build his city, and whence he sent for citizens to inhabit it? I, in return, ask of them, what authority they have for believing that the city was constructed of squared stones, and with great skill, and at much expense, and that the building of it was a work of long continuance? For nothing further can be gathered from the words of Moses, than that Cain surrounded himself and his posterity with walls formed of the rudest materials: and as it respects the inhabitants; that in that commencement of the fecundity of mankind, his offspring would have grown to so great a number when it had reached his children of the fourth generation, that it might easily form the body of one city.

19. *And Lamech took unto him two wives.* We have here the origin of polygamy in a perverse and degenerate race; and the first author of it, a cruel man, destitute of all humanity. Whether he had been impelled by an immoderate desire of augmenting his own family, as proud and ambitious men are wont to be, or by mere lust, it is of little consequence to determine; because, in either way he violated the sacred law of marriage, which had been delivered by God. For God had determined, that "the two should be one flesh," and that is the perpetual order of nature. Lamech, with brutal contempt of God, corrupts nature's laws. The Lord, therefore, willed that the corruption of lawful marriage should proceed from the house of Cain, and from the person of Lamech, in order that polygamists might be ashamed of the example.

20. *Jabal ; he was the father of such as dwell in tents.* Moses now relates that, with the evils which proceeded from the family of Cain, some good had been blended. For the invention of arts, and of other things which serve to the common use and convenience of life, is a gift of God by no means to be despised, and a faculty worthy of commendation. It is truly wonderful, that this race, which had most deeply fallen from integrity, should have excelled the rest of the posterity of Adam in rare endowments.[251] I, however, understand Moses to have spoken expressly concerning these arts, as having been invented in the family of Cain, for the purpose of showing that he was not so accursed by the Lord but that he would still scatter some excellent gifts among his posterity; for it is probable, that the genius of others was in the meantime not inactive; but that there were, among the sons of Adam, industrious and skillful men, who exercised their diligence in the invention and cultivation of arts. Moses, however, expressly celebrates the remaining benediction of God on that race, which otherwise would have been deemed void and barren of all good. Let us then know, that the sons of Cain, though deprived of the Spirit of regeneration, were yet endued with gifts of no despicable kind; just as the experience of all ages teaches us how widely the rays of divine light have shone on unbelieving nations, for the benefit of the present life; and we see, at the present time, that the excellent gifts of the Spirit are diffused through the whole human

251 "Non poenitendis dotibus, prae allis Adae posteris excelluisse."

race. Moreover, the liberal arts and sciences have descended to us from the heathen. We are, indeed, compelled to acknowledge that we have received astronomy, and the other parts of philosophy, medicines and the order of civil government, from them. Nor is it to be doubted, that God has thus liberally enriched them with excellent favors that their impiety might have the less excuse. But, while we admire the riches of his favor which he has bestowed on them, let us still value far more highly that grace of regeneration with which he peculiarly sanctifies his elect unto himself.

Now, although the invention of the harp, and of similar instruments of music, may minister to our pleasure, rather than to our necessity, still it is not to be thought altogether superfluous; much less does it deserve, in itself, to be condemned. Pleasure is indeed to be condemned, unless it be combined with the fear of God, and with the common benefit of human society. But such is the nature of music, that it can be adapted to the offices of religion, and made profitable to men; if only it be free from vicious attractions, and from that foolish delight, by which it seduces men from better employments, and occupies them in vanity. If, however, we allow the invention of the harp no praise, it is well known how far and how widely extends the usefulness of the art of the carpenter. Finally, Moses, in my opinion, intends to teach that that race flourished in various and preeminent endowments, which would both render it inexcusable, and would prove most evident testimonies of the divine goodness. The name of "the father of them that dwell in tents," is given to him who was the first inventor of that convenience, which others afterwards imitated.

23. *Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech*. The intention of Moses is to describe the ferocity of this man, who was, however, the fifth in descent from the fratricide Cain, in order to teach us, that, so far from being terrified by the example of divine judgment which he had seen in his ancestor, he was only the more hardened. Such is the obduracy of the impious, that they rage against those chastisements of God, which ought at least to render them gentle. The obscurity of this passage, which has procured for us a variety of interpretations, mainly arises hence; that whereas Moses speaks abruptly, interpreters have not considered what is the tendency of his speech. The Jews have, according to their manner, invented a foolish fable; namely, that Lamech was a hunter and blind, and had a boy to direct his hand; that Cain, while he was concealed in the woods, was shot through by his arrow, because the boy, talking him for a wild beast, had directed his master's hand towards him; that Lamech then took revenge on the boy, who, by his imprudence, had been the cause of the murder. And ignorance of the true state of the case has caused everyone to allow himself to conjecture what he pleased. But to me the opinion of those seems to be true and simple, who resolve the past tense into the future, and understand its application to be indefinite; as if he had boasted that he had strength and violence enough to slay any, even the strongest enemy. I therefore lead thus, 'I will slay a man for my wound, and a young man for my bruise,' or 'in my bruise and wound.' But, as I have said, the occasion of his holding this conversation

with his wives is to be noticed. We know that sanguinary men, as they are a terror to others, so are they everywhere hated by all. The wives, therefore, of Lamech were justly alarmed on account of their husband, whose violence was intolerable to the whole human race, lest, a conspiracy being formed, all should unite to crush him, as one deserving of public odium and execration. Now Moses, to exhibit his desperate barbarity, seeing that the soothing arts of wives are often wont to mitigate cruel and ferocious men, declares that Lamech cast forth the venom of his cruelty into the bosom of his wives. The sum of the whole is this: He boasts that he has sufficient courage and strength to strike down any who should dare to attack him. The repetition occurring in the use of the words 'man' and 'young man' is according to Hebrew phraseology, so that none should think different persons to be denoted by them; he only amplifies, in the second member of the sentence, his furious audacity, when he glories that young men in the flower of their age would not be equal to contend with him: as if he would say, Let each mightiest man come forward, there is none whom I will not dispatch.' So far was he from calming his wives with the hope of his leading a more humane life, that he breaks forth in threats of sheer indiscriminate slaughter against every one, like a furious wild beast. Whence it easily appears, that he was so imbued with ferocity as to have retained nothing human. The nouns *wound* and *bruise* may be variously read. If they be rendered 'for my wound and bruise,' then the sense will be, 'I confidently take upon my own head whatever danger there may be, let what will happen it shall be at my expense; for I have a means of escape at hand.' Then what follows must be read in connection with it, If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold. If the ablative case be preferred, 'In my wound and bruise,' there will still be a double exposition. The first is, 'Although I should be wounded, I would still kill the man; what then will I not do when I am whole?' The other, and, in my judgment, the sounder and more consistent exposition, is, 'If any one provoke me by injury, or attempt any act of violence, he shall feel that he has to deal with a strong and valiant man; nor shall he who injures me escape with impunity.'[252]

252 It is clear that Calvin had no perception of the poetical character of this speech, or he would more correctly have interpreted its meaning. There is, however, and will be, much difference of opinion respecting the real nature of the act spoken of in this obscure poem. Some have thought Lamech guilty of savage cruelty in murdering an innocent person; others have deemed the act to be one of justifiable homicide, done in self-defense. Others, again, have supposed the expression of Lamech to be a mere question, which admitted only of a negative answer, 'Have I slain a man for my wound?' And, lastly, there are those who, with Calvin, take it as the language of bravado, 'I would slay a man for wounding me, if he should attempt to do it.' In Bishop Lowth's fourth Prelection the whole is given in three distiches of Hebrew poetry, of which the following is a translation: — ***"Ada and Zillah, hear my voice:***
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech;
Because I have slain a man for my wound,
And a boy for my bruise:

This example shows that men ever glide from bad to worse. The wickedness of Cain was indeed awful; but the cruelty of Lamech advanced so far that he was unsparing of human blood. Besides, when he saw his wives struck with terror, instead of becoming mild, he only sharpened and confirmed himself the more in cruelty. Thus the brutality of cruel men increases in proportion as they find themselves hated; so that instead of being, touched with penitence, they are ready to bury one murder under ten others. Whence it follows that they having once become imbued with blood, shed it, and drink its without restraint.

24. *Cain shall be avenged sevenfold.* It is not my intention to relate the ravings or the dreams of every writer, nor would I have the reader to expect this from me; here and there I allude to them, though sparingly, especially if there be any color of deception; that readers, being often admonished, may learn to take heed unto themselves. Therefore, with respect to this passages which has been variously tortured, I will not record what one or another may have delivered, but will content myself with a true exposition of it. God had intended that Cain should be a horrible example to warn others against the commission of murder; and for this end had marked him with a shameful stigma. Yet lest any one should imitate his crime, He declared whosoever killed him should be punished with sevenfold severity. Lamech, impiously perverting this divine declaration, mocks its severity; for he hence takes greater license to sin, as if God had granted some singular privilege to murderers; not that he seriously thinks so, but being destitute of all sense of piety, he promises himself impunity, and in the meantime jestingly uses the name of God as an excuse: just as Dionysus did, who boasted that the gods favor sacrilegious persons, for the sake of obliterating the infamy which he had contracted. Moreover, as the number seven in Scripture designates a multitudes

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If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,

Lamech even seventy times seven." De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum.

See also Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary in loco. The following translation from Herder is also worthy of notice:

*— **"Ye wives of Lamech, hear my voice,***

And hearken to my speech;

I slew a man who wounded me,

A youth who smote me with a blow,

If Cain shall be seven times avenged,

Then Lamech seventy times seven."

Caunter's Poetry of the Pentateuch, vol. 1, p. 81. Caunter commends the translation of Bishop Lowth for having got rid of the copulative conjunction in the fourth line. This, however, is a mistake into which he has been led by reading Lowth not in the original, but in Dr. Gregory's translation. A remark of Michaelis appears worthy of attention. Speaking of Lamech and his wives, he says, 'It is not to be supposed that he addressed them in verse; the substance of what he said has been reduced to numbers, for the sake of preserving it easily in the memory.' *— Ed.*

so sevenfold is taken for a very great increase. Such is the meaning of the declaration of Christ,

'I do not say that thou shalt remit the offense seven times,
but seventy times seven,' (Matthew 18:22.)

25. *Adam knew his wife again*. Some hence infer that our first parents were entirely deprived of their offspring when one of their sons had been slain, and the other was cast far away into banishment. But it is utterly incredible that, when the benediction of God in the propagation of mankind was in its greatest force, Adam and Eve should have been through so many years unfruitful. But rather before Abel was slain, the continual succession of progeny had already rendered the house of Adam populous; for in him and his wife especially the effect of that declaration ought to be conspicuous, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth." What, therefore, does Moses mean? Truly, that our first parents, horror-struck at the impious slaughter, abstained for a while from the conjugal bed. Nor could it certainly be otherwise, than that they, in reaping this exceedingly sad and bitter fruit of their apostasy from God, should sink down almost lifeless. The reason why he now passes by others is that he designed to trace the generation of pious descendants through the line of Seth. In the following chapter, however, where he will say, that "Adam begat sons and daughters," he undoubtedly includes a great number who had been born before Seth; to whom, however, but little regard is paid since they were separated from that family which worshipped God in purity, and which might truly be deemed the Church of God.

God, saith she *, has appointed me another seed instead of Abel*. Eve means some peculiar seed; for we have said that others had been born who had also grown up before the death of Abel; but, since the human race is prone to evil, nearly her whole family had, in various ways, corrupted itself; therefore, she entertained slight hope of the remaining multitude, until God should raise up to her a new seed, of which she might expect better things. Wherefore, she regarded herself as bereaved not of one son only, but of her whole offspring, in the person of Abel.

26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*. In the verb 'to call upon,' there is a *synecdochee*, for it embraces generally the whole worship of God. But religion is here properly designated by that which forms its principal part. For God prefers this service of piety and faith to all sacrifices, (Psalm 50:14.) Yea, this is the spiritual worship of God which faith produces. This is particularly worthy of notice, because Satan contrives nothing with greater care than to adulterate, with every possible corruption, the pure invocation of God, or to draw us away from the only God to the invocation of creatures. Even from the beginning of the world he has not ceased to move this stone, that miserable men might weary themselves in vain in a preposterous worship of God. But let us know, that the entire pomp of adoration is nothing worth, unless this chief point of worshipping God aright be maintained. Although the passage may be more simply explained to mean, that then the name of God was again

celebrated; yet I approve the former sense, because it is more full, contains a useful doctrine, and also agrees with the accustomed phraseology of Scripture. It is a foolish figment, that God then began to be called by other names; since Moses does not here censure depraved superstitions, but commends the piety of one family which worshipped God in purity and holiness, when religions among other people, was polluted or extinct. And there is no doubt, that Adam and Eve, with a few other of their children were themselves true worshippers of God; but closes means, that so great was then the deluge of impiety in the world that religion was rapidly hastening to destruction; because it remained only with a few men, and did not flourish in any one race. We may readily conclude that Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God. And after he begat a son, like himself, and had a rightly constituted family, the face of the Church began distinctly to appear, and that worship of God was set up which might continue to posterity. Such a restoration of religion has been effected also in our time; not that it had been altogether extinct; but there was no certainly defined people who called upon God; and, no sincere profession of faith, no uncorrupted religion could anywhere be discovered. Whence it too evidently appears how great is the propensity of men, either to gross contempt of God, or to superstition; since both evils must then have everywhere prevailed, when Moses relates it as a miracles that there was at that time a single family in which the worship of God arose.

CHAPTER 5.

Genesis 5:1-32

1. This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;	**1.** Iste est liber generationum Adam: in die qua creavit Deus hominem, ad similitudinem Dei fecit illum.
2. Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.	**2.** Masculum et foeminam creeavit eos, et benedixit eis: et vocavit nomen eorum Hominem, in die qua creati sunt.
3. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat *a son* in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:	**3.** Et vixit Adam triginta et centum annos: et genuit ad similitudinem suam, ad imaginem suam *filium*, et vocavit nomen ejus Seth.
4. And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:	**4.** Et fuerunt dies Adam postquam genuit Seth, octingenti anni: et genuit filios et filias.
5. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.	**5.** Fuerunt itaque omnes dies Adam quibus vixit, nongenti anni et triginta anni: et mortuus est.
6. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:	**6.** Et vixit Seth quinque annos et centum annos, et genuit Enos.
7. And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:	**7.** Et vixit Seth postquam genuit Enos, septem annos et octingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
8. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.	**8.** Fuerunt itaque omnes dies Seth, duodecim anni et nongenti anni: et mortuus est.
9. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:	**9.** Et vixit Enos nonaginta annos, et genuit Kenan.
10. And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:	**10.** Et vixit Enos postquam genuit Kenan, quindecim annos et octingentos annos, et genuit filios et filias.
11. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.	**11.** Fuerunt igitur omnes dies Enos, quinque anni et nongenti anni: et mortuus est.
12. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel:	**12.** Et vixit Kenan septuaginta annos, et genuit Mahalaleel.

13. And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:	**13.** Et vixit Kenan postquam genuit Mahalaleel, quadraginta annos et octingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
14. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.	**14.** Fuerunt itaque omnes dies Kenan, decem anni et nongenti anni: et mortuus est.
15. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:	**15.** Et vixit Mahalaleel quinque annos et sexaginta annos, et genuit Jered.
16. And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:	**16.** Et vixit Mahalaleel postquam genuit Jered, triginta annos et octingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
17. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.	**17.** Fuerunt igitur omnes dies Mahalaleel, quinque anni et octingenti anni: et mortuus est.
18. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch:	**18.** Et vixit Jered duos et sexaginta annos et centum annos, et genuit Hanoch.
19. And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:	**19.** Et vixit Jered postquam genuit Hnoch octingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
20. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.	**20.** Fuerunt ergo omnes dies Jered duo et sexaginta anni et nongenti anni: et mortuus est.
21. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:	**21.** Et vixit Hanoch quinque et sexaginta annos, et genuit Methuselah.
22. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:	**22.** Et ambulavit Hanoch cum Deo, postquam genuit Methuselah, trecentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
23. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:	**23.** Fuerunt itaque omnes dies Hanoch, quinque et sexaginta anni et trecenti anni.
24. And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.	**24.** Et ambulavit Hanoch cum Deo: et non fuit, quia tulit eum Deus.
25. And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:	**25.** Et vixit Methuselah septem et octoginta annos et centum annos, et genuit Lemech.

26. And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:	**26.** Et vixit Methuselah postquam genuit Lemech, duos et octoginta annos et septingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
27. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.	**27.** Fuerunt igitur omnes dies Methuselah novem et sexaginta anni et nongenti anni: et mortuus est.
28. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:	**28.** Et vixit Lemech duos et octoginta annos et centum annos: et genuit filium.
29. And he called his name Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.	**29.** Et bocavit nomen ejus Noah, dicendo, Iste consolabitur nos ab opere nostro, et a dolore manuum nostrarum de terra cui maledixit Jehova.
30. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:	**30.** Et vixit Lemech postquam genuit ipsum Noah, quinque et nonaginta annos et quingentos annos et quingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
31. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.	**31.** Fuerunt itaque omnes dies Lemech septem et septuaginta anni et septingenti anni: et mortuus est.
32. And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.	**32.** Et erat Noah quingentorum annorum, et genuit ipse Noah, Sem, Cham, et Jepheth.

1. *This is the book of the generations of Adam*. In this chapter Moses briefly recites the length of time which had intervened between the creation of the world and the deluge; and also slightly touches on some portion of the history of that period. And although we do not comprehend the design of the Spirit, in leaving unrecorded great and memorable events, it is, nevertheless, our business to reflect on many things which are passed over in silence. I entirely disapprove of those speculations which every one frames for himself from light conjectures; nor will I furnish readers with the occasion of indulging themselves in this respect; yet it may, in some degree, be gathered from a naked and apparently dry narration, what was the state of those times, as we shall see in the proper places. The book, according to the Hebrew phrase, is taken for a catalogue. The generations signify a continuous succession of a race, or a continuous progeny. Further, the design with which this catalogue was made, was, to inform us, that in the great, or rather, we might say, prodigious multitude of men, there was always a number, though small, who worshipped God; and that this number

was wonderfully preserved by celestial guardianship, lest the name of God should be entirely obliterated, and the seed of the Church should fail.

In the day that God created. He does not restrict these "generations" to the day of the creation, but only points out their commencement; and, at the same time, he distinguishes between our first parents and the rest of mankind, because God had brought them into life by a singular method, whereas others had sprung from a previous stock, and had been born of parents.[253] Moreover, Moses again repeats what he had before stated that Adam was formed according to the image of God, because the excellency and dignity of this favor could not be sufficiently celebrated. It was already a great thing, that the principal place among the creatures was given to man; but it is a nobility far more exalted, that he should bear resemblance to his Creator, as a son does to his father. It was not indeed possible for God to act more liberally towards man, than by impressing his own glory upon him, thus making him, as it were, a living image of the Divine wisdom and justice. This also is of force in repelling the calumnies of the wicked who would gladly transfer the blame of their wickedness to their Maker, had it not been expressly declared, that man was formed by nature a different being from that which he has now become, through the fault of his own defection from God.

2. *Male and female created he them*. This clause commends the sacred bond of marriage, and the inseparable union of the husband and the wife. For when Moses has mentioned only one, he immediately afterwards includes *both* under *one* name. And he assigns a common name indiscriminately to both, in order that posterity might learn more sacredly to cherish this connection between each other, when they saw that their first parents were denominated as one person. The trifling inference of Jewish writers, that married persons *only* are called Adam, (or man,) is refuted by the history of the creation; nor truly did the Spirit, in this place, mean anything else, than that after the appointment of marriage, the husband and the wife were like one man. Moreover, he records the blessing pronounced upon them, that we may observe in it the wonderful kindness of God in continuing to grant it; yet let us know that by the depravity and wickedness of men it was, in some degree, interrupted.

3. *And begat a son in his own likeness*. We have lately said that Moses traces the offspring of Adam only through the line of Seth, to propose for our consideration the succession of the Church. In saying that Seth begat a son after his own image, he refers in part to the first origin of our nature: at the same time its corruption and pollution is to be noticed, which

253 "Il discerne les premiers hommes d'avec les autres, aus quels Dieu a prolonge la vie eu une facon singuliere: combien qu'ils ne fussent de si haute ne si noble race." — *French Trans.*

It will be perceived that this translation differs materially in sense from that given above; but, after the fullest consideration, the Editor adheres to his own, as a more literal rendering of the original Latin, and as being more in accordance with the reasoning of the Author. — *Ed.*

having been contracted by Adam through the fall, has flowed down to all his posterity. If he had remained upright, he would have transmitted to all his children what he had received: but now we read that Seth, as well as the rest, was defiled; because Adams who had fallen from his original state, could beget none but such as were like himself. If any one should object that Seth with his family had been elected by the special grace of God: the answer is easy and obvious; namely, that a supernatural remedy does not prevent carnal generation from participating in the corruption of sin. Therefore, according to the flesh, Seth was born a sinner; but afterwards he was renewed by the grace of the Spirit. This sad instance of the holy patriarch furnishes us with ample occasion to deplore our own wretchedness.

4. *And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth*. In the number of years here recorded we must especially consider the long period which the patriarchs lived together. For through six successive ages, when the family of Seth had grown into a great people, the voice of Adam might daily resound, in order to renew the memory of the creation, the fall, and the punishment of man; to testify of the hope of salvation which remained after chastisement, and to recite the judgments of God, by which all might be instructed. After his death his sons might indeed deliver, as from hand to hand, what they had learned, to their descendants; but far more efficacious would be the instruction from the mouth of him, who had been himself the eyewitness of all these things. Yet so wonderful, and even monstrous, was the general obstinacy, that not even the sounder part of the human race could be retained in the obedience and the fear of God.

5. *And he died*. This clause, which records the death of each patriarch, is by no means superfluous. For it warns us that death was not in vain denounced against men; and that we are now exposed to the curse to which man was doomed, unless we obtain deliverance elsewhere. In the meantime, we must reflect upon our lamentable condition; namely, that the image of God being destroyed, or, at least, obliterated in us, we scarcely retain the faint shadow of a life, from which we are hastening to death. And it is useful, in a picture of so many ages, to behold, at one glance, the continual course and tenor of divine vengeance; because otherwise, we imagine that God is in some way forgetful; and to nothing are we more prone than to dream of immortality on earth, unless death is frequently brought before our eyes.

22. *And Enoch walked with God*. Undoubtedly Enoch is honored with peculiar praise among the men of his own age, when it is said that he walked with God. Yet both Seth and Enoch, and Cainan, and Mahalaleel, and Jared, were then living, whose piety was celebrated in the former part of the chapter.[254] As that age could not be ruder or barbarous, which had so many most excellent teachers; we hence infer, that the probity of this holy man, whom the Holy Spirit exempted from the common order, was rare and almost singular. Meanwhile,

254 "Superiori capite." Doubtless a mistake. — *Ed*.

a method is here pointed out of guarding against being carried away by the perverse manners of those with whom we are conversant. For public custom is as a violent tempest; both because we easily suffer ourselves to be led hither and thither by the multitude, and because every one thinks what is commonly received must be right and lawful; just as swine contract an itching from each other; nor is there any contagion worse, and more loathsome than that of evil examples. Hence we ought the more diligently to notice the brief description of a holy life, contained in the words, "Enoch walked with God." Let those, then, who please, glory in living according to the custom of others; yet the Spirit of God has established a rule of living well and rightly, by which we depart from the examples of men who do not form their life and manners according to the law of God. For he who, pouring contempt upon the word of God, yields himself up to the imitation of the world, must be regarded as living to the devil. Moreover, (as I have just now hinted,) all the rest of the patriarchs are not deprived of the praise of righteousness; but a remarkable example is set before us in the person of one man, who stood firmly in the season of most dreadful dissipation; in order that, if we wish to live rightly and orderly, we may learn to regard God more than men. For the language which Moses uses is of the same force as if he had said, that Enoch, lest he should be drawn aside by the corruptions of men, had respect to God alone; so that with a pure conscience, as under his eyes, he might cultivate uprightness.

24. *And he was not, for God took him*. He must be shamelessly contentious, who will not acknowledge that something extraordinary is here pointed out. All are, indeed, taken out of the world by death; but Moses plainly declares that Enoch was taken out of the world by an unusual mode, and was received by the Lord in a miraculous manner. For ⊠⊠⊠(*lakah*) among the Hebrews signifies 'to take to one's self,' as well as simply to take. But, without insisting on the word, it suffices to hold fast the thing itself; namely, that Enoch, in the middle period of life, suddenly, and in an unexampled method, vanished from the sight of men, because the Lord took him away, as we read was also done with respect to Elijah. Since, in the translation of Enoch, an example of immortality was exhibited; there is no doubt that God designed to elevate the minds of his saints with certain faith before their death; and to mitigate, by this consolation, the dread which they might entertain of death, seeing they would know that a better life was elsewhere laid up for them. It is, however, remarkable that Adam himself was deprived of this support of faith and of comfort. For since that terrible judgment of God, 'Thou shalt die the death,' was constantly sounding in his ears, he very greatly needed some solace, in order that he might in death have something else to reflect upon than curse and destruction. But it was not till about one hundred and fifty years after his death,[255] that the translation of Enoch took place, which was to be as a visible represent-

255 Adam died at the age of 930.
Enoch was born when Adam was 622,
and was translated when he himself was 365.

ation of a blessed resurrection; by which, if Adam had been enlightened, he might have girded himself with equanimity for his own departure. Yet, since the Lord, in inflicting punishment, had moderated its rigour, and since Adam himself had heard from his own mouth, what was sufficient to afford him no slight alleviation; contented with this kind of remedy, it became his duty patiently to bear, both the continual cross in this world, and also the bitter and sorrowful termination of his life. But whereas others were not taught in the same manner by a manifest oracle to hope for victory over the serpent, there was, in the translation of Enoch, an instruction for all the godly, that they should not keep their hope confined within the boundaries of this mortal life. For Moses shows that this translation was a proof of the Divine love towards Enoch, by connecting it immediately with his pious and upright life. Nevertheless, to be deprived of life is not in itself desirable. It follows, therefore, that he was taken to a better abode; and that even when he was a sojourner in the world, he was received into a heavenly country; as the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (Hebrews 11:5,) plainly teaches. Moreover, if it be inquired, why Enoch was translated, and what is his present condition; I answer, that his transition was by a peculiar privilege, such as that of other men would have been, if they had remained in their first state.[256] For although it was necessary for him to put off what was corruptible; yet was he exempt from that violent separation, from which nature shrinks. In short, his translation was a placid and joyful departure out of the world. Yet he was not received into celestial glory, but only freed from the miseries of the present life, until Christ should come, the first-fruits of those who shall rise again. And since he was one of the members of the Church, it was necessary that he should wait until they all shall go forth together, to meet Christ, that the whole body may be united to its Head. Should any one bring as an objection the saying of the Apostle,

'It is appointed unto all men once to die,' (Hebrews 9:27,)

the solution is easy, namely, that death is not always the separation of the soul from the body; but they are said to die, who put off their corruptible nature: and such will be the death of those who will be found surviving at the last day.

29. *And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work.* In the Hebrew languages the etymology of the verb ☒☒☒ (*nacham*) does not correspond with the noun ☒☒☒ (*noach*,) unless we call the letter ☒ (*mem*) superfluous; as sometimes, in com-

Age of the world, 987. So that Adam had been dead 57 years when Enoch was translated. Whence it would appear that either the word "centum," a hundred, had slipped by mistake from Calvin's pen; or which is more probably, that, though the two Latin editions before the Editor, have the mistake, the more early ones were free from it. For the French version and the Old English one are correct. — *Ed.*

256 "S'ils fussent demeurez en leur premier estat." These words, in the French translation, have no corresponding passage in the original, but are so obvious an explanation of Calvin's language, that they are here translated. — *Ed.*

position, certain letters are redundant. ☒☒☒ *Noach* signifies to *give rest*, but ☒☒☒ *nacham* to *comfort*. The name Noah is derived from the former verb. Wherefore, there is either the transmutation of one letter into another, or only a bare *allusion*, when Lamech says, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work."[257] But as to the point in hand, there is no doubt that he promises to himself an alleviation, or solace, of his labors. But it is asked, whence he had conceived such hope from a son whose disposition he could not yet have discerned. The Jews do not judge erroneously in declaring Lamech's expression to be a prophecy; but they are too gross in restricting to agriculture what is applicable to all those miseries of human life which proceed from the curse of God, and are the fruits of sin. I come, indeed, to this conclusion; that the holy fathers anxiously sighed, when, being surrounded with so many evils they were continually reminded of the first origin of all evils, and regarded themselves as under the displeasure of God. Therefore in the expression, the toil of our hands, there is the figure *synecdochee* ; because under one kind of toil he comprises the whole miserable state into which mankind had fallen. For they undoubtedly remembered what Moses has related above, concerning the labourious, sad, and anxious life to which Adam had been doomed: and since the wickedness of man was daily increasing, no mitigation of the penalty could be hoped for, unless the Lord should bring unexpected succor. It is probable that they were very earnestly looking for the mercy of God; for their faith was strong, and necessity urged them ardently to desire help. But that the name was not rashly given to Noah, we may infer hence, that Moses expressly notes it as a thing worthy to be remembered. Certainly some meaning was couched under the names of other patriarchs; yet he passes by the reason why they were so called, and only insists upon this name of Noah. Therefore the contentious reader is not to be allowed hence to pronounce a judgment, that there was something peculiar in Noah, which did not suit others before him. I have, then, no doubt that Lamech hoped for something rare and unwonted from his son; and that, too, by the inspiration of the Spirit. Some suppose him to have been deceived, inasmuch as he believed that Noah was the Christ; but they adduce no rational conjecture in support of the opinion. It is more probable, that, seeing something great was promised concerning his son, he did not refrain from mixing his own imagination with the oracle; as holy men are also sometimes wont to exceed the measure of revelation, and thus it comes to pass, that they neither touch heaven nor earth.

32. *And Noah was five hundred years old*. Concerning the fathers whom Moses has hitherto enumerated, it is not easy to conjecture whether each of them was the first born of his family or not; for he only wished to follow the continued succession of the Church. But God, to prevent men from being elated by a vain confidence in the flesh, frequently chooses

257 See Schindler's Lexicon, sub voce ☒☒☒, No. III and also, sub voce ☒☒☒, as a proper name, where he derives the latter word from the former, "litera ☒ abjecta, aut, quod consolatio sit quies, recreatio." — *Ed*

for himself those who are posterior in the order of nature. I am, therefore, uncertain whether Moses has recorded the catalogue of those whom God preferred to others; or of those who, by right of primogeniture, held the chief rank among their brethren; I am also uncertain how many sons each had. With respect to Noah, it plainly appears that he had no more than three sons; and this Moses purposely declares the more frequently, that we may know that the whole of his family was preserved. But they, in my opinion, err, who think that in this place the chastity of Noah is proclaimed, because he led a single life through nearly five centuries. For it is not said that he was unmarried till that time; nor even in what year of his life he had begun to be a father. But, in simply mentioning the time in which he was warned of the future deluge, Moses also adds, that at the same time, or thereabouts, he was the father of three sons; not that he already had them, but because they were born not long afterwards. That he had, indeed, survived his five hundredth year before Shem was born, will be evident from the eleventh chapter (Genesis 11:1); concerning the other two nothing is known with certainty, except that Japheth was the younger.[258] It is wonderful that from the time when he had received the dreadful message respecting the destruction of the human race, he was not prevented, by the greatness of his grief, from intercourse with his wife; but it was necessary that some remains should survive, because this family was destined for the restoration of the second world. Although we do not read at what time his sons took wives, I yet think it was done long before the deluge; but they were unfruitful by the providence of God, who had determined to preserve only eight souls.

258 This inference, that Japheth was the younger son, Calvin seems to have drawn from a translation of Genesis 10:21, different from our own. In our version Shem is there called "the brother of Japheth the elder." But commentators are generally agreed that the English version is right. It not only gives the more natural sense of the original, but is confirmed by collateral testimony. For it is clear that Noah began to have children in his five hundredth year. Shem was one hundred years old two years after the flood, and therefore was born when his father was five hundred and two years old. Some one, then, of Noah's sons must have been born before this. Now we are told that Ham was the younger son, (Genesis 9:24). Therefore Japheth must have been his first-born. — See Patrick's and Bush's Commentaries, and Wells' Geography of the Old Testament. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 6.

Genesis 6:1-22	
1. And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,	**1.** Et fuit, quum coepis sent homines multiplicari in superficie terrae, filiaeque natae essent eis:
2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.	**2.** Tunc viderunt filii Dei filias hominum quod pulchrae essent: et acceperunt sibi uxores ex omnibus quas elegerant.
3. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.	**3.** Et dixit Jehovan, Non desceptabit Spiritus meus cum homine in saeculum, eo quod sit etiam ipse caro: et erunt dies ejus centum et viginti anni.
4. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.	**4.** Gigantes fuerunt in terra in diebus illis: et etiam postquam ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum, genuerunt eis: isti sunt potentes, qui a saeculo *fuerunt* viri nominis.
5. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.	**5.** Et vidit Jehova quod multa esset malitia hominum in terra et *quod* omne figmentum cogitationum cordit eorum tantumodo esset malum omni die:
6. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.	**6.** Tunc poenituit Jehovam quod fecisset hominem in terra et doluit in corde suo.
7. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.	**7.** Et dixit Jehova, Delebo hominem quem creavi, a superficie terrae, ab homine usque ad jumentum, usque ad reptile, et usque ad volatile coeli: quia poenitet me quod fecerim ea.
8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.	**8.** Et Noah invenit gratiam in oculis Jehovae.
9. These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.	**9.** Istae sunt generationes Noah. Noah vir justus, perfectus fuit in generationibus suis: cum Deo ambulavit Noah.

10. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.	**10.** Genuit vero Noah tres filios, Sem, Cham, et Jepheth.
11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.	**11.** Et corrupta erat: nam corruperat omnis caro viam suam super terram.
12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.	**12.** Et vidit Deus terran, et ecce, corrupta erat: nam corruperat omnis caro viam suam super terram.
13. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.	**13.** Dixit itaque Deus ad Noah, Finis universae carnis venit coram me: quia repleta est terrs iniquitate a facie eorum: et ecce, ego disperdam eos cum terra.
14. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.	**14.** Fac tibi arcam e lignis gopher, mansiunculas facies in arca, et bituminabis eam intrinsecus et extrinsecus bitumine.
15. And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of* : The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.	**15.** Et haec *mensura* qua facies cam: Trecentorum cubitorum erit longitudo arcae, quinquaginta cubitorum latitudo ejus: et triginta cubitorum altitudo ejus.
16. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it.	**16.** Fenestram facies arcae, et in cubito consummabis eam superne: ostium vero arcae in latere ejus pones: inferiora et secunda, et tertia facies in ea.
17. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.	**17.** Et ego ecce *ego* adduco diluvium aquarum super terram, ut disperdam omnem carnem in qua est spiritus vitae sub coelo: omne quod est in terra morietur.
18. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.	**18.** Et statuam pactum meum tecum, et ingredieris arcam tu, et filii tui, et uxor tua, et uxores filiorum tuorum tecum.

19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee; they shall be male and female.	**19.** Et ex omni vivente, ex omni carne, bina ex omnibus introduces in arcam, ut viva serventur tecum, masculus et foemina erunt.
20. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every *sort* shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.	**20.** Ex volatili secundum speciem suam, et ex animali secundum speciem suam, ex omni reptili terrae secundum speciem suam, bina ex omnibus ingredientur ad to, ut viva conserventur.
21. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.	**21.** Et tu cape tibi ex omni esca quae comeditur, et congregabis tibi, eritque tibi et illis ad vescendum.
22. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.	**22.** Et fecit Noah juxta omnia quae praeceperat ei Deus, sic fecit.

1. *And it came to pass, when men began to multiply*. Moses, having enumerated in order, ten patriarchs, with whom the worship of God remained pure, now relates, that their families also were corrupted. But this narration must be traced to an earlier period than the five hundredth year of Noah. For, in order to make a transition to the history of the deluge, he prefaces it by declaring the whole world to have been so corrupt, that scarcely anything was left to God, out of the widely spread defection. That this may be the more apparent, the principle is to be kept in memory, that the world was then as if divided into two parts; because the family of Seth cherished the pure and lawful worship of Good, from which the rest had fallen. Now, although all mankind had been formed for the worship of God, and therefore sincere religion ought everywhere to have reigned; yet since the greater part had prostituted itself, either to an entire contempt of God, or to depraved superstitions; it was fitting that the small portion which God had adopted, by special privilege, to himself, should remain separate from others. It was, therefore, base ingratitude in the posterity of Seth, to mingle themselves with the children of Cain, and with other profane races; because they voluntarily deprived themselves of the inestimable grace of God. For it was an intolerable profanation, to pervert, and to confound, the order appointed by God. It seems at first sight frivolous, that the sons of God should be so severely condemned, for having chosen for themselves beautiful wives from the daughters of men. But we must know first, that it is not a light crime to violate a distinction established by the Lord; secondly, that for the worshippers of God to be separated from profane nations, was a sacred appointment which ought reverently to have been observed, in order that a Church of God might exist upon earth; thirdly, that the disease was desperate, seeing that men rejected the remedy divinely prescribed for them.

In short, Moses points it out as the most extreme disorder; when the sons of the pious, whom God had separated to himself from others, as a peculiar and hidden treasure, became degenerate.

That ancient figment, concerning the intercourse of angels with women, is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity; and it is surprising that learned men should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious. The opinion also of the Chaldean paraphrase is frigid; namely, that promiscuous marriages between the sons of nobles, and the daughters of plebeians, is condemned. Moses, then, does not distinguish the sons of God from the daughters of men, because they were of dissimilar nature, or of different origin; but because they were the sons of God by adoption, whom he had set apart for himself; while the rest remained in their original condition. Should any one object, that they who had shamefully departed from the faith, and the obedience which God required, were unworthy to be accounted the sons of God; the answer is easy, that the honor is not ascribed to them, but to the grace of God, which had hitherto been conspicuous in their families. For when Scripture speaks of the sons of God, sometimes it has respect to eternal election, which extends only to the lawful heirs; sometimes to external vocations according to which many wolves are within the fold; and thought in fact, they are strangers, yet they obtain the name of sons, until the Lord shall disown them. Yea, even by giving them a title so honorable, Moses reproves their ingratitude, because, leaving their heavenly Father, they prostituted themselves as deserters.

2. *That they were fair*. Moses does not deem it worthy of condemnation that regard was had to beauty, in the choice of wives; but that mere lust reigned. For marriage is a thing too sacred to allow that men should be induced to it by the lust of the eyes.[259] For this union is inseparable comprising all the parts of life; as we have before seen, that the woman was created to be a helper of the man. Therefore our appetite becomes brutal, when we are so ravished with the charms of beauty, that those things which are chief are not taken into the account. Moses more clearly describes the violent impetuosity of their lust, when he says, that they took wives of all that they chose; by which he signifies, that the sons of God did not make their choice from those possessed of necessary endowments, but wandered without discrimination, rushing onward according to their lust. We are taught, however, in these words, that temperance is to be used in holy wedlock, and that its profanation is no light crime before God. For it is not fornication which is here condemned in the sons of the saints, but the too great indulgence of license in choosing themselves wives. And truly, it is impossible but that, in the succession of time, the sons of God should degenerate when they thus bound themselves in the same yoke with unbelievers. And this was the extreme policy of Balaam; that, when the power of cursing was taken from him, he commanded women to

259 "Est autem res sanctior conjugium quam ut oculis ferri homines debeant ad vluptatem coitus."

be privily sent by the Midianites, who might seduce the people of God to impious defection. Thus, as in the sons of the patriarchs, of whom Moses now treats, the forgetfulness of that grace which had been divinely imparted to them was, in itself, a grievous evil, inasmuch as they formed illicit marriages after their own host; a still worse addition was made, when, by mingling themselves with the wicked, they profaned the worship of God, and fell away from the faith; a corruption which is almost always wont to follow the former.

3. *My Spirit shall not always strive.* Although Moses had before shown that the world had proceeded to such a degree of wickedness and impiety, as ought not any longer to be borne; yet in order to prove more certainly, that the vengeance by which the whole world was drowned, was not less just than severe, he introduces God himself as the speaker. For there is greater weight in the declaration when pronounced by God's own mouth, that the wickedness of men was too deplorable to leave any apparent hope of remedy, and that therefore there was no reason why he should spare them. Moreover, since this would be a terrible example of divine anger, at the bare hearing of which we are even now afraid, it was necessary to be declared, that God had not been impelled by the heat of his anger into precipitation, nor had been more severe than was right; but was almost compelled, by necessity, utterly to destroy the whole world, except one single family. For men commonly do not refrain from accusing God of excessive haste; nay, they will even deem him cruel for taking vengeance of the sins of men. Therefore, that no man may murmur, Moses here, in the person of God, pronounces the depravity of the world to have been intolerable, and obstinately incurable by any remedy. This passage, however, is variously expounded. In the first place, some of the Hebrews derive the word which Moses uses from the root[260] ⊠⊠⊠(*nadan*) which signifies a *scabbard*. And hence they elicit the meaning that God was unwilling for his Spirit to be any longer held captive in a human body, as if enclosed like a sword in the scabbard. But because the exposition is distorted, and savours of the delirium of the Manichees, as if the soul of man were a portion of the Divine Spirit, it is by us to be rejected. Even among the Jews, it is a more commonly received opinion, that the word in question is from the root ⊠⊠⊠ (*doon.*) But since it often means *to judge*, and sometimes to *litigate*, hence also arise different interpretations. For some explain the passage to mean, that God will no longer deign to govern men by his Spirit; because the Spirit of God acts the part of a judge within us, when he so enlightens us with reason that we pursue what is right. Luther, according to his custom, applies the term to the external jurisdiction which God exercises by the ministry of the prophets, as if some one of the patriarchs had said in an assembly, 'We must cease from crying aloud; because it is an unbecoming thing that the Spirit of God, who speaks

260 "⊠⊠⊠ Vagina, in qua gladius est reconditus. Per metaphorum corpus, cui anima, tanquam gladius vaginae, inest." "A scabbard in which the sword is concealed. Metaphorically, the body in which the soul is, as a sword in its scabbard." — *Schindler.* — *Ed*

through us, should any longer weary himself in reproving the world.' This is indeed ingeniously spoken; but because we must not seek the sense of Scripture in uncertain conjectures, I interpret the words simply to mean, that the Lord, as if wearied with the obstinate perverseness of the world, denounces that vengeance as present, which he had hitherto deferred. For as long as the Lord suspends punishment, he, in a certain sense, strives with men, especially if either by threats or by examples of gentle chastisement, he invites them to repentance. In this way he had striven already, some centuries, with the world, which, nevertheless, was perpetually becoming worse. And now, as if wearied out, he declares that he has no mind to contend any longer.[261] For when God, by inviting the unbelievers to repentance, had long striven with them; the deluge put an end to the controversy. However, I do not entirely reject the opinion of Luther that God, having seen the deplorable wickedness of men, would not allow his prophets to spend their labor in vain. But the general declaration is not to be restricted to that particular case. When the Lord says, 'I will not contend for ever,' he utters his censure on an excessive and incurable obstinacy; and, at the same time, gives proof of the divine longsuffering: as if he would say, There will never be an end of contentions unless some unprecedented act of vengeance cuts off the occasion of it. The Greek interpreters, deceived by the similitude of one letter to another have improperly read, 'shall not remain:'[262] which has commonly been explained, as if men were then deprived of a sound and correct judgment; but this has nothing to do with the present passage.

For that he also is flesh. The reason is added why there is no advantage to be expected from further contention. The Lord here seems to place his Spirit in opposition to the carnal nature of men. In which method, Paul declares that the

'natural man does not receive those things which belong to the Spirit, and that they are foolishness unto him,'
(1 Corinthians 2:14.)

The meaning of the passage therefore is, that it is in vain for the Spirit of God to dispute with the flesh, which is incapable of reason. God gives the name of flesh as a mark of ignominy to men, whom he, nevertheless, had formed in his own image. And this is a mode of speaking familiar to Scripture. They who restrict this appellation to the inferior part of the soul are greatly deceived. For since the soul of man is vitiated in every part, and the reason of man is not less blind than his affections are perverse, the whole is properly called carnal. Therefore, let us know, that the whole man is naturally flesh, until by the grace of regeneration he begins to be spiritual. Now, as it regards the words of Moses, there is no doubt that they

261 "Acsi Gallice quis diceret, c'est trop plaider," as if any one should say in French, "This is to plead too much."

262 "Non permanebit." — *Vulgate*. "Οὐ μὴ καταμείνη τὸ πνεῦμά μου." — *Sept*. See on the word ⊠⊠⊠, Poole's Synopsis in loco, and Professor Lee's Lexicon.

contain a grievous complaint together with a reproof on the part of God. Man ought to have excelled all other creatures, on account of the mind with which he was endued; but now, alienated from right reason, he is almost like the cattle of the field. Therefore God inveighs against the degenerate and corrupt nature of men; because, by their own fault, they are fallen to that degree of fatuity, that now they approach more nearly to beasts than to true men, such as they ought to be, in consequence of their creation. He intimates, however, this to be an adventitious fault, that man has a relish only for the earth, and that, the light of intelligence being extinct, he follows his own desires. I wonder that the emphasis contained in the particle ⊠⊠⊠ (*beshagam*,) has been overlooked by commentators; for the words mean, 'on this account, because he also is flesh.' In which language God complains, that the order appointed by him has been so greatly disturbed, that his own image has been transformed into flesh.

Yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. Certain writers of antiquity, such as Lactantius, and others, have too grossly blundered in thinking that the term of human life was limited within this space of time; whereas, it is evident, that the language used in this place refers not to the private life of any one, but to a time of repentance to be granted to the whole world. Moreover, here also the admirable benignity of God is apparent, in that he, though wearied with the wickedness of men, yet postpones the execution of extreme vengeance for more than a century. But here arises an apparent discrepancy. For Noah departed this life when he had completed nine hundred and fifty years. It is however said that he lived from the time of the deluge three hundred and fifty years. Therefore, on the day he entered the ark he was six hundred years old. Where then will the twenty years be found? The Jews answer, that these years were cut off in consequence of the increasing wickedness of men. But there is no need of that subterfuge; when the Scripture speaks of the five hundredth year of his age, it does not affirm, that he had actually reached that point. And this mode of speaking, which takes into account the beginning of a period, as well as its end, is very common. Therefore, inasmuch as the greater part of the fifth century of his life was passed, so that he was nearly five hundred years old, he is said to have been of that age.[263]

263 The whole of this passage might have been more clearly expressed. At the close of chapter 5, it is said, "Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japeth." In the verse on which Calvin here comments, it is stated, that man's days on earth "shall be one hundred and twenty years"; but in Genesis 7:11, we are told, that the deluge came "in the six hundredth year of Noah's life." This would pare down the one hundred and twenty years to one hundred; and therefore Calvin asks, "Where are the remaining twenty to be found?" To answer this question, he shows that there was something indefinite in the statement of Noah's age in the first of these passages, and Moses does not say that the flood began precisely in that year. He therefore concludes that, according to a common mode of speaking among the Hebrews, he was in the fifth century of his life; and therefore he would infer, that Noah was about four hundred and eighty years of age at the time referred

4. *There were giants in the earth.* Among the innumerable kinds of corruptions with which the earth was filled, Moses especially records one in this place; namely that giants practiced great violence and tyranny. I do not, however, suppose, that he speaks of all the men of this age; but of certain individuals, who, being stronger than the rest, and relying on their own might and power, exalted themselves unlawfully, and without measure. As to the Hebrew noun, ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*nefilim*,) its origin is known to be from the verb ⊠⊠⊠ (*naphal*,) which is *to fall* ; but grammarians do not agree concerning its etymology. Some think that they were so called because they exceeded the common stature;[264] others, because the countenance of men fell at the sight of them, on account of the enormous size of their body; or, because all fell prostrate through terror of their magnitude. To me there seems more truth in the opinion of those who say, that a similitude is taken from a torrent, or an impetuous tempest; for as a storm and torrent, violently falling, lays waste and destroys the fields, so these robbers brought destruction and desolation into the world.[265] Moses does not indeed say, that they were of extraordinary stature, but only that they were robust. Elsewhere, I acknowledge, the same word denotes vastness of stature, which was formidable to those who explored the land of Canaan, (Joshua 13:33.) But Moses does not distinguish those of whom he speaks in this place, from other men, so much by the size of their bodies, as by their robberies and their lust of dominion. In the context, the particle ⊠⊠⊠ (*vegam*,) which is interposed, is emphatical. Jerome, after whom certain other interpreters have blundered, has rendered this passage in the worst possible manner.[266] For it is literally rendered thus, 'And even after the sons of God had gone in to the daughters of men;' as if he had said, *Moreover*, or, 'And at this time.' For in the first place, Moses relates that there were giants; then he subjoins, that there were also others from among that promiscuous offspring, which was produced when the sons of God mingled themselves with the daughters of men. It would not have been wonderful if such outrage had prevailed among the posterity of Cain; but the universal pollution is more clearly evident from this, that the holy seed was defiled by the same corruption. That a contagion so great should have spread through the few families which ought to have constituted the sanctuary of God, is no slight aggravation of the evil.

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to: if one hundred and twenty years be added, it will make him six hundred years old at the time of his entering the ark. — *Ed.*

264 "Quia excidissent a communi statura;" a misprint, undoubtedly, for excedissent. — *Ed.*

265 "Vatablus in Poli Synopsi." — *Ed.*

266 "Gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis. Postquam enim ingressi sunt," etc. There were giants on the earth in those days. For after the sons of God, etc. — *Vulgate*. The words which the Vulgate translates, 'for after,' — plainly accounting for the birth of the giants from the intercourse alluded to in the next clause, — are translated in the Septuagint, καὶ μετ ἐκεῖνο, "and after this;" which favors the interpretation of Calvin, with which also the English version corresponds. — *Ed*

The giants, then, had a prior origin; but afterwards those who were born of promiscuous marriages imitated their example.

The same became mighty men which were of old[267] The word 'age' is commonly understood to mean *antiquity* : as if Moses had said, that they who first exercised tyranny or power in the world, together with an excessive licentiousness and an unbridled lust of dominion, had begun from this race. Yet there are those who expound the expression, 'from the age,' to mean, *in the presence of the world* : for the Hebrew word ⌧⌧⌧ (*olam*,) has also this signification.[268] Some think that this was spoken proverbially; because the age immediately posterior to the deluge had produced none like them. The first exposition is the more simple; the sum of the whole, however, is, that they were ferocious tyrants, who separated themselves from the common rank. Their first fault was pride; because, relying on their own strength, they arrogated to themselves more than was due. Pride produced contempt of God, because, being inflated by arrogance, they began to shake off every yoke. At the same time, they were also disdainful and cruel towards men; because it is not possible that they, who would not bear to yield obedience to God, should have acted with moderation towards men. Moses adds they were "men of renown;" by which he intimates that they boasted of their wickedness, and were what are called, honorable robbers. Nor is it to be doubted, that they had something more excellent than the common people, which procured for them favor and glory in the world. Nevertheless, under the magnificent title of heroes, they cruelly exercised dominion, and acquired power and fame for themselves, by injuring and oppressing their brethren. And this was the first nobility of the world. Lest any one should too greatly delight himself in a long and dingy line of ancestry; this, I repeat, was the nobility, which raised itself on high, by pouring contempt and disgrace on others. Celebrity of name is not in itself condemned; since it is necessary that they whom the Lord has adorned with peculiar gifts should be preeminent among others; and it is advantageous that there should be distinction of ranks in the world. But as ambition is always vicious and more especially so when joined with a tyrannical ferocity, which causes the more powerful to insult the weak, the evil becomes intolerable. It is, however, much worse, when wicked men gain honor by their crimes; and when, the more audacious any one is in doing injury, the more insolently he boasts of the empty smoke of titles. Moreover, as Satan is an ingenious contriver of falsehoods, by which he would corrupt the truth of God, and in this manner render it suspected, the poets have invented many fables concerning the giants; who are called by them the sons of the Earth, for this reason, as it appears to me, because they rushed forward to acquire dominions without any example of their ancestors.

267 "Ipsi potentes a saeculo." 'They were mighty men from the age'; or, from the old time. — *Ed.*

268 Vide Schindler's Lexicon, sub voce ⌧⌧⌧

5. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great*. Moses prosecutes the subject to which he had just alluded, that God was neither too harsh, nor precipitate in exacting punishment from the wicked men of the world. And he introduces God as speaking after the manner of men, by a figure which ascribes human affections to God;[269] because he could not otherwise express what was very important to be known; namely, that God was not induced hastily, or for a slight cause, to destroy the world. For by the word *saw*, he indicates long continued patience; as if he would say, that God had not proclaimed his sentence to destroy men, until after having well observed, and long considered, their case, he saw them to be past recovery. Also, what follows has not a little emphasis, that 'their wickedness was great in the earth.' He might have pardoned sins of a less aggravated character: if in one part only of the world impiety had reigned, other regions might have remained free from punishment. But now, when iniquity has reached its highest point, and so pervaded the whole earth, that integrity possesses no longer a single corner; it follows, that the time for punishment is more than fully arrived. A prodigious wickedness, then, everywhere reigned, so that the whole earth was covered with it. Whence we perceive that it was not overwhelmed with a deluge of waters till it had first been immersed in the pollution of wickedness.

Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart. Moses has traced the cause of the deluge to external acts of iniquity, he now ascends higher, and declares that men were not only perverse by habit, and by the custom of evil living; but that wickedness was too deeply seated in their hearts, to leave any hope of repentance. He certainly could not have more forcibly asserted that the depravity was such as no moderate remedy might cure. It may indeed happen, that men will sometimes plunge themselves into sin, while yet something of a sound mind will remain; but Moses teaches us, that the mind of those, concerning whom he speaks, was so thoroughly imbued with iniquity, that the whole presented nothing but what was to be condemned. For the language he employs is very emphatical: it seemed enough to have said, that their heart was corrupt: but not content with this word, he expressly asserts, "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart;" and adds the word "only," as if he would deny that there was a drop of good mixed with it.

Continually. Some expound this particle to mean, from commencing infancy; as if he would say, the depravity of men is very great from the time of their birth. But the more correct interpretation is, that the world had then become so hardened in its wickedness, and was so far from any amendment, or from entertaining any feeling of penitence, that it grew worse and worse as time advanced; and further, that it was not the folly of a few days, but the inveterate depravity which the children, having received, as by hereditary right, transmitted from their parents to their descendants. Nevertheless, though Moses here speaks of the wickedness which at that time prevailed in the world, the general doctrine[270] is

269 Per ἀνθρωποπάθειαν

270 That is, the "general doctrine" of man's total and universal depravity. — *Ed.*

properly and consistently hence elicited. Nor do they rashly distort the passage who extend it to the whole human race. So when David says,

'That all have revolted, that they are become unprofitable, that is, none who does good, no not one; their throat is an open sepulcher; there is no fear of God before their eyes,' (Psalm 5:10;14:3)

he deplores, truly, the impiety of his own age; yet Paul (Romans 3:12) does not scruple to extend it to all men of every age: and with justice; for it is not a mere complaint concerning a few men, but a description of the human mind when left to itself, destitute of the Spirit of God. It is therefore very proper that the obstinacy of the men, who had greatly abused the goodness of Gods should be condemned in these words; yet, at the same time, the true nature of man, when deprived of the grace of the Spirit, is clearly exhibited.

6. *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth* The repentance which is here ascribed to God does not properly belong to him, but has reference to our understanding of him. For since we cannot comprehend him as he is, it is necessary that, for our sakes he should, in a certain sense, transform himself. That repentance cannot take place in God, easily appears from this single considerations that nothing happens which is by him unexpected or unforeseen. The same reasoning, and remark, applies to what follows, that God was affected with grief. Certainly God is not sorrowful or sad; but remains forever like himself in his celestial and happy repose: yet, because it could not otherwise be known how great is God's hatred and detestation of sin, therefore the Spirit accommodates himself to our capacity. Wherefore, there is no need for us to involve ourselves in thorny and difficult questions, when it is obvious to what end these words of repentance and grief are applied; namely, to teach us, that from the time when man was so greatly corrupted, God would not reckon him among his creatures; as if he would say, 'This is not my workmanship; this is not that man who was formed in my image, and whom I had adorned with such excellent gifts: I do not deign now to acknowledge this degenerate and defiled creature as mine.' Similar to this is what he says, in the second place, concerning grief; that God was so offended by the atrocious wickedness of men, as if they had wounded his heart with mortal grief: There is here, therefore, an unexpressed antithesis between that upright nature which had been created by God, and that corruption which sprung from sin. Meanwhile, unless we wish to provoke God, and to put him to grief, let us learn to abhor and to flee from sin. Moreover, this paternal goodness and tenderness ought, in no slight degree, to subdue in us the love of sin; since God, in order more effectually to pierce our hearts, clothes himself with our affections. This figure, which represents God as transferring to himself what is peculiar to human nature, is called ἀνθρωποπάθεια

7. *And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, etc*. He again introduces God as deliberating, in order that we may the better know that the world was not destroyed without mature counsel on the part of God.

For the Spirit of the Lord designed that we should be diligently admonished on this point, in order that he might cut off occasion for those impious complaints, into which we should be otherwise too ready to break forth. The word *said* here means *decreed* ; because God utters no voice, without having inwardly determined what he would do. Besides, he had no need of new counsel, according to the manner of men, as if he were forming a judgment concerning something recently discovered. But all this is said in consideration of our infirmity; that we may cleverly think of the deluge, but it shall immediately occur to us that the vengeance of God was just. Moreover, God, not content with the punishment of man, proceeds even to beasts, and cattle, and fowls and every kind of living creatures. In which he seems to exceed the bounds of moderation: for although the impiety of men is hateful to him, yet to what purpose is it to be angry with unoffending animals? But it is not wonderful that those animals, which were created for man's sake, and lived for his use, should participate in his ruin: neither asses, nor oxen, nor any other animals, had done evil; yet being in subjection to man when he fell, they were drawn with him into the same destruction. The earth was like a wealthy house, well supplied with every kind of provision in abundance and variety. Now, since man has defiled the earth itself with his crimes, and has vilely corrupted all the riches with which it was replenished, the Lord also designed that the monument of his punishment should there be placed: just as if a judge, about to punish a most wicked and nefarious criminal, should, for the sake of greater infamy, command his house to be razed to the foundation. And this all tends to inspire us with a dread of sin; for we may easily infer how great is its atrocity, when the punishment of it is extended even to the brute creation.

8. *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* This is a Hebrew phrase, which signifies that God was propitious to him, and favored him. For so the Hebrews are accustomed to speak: — 'If I have found grace in thy sight,' instead of, 'If I am acceptable to thee,' or, 'If thou wilt grant me thy benevolence or favor.' Which phrase requires to be noticed, because certain unlearned men infer with futile subtlety, that if men find grace in God's sight, it is because they seek it by their own industry and merits. I acknowledge, indeed, that here Noah is declared to have been acceptable to God, because, by living uprightly and homily, he kept himself pure from the common pollutions of the world; whence, however, did he attain this integrity, but from the preventing grace of God? The commencement, therefore, of this favor was gratuitous mercy. Afterwards, the Lord, having once embraced him, retained him under his own hand, lest he should perish with the rest of the world.

9. *These are the generations of Noah.* The Hebrew word ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*toledoth*) properly means generation. It has, however, sometimes a more extended sense, and applies to the whole history of life; this indeed seems to be its meaning in the present place.[271] For when Moses had stated that one man was found whom God, — when he had determined to destroy

271 See Dathe, in loco.

the whole world, — would yet preserve, he briefly describes what kind of person he was. And, in the first place, asserts, that he was just and upright among the men of his age: for here is a different Hebrew noun, ⊠⊠⊠ (*dor*,) which signifies an age, or the time of a life.[272] The word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*tamim*) which the ancient interpreter is accustomed to translate *perfect*,[273] is of the same force as *upright* or *sincere* ; and is opposed to what is deceitful, pretended, and vain. And Moses does not rashly connect these two things together; for the world, being always influenced by external splendor, estimates justice, not by the affection of the heart, but by bare works. If, however, we desire to be approved by God, and accounted righteous before him, we must not only regulate our hands, and eyes, and feet, in obedience to his Law; but integrity of heart is above all things required, and holds the chief place in the true definition of righteousness. Let us, however, know that they are called just and upright, not who are in every respect perfect, and in whom there is no defect; but who cultivate righteousness purely, and from their heart. Because we are assured that God does not act towards his own people with the rigour of justice, as requiring of them a life according to the perfect rule of the Law; for, if only no hypocrisy reigns within them, but the pure love of rectitude flourishes, and fills their hearts, he pronounces them, according to his clemency, to be righteous.

The clause, "in his generations," is emphatical. For he has already often said, and will soon repeat it, that nothing was more corrupt than that age. Therefore, it was a remarkable instance of constancy, that Noah being surrounded on every side with the filth of iniquity, should hence have contracted no contagion. We know how great is the force of custom, so that nothing is more difficult than to live homily among the wicked, and to avoid being led away by their evil examples. Scarcely is there one in a hundred who has not in his mouth that diabolical proverb, 'We must howl when we are among the wolves;' and the greater part, — framing a rule for themselves from the common practice, — judge everything to be lawful which is generally received. As, however, the singular virtue of Noah is here commended; so let us remember that we are instructed what we ought to do, though the whole world were rushing to its own destruction. If, at the present time, the morals of men are so vitiated, and the whole mode of life so confused, that probity has become most rare; still more vile and dreadful was the confusion in the time of Noah, when he had not even one associate in the worship of God, and in the pursuit of holiness. If *he* could bear up against the corruptions of the whole world, and against such constant and vehement assaults of iniquity; no excuse is left for *us*, unless, with equal fortitude of mind, we prosecute a right course through innumerable obstacles of vice. It is not improbable that Moses uses the word *generations* in the

272 Though it also means generation. — See Gesenius, Schindler, etc, sub voce ⊠⊠⊠

273 "Noe vir justus atque perfectus ferit." — *Vulgate*. — "⊠⊠⊠⊠ refers chiefly to moral integrity, irreproachable, innocent, honest." — *Gesenius*

plural number, the more fully to declare what a strenuous and invincible combatant Noah was, who, through so many ages, had remained unaltered. Besides, the manner of cultivating righteousness, which he had adopted is explained in the context; namely that he had "walked with God," which excellency he had also commended in the holy father Enoch, in the preceding chapter, where we have stated what the expression means. When the corruption of morals was so great in the earth, if Noah had had respect to man, he would have been cast into a profound labyrinth. He sees, therefore, this to be his only remedy; namely, to disregard men, that he may fix all his thoughts on God, and make Him the sole Arbiter of his life. Whence it appears, how foolishly the Papists clamor that we ought to follow the fathers; when the Spirit expressly recalls us from the imitation of men, except so far as they lead us to God. Moses again mentions his three sons, for the purpose of showing that, in the greatest sorrow by which he was almost consumed, he was yet able to have offspring, in order that God might have a small remnant of seed for himself.

11. *The earth also was corrupt before God.* In the former clause of this verse Moses describes that impious contempt of God, which had left no longer any religion in the world; but the light of equity being extinct, all men had plunged into sin. In the second clause he declares, that the love of oppression, that frauds, injuries, rapines, and all kinds of injustice, prevailed. And these are the fruits of impiety, that men, when they have revolted from God, — forgetful of mutual equity among themselves, — are carried forward to insane ferocity, to rapines, and to oppressions of all sorts. God again declares that he had *seen* this; in order that he may commend his longsuffering to us. The earth is here put for its inhabitants; and the explanation immediately follows, 'that all flesh had corrupted its way.' Yet the word flesh is not here understood as before, in a bad sense; but is meant for *men*, without any mark of censure: as in other places of Scripture,

'All flesh shall see the glory of the Lord,' (Isaiah 40:5.)

'Let all flesh be silent before the Lord,' (Zechariah 2:13.)

13. *And God said unto Noah.* Here Moses begins to relate how Noah would be preserved. And first, he says, that the counsel of God respecting the destruction of the world was revealed to him. Secondly, that the command to build the ark was given. Thirdly, that safety was promised him, if, in obedience to God, he would take refuge in the ark. These chief points are to be distinctly noted; even as the Apostle, when he proclaims the faith of Noah, joins fear and obedience with confidence, (Hebrews 11:7.) And it is certain that Noah was admonished of the dreadful vengeance which was approaching; not only in order that he might be confirmed in his holy purpose, but that, being constrained by fear, he might the more ardently seek for the favor offered to him. We know that the impunity of the wicked is sometimes the occasion of alluring even the good to sin: the denunciation, therefore, of future punishment ought to be effectual in restraining the mind of a holy man; lest, by gradual declension, he should at length relax to the same lasciviousness. Yet God had special reference to the

other point; namely, that by keeping continually in view the terrible destruction of the world, Noah might be more and more excited to fear and solicitude. For it was necessary, that in utter despair of help from any other quarter, he should seek his safety, by faith, in the ark. For so long as life was promised to him on earth, never would he have been so intent as he ought, in the building of the ark; but, being alarmed by the judgment of God, he earnestly embraces the promise of life given unto him. He no longer relies upon the natural causes or means of life; but rests exclusively on the covenant of God, by which he was to be miraculously preserved. No labor is now troublesome or difficult to him; nor is he broken down by long fatigue. For the spur of God's anger pierces him too sharply to allow him to sleep in carnal delights, or to faint under temptations, or to be delayed in his course by vain hope: he rather stirs himself up, both to flee from sin, and to seek a remedy. And the Apostle teaches, that it was not the least part of his faith, that through the fear of those things which were not seen he prepared an ark. When faith is treated of simply, mercy and the gratuitous promise come into the account; but when we wish to express all its parts, and to canvass its entire force and nature, it is necessary that fear also should be joined with it. And, truly no one will ever seriously resort to the mercy of God, but he who, having been touched with the threatening of God, shall dread that judgment of eternal death which they denounce, shall abhor himself on account of his own sins, shall not carelessly indulge his vices, nor slumber in his pollution; but shall anxiously sigh for the remedy of his evils. This was, truly, a peculiar privilege of grace, that God warned Noah of the future deluge. Indeed, he frequently commands his threatening to be proposed to the elect, and reprobate, in common; that by inviting both to repentance, he may humble the former, and render the latter inexcusable. But while the greater part of mankind, with deaf ears, reject whatever is spoken, he especially turns his discourse to his own people, who are still curable, that by the fear of his judgment he may train them to piety. The condition of the wicked might at that time seem desirable, in comparison with the anxiety of holy Noah. They were securely flattering themselves in their own delights; for we know what Christ declares concerning the luxury of that period, (Luke 17:26.) Meanwhile, the holy man, as if the world were every moment going to ruin, groaned anxiously and sorrowfully. But if we consider the end; God granted an inestimable benefit to his servant, in denouncing to him a danger, of which he must beware.

The earth is filled with violence through them. [274] God intimates that men were to be taken away, in order that the earth, which had been polluted by the presence of beings so wicked, might be purified. Moreover, in speaking only of the iniquity and violence, of the frauds and rapines, of which they were guilty towards each other; he does it, not as if he were intending to remit his own claims upon them, but because this was a more gross and palpable demonstration of their wickedness.

274 "Repleta est terra iniquitae a facie corum."

14. *Make thee an ark of gopher wood.* Here follows the command to build the ark, in which God wonderfully proved the faith and obedience of his servant. Concerning its structure, there is no reason why we should anxiously inquire, except so far as our own edification is concerned. First, the Jews are not agreed among themselves respecting the kind of wood of which it was made. Some explain the word gopher to be the cedar; others, the fir-tree; others, the pine. They differ also respecting the stories; because many think that the sink was in the fourth place, which might receive the refuse and other impurities. Others make five chambers in a triple floor, of which they assign the highest to the birds. There are those who suppose that it was only three stories in height; but that these were separated by intermediate divisions. Besides, they do not agree about the window: to some it appears that there was not one window only, but many. Some say they were open to receive air; but others contend that they were only made for the sake of light, and therefore were covered over with crystal, and lined with pitch. To me it seems more probable, that there was only one, not cut out for the sake of giving light; but to remain shut, unless occasion required it to be opened, as we shall see afterwards. Further, that there was a triple story, and rooms separated in a manner to us unknown. The question respecting its magnitude is more difficult. For, formerly, certain profane men ridiculed Moses, as having imagined that so vast a multitude of animals was shut up in so small a space; a third part of which would scarcely contain four elephants. Origin solves this question, by saying that a geometrical cubit was referred to by Moses, which is six times greater than the common one; to whose opinion Augustine assents in his fifteenth book on the 'City of God,' and his first book of 'Questions on Genesis.' I grant what they allege, that Moses, who had been educated in all the science of the Egyptians, was not ignorant of geometry; but since we know that Moses everywhere spoke in a homely style, to suit the capacity of the people, and that he purposely abstained from acute disputations, which might savor of the schools and of deeper learning; I can by no means persuade myself, that, in this place, contrary to his ordinary method, he employed geometrical subtlety. Certainly, in the first chapter, he did not treat scientifically of the stars, as a philosopher would do; but he called them, in a popular manner, according to their appearance to the uneducated, rather than according to truth, "two great lights." Thus we may everywhere perceive that he designates things, of every kind by their accustomed names. But what was then the measure of the cubit I know not; it is, however, enough for me, that God (whom, without controversy, I acknowledge to be the chief builder of the ark) well knew what things the place which he described to his servant was capable of holding. If you exclude the extraordinary power of God from this history, you declare that mere fables are related. But, by us, who confess that the remains of the world were preserved by an incredible miracle, it ought not to be regarded as an absurdity, that many wonderful things are here related, in order that hence the secret and incomprehensible power of God, which far surpasses all our

senses, may be the more clearly exhibited. Porphyry or some other caviller,[275] may object, that this is fabulous, because the reason of it does not appear; or because it is unusual; or because it is repugnant to the common order of nature. But I make the rejoinder; that this entire narration of Moses, unless it were replete with miracles would be colds and trifling, and ridiculous. He, however, who will reflect aright upon the profound abyss of Divine omnipotence in this history, will rather sink in reverential awe, than indulge in profane mockery. I purposely pass over the allegorical application which Augustine makes of the figure of the ark to the body of Christ, both in his fifteenth book of 'The City of God,' and his twelfth book against Faustus; because I find there scarcely anything solid. Origin still more boldly sports with allegories: but there is nothing more profitable, than to adhere strictly to the natural treatment of things. That the ark was an image of the Church is certain, from the testimony of Peter, (1 Peter 3:21;) but to accommodate its several parts to the Church, is by no means suitable, as I shall again show, in its proper place.

18. *But with thee will I establish my covenant*. Since the construction of the ark was very difficult, and innumerable obstacles might perpetually arise to break off the work when begun, God confirms his servant by a super added promise. Thus was Noah encouraged to obey God; seeing that he relied on the Divine promise, and was confident that his labor would not be in vain. For then do we freely embrace the commands of God, when a promise is attached to them, which teaches us that we shall not spend our strength for nought. Whence it appears how foolishly the Papists are deceived, who triflingly argue, that men are led away by the doctrine of faith from the desire of doing well. For what will be the degree of our alacrity in well-doing, unless faith enlighten us? Let us therefore know, that the promises of God alone, are they which quicken us, and inspire each of our members with vigor to yield obedience to God: but that without these promises, we not only lie torpid in indolence, but are almost lifeless, so that neither hands nor feet can do their duty. And hence, as often as we become languid, or more remiss than we ought to be, in good works, let the promises of God recur to us, to correct our tardiness. For thus, according to the testimony of Paul, (Colossians 1:5,) love flourishes in the saints, on account of the hope laid up for them in heaven. It is especially necessary that the faithful should be confirmed by the word of God, lest they faint in the midst of their course; to the end that they may certainly be assured that they are not beating the air, as they say; but that, acquiescing in the promise given them, and being sure of success, they follow God who calls them. This connection, then, is to be

275 "Hoc Porphyrius, vel quispiam alius canis, fabulosum esse obganniet." Throughout the above passage, Calvin takes for granted, that there was a miracle, when a close examination would have convinced him that there was none. It has only required the use of a little arithmetic, and common sense, to prove that the ark was more than sufficient to contain all the creatures which Noah was commanded to bring into it, as well as provision for the whole time of their residence in it. — See Wells' Geography of the Old Test., chap. 11. — *Ed.*

borne in mind, that when God was instructing his servant Moses what he would have him do, he declares, for the purpose of retaining him in obedience to himself, that he requires nothing of him in vain. Now, the sum of this covenant of which Moses speaks was, that Noah should be safe, although the whole world should perish in the deluge. For there is an understood antithesis, that the whole world being rejected, the Lord would establish a peculiar covenant with Noah alone. Wherefore, it was the duty of Noah to oppose this promise of God, like a wall of iron, against all the terrors of death; just as if it were the purpose of God, by this sole word, to discriminate between life and death. But the covenant with him is confirmed, with this condition annexed, that his family shall be preserved for his sake; and also the brute animals, for the replenishing of the new world; concerning which I shall say more in the ninth chapter. Genesis 9:1

19. *And of every living thing of all flesh.* "All flesh" is the name he gives to animals of whatsoever kind they may be. He says they went in two and two; not that a single pair of each kind was received into the ark, (for we shall soon see that there were three pairs of the clean kinds, and one animal over, which Noah afterwards offered in sacrifice;) but whereas here mention is made only of offspring, he does not expressly state the number, but simply couples males with females, that Noah might hence perceive how the world was to be replenished.

22. *Thus did Noah.* In a few words, but with great sublimity, Moses here commends the faith of Noah. The unskilful wonder that the apostle (Hebrews 11:7) makes him "heir of the righteousness which is by faith." As if, truly, all the virtues, and whatsoever else was worthy of praise in this holy man, had not sprung from this fountain. For we ought to consider the assaults of temptation to which his breast was continually exposed. First, the prodigious size of the ark might have overwhelmed all his senses, so as to prevent him from raising a finger to begin the work. Let the reader reflect on the multitude of trees to be felled, on the great labor of conveying them, and the difficulty of joining them together. The matter was also long deferred; for the holy man was required to be engaged more than a hundred years in most troublesome labor. Nor can we suppose him to have been so stupid, as not to reflect upon obstacles of this kind. Besides, it was scarcely to be hoped, that the men of his age would patiently bear with him, for promising himself an exclusive deliverance, attended with ignominy to themselves. Their unnatural ferocity has been before mentioned; there can therefore be no doubt that they would daily provoke modest and simpleminded men, even without cause. But *here* was a plausible occasion for insult; since Noah, by felling trees on all sides, was making the earth bare, and defrauding them of various advantages. It is a common proverb, that perverse and contentious men will dispute about an ass's shadow. What, then, might Noah think, would those fierce Cyclops do for the shadow of so many trees; who, being practiced in every kind of violence, would seize with eagerness on all sides an occasion of exercising cruelty? But this was what chiefly tended to inflame their rage,

that he, by building an asylum for himself, virtually doomed them all to destruction. Certainly, unless they had been restrained by the mighty hand of God, they would have stoned the holy man a hundred times; still it is probable, that their vehemence was not so far repressed, as to prevent them from frequently assailing him with scoffs and derision, from heaping upon him many reproaches, and pursuing him with grievous threats. I even think, that they did not restrain their hands from disturbing his work. Therefore, although he may have addressed himself with alacrity to the work committed to him; yet his constancy might have failed more than a thousand times, in so many years, unless it had been firmly rooted. Moreover, as the work itself appeared impracticable, it may be further asked, Whence were provisions for the year to be obtained? Whence food for so many animals? He is commanded to lay up what will suffice for food during ten months for his whole family for cattle, and wild beasts, and even for birds. Truly, it seems absurd, that after he has been disengaged from agriculture, in order to build the ark, he should be commanded to collect a two-years' store of provision; but much more trouble attended the providing of food for animals. He might therefore have suspected that God was mocking him. His last work was to gather animals of all kinds together. As if, indeed, he had all the beasts of the forest at his command, or was able to tame them; so that, in his keeping, wolves might dwell with lambs, tigers with hares, lions with oxen — as sheep in his fold. But the most grievous temptation of all was, that he was commanded to descend, as into the grave, for the sake of preserving his life, and voluntarily to deprive himself of air and vital spirit; for the smell of dung alone pent up, as it was, in a closely filled place, might, at the expiration of three days, have stifled all the living creatures in the ark. Let us reflect on these conflicts of the holy man — so severe, and multiplied and long-continued — in order that we may know how heroic was his courage, in prosecuting, to the utmost, what God had commanded him to do. Moses, indeed, says in a single word that he did it; but we must consider how far beyond all human power was the doing of it: and that it would have been better to die a hundred deaths, than to undertake a work so labourious, unless he had looked to something higher than the present life. A remarkable example, therefore, of obedience is here described to us; because, Noah, committing himself entirely to God, rendered Him due honor. We know, in this corruption of our nature, how ready men are to seek subterfuges, and how ingenious in inventing pretexts for disobedience to God. Wherefore, let us also learn to break through every kind of impediment, and not to give place to evil thoughts, which oppose themselves to the word of God, and with which Satan attempts to entangle our minds, that they may not obey the command of God. For God especially demands this honor to be given to himself, that we should suffer him to judge for us. And this is the true proof of faith, that we, being content with one of his commands, gird ourselves to the work, so that we do not swerve in our course, whatever obstacle Satan may place in our way, but are borne on the wings of faith above the world. Moses also shows, that Noah obeyed God, not in one particular only, but in all. Which is

diligently to be observed; because hence, chiefly, arises dreadful confusion in our life, that we are not able, unreservedly to submit ourselves to God; but when we have discharged some part of our duty, we often blend our own feelings with his word. But the obedience of Noah is celebrated on this account, that it was entire, not partial; so that he omitted none of those things which God had commanded.

CHAPTER 7.

Genesis 7:1-24

1. And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.	**1.** Et dixit Jehova ad Noah, Ingredere tu, et omnis domus tua arcam: quia to vidi justum coram me in aetate ista.
2. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female.	**2.** Ex omni animali mundo capies tibi septena septena, virum et foemellam ejus: et ex animali quod non mundum est, bina, virum et foemellam ejus.
3. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.	**3.** Etiam ex volatili coeli septena, masculum et foemellam: ut vivum conservetur semen in superficie omnis terrae.
4. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.	**4.** Quia post dies adhuc septem ego pluam super terram quadraginta dies, et quadraginta noctes, et delebo omnem substantiam quam feci, a superficie terrae.
5. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.	**5.** Et fecit Noah secundum omnia quae praeceperat ei Jehova.
6. And Noah *was* six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.	**6.** Noah autem erat sexcentorum annorum quando diluvium fuit aquarum super terram.
7. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.	**7.** Et ingressus Noah, et filii ejus, et uxor ejus, et uxores filiorum ejus cum eo in arcam, propter aquas diluvii.
8. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,	**8.** Ex animali mundo, et ex animali quod non erat mundum, et ex volatili, et ex omni quod reptat super terram,
9. There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.	**9.** Bina bina ingressa sunt ad Noah in arcam, masculus et foemella, quemadmodum praeceperat Deus ipsi Noah.
10. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.	**10.** Et fuit, post septem dies aquae diluvii fuerunt super terram.

11. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.	**11.** In anno sexcentesimo annorum vitae Noah, in mense secundo, in septimadecima die mensis, die ipsa, rupti sunt omnes fontes voraginis magnaaae, et fenestrae coeli apertae sunt.
12. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.	**12.** Et fuit pluvia super terram quadraginta dies et quadraginta noctes.
13. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;	**13.** Ipso eodem die ingressus est Noah, et Sem, et Cham, et Jepheth, filii Noah, et uxor Noah, tresque uxores filiorum ejus cum illis, in arcam:
14. They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.	**14.** Ipsi, et omnis bestia juxta speciem suam, et omne animal juxta speciem suam, et omne reptile quod reptat super terram, secundum speciem suam, et omne volatile juxta speciem suam, omnis abis, et omne alatum.
15. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life.	**15.** Ingressa sunt igitur ad Noah in arcam, bina bina ex omni carne in qua erat spiritus vitae.
16. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.	**16.** Et quae ingressa sunt, masculus et foemina ex omni carne ingressa sunt, quemadmodum praeceperat ei Deus: et clausit Jehova super eum.
17. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.	**17.** Et factum est diluvium quadraginta dies super terram, et multilicatae sunt aquae, elevaveruntque arcam: itaque elevata est a terra.
18. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.	**18.** Et praevaluerunt aquae, et multiplicatae sunt valde super terram, et fluitabat arca super faciem aquarum.
19. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered.	**19.** Roboraverunt itaque se aquae valde super terram, et operti sunt omnes montes excelsi qui erant sub universo coelo.

20. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.	**20.** Quindecim cubitis superne roboraverunt se aquae, ita ut operti sint montes.
21. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:	**21.** Et mortua est omnis caro quae reptabat super terram, tam de volatili quam de animali et bestia, et omni reptili quod reptat super terram, et omni homine.
22. All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.	**22.** Omnia in quorum nare erat anhelitus spiritus vitae, ex omnibus quae erant in sicco, mortua sunt.
23. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.	**23.** Et delevit omnem substantiam vivam, quae erat super faciem terrae, ab homine usque ad jumentum, usque ad reptile, et usque ad volatile coeli: et deleta sunt e terra, et remansit tantum Noah, et qui cum eo erant in arca.
24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.	**24.** Et roboraverunt se aquae super terram quinquaginta et centum dies.

1. *And the Lord said unto Noah.* I have no doubt that Noah was confirmed, as he certainly needed to be, by oracles frequently repeated. He had already sustained, during one hundred years, the greatest and most furious assaults; and the invincible combatant had achieved memorable victories; but the most severe contest of all was, to bid farewell to the world, to renounce society and to bury himself in the ark. The face of the earth was, at that time, lovely; and Moses intimates that it was the season in which the herbs shoot forth and the trees begin to flourish. Winter, which binds the joy of sky and earth in sharp and rugged frost, has now passed away; and the Lord has chosen the moment for destroying the world, in the very season of spring. For Moses states that the commencement of the deluge was in the second month. I know, however, that different opinions prevail on this subject; for there are three who begin the year from the autumnal equinox; but that mode of reckoning the year is more approved, which makes it commence in the month of March. However this might be, it was no light trial for Noah to leave of his own accord, the life to which he had been accustomed during six hundred years, and to seek a new mode of life in the abyss of death. He is commanded to forsake the world, that he may live in a sepulcher which he had been labouriously digging for himself through more than a hundred years. Why was this? Because, in a little while, the earth was to be submerged in a deluge of waters. Yet nothing

of the kind is apparent: all indulge in feasts, celebrate nuptials, build sumptuous houses; in short, everywhere, daintiness and luxury prevail; as Christ himself testifies, that that age was intoxicated with its own pleasures, (Luke 17:26.) Wherefore, it was not without reason, that the Lord encouraged and fortified the mind of his servant afresh, by the renewal of the promise, lest he should faint; as if he would says 'Hitherto thou hast labored with fortitude amid so many causes of offense; but now the case especially demands that thou shouldst take courage, in order to reap the fruit of thy labor: do not, however, wait till the waters burst forth on every side from the opened veins of the earth, and till the higher waters of heaven, with opposing violence, rush from their opened cataracts; but while everything is yet tranquil, enter into the ark, and there remain till the seventh day, then suddenly shall the deluge arise.' And although oracles are not now brought down from heaven, let us know that continual meditation on the word is not ineffectual; for as new difficulties perpetually arise before us, so God, by one and another promise, establishes our faith, so that our strength being renewed, we may at length arrive at the goal. Our duty, indeed, is, attentively to hear God speaking to us; and neither through depraved fastidiousness, to reject those exercises, by which He cherishes, or excites, or confirms our faith, according as he knows it to be still tender, or languishing, or weak; nor yet to reject them as superfluous. For thee have I seen righteous. When the Lord assigns as his reason for preserving Noah, that he knew him to be righteous, he seems to attribute the praise of salvation to the merit of works; for if Noah was saved because he was righteous, it follows, that we shall deserve life by good works. But here it behaves us cautiously to weigh the design of God; which was to place one man in contrast with the whole world, in order that, in his person, he might condemn the unrighteousness of all men. For he again testifies, that the punishment which he was about to inflict on the world was just, seeing that only one man was left who then cultivated righteousness, for whose sake he was propitious to his whole family. Should any one object, that from this passage, God is proved to have respect to works in saving men, the solution is ready; that this is not repugnant to gratuitous acceptance, since God accepts those gifts which he himself has conferred upon his servants. We must observe, in the first place, that he loves men freely, inasmuch as he finds nothing in them but what is worthy of hatred, since all men are born the children of wrath, and heirs of eternal malediction. In this respect he adopts them to himself in Christ, and justifies them by his mere mercy. After he has, in this manner, reconciled them unto himself, he also regenerates them, by his Spirit, to new life and righteousness. Hence flow good works, which must of necessity be pleasing to God himself. Thus he not only loves the *faithful* but also their *works*. We must again observe, that since some fault always adheres to our works, it is not possible that they can be approved, except as a matter of indulgence. The grace, therefore, of Christ, and not their own dignity or merit, is that which gives worth to our works. Nevertheless, we do not deny that they come into the account before God: as he here acknowledges and accepts the righteousness of Noah which had

proceeded from his own grace; and in this manner (as Augustine speaks) he will crown his own gifts. We nay further notice the expression, "I have seen thee righteous before me;" by which words, he not only annihilates all that hypocritical righteousness which is destitute of interior sanctity of heart, but vindicates his own authority; as if he would declare, that he alone is a competent judge to estimate righteousness. The clause, in this generation, is added, as I have said, for the sake of amplification; for so desperate was the depravity of that age, that it was regarded as a prodigy, that Noah should be free from the common infection.

2. *Of every clean beast*. He again repeats what he had before said concerning animals, and not without occasion. For there was no little difficulty in collecting from woods, mountains, and caves, so great a multitude of wild beasts, many species of which were perhaps altogether unknown; and there was, in most of them, the same ferocity which we now perceive. Wherefore, God encourages the holy man, lest being alarmed with that difficulty, and having cast aside all hope of success, he should fail. Here, however, at first sight, appears some kind of contradiction, because whereas he before had spoken of *pairs* of animals, he now speaks of *sevens*. But the solution is at hand; because, previously, Moses does not state the number, but only says that females were added as companions to the males; as if he had said, Noah himself was commanded not to gather the animals promiscuously together, but to select *pairs* out of them for the propagation of offspring. Now, however, the discourse is concerning the actual number. Moreover, the expression, by sevens, is to be understood not of seven pairs of each kind, but of three pairs, to which one animal is added for the sake of sacrifice.[276] Besides, the Lord would have a threefold greater number of clean animals than of others preserved, because there would be a greater necessity of them for the use of man. In which appointment, we must consider the paternal goodness of God towards us, by which he is inclined to have regard to us in all things.

3. *To keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth*. That is, that hence offspring might be born. But this is referred to Noah; for although, properly speaking, God alone gives life, yet God here refers to those duties which he had enjoined upon his servant: and it is with respect to his appointed office, that God commands him to collect animals that he may keep seed alive. Nor is this extraordinary, seeing that the ministers of the gospel are said, in a sense, to confer spiritual life. In the clause which next follows, upon the face of all the earth, there is a twofold consolation: that the waters, after they had covered the earth for a time, would again cease, so that the dry surface of the earth should appear; and then, that not only should Noah himself survive, but, by the blessing of God, the number of animals should be so increased, as to spread far and wide through the whole world. Thus, in the midst of ruin,

276 Le Clerc objects to this interpretation, and supposes that seven of each sex, of unclean animals, were admitted into the ark. Perhaps a skeptical objection to the use of the seventh animal, as a sacrifice, inclined him to adopt this interpretation. Commentators, however, have generally preferred the solution here given. — *Ed.*

future restoration is promised to him. Moses is very earnest in showing that God took care, by every means, to retain Noah in obedience to his word, and that the holy man entirely acquiesced. This doctrine is very useful, especially when God either promises or threatens anything incredible, since men do not willingly receive what seems to them improbable. For nothing was less accordant with the judgment of the flesh, than that the world should be destroyed by its Creator; because this was to subvert the whole order of nature which he had established. Wherefore, unless Noah had been well admonished of this terrible judgment of God, he never would have ventured to believe it; lest he should conceive of God as acting in contradiction to himself. The word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*hayekom*,) which Moses here uses has its origin from a word signifying to stand; but it properly means whatever lives and flourishes.

5. *And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded*. This is not a bare repetition of the former sentence; but Moses commends Noah's uniform tenor of obedience in keeping all God's commandments; as if he would say, that in whatever particular it pleased God to try his obedience, he always remained constant. And, certainly, it is not becoming to obey one or another commandment of God only, so that when we have performed a defective obedience, we should feel at liberty to withdraw; for we must keep in memory the declaration of James,

'He who forbade thee to kill, forbade thee also to steal, and to commit adultery,' (James 2:11.)

6. *And Noah was six hundred years old*. It is not without reason that he again mentions the age of Noah. For old age has this among other evils, that it renders men more indolent and morose; whence the faith of Noah was the more conspicuous, because it did not fail him in that advanced period of life. And as it was a great excellence, not to languish through successive centuries, so big promptitude deserves no little commendation; because, being commanded to enter the ark, he immediately obeyed. When Moses shortly afterwards subjoins, that he had entered on account of the waters of the deluge, the words ought not to be expounded, as if he were compelled, by the rushing of the waters, to flee into the ark; but that he, being moved with fear by the word, perceived by faith the approach of that deluge which all others ridiculed. Wherefore, his faith is again commended in this place, because, indeed, he raised his eyes above heaven and earth.

8. *Of clean beasts*. Moses now explains, — what had before been doubtful, — in which manner the animals were gathered together into the ark, and says that they came of their own accord. If this should seem to any one absurd, let him recall to mind what was said before, that in the beginning every kind of animals presented themselves to Adam, that he might give them names. And, truly, we dread the sight of wild beasts from no other cause than this, that seeing we have shaken off the yoke of God, we have lost that authority over them with which Adam was endued. Now, it was a kind of restoration of the former state of things when God brought to Noah those animals which he intended should be preserved

through Noah's labor and service. For Noah retained the untamed animals in his ark, in the very same way in which hens and geese are preserved in a coop. And it is not superfluously added, that the animals themselves came, as God had instructed Noah; for it shows that the blessing of God rested on the obedience of Noah, so that his labor should not be in vain. It was impossible, humanly speaking, that in a moment such an assemblage of all animals should take place; but because Noah, simply trusting the event with God, executed what was enjoined upon him; God, in return, gave power to his own precept, that it might not be without effect. Properly speaking, this was a promise of God annexed to his commands. And, therefore, we must conclude, that the faith of Noah availed more, than all snares and nets, for the capture of animals; and that, by the very same gate, lions, and wolves, and tigers, meekly entered, with oxen, and with lambs, into the ark. And this is the only method by which we may overcome all difficulties; while, — being persuaded, that what is impossible to us is easy to God, — we derive alacrity from hope. It has before been stated that the animals entered in by pairs. We have also related the different opinions of interpreters respecting the month in which the deluge took place. For since the Hebrews begin their year in sacred things from March, but in earthly affairs from September; or, — which is the same thing, — since the two equinoxes form with them a double commencement of the year, some think that the *sacred* year, and some the *political*, is here intended. But because the former method of reckoning the years was Divinely appointed, and is also more agreeable to nature, it seems probable that the deluge began about the time of spring.

11. *The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up*. Moses recalls the period of the first creation to our memory; for the earth was originally covered with water; and by the singular kindness of God, they were made to recede, that some space should be left clear for living creatures. And this, philosophers are compelled to acknowledge, that it is contrary to the course of nature for the waters to subside, so that some portion of the earth might rise above them. And Scripture records this among the miracles of God, that he restrains the force of the sea, as with barriers, lest it should overwhelm that part of the earth which is granted for a habitation to men. Moses also says, in the first chapter, that some waters were suspended above in the heaven; and David, in like manner, declares, that they are held enclosed as in a bottle. Lastly, God raised for men a theater in the habitable region of the earth; and caused, by his secret power, that the subterraneous waters should not break forth to overwhelm us, and the celestial waters should not conspire with them for that purpose. Now, however, Moses states, that when God resolved to destroy the earth by a deluge, those barriers were torn up. And here we must consider the wonderful counsel of God; for he might have deposited, in certain channels or veins of the earth, as much water as would have sufficed for all the purposes of human life; but he has designedly placed us between two graves, lest, in fancied security, we should despise that kindness on which our life depends. For the element of water, which philosophers deem one of the principles of

life, threatens us with death from above and from beneath, except so far as it is restrained by the hand of God. In saying that the fountains were broken up, and the cataracts opened, his language is metaphorical, and means, that neither did the waters flow in their accustomed manner, nor did the rain distil from heaven; but that the distinctions which we see had been established by God, being now removed, there were no longer any bars to restrain the violent irruption.

12. *And the rain was upon the earth*. Although the Lord burst open the floodgates of the waters, yet he does not allow them to break forth in a moment, so as immediately to overwhelm the earth, but causes the rain to continue forty days; partly, that Noah, by long meditation, might more deeply fix in his memory what he had previously learned, by instruction, through the word; partly, that the wicked, even before their death, might feel that those warnings which they had held in derision, were not empty threats. For they who had so long scorned the patience of God, deserved to feel that they were gradually perishing under that righteous judgment of his, which, during a hundred years, they had treated as a fable. And the Lord frequently so tempers his judgments, that men may have leisure to consider with more advantage those judgments which, by their sudden eruption, might overcome them with astonishment. But the wonderful depravity of our nature shows itself in this, that if the anger of God is suddenly poured forth, we become stupefied and senseless; but if it advances with measured pace, we become so accustomed to it as to despise it; because we do not willingly acknowledge the hand of God without miracles; and because we are easily hardened, by a kind of superinduced insensibility, at the sight of God's works.

13. *In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, etc*. A repetition follows, sufficiently particular, considering the brevity with which Moses runs through the history of the deluge, yet by no means superfluous. For it was the design of the Spirit to retain our minds in the consideration of a vengeance too terrible to be adequately described by the utmost severity of language. Besides, nothing is here related but what is difficult to be believed; wherefore Moses the more frequently inculcates these things, that however remote they may be from our apprehension, they may still obtain credit with us. Thus the narration respecting the animals refers to this point; that by the faith of holy Noah they were drawn from their woods and caverns and were collected in one place from their wandering courses, as if they had been led by the hand of God. We see, therefore, that Moses does not insist upon this point without an object; but he does it to teach us that each species of animals was preserved, not by chance, nor by human industry, but because the Lord reached out and offered to Noah himself, from hand to hand, (as they say,) whatever animal he intended to keep alive.

16. *And the Lord shut him in*. This is not added in vain, nor ought it to be lightly passed over. That door must have been large, which could admit an elephant. And truly, no pitch would be sufficiently firm and tenacious, and no joining sufficiently solid, to prevent the immense force of the water from penetrating through its many seams, especially in an irrup-

tion so violent, and in a shock so severe. Therefore, Moses, to cut off occasion for the vain speculations which our own curiosity would suggest, declares in one word, that the ark was made secure from the deluge, not by human artifice, but by divine miracle. It is, indeed, not to be doubted that Noah had been endued with new ability and sagacity, that nothing might be defective in the structure of the ark. But lest even this favor should be without success, it was necessary for something greater to be added. Wherefore, that we might not measure the mode of preserving the ark by the capacity of our own judgment, Moses teaches use that the waters were not restrained from breaking in upon the ark, by pitch or bitumen only, but rather by the secret power of God, and by the interposition of his hand.

17. *And the flood was forty days, etc*. Moses copiously insists upon this fact, in order to show that the whole world was immersed in the waters. Moreover, it is to be regarded as the special design of this narrations that we should not ascribe to fortune, the flood by which the world perished; how ever customary it may be for men to cast some veil over the works of God, which may obscure either his goodness or his judgments manifested in them. But seeing it is plainly declared, that whatever was flourishing on the earth was destroyed, we hence infer, that it was an indisputable and signal judgment of God; especially since Noah alone remained secure, because he had embraced, by faith, the word in which salvation was contained. He then recalls to memory what we before have said; namely how desperate had been the impiety, and how enormous the crimes of men, by which God was induced to destroy the whole world; whereas, on account of his great clemency, he would have spared his own workmanship, had he seen that any milder remedy could have been effectually applied. These two things, directly opposed to each other, he connects together; that the whole human race was destroyed, but that Noah and his family safely escaped. Hence we learn how profitable it was for Noah, disregarding the world, to obey God alone: which Moses states not so much for the sake of praising the man, as for that of inviting us to imitate his example. Moreover, lest the multitude of sinners should draw us away from God; we must patiently bear that the ungodly should hold us up to ridicule, and should triumph over us, until the Lord shall show by the final issue, that our obedience has been approved by him. In this sense, Peter teaches that Noah's deliverance from the universal deluge was a figure of baptism, (1 Peter 3:21;) as if he had said, the method of the salvation, which we receive through baptism, degrees with this deliverance of Noah. Since at this time also the world is full of unbelievers as it was then; therefore it is necessary for us to separate ourselves from the greater multitude, that the Lord may snatch us from destruction. In the same manner, the Church is fitly, and justly, compared to the ark. But we must keep in mind the similitude by which they mutually correspond with each other; for that is derived from the word of God alone; because as Noah believing the promise of God, gathered himself his wife and his children together, in order that under a certain appearance of death, he might emerge out of death; so it is fitting that we should renounce the world and die, in order that the

Lord may quicken us by his word. For nowhere else is there any security of salvation. The Papists, however, act ridiculously who fabricate for us an ark without the word.

CHAPTER 8.

Genesis 8:1-22

1. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;	**1.** Recordatus est autem Deus Noah, et omnis bestiae, et omnis animalis quae erant cum eo in arca: et transire fecit Deus ventum super terram, et quieverunt aquae.
2. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;	**2.** Et clauserunt se fontes abyssi, fenestraeque coelo.
3. And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.	**3.** Et reversae sunt aquae a superficie terrae, eundo et redeundo, et defecerunt aquae in fine quinquaginta et centum dierum.
4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.	**4.** Et requievit arca mense septimo, septimadecima die mensis super montes Ararath.
5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.	**5.** Et aquae ibant et deficiebant usque ad mensem decimum: in decimo, in prima mensis visa sunt cacumina montium.
6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:	**6.** Et fuit, in fine quadraginta dierum, aperuit Noah fenestram arcae quam fecerat.
7. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.	**7.** Et misit corvum, et egressus est egrediendo et redeundo, donex siccarentur aquae quae erant super terram.
8. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;	**8.** Deinde misit columbam a se, ut videret an extenuatae essent aquae a superficie terrae.
9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.	**9.** Et non invenit columba requiem plantae pedis sui, et reversa est ad eum in arcam: quia aquae erant in superficie omnis terrae: et misit manum suam, et accepit eam, introduxitque eam ad se in arcam.

10. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;	**10.** Et expectavit adhuc septem dies alios, et addidit ut mitteret columbam ex arca.
11. And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.	**11.** Et venit ad eum columba tempore vespertimo, et ecce, folium olivae raptum erat in ore ejus, et cognovit Noah quod extenuatae essent aquae a superficie terrae.
12. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.	**12.** Et expectavit adhuc septem alios, et misit columbam: et non addidit ut reverteretur ad cum amplius.
13. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.	**13.** Et fuit, primo et sexcentesimo anno, primo *mense*, in prima mensis, siccatae sunt aquae a superficie terrae: removit autem Noah operimentum arcae, et vidit, et exxe siccata erat facies terrae.
14. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.	**14.** Et in mense secundo, in septima et vicesima die mensis, aruit terra.
15. And God spake unto Noah, saying,	**15.** Loquutus est autem Deus ad Noah, dicendo,
16. Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.	**16.** Egredere ex arca, tu, et uxor tua, et filii tui, et uxores filiorum tuorum tecum.
17. Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.	**17.** Omnem bestiam quae est tecum, ex omni carne, tam de volatili quam de animali, et omni reptili quod reptat super terram educ tecum: ut se moveant in terra, et crescant, multiplicenturque super terram.
18. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:	**18.** Et egressus est Noah, et filii ejus, et uxor ejus, et uxores filiorum ejus cum eo.
19. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.	**19.** Omnis bestia, omne reptile et omne volatile, omne quod movetur super terram, secundum familias eorum egressa sunt ex arca.

20. And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.	**20.** Et aedificavit Noah altare Jehovae, et tulit ex omni animali mundo, et ex omni volatili mundo, et obtulit holocausta in altari.
21. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.	**21.** Odoratusque est Jehova odorem quietis. Et dixit Jehova in corde suo, Non addam ut maledicam ultra terrae propter hominem: quia cogitatio cordis hominis mala est a pueritia sua: nec addam ultra ut percutiam omne vivens quemadmodum feci.
22. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.	**22.** Posthac omnibus diebus terrae, sementis et messis, et frigus et aestus, et aestas et hyems, et dies et nox non cessabunt.

1. *And God remembered Noah.* Moses now descends more particularly to that other part of the subject, which shows, that Noah was not disappointed in his hope of the salvation divinely promised to him. The *remembrance* of which Moses speaks, ought to be referred not only to the external aspect of things, (so to speak,) but also to the inward feeling of the holy man. Indeed it is certain, that Gods from the time in which he had once received Noah into his protection, was never unmindful of him; for, truly, it was by as great a miracle, that he did not perish through suffocation in the ark, as if he had lived without breath, submerged in the waters. And Moses just before has said that by God's secret closing up of the ark, the waters were restrained from penetrating it. But as the ark was floating, even to the fifth month, upon the waters, the delay by which the Lord suffered his servant to be anxiously and miserably tortured might seem to imply a kind of oblivion. And it is not to be questioned, that his heart was agitated by various feelings, when he found himself so long held in suspense; for he might infer, that his life had been prolonged, in order that he might be more miserable than any of the rest of mankind. For we know that we are accustomed to imagine God absent, except when we have some sensible experience of his presence. And although Noah tenaciously held fast the promise which he had embraced, even to the end, it is yet credible, that he was grievously assailed by various temptations; and God, without doubt, purposely thus exercised his faith and patience. For, why was not the world destroyed in three days? And for what purpose did the waters, after they had covered the highest mountains rise fifteen cubits higher, unless it was to accustom Noah, and his family, to meditate the more profitably on the judgments of Gods and when the danger was past, to acknowledge that they had been rescued from a thousand deaths? Let us therefore learn, by this example, to repose on the providence of God, even while he seems to be most forgetful of us; for at

length, by affording us help, he will testify that he has been mindful of us. What, if the flesh persuade us to distrust, yet let us not yield to its restlessness; but as soon as this thought creeps in, that God has cast off all care concerning us, or is asleep, or far distant, let us immediately meet it with this shield, 'The Lord, who has promised his help to the miserable will, in due time, be present with us, that we may indeed perceive the care he takes of us.' Nor is there less weight in what is added that God also remembered the animals; for if, on account of the salvation promised to man, his favor is extended to brute cattle, and to wild beasts; what may we suppose will be his favor towards his own children, to whom he has so liberally, and so sacredly, pledged his faithfulness?

And God made a wind to pass over the earth. Here it appears more clearly, that Moses is speaking of the effect of God's remembrance of Noah; namely, that in very deed, and by a sure proof, Noah might know that God cared for his life. For when God, by his secret power, might have dried the earth, he made use of the wind; which method he also employed in drying the Red Sea. And thus he would testify, that as he had the waters at his command, ready to execute his wrath, so now he held the winds in his hand, to afford relief. And although here a remarkable history is recorded by Moses, we are yet taught, that the winds do not arise fortuitously, but by the command of God; as it is said in Psalm 104:4, that 'they are the swift messengers of God;' and again, that God rides upon their wings. Finally, the variety, the contrary motions, and the mutual conflicts of the elements, conspire to yield obedience to God. Moses also adds other inferior means by which the waters were diminished and caused to return to their former position. The sum of the whole is, that God, for the purpose of restoring the order which he had before appointed, recalled the waters to their prescribed boundaries so that while the celestial waters, as if congealed, were suspended in the air; others might lie concealed in their gulfs; others flow in separate channels; and the sea also might remain within its barriers.

3. *And after the end of the hundred and fifty days*. Some think that the whole time, from the beginning of the deluge to the abatement of the waters, is here noted; and thus they include the forty days in which Moses relates that there was continued rain. But I make this distinction, that until the fortieth day, the waters rose gradually by fresh additions; then that they remained nearly in the same state for one hundred and fifty days; for both computations make the period a little more than six months and a half. And Moses says, that about the end of the seventh month, the diminution of the waters appeared to be such that the ark settled upon the highest summit of a mountain, or touched some ground. And by this lengthened space of time, the Lord would show the more plainly, that the dreadful desolation of the world had not fallen upon it accidentally, but was a remarkable proof of his judgment; while the deliverance of Noah was a magnificent work of his grace, and worthy of everlasting remembrance. If, however, we number the seventh month from the beginning of the year, (as some do,) and not from the time that Noah entered the ark, the subsidence of which

Moses speaks, took place earlier, namely, as soon as the ark had floated five months. If this second opinion is received, there will be the same reckoning of ten months; for the sense will be, that in the eighth month after the commencement of the deluge, the tops of the mountains appeared. Concerning the name Ararat, I follow the opinion most received. And I do not see why some should deny it to be Armenian the mountains of which are declared, by ancient authors, almost with one consents to be the highest.[277] The Chaldean paraphrase also points out the particular part, which he calls mountains of *Cardu*,[278] which others call *Cardueni*. But whether that be true, which Josephus has handed down respecting the fragments of the ark found there in his time; remnants of which, Jerome says, remained to his own age, I leave undecided.

6. *At the end of forty days*. We may hence conjecture with what great anxiety the breast of the holy man was oppressed. After he had perceived the ark to be resting on solid ground, he yet did not dare to open the window till the fortieth day; not because he was stunned and torpid, but because an example, thus formidable, of the vengeance of God, had affected him with such fear and sorrow combined, that being deprived of all judgment, he silently remained in the chamber of his ark. At length he sends forth a raven, from which he might receive a more certain indication of the dryness of the earth. But the raven perceiving nothing but muddy marshes, hovers around, and immediately seeks to be readmitted. I have no doubt that Noah purposely selected the ravens which he knew might be allured by the odour of carcasses, to take a further flight, if the earth, with the animals upon it, were already exposed to view; but the raven, flying around did not depart far. I wonder whence a negation, which Moses has not in the Hebrew text, has crept into the Greek and Latin version, since it entirely changes the sense.[279] Hence the fable has originated, that the raven, having found carcasses, was kept away from the arks and forsook its protector. Afterwards, futile allegories followed, just as the curiosity of men is ever desirous of trifling. But the dove, in its first egress, imitated the raven, because it flew back to the ark; afterwards it brought a branch of olive in its bill;

277 "As to the opinion, which takes the mountains of Ararat to be situated within the country of Armenia, the followers of it (some very few excepted) do agree, that the ark of Noah rested in that part of the mountains of Ararat, which in Greek and Latin writers is styled the Gordiaean mountains, (or, with some variation, the mountains of the Cordyaei, Cordueni, Carduchi, Curdi, etc.,) and which lies near the spring of the Tigris." — Wells' Geography, vol. 1 chap. 2. — *Ed*.

278 "□□□□ □□□□ □□. (*Al toorai Kardoo*,) Super montes Cardu. — Chaldee paraphrase." — *Walton*

279 "□□□□ □□□□ □□□□, *Vayesta yatso vashoob*." "And went out going and returning." The Vulgate has it, 'Qui egrediebatur, et non revertebatur.' The Septuagint introduces the same negative, so does the Syriac; but the Chaldee paraphrase, the Samaritan text, and the Arabic version, all omit the negative. Our translators, in the text, seem to have followed the Vulgate, though hesitatingly, but in the margin, they give the rendering of the original. — See Walton's Polyglott. — *Ed*

and at the third time, as if emancipated, it enjoyed the free air, and the free earth. Some writers exercise their ingenuity on the olive branch;[280] because among the ancients it was the emblem of peace, as the laurel was of victory. But I rather think, that as the olive tree does not grow upon the mountains, and is not a very lofty tree, the Lord had given his servant some token whence he might infer, that pleasant regions, and productive of good fruits, were now freed from the waters. Because the version of Jerome says, that it was a branch with green leaves; they who have thought, that the deluge began in the month of September, take this as a confirmation of their opinion. But the words of Moses have no such meaning. And it might be that the Lord, willing to revive the spirit of Noah, offered some branch to the dove, which had not yet altogether withered under the waters.

15. *And God spake unto Noah.* Though Noah was not a little terrified at the judgment of God, yet his patience is commended in this respect, that having the earth, which offered him a home, before his eyes, he yet does not venture to go forth. Profane men may ascribe this to timidity, or even to indolence; but holy is that timidity which is produced by the obedience of faith. Let us therefore know, that Noah was restrained, by a hallowed modesty, from allowing himself to enjoy the bounty of nature, till he should hear the voice of God directing him to do so. Moses winds this up in a few words, but it is proper that we should attend to the thing itself. All ought indeed, spontaneously, to consider how great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life has shone forth, does not yet move a foot out of his sepulcher, without the command of God. Thus we see, that, by a continual course of faith, the holy man was obedient to God; because at God's command, he entered the ark, and there remained until God opened the way for his egress; and because he chose rather to lie in a tainted atmosphere than to breathe the free air, until he should feel assured that his removal would be pleasing to God. Even in minute affairs, Scripture commends to us this self-government, that we should attempt nothing but with an approving conscience. How much less is the rashness of men to be endured in religious matters, if, without taking counsel of God, they permit themselves to act as they please. It is not indeed to be expected that God will every moment pronounce, by special oracles, what is necessary to be done; yet it becomes us to hearken attentively to his voice, in order to be certainly persuaded that we undertake nothing but what is in accordance with his word. The spirit of prudence, and of counsel, is also to be sought; of which he never leaves those destitute, who are docile and obedient to his commands. In this sense, Moses relates that Noah went out of the ark as soon as he, relying on the oracle of God, was aware that a new habitation was given him in the earth.

17. *That they may breed abundantly, etc.* With these words the Lord would cheer the mind of Noah, and inspire him with confidence, that a seed had been preserved in the ark

280 "In ramo olivae quidam philosophantur."

which should increase till it replenished the whole earth. In short, the renovation of the earth is promised to Noah; to the end that he may know that the world itself was inclosed in the ark, and that the solitude and devastation, at the sight of which his heart might faint, would not be perpetual.

20. *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord.* As Noah had given many proofs of his obedience, so he now presents an example of gratitude. This passage teaches us that sacrifices were instituted from the beginning for this end, that men should habituate themselves, by such exercises, to celebrate the goodness of God, and to give him thanks. The bare confession of the tongue, yea, even the silent acknowledgment of the heart, might suffice for God; but we know how many stimulants our indolence requires. Therefore, when the holy fathers, formerly, professed their piety towards God by sacrifices, the use of them was by no means superfluous. Besides, it was right that they should always have before their eyes symbols, by which they would be admonished, that they could have no access to God but through a mediator. Now, however, the manifestation of Christ has taken away these ancient shadows. Wherefore, let us use those helps which the Lord has prescribed.[281] Moreover, when I say that sacrifices were made use of, by the holy fathers, to celebrate the benefits of God, I speak only of one kind: for this offering of Noah answers to the peace-offerings, and the first-fruits. But here it may be asked, by what impulse Noah offered a sacrifice to God, seeing he had no command to do so? I answer: although Moses does not expressly declare that God commanded him to do it, yet a certain judgment may be formed from what follows, and even from the whole context, that Noah had rested upon the word of Gods and that, in reliance on the divine command, he had rendered this worship, which he knew, indubitably, should be acceptable to God. We have before said, that one animal of every kind was preserved separately; and have stated for what end it was done. But it was useless to set apart animals for sacrifice, unless God had revealed this design to holy Noah, who was to be the priest to offer up the victims. Besides, Moses says that sacrifices were chosen from among clean animals. But it is certain that Noah did not invent this distinction for himself since it does not depend on human choice. Whence we conclude, that he undertook nothing without divine authority. Also immediately afterwards, Moses subjoins, that the smell of the sacrifice was acceptable to God. This general rule, therefore, is to be observed, that all religious services which are not perfumed with the odour of faith, are of an ill-savor before God. Let us therefore know, that the altar of Noah was founded in the word of God. And the same word was as salt to his sacrifices, that they might not be insipid.

281 "Quare adminiculis utamur," etc. The French translation has it, "Et pourtant usons," etc. "And, nevertheless, let us use," etc. The meaning of the sentence seems to be, that, as the fathers, in obedience to God, used sacrifices, which were afterwards abolished as being of no value, so ought we to avail ourselves of those aids (adminicula) which might seem to be of no importance, had not God enjoined them. — *Ed.*

21. *And the Lord smelled a sweet savor*[282] Moses calls that by which God was appeased, an odour of rest; as if he had said, the sacrifice had been rightly offered. Yet nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that God should have been appeased by the filthy smoke of entrails, and of flesh. But Moses here, according to his manner, invests God with a human character for the purpose of accommodating himself to the capacity of an ignorant people. For it is not even to be supposed, that the rite of sacrifice, in itself, was grateful to God as a meritorious act; but we must regard the end of the work, and not confine ourselves to the external form. For what else did Noah propose to himself than to acknowledge that he had received his own life, and that of the animals, as the gift of God's mercy alone? This piety breathed a good and sweet odour before God; as it is said, (Psalm 116:12,)

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord."

And the Lord said in his heart. The meaning of the passage is, God had decreed that he would not hereafter curse the earth. And this form of expression has great weight: for although God never retracts what he has openly spoken with his mouth, yet we are more deeply affected when we hear, that he has fixed upon something in his own mind; because an inward decree of this kind in no way depends upon creatures. To sum up the whole, God certainly determined that he would never more destroy the world by a deluge. Yet the expression, 'I will not curse,' is to be but generally understood; because we know how much the earth has lost of its fertility since it has been corrupted by man's sin, and we daily feel that it is cursed in various ways. And he explains himself a little afterwards, saying, 'I will not smite anymore every thing living.' For in these words he does not allude to every kind of vengeance, but only to that which should destroy the world, and bring ruin both on mankind and the rest of animals: as if he would say, that he restored the earth with this stipulation, that it should not afterwards perish by a deluge. So when the Lord declares, (Isaiah 54:9,) that he will be contented with one captivity of his people, he compares it with the waters of Noah, by which he had resolved that the world should only once be overwhelmed.[283]

For the imagination of man's heart. This reasoning seems incongruous: for if the wickedness of man is so great that it does not cease to provoke the anger of God, it must necessarily bring down destruction upon the world. Nay, God seems to contradict himself by having previously declared that the world must be destroyed, because its iniquity was desperate. But here it behaves us more deeply to consider his design; for it was the will of God that there should be some society of men to inhabit the earth. If, however, they were

282 "Odorem quietis." "A savor of rest." — Margin of English Version.

283 "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee."

to be dealt with according to their deserts, there would be a necessity for a daily deluge. Wherefore, he declares, that in inflicting punishment upon the second world, he will so do it, as yet to preserve the external appearance of the earth, and not again to sweep away the creatures with which he has adorned it. Indeed, we ourselves may perceive such moderation to have been used, both in the public and special judgments of God, that the world yet stands in its completeness, and nature yet retains its course. Moreover, since God here declares what would be the character of men even to the end of the world, it is evident that the whole human race is under sentence of condemnation, on account of its depravity and wickedness. Nor does the sentence refer only to corrupt morals; but their iniquity is said to be an innate iniquity, from which nothing but evils can spring forth. I wonder, however, whence that false version of this passage has crept in, that the thought is prone to evil;[284] except, as is probable, that the place was thus corrupted, by those who dispute too philosophically concerning the corruption of human nature. It seemed to them hard, that man should be subjected, as a slave of the devil to sin. Therefore, by way of mitigation, they have said that he had a propensity to vices. But when the celestial Judge thunders from heaven, that his thoughts themselves are evil, what avails it to soften down that which, nevertheless, remains unalterable? Let men therefore acknowledge, that inasmuch as they are born of Adam, they are depraved creatures, and therefore can conceive only sinful thoughts, until they become the new workmanship of Christ, and are formed by his Spirit to a new life. And it is not to be doubted, that the Lord declares the very mind of man to be depraved, and altogether infected with sin; so that all the thoughts which proceed thence are evil. If such be the defect in the fountain itself, it follows, that all man's affections are evil, and his works covered with the same pollution, since of necessity they must savor of their original. For God does not merely say that men sometimes think evil; but the language is unlimited, comprising the tree with its fruits. Nor is it any proof to the contrary, that carnal and profane men often excel in generosity of disposition, undertake designs apparently honorable, and put forth certain evidences of virtue. For since their mind is corrupted with contempt of God, with pride, self-love, ambitious hypocrisy, and fraud; it cannot be but that all their thoughts are contaminated with the same vices. Again, they cannot tend towards a right end: whence it happens that they are judged to be what they really are, crooked and perverse. For all things in such men, which release us under the color of virtue, are like wine spoiled by the odour of the cask. For, (as was before said,) the very affections of nature, which in themselves are laudable, are yet vitiated by original sin, and on account of their irregularity have degenerated from their proper nature; such are the mutual love of married persons, the love of parents towards their children, and the like. And the clause which is added, "from youth," more fully declares that men are born evil; in order to show that, as soon as they are of an age to

284 "Sensus enim, et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt." — *Vulgate*.

begin to form thoughts, they have radical corruption of mind. Philosophers, by transferring to habit, what God here ascribes to nature, betray their own ignorance. And to wonder; for we please and flatter ourselves to such an extent, that we do not perceive how fatal is the contagion of sin, and what depravity pervades all our senses. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the judgment of God, which pronounces man to be so enslaved by sin that he can bring forth nothing sound and sincere. Yet, at the same time, we must remember, that no blame is to be cast upon God for that which has its origin in the defection of the first man, whereby the order of the creation was subverted. And furthers it must be noted, that men are not exempted from guilt and condemnation, by the pretext of this bondage: because, although all rush to evil, yet they are not impelled by any extrinsic force, but by the direct inclination of their own hearts; and, lastly, they sin not otherwise than voluntarily.

22. *While the earth remaineth*[285] By these words the world is again completely restored. For so great was the confusion and disorder which had overspread the earth, that there was a necessity for some renovation. On which account, Peter speaks of the old world as having perished in the deluge, (2 Peter 3:6.) Moreover, the deluge had been an interruption of the order of nature. For the revolutions of the sun and moon had ceased: there was no distinction of winter and summer. Wherefore, the Lord here declares it to be his pleasure, that all things should recover their vigor, and be restored to their functions. The Jews erroneously divide their year into six parts; whereas Moses, by placing the summer in opposition to the winter, thus divides the whole year in a popular manner into two parts. And it is not to be doubted, that by cold and heat he designates the periods already referred to. Under the words, "seed-time," and "harvest," he marks those advantages which flow to men from the moderated temperature of the atmosphere. If it is objected that this equable temperament is not every year perceived; the answer is ready, that the order of the world is indeed disturbed by our vices, so that many of its movements are irregular: often the sun withholds its proper heat, — snow or hail follow in the place of dew, — the air is agitated by various tempests; but although the world is not so regulated as to produce perpetual uniformity of seasons, yet we perceive the order of nature so far to prevail, that winter and summer annually recur, that there is a constant succession of days and nights, and that the earth brings forth its fruits in summer and autumn. Moreover, by the expression, 'all the days of the earth,' he means, 'as long as the earth shall last.'

285 "Posthac omnibus diebus terrae."

CHAPTER 9.

Genesis 9:1-29	
1. And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.	**1.** Et benedixit Deus Noah, et filiis ejus: et dixit ad eos, Crescite, et multiplicamini, et replete terram.
2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.	**2.** Et timor vester et pavor vester erit super omnem bestiam terrae, et super omne volatile coeli, cum omnibus quae gradiuntur in terra, et omnibus piscibus maris: *quia* manui vestrae tradita sunt.
3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.	**3.** Omne reptile quod vivit, vobis erit ad vescendum: sicut virentem herbam dedi vobis omnia.
4. But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.	**4.** Veruntamen carnem cum anima ejus, sanguine ejus, non comedetis.
5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.	**5.** Et profecto sanguinem vestrum, qui vobis est in animas, requiram: de manu omnis bestiae requiram illum, et de manu hominis, et de manu viri fratris ejus requiram animam hominis.
6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.	**6.** Qui effuderit sanguinem hominis in homine, sanguis ejus effundetur: quia ad imaginem Dei fecit hominem.
7. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.	**7.** Et vos crescite, et multiplicamini, et generate in terra, et multiplicemini in ea.
8. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,	**8.** Et dixit Deus ad Noah, et ad filios ejus qui cum eo erant, dicendo,
9. And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;	**9.** Et ego, ecce ego statuo pactum meum vobiscum, et cum semine vestro post vos.
10. And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all	**10.** Et cum omni anima vivente quae est vobiscum, tam cum volatili quam cum animali, et omni bestia terrae vobiscum, ab omni-

that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.	bus quae egressa sunt ex arca: cum omni, *inquam*, bestia terrae.
11. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.	**11.** Et statuam pactum meum vobiscum, et non excidetur omnis caro ultra ab aquis diluvii, et non erit ultra diluvium, ut disperdat terram.
12. And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations:	**12.** Et dixit Deus, Hoc est signum foederis quod ego do inter me et bos, et omnem animan viventem quae est vobiscum in generationes saeculi:
13. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.	**13.** Arcum meum ponam in nube, et erit in signum foederis inter me et terram.
14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:	**14.** Et erit, quum obnubilavero nubem super terram, tunc apparebit arcus in nube.
15. And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.	**15.** Et recordabor foederis mei quod est inter me et vos, et omnem animam viventem cum omni carne: et non erit ultra aqua ad diluvium, ut disperdat omnem carnem.
16. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.	**16.** Et erit arcus in nube, et videbo illum, ut recorder pacti perpetui inter Deum et omnem animam viventem cum omni carne quae est super terram.
17. And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.	**17.** Et dixit Deus ad Noah, Hoc est signum foederis quod statui inter me et omnem carnem quae est super terram.
18. And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan.	**18.** Erant autem filii Noah qui egressi sunt de arca, Sem, Cham, et Jepheth: et Cham est pater Chenaan.
19. These *are* the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.	**19.** Tres isti, filii Noah: et ab istis dispersa est universa terra.

20. And Noah began *to be* an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:	**20.** Coepit vero Noah colere terram, et plantavit vineam.
21. And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.	**21.** Et bibit de vino et inebriatus est, et discooperuit se in medio tabernaculi sui.
22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.	**22.** Et vidit Cham pater Chenaan turpitudinem patris sui, et nuntiavit duobus fratribus suis in platea.
23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.	**23.** Et tulerunt Sem et Jepheth vestimentum, et posuerunt super humerum ambo ipse: et euntes retrorsum, operuerunt turpitudinem patris sui: et facies eorum erant retrorsum, et turpitudinem patris sui non viderunt.
24. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.	**24.** Expergefactus autem Noah a vino suo, cognovit quod fecerat sibi filius suus minor.
25. And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.	**25.** Et dixit, Maledictus Chenaan, servus servorum erit fratribus suis.
26. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.	**26.** Et dixit, Benedictus Jehova Deus Sem, et sit Chenaan servus eis.
27. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.	**27.** Dilatet Deus Jepheth, et habitet in tabernaculis Sem: et sit Chenaan servus eis.
28. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.	**28.** Et vixit Noah post diluvium trecentos annos et quinquaginta annos.
29. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.	**29.** Fuerunt autem omnes dies Noah nongenti anni et quinquaginta: et mortuus est.

1. *And God blessed Noah*. We hence infer with what great fear Noah had been dejected, because God, so often and at such length, proceeds to encourage him. For when Moses here says, that God blessed Noah and his sons, he does not simply mean that the favor of fruitfulness was restored to them; but that, at the same time, the design of God concerning the new restitution of the world was revealed unto them. For to the blessing itself is added the voice

of God by which he addresses them. We know that brute animals produce offspring in no other way than by the blessing of God; but Moses here commemorates a privilege which belongs only to men. Therefore, lest those four men and their wives, seized with trepidation, should doubt for what purpose they had been delivered, the Lord prescribes to them their future condition of life: namely, that they shall raise up mankind from death to life. Thus he not only renews the world by the same word by which he before created it; but he directs his word to men, in order that they may recover the lawful use of marriage, may know that the care of producing offspring is pleasing to Himself, and may have confidence that a progeny shall spring from them which shall diffuse itself through all regions of the earth, so as to render it again inhabited; although it had been laid waste and made a desert. Yet he did not permit promiscuous intercourse, but sanctioned anew that law of marriage which he had before ordained. And although the blessing of God is, in some way, extended to illicit connections, so that offspring is thence produced, yet this is an impure fruitfulness; that which is lawful flows only from the expressly declared benediction of God.

2. *And the fear of you*. This also has chiefly respect to the restoration of the world, in order that the sovereignty over the rest of animals might remain with men. And although after the fall of man, the beasts were endued with new ferocity, yet some remains of that dominion over them, which God had conferred on him in the beginning, were still left. He now also promises that the same dominion shall continue. We see indeed that wild beasts rush violently upon men, and rend and tear many of them in pieces; and if God did not wonderfully restrain their fierceness, the human race would be utterly destroyed. Therefore, what we have said respecting the inclemency of the air, and the irregularity of the seasons, is also here applicable. Savage beasts indeed prevail and rage against men in various ways, and no wonder; for since we perversely exalt ourselves against God, why should not the beasts rise up against us? Nevertheless, the providence of God is a secret bridle to restrain their violence. For, whence does it arise that serpents spare us, unless because he represses their virulence? Whence is it that tigers, elephants, lions, bears, wolves, and other wild beasts without number, do not rend, tear, and devour everything human, except that they are withheld by this subjection, as by a barrier? Therefore, it ought to be referred to the special protection and guardianship of God, that we remain in safety. For, were it otherwise, what could we expect; since they seem as if born for our destruction, and burn with the furious desire to injure us? Moreover, the bridle with which the Lord restrains the cruelty of wild beasts, to prevent them falling upon men, is a certain fear and dread which God has implanted in them, to the end that they might reverence the presence of men. Daniel especially declares this respecting kings; namely, that they are possessed of dominion, because the Lord has put the fear and the dread of them both on men and beasts. But as the first use of fear is to defend the society of mankind; so, according to the measure in which God has given to men a general authority over the beasts, there exists in the greatest and the least of men, I know

not what hidden mark, which does not suffer the cruelty of wild beasts, by its violence to prevail. Another advantage, however and one more widely extended, is here noted; namely, that men may render animals subservient to their own convenience, and may apply them to various uses, according to their wishes and their necessities. Therefore, the fact that oxen become accustomed to bear the yoke; that the wildness of horses is so subdued as to cause them to carry a rider; that they receive the pack-saddle to bear burdens; that cows give milk, and suffer themselves to be milked; that sheep are mute under the hand of the shearer; all these facts are the result of this dominion, which, although greatly diminished, is nevertheless not entirely abolished.

3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.* The Lord proceeds further, and grants animals for food to men, that they may eat their flesh. And because Moses now first relates that this right was given to men, nearly all commentators infer, that it was not lawful for man to eat flesh before the deluge, but that the natural fruits of the earth were his only food. But the argument is not sufficiently firm. For I hold to this principle; that God here does not bestow on men more than he had previously given, but only restores what had been taken away, that they might again enter on the possession of those good things from which they had been excluded. For since they had before offered sacrifices to God, and were also permitted to kill wild beasts, from the hides and skins of which, they might make for themselves garments and tents, I do not see what obligation should prevent them from the eating of flesh. But since it is of little consequence what opinion is held, I affirm nothing on the subject.[286] This ought justly to be deemed by us of greater importance, that to eat the flesh of animals is granted to us by the kindness of God; that we do not seize upon what our appetite desires, as robbers do, nor yet tyrannically shed the innocent blood of cattle; but that we only take what is offered to us by the hand of the Lord. We have heard what Paul says, that we are at liberty to eat what we please, only we do it with the assurance of conscience, but that he who imagines anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean, (Romans 14:14.) And whence has this happened to man, that he should eat whatever food he pleased before God, with a tranquil mind, and not with unbridled license, except from his knowing, that it has been divinely delivered into his hand by the right of donation? Wherefore, (the

286 The question which Calvin here dismisses as one of little importance has, in modern controversy, assumed a very different position; and most commentators have come to a decision, the reverse of that to which he inclines. His arguments appears chargeable with the want of firmness, which he imputes to others. The inference that the flesh of sacrifices was eaten, since otherwise it must have been wasted, is of no force, if we suppose the first sacrifices to have been all holocausts, or whole burnt offering unto the Lord. The garments or tents referred to as made from the skins of animals were, in all probability, those of the very animals which were thus sacrificed; so that there is no reason hence to conclude, that flesh was eaten before the deluge. But let the reader refer to Magee on the Atonement, Dissertation, No.li2 — *Ed.*

same Paul being witness,) the word of God sanctifies the creatures, that we may purely and lawfully feed on them, (1 Timothy 4:5.) Let the adage be utterly rejected which says, 'that no one can feed and refresh his body with a morsel of bread, without, at the same time, defiling his soul.' Therefore it is not to be doubted, that the Lord designed to confirm our faith, when he expressly declares by Moses, that he gave to man the free use of flesh, so that we might not eat it with a doubtful and trembling conscience. At the same time, however, he invites us to thanksgiving. On this account also, Paul adds "prayer" to the "word," in defining the method of sanctification in the passage recently cited.

And now we must firmly retain the liberty given us by the Lord, which he designed to be recorded as on public tables. For, by this word, he addresses all the posterity of Noah, and renders this gift common to all ages. And why is this done, but that the faithful may boldly assert their right to that which, they know, has proceeded from God as its Author? For it is an insupportable tyranny, when God, the Creator of all things, has laid open to us the earth and the air, in order that we may thence take food as from his storehouse, for these to be shut up from us by mortal man, who is not able to create even a snail or a fly. I do not speak of external prohibition;[287] but I assert, that atrocious injury is done to God, when we give such license to men as to allow them to pronounce that unlawful which God designs to be lawful, and to bind consciences which the word of God sets free, with their fictitious laws. The fact that God prohibited his ancient people from the use of unclean animals, seeing that exception was but temporary, is here passed over by Moses.

4. *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof* Some thus explain this passages 'Ye may not eat a member cut off from a living animal,' which is too trifling. However, since there is no copulative conjunction between the two words, *blood* and *life*, I do not doubt that Moses, speaking of the life, added the word *blood* exegetically,[288] as if he would say, that flesh is in some sense devoured with its life, when it is eaten imbued with its own blood. Wherefore, the life and the blood are not put for different things, but for the same; not because blood is in itself the life, but inasmuch as the vital spirits chiefly reside in the blood, it is, as far as our feeling is concerned, a token which represents life. And this is expressly declared, in order that men may have the greater horror of eating blood For if it be a savage and barbarous thing to devour lives, or to swallow down living flesh, men betray their brutality by eating blood. Moreover, the tendency of this prohibition is by no means obscure, namely, that God intends to accustom men to gentleness, by abstinence from the blood of animals; but, if they should become unrestrained, and daring in eating wild animals they

287 By external prohibition, is probably meant such as might be enjoined by the magistrate during a time of scarcity, or for any purely civil purpose. — *Ed.*

288 This is apparent in the English version, where the words, "which is," are added in Italics, showing that in the judgment of the translators, the word following was explanatory of that which preceded. — *Ed.*

would at length not be sparing of even human blood. Yet we must remember, that this restriction was part of the old law.[289] Wherefore, what Tertullian relates, that in his time it was unlawful among Christians to taste the blood of cattle, savours of superstition. For the apostles, in commanding the Gentiles to observe this rite, for a short time, did not intend to inject a scruple into their consciences, but only to prevent the liberty which was otherwise sacred, from proving an occasion of offense to the ignorant and the weak.

5. *And surely your blood of your lives will I require*. In these words the Lord more explicitly declares that he does not forbid the use of blood out of regard to animals themselves, but because he accounts the life of men precious: and because the sole end of his law is, to promote the exercise of common humanity between them. I therefore think that Jerome, in rendering the particle ⌧⌧ (*ach,*) *for*, has done better than they who read it as an adversative disjunctive; 'otherwise your blood will I require;' yet literally it may best be thus translated, 'And truly your blood.'[290] The whole context is (in my opinion) to be thus read, 'And truly your blood, which is *in* your lives, or which is *as* your lives, that is which vivifies and quickens you, as it respects your body, will I require: from the hand of all animals will require it; from the hand of man, from the hand, I say, of man, his brother, will I require the life of man.' The distinction by which the Jews constitute four kinds of homicide is frivolous; for I have explained the simple and genuine sense, namely, that God so highly estimates our life, that he will not suffer murder to go unavenged. And he inculcates this in so many words, in order that he may render the cruelty of those the more detestable, who lay violent hands upon their neighbors. And it is no common proof of God's love towards us, that he undertakes the defense of our lives, and declares that he will be the avenger of our death. In saying that he will exact punishment from animals for the violated life of men, he gives us this as an example. For if, on behalf of man, he is angry with brute creatures who are hurried by a blind impulse to feed upon him; what, do we suppose, will become of the man who, unjustly, cruelly, and contrary to the sense of nature, falls upon his brother?

6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood*[291] The clause in man which is here added, has the force of amplification. Some expound it, 'Before witnesses.' Others refer it to what follows, namely, 'that by man his blood should be shed.'[292] But all these interpretations are forced. What I have said must be remembered, that this language rather expresses the atrociousness of the crime; because whosoever kills a man, draws down upon himself the blood and life of his brother. On the whole, they are deceived (in my judgment) who think that a political law, for the punishment of homicides, is here simply intended. Truly I do not deny that the

289 "Partem fuisse veteris paedagogiae."

290 Thus agreeing with the English version.

291 "Qui effuderit sanguinem hominis in homine." He who shall have shed the blood of man in man.

292 This is the interpretation of the English version.

punishment which the laws ordain, and which the judges execute, are founded on this divine sentence; but I say the words are more comprehensive. It is written,

'Men of blood shall not live out half their days,'

(Psalm 55:23.)

And we see some die in highways, some in stews, and many in wars. Therefore, however magistrates may connive at the crime, God sends executioners from other quarters, who shall render unto sanguinary men their reward. God so threatens and denounces vengeance against the murderer, that he even arms the magistrate with the sword for the avenging of slaughter, in order that the blood of men may not be shed with impunity.

For in the image of God made he man. For the greater confirmation of the above doctrines God declares, that he is not thus solicitous respecting human life rashly, and for no purpose. Men are indeed unworthy of God's care, if respect be had only to themselves. but since they bear the image of God engraven on them, He deems himself violated in their person. Thus, although they have nothing of their own by which they obtain the favor of God, he looks upon his own gifts in them, and is thereby excited to love and to care for them. This doctrine, however is to be carefully observed that no one can be injurious to his brother without wounding God himself. Were this doctrine deeply fixed in our minds, we should be much more reluctant than we are to inflict injuries. Should any one object, that this divine image has been obliterated, the solution is easy; first, there yet exists some remnant of it, so that man is possessed of no small dignity; and, secondly, the Celestial Creator himself, however corrupted man may be, still keeps in view the end of his original creation; and according to his example, we ought to consider for what end he created men, and what excellence he has bestowed upon them above the rest of living beings.

7. *And you, be ye fruitful and multiply*. He again turns his discourse to Noah and his sons, exhorting them to the propagation of offspring: as if he would say, 'You see that I am intent upon cherishing and preserving mankind, do you therefore also attend to it.' At the same time, in commending to them the preservation of seed, he deters them from murder, and from unjust acts of violence. Yet his chief end was that to which I have before alluded, that he might encourage their dejected minds. For in these words is contained not a bare precept, but also a promise.

8. *And God spake unto Noah*. That the memory of the deluge might not inspire them with new terrors, as often as the sky were covered with clouds, lest the earth should again be drowned; this source of anxiety is taken away. And certainly, if we consider the great propensity of the human mind to distrust, we shall not deem this testimony to have been unnecessary even for Noah. He was indeed endued with a rare and incomparable faith, even to a miracle; but no strength of constancy could be so great, that this most sad and terrible vengeance of God should not shake it. Therefore, whenever any great and continued shower shall seem to threaten the earth with a deluge, this barrier, on which the holy man may rely,

is interposed. Now although his sons would need this confirmation more than he, yet the Lord speaks especially on his account. And the clause which follows, 'and to his sons who were with him,' is to be referred to this point. For how is it, that God, making his covenant with the sons of Noah, commands them to hope for the best? Truly, because they are joined with their father, who is, as it were, the stipulator of the covenant, so as to be associated with him, in a subordinate place[293] . Moreover, there is no doubt that it was the design of God to provide for all his posterity. It was not therefore a private covenant confirmed with one family only, but one which is common to all people, and which shall flourish in all ages to the end of the world. And truly, since at the present time, impiety overflows not less than in the age of Noah, it is especially necessary that the waters should be restrained by this word of God, as by a thousand bolts and bars lest they should break forth to destroy us. Wherefore, relying on this promise, let us look forward to the last day, in which the consuming fire shall purify heaven and earth.

10. *And with every living creature.* Although the favor which the Lord promises extends also to animals, yet it is not in vain that he addresses himself only to men, who, by the sense of faith, are able to perceive this benefit. We enjoy the heaven and the air in common with the beasts, and draw the same vital breath; but it is no common privilege, that God directs his word to us; whence we may learn with what paternal love he pursues us. And here three distinct steps are to be traced. First, God, as in a matter of present concern, makes a covenant with Noah and his family, lest they should be afraid of a deluge for themselves. Secondly, he transmits his covenant to posterity, not only that, as by continual succession, the effect may reach to other ages; but that they who should afterwards be born might also apprehend this testimony by faith, and might conclude that the same thing which had been promised to the sons of Noah, was promised unto them. Thirdly, he declares that he will be propitious also to brute animals, so that the effect of the covenant towards them, might be the preservation of their lives only, without imparting to them sense and intelligence. Hence the ignorance of the Anabaptists may be refuted, who deny that the covenant of God is common to infants, because they are destitute of present faith. As if, truly, when God promises salvation to a thousand generations, the fathers were not intermediate parties between God and their children, whose office it is to deliver to their children (so to speak) from hand to hand the promise received from God. But as many as withdraw their life from this protection of God (since the greater part of men either despise or ridicule this divine covenant) deserve, by this single act of ingratitude, to be immersed in eternal fire. For although this be an earthly promise, yet God designs the faith of his people to be exercised, in order that they may be assured that a certain abode will, by his special goodness, be provided for them on earth, until they shall be gathered together in heaven.

293 "Ut secundo loco in societatem accedant."

12. *This is the token of the covenant*. A sign is added to the promise, in which is exhibited the wonderful kindness of God; who, for the purpose of confirming our faith in his word, does not disdain to use such helps. And although we have more fully discussed the use of signs in Genesis 2:1, yet we must briefly maintain, from these words of Moses, that it is wrong to sever signs from the word. By the word, I mean not that of which Papists boast; whereby they enchant bread, wine, water, and oil, with their magical whisperings; but that which may strengthen faith: according no the Lord here plainly addresses holy Noah and his sons; he then annexes a seal, for the sake of assurance. Wherefore, if the sacrament be wrested from the word, it ceases to be what it is called. It must, I say, be a vocal sign, in order that it may retain its force, and not degenerate from its nature. And not only is that administration of sacraments in which the word of God is silent, vain and ludicrous; but it draws with it pure satanic delusions. Hence we also infer, that from the beginning, it was the peculiar property of sacraments, to avail for the confirmation of faith. For certainly, in the covenant that promise is included to which faith ought to respond. It appears to some absurd, that faith should be sustained by such helps. But they who speak thus do not, in the first place, reflect on the great ignorance and imbecility of our minds; nor do they, secondly, ascribe to the working of the secret power of the Spirit that praise which is due. It is the work of God alone to begin and to perfect faith; but he does it by such instruments as he sees good; the free choice of which is in his own power.

13. *I do set my bow in the cloud*. From these words certain eminent theologians have been induced to deny, that there was any rainbow before the deluge: which is frivolous. For the words of Moses do not signify, that a bow was then formed which did not previously exist; but that a mark was engraven upon it, which should give a sign of the divine favor towards men. That this may the more evidently appear, it will be well to recall to memory what we have elsewhere said, that some signs are natural, and some preternatural. And although there are many examples of this second class of signs in the Scriptures; yet they are peculiar, and do not belong to the common and perpetual use of the Church. For, as it pleases the Lord to employ earthly elements, as vehicles for raising the minds of men on high, so I think the celestial arch which had before existed naturally, is here consecrated into a sign and pledge; and thus a new office is assigned to it; whereas, from the nature of the thing itself, it might rather be a sign of the contrary; for it threatens continued rain. Let this therefore he the meaning, of the words, 'As often as the rain shall alarm you, look upon the bow. For although it may seem to cause the rain to overflow the earth, it shall nevertheless be to you a pledge of returning dryness, and thus it will then become you to stand with greater confidence, than under a clear and serene sky.' Hence it is not for us to contend with philosophers respecting the rainbow; for although its colors are the effect of natural causes, yet they act profanely who attempt to deprive God of the right and authority which he has over his creatures.

15. *And I will remember my covenant*. Moses, by introducing God so often as the speaker, teaches us that the word holds the chief place, and that signs are to be estimated by it.[294] God, however, speaks after the manner of men, when he says, that at the sight of the rainbow he will remember his covenant. But this mode of speaking has reference to the faith of men, in order that they may reflect, that God, whenever he stretches out his arch over the clouds, is not unmindful of his covenant.

18. *The sons of Noah*. Moss enumerates the sons of Noah, not only because he is about to pass on to the following history, but for the purpose of more fully illustrating the force of the promise, "Replenish the earth." For we may hence better conceive how efficacious the blessing of God has been, because an immense multitude of men proceeded in a short time from so small a number; and because one family, and that a little one, grew into so many, and such numerous nations.

20. *And Noah began to be an husbandman*. I do not so explain. the words, as if he then, for the first time, began to give his attention to the cultivation of the fields; but, (in my opinion,) Moses rather intimates, that Noah, with a collected mind, though now an old man, returned to the culture of the fields, and to his former labors. It is, however, uncertain whether he had been a vine-dresser or not. It is commonly believed that wine was not in use before that time. And this opinion has been the more willingly received, as affording an honorable pretext for the excuse of Noah's sin. But it does not appear to me probable that the fruit of the vine, which excels all others, should have remained neglected and unprofitable. Also, Moses does not say that Noah was drunken on the first day on which he tasted it. Therefore, leaving this question undetermined, I rather suppose, that we are to learn from the drunkenness of Noah, what a filthy and detestable crime drunkenness is. The holy patriarch, though he had hitherto been a rare example of frugality and temperance, losing all self-possession, did, in a base and shameful manner, prostrate himself naked on the ground, so as to become a laughingstock to all. Therefore, with what care ought we to cultivate sobriety, lest anything like this, or even worse, should happen to us? Formerly, the heathen philosopher said, that 'wine is the blood of the earth; and, therefore, when men intemperately pour it down their throats, they are justly punished by their mother. Let us, however, rather remember, that when men, by shameful abuse, profane this noble and most precious gift of God, He himself becomes the Avenger. And let us know, that Noah, by the judgement of Gods has been set forth as a spectacle to be a warning to others, that they should not become intoxicated by excessive drinking. Some excuse might certainly be made for the holy man; who, having completed his labor, and being exhilarated with wine, imagines that he is but

294 "Precipuas esse verbi partes, et inde aestimanda signa." — "Queleprincipal gist en la parole, et que d'icelle il faut estimer les sacramens." That the principal force is in the word, and that from it we must estimate the sacraments. — *French Tr.*

taking his just reward. But God brands him with an eternal mark of disgrace. What then, do we suppose, will happen to those idle-bellies and insatiable gluttons whose sole object of contention is who shall consume the greatest quantity of wine? And although this kind of correction was severe, yet it was profitable to the servant of God; since he was recalled to sobriety, lest by proceeding in the indulgence of a vice to which he had once yielded, he should ruin himself; just as we see drunkards become at length brutalized by continued intemperance.

22. *And Ham, the father of Canaan.* This circumstance is added to augment the sorrow of Noah, that he is mocked by his own son. For we must ever keep in memory, that this punishment was divinely inflicted upon him; partly, because his fault was not a light one; partly that God in his person might present a lesson of temperance to all ages. Drunkenness in itself deserves as its reward, that they who deface the image of their heavenly Father in themselves, should become a laughingstock to their own children. For certainly, as far as possible, drunkards subvert their own understanding, and so far deprive themselves of reason as to degenerate into beasts. And let us remember, that if the Lord so grievously avenged the single transgression of the holy man, he will prove an avenger no less severe against those who are daily intoxicated; and of this we have examples sufficiently numerous before our eyes. In the meanwhile, Ham, by reproachfully laughing at his feather, betrays his own depraved and malignant disposition. We know that parents, next to God, are most deeply to be reverenced; and if there were neither books nor sermons, nature itself constantly inculcates this lesson upon us. It is received by common consent, that piety towards parents is the mother of all virtues. This Ham, therefore, must have been of a wicked, perverse, and crooked disposition; since he not only took pleasure in his father's shame, but wished to expose him to his brethren. And this is no slight occasion of offense; first, that Noah, the minister of salvation to men, and the chief restorer of the world, should in extreme old age, lie intoxicated in his house; and then, that the ungodly and wicked Ham should have proceeded from the sanctuary of God.[295] God had selected eight souls as a sacred seed, thoroughly purged from all corruption, for the renovation of the Church: but the son of Noah shows, how necessary it is for men to be held as with the bridle of God, however they may be exalted by privilege. The impiety of Ham proves to us how deep is the root of wickedness in men; and that it continually puts forth its shoots, except where the power of the Spirit prevails over it. But if, in the hallowed sanctuary of God, among so small a number, one fiend was preserved; let us not wonder if, at this day, in the Church, containing a much greater multitude of men, the wicked are mingled with the good. Nor is there any doubt that the minds of Shem and Japheth were grievously wounded, when they perceived in their own brother such a prodigy of scorn; and, on the other hand, their father shamefully lying

295 Reference is here made to the ark, as the type of the Church. — *Ed.*

prostrate on the ground. Such a debasing alienation of mind in the prince of the new world, and the holy patriarch of the Church, could not less astonish them, than if they had seen the ark itself broken, dashed in pieces, cleft asunder, and destroyed. Yet this cause of offense they alike overcome by their magnanimity, and conceal by their modesty. Ham alone eagerly seizes the occasion of ridiculing and inveighing against his father; just as perverse men are wont to catch at occasions of offense in others, which may serve as a pretext for indulgence in sin. And his age renders him the less excusable; for he was not a lascivious youth, who, by his thoughtless laughter, betrayed his own folly, seeing that he was already more than one hundred years old. Therefore, it is probable, that he thus perversely insulted his father, for the purpose of acquiring for himself the license of sinning with impunity. We see many such at this day, who most studiously pry into the faults of holy and pious men, in order that without shame they may precipitate themselves into all iniquity; they even make the faults of other men an occasion of hardening themselves into a contempt for God.

23. *And Shem and Japheth took a garment*. Here the piety, as well as the modesty, of the two brothers is commended; who, in order that the dignity of their father might not be lowered in their esteem, but that they might always cherish and keep entire the reverence which they owed him, turned away their eyes from the sight of his disgrace. And thus they gave proof of the regard they paid to their father's honor, in supposing that their own eyes would be polluted, if they voluntarily looked upon the nakedness by which he was disgraced. At the same time they also consulted their own modesty. For (as it was said in Genesis 3:1) there is something so unaccountably shameful in the nakedness of man, that scarcely any one dares to look upon himself, even when no witness is present. They also censure the impious rashness of their brother, who had not spared his father. Hence, then, we may learn how acceptable to God is that piety, of which the example here recorded receives a signal encomium of the Spirit. But if piety towards an earthly father was a virtue so excellent, and so worthy of praise; with how much greater devotedness of piety ought the sacred majesty of God to be worshipped? The Papists make themselves ridiculous by desiring to cover the filthiness of their idol, yea, the abominations of their whole impure clergy, with the cloak of Shem and Japheth. I omit to state how great is the difference between the disgrace of Noah and the execrable vileness of so many crimes which contaminate heaven and earth. But it is necessary that Antichrist and his horned bishops, with all that rabble, should prove themselves to be fathers,[296] if they with that any honor should be paid them.

24. *And Noah awoke*. It might seem to some that Noah, although he had just cause of anger, still conducted himself with too little modesty and gravity; and that he ought, at least, silently to have mourned over his sin before God; and also, with shame, to have given proof of his repentance to men: but that now as if he had committed no offense, he fulminates

296 That is, legitimate fathers.

with excessive severity against his son.[297] Moses, however, does not here relate reproaches uttered by Noah, under the excitement of rage and anger, but rather introduces him speaking in the spirit of prophecy. Wherefore we ought not to doubt, that the holy man was truly humbled (as he ought to be) under a sense of his fault, and honestly reflected on his own deserts; but now, having received the grant of pardon, and his condemnation being removed, he proceeds as the herald of Divine judgment. It is not indeed to be doubted that the holy man, endued with a disposition otherwise gentle, and being one of the best of parents, would pronounce this sentence upon his son with the most bitter grief of mind. For he saw him miraculously preserved amongst a few and having a place among the very flower of the human race. Now, therefore, when, with his own mouth, he is compelled to separate him from the Church of God, he doubtless would grievously bewail the malediction of his son. But by this example, God would admonish us that the constancy of our faith must be retained, if at any time we see those fail who are most closely united to us, and that our spirits ought not to be broken; nay, that we must so exercise the severity which God enjoins, as not to spare even our own bowels. And whereas, Noah does not pronounce a sentence so harsh, except by Divine inspiration, it behaves us to infer from the severity of the punishment how abominable in the sight of God is the impious contempt of parents, since it perverts the sacred order of nature, and violates the majesty and authority of God, in the person of those whom he has commanded to preside in his place.

25. *Cursed be Canaan*[298] It is asked in the first place, why Noah instead of pronouncing the curse upon his son, inflicts the severity of punishment, which that son had deserved,

297 This is an objection, to which the answer immediately follows.

298 It has been remarked by Bishop Lowth, that nearly all the indications of future events in the Holy Scriptures are announced in verse and in numbers. — Prael. 2 We have here a remarkable instance of this peculiarity. The following is a translation of Bishop Lowth's version of Noah's prediction: — ***Cursed be Canaan!***

A servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem!

And let Canaan be their servant.

May God enlarge Japheth,

And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;

And let Canaan be their servant. — Prael. 4 The adoption of some differences of reading has been suggested by later critics. It has been especially observed, that the first hemistich is a broken or short line, and does not correspond with the next in length or rhyme. And on the authority of the Arabic version, (see Walton's Polyglott,) many learned men would thus fill up the line — ***"Cursed be Ham, the father of Canaan."*** They would also, on the same authority, alter the fourth and sixth lines, by inserting the word "father," thus — ***"And let the father of Canaan be their servant."*** Yet such alterations are not lightly to be made in the sacred text; and it seems highly probable, that the addition in the Arabic version was intended for nothing more originally than a paraphrase to explain the translator's view of the passage. The reader is referred to Caunter on the Poetry of the Pentateuch,

upon his innocent grandson; since it seems not consistent with the justice of God, to visit the crimes of parents upon their children? But the answer is well known; namely that God, although he pursues his course of judgments upon the sons and the grandchildren of the ungodly, yet in being angry with them, is not angry with the innocent, because even they themselves are found in fault. Wherefore there is no absurdity in the act of avenging the sins of the fathers upon their reprobate children; since, of necessity, all those whom God has deprived of his Spirit are subject to his wrath. But it is surprising that Noah should curse his grandson; and should pass his son Ham, the author of the crime, over in silence. The Jews imagine that the reason of this was to be traced to the special favor of God; and that since the Lord had bestowed on Ham so great an honor,[299] the curse was transferred from him to his son. But the conjecture is futile. Certainly, to my mind, there is no doubt that the punishment was carried forward even to his posterity in order that the severity of it might be the more apparent; as if the Lord had openly proclaimed that the punishment of one man would not satisfy him but that he would attach the curse also to the posterity of the offender, so that it should extend through successive ages. In the meantime, Ham himself is so far from being exempt, that God, by involving his son with him, aggravates his own condemnation.

Another question is also proposed; namely, why among the many sons of Ham, God chooses one to be smitten? But let not our curiosity here indulge itself too freely; let us remember that the judgments of God are, not in vain, called "a great deep," and that it would be a degrading thing for God, before whose tribunal we all must one day stand, to be subjected to our judgments, or rather to our foolish temerity. He chooses whom he sees good, that he may show forth in them an example of his grace and kindness; others he appoints to a different end, that they may be proofs of his anger and severity. Here, although the minds of men are blinded, let every one of us, conscious of his own infirmity, learn rather to ascribe praise to God's justice, than plunge, with insane audacity, into the profound abyss. While God held the whole seed of Ham as obnoxious to the curse, he mentions the Canaanites by name, as those whom he would curse above all others. And hence we infer that this judgment proceeded from God, because it was proved by the event itself. What would certainly be the condition of the Canaanites, Noah could not know by human means. Wherefore in things obscure and hidden, the Spirit directed his tongue.

Another difficulty still remains: for since the Scripture teaches that God avenges the sins of men on the third and fourth generation, it seems to assign this limit to the wrath of

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for further information respecting the poetical character of these verses; and to Bishop Newton's Dissertations, No. I., for its prophetical application. Some excellent remarks, of a practical kind, will be found in Bishop Hall's contemplations. — *Ed.*

299 Namely, that of having preserved him in the ark. — *Ed.*

God; but the vengeance of which mention is now made extends itself to the tenth generation. I answer, that these words of Scripture are not intended to prescribe a law to God, which he may not so far set aside, as to be at liberty to punish sins beyond four generations. The thing to be here observed is, the comparison instituted between punishment and grace; by which we are taught, that God, while he is a just avenger of crimes, is still more inclined to mercy. In the meantime, let his liberty remain unquestioned, to extend his vengeance as far as he pleases.

A servant of servants shall he be. This Hebraism signifies that Canaan shall be the last, even among servants: as if it had been said, 'Not only shall his condition be servile, but worse than that of common servitude.'[300] Yet the thunder of this severe and dreadful prophecy seems weak and illusory, since the Canaanites excelled in strength and in riches, and were possessed of extensive dominion. Where then is this servitude? In the first place, I answer, that though God, in threatening men, does not immediately execute what he denounces, yet his threats are never weak and ineffectual. Secondly, that the judgments of God are not always exhibited before our eyes, nor apprehended by our carnal reason. The Canaanites, having shaken off the yoke of servitude, which was divinely imposed upon them, even proceeded to grasp at empire for themselves. But although they triumph for a time, yet in the sight of God their condition is not deemed free. Just as when the faithful are iniquitously oppressed, and tyrannically harassed by the wicked, their spiritual liberty is still not extinct in the sight of God. It behaves us then to be content with this proof of the divine judgment, that God promised the dominion of the land of Canaan to his servant Abraham, and at length devoted the Canaanites to destruction. But because the Pope so earnestly maintains that he sometimes utters prophecies, — as did even Caiaphas, (John 11:51,) — lest we should seem to refuse him everything, I do not deny that the title with which he adorns himself was dictated by the Spirit of God, 'Let him be a servant of servants,' in the same sense that Canaan was.

26. *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem*. Noah blesses his other children, but in a different manner. For he places Shem in the highest post of honor. And this is the reason why Noah, in blessing him, breaks forth in the praise of God, without adhering to the person of man. For the Hebrews, when they are speaking of any rare and transcendent excellence, raise their thoughts to God. Therefore the holy man, when he perceived that the most abundant grace of God was destined for his son Shem, rises to thanksgiving. Whence we infer, that he spoke, not from carnal reason, but rather treated of the secret favors of God, the result of which was to be deferred to a remote period. Finally, by these words it is declared, that the benediction of Shem would be divine or heavenly.

300 Vide Ainsworth in loco, Bishop Newton's Dissertation i.

27. *God shall enlarge Japheth.* In the Hebrew words ⊠⊠⊠ (*japhte*) and ⊠⊠⊠ (*japheth*,) there is an elegant allusion. For the root of the word is ⊠⊠⊠ (*pathah*,) which, among the Hebrews, signifies to entice with smooth words, or to allure in one direction or another. Here, however, nearly all commentators take it as signifying to enlarge.[301] If this exposition be received, the meaning will be, that the posterity of Japheth, which for a time would be scattered, and removed far from the tents of Shem, would at length be increased, so that it should more nearly approach them, and should dwell together with them, as in a common home. But I rather approve the other version, 'God shall gently bring back, or incline Japheth.'[302] Moreover, whichever interpretation we follow, Noah predicts that there will be a temporary dissension between Shem and Japheth, although he retains both in his family and calls both his lawful heirs; and that afterwards the time will come, in which they shall again coalesce in one body, and have a common home. It is, however, most absolutely certain, that a prophecy is here put forth concerning things unknown to man, of which, as the event, at length, shows God alone was the Author. Two thousand years and some centuries more, elapsed before the Gentiles and the Jews were gathered together in one faith. Then the sons of Shem, of whom the greater part had revolted and cut themselves off from the holy family of God, were collected together, and dwelt under one tabernacle.[303] Also the Gentiles, the progeny of Japheth, who had long been wanderers and fugitives were received into the same tabernacle. For God, by a new adoption, has formed a people out of those who were separated, and has confirmed a fraternal union between alienated parties. This is done by the sweet and gentle voice of God, which he has uttered in the gospel; and this prophecy is still daily receiving its fulfillment, since God invites the scattered sheep to join his flock, and collects, on every side, those who shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. It is truly no common support of our faith, that the calling of the Gentiles is not only decreed in the eternal counsel of God, but is openly declared by the mouth of the Patriarch; lest we should think it to have happened suddenly or by chance, that the inheritance

301 "Dilatet Deus Japheth." — *Vulg.* "πλατύναι ὅ Θεὸς" — *Sept*

302 See marginal reading of English version, "God will persuade Japheth." — See also Schindler's Lexicon, sub voce ⊠⊠⊠, and Ainsworth in loco. It is however objected, and not without reason, that the word here rendered *persuade* is rarely, if ever, used in a good sense, that it generally means to entice, or allure to evil; and, therefore, the most judicious critics seem rather inclined to fall back upon the version given in the text of our translation, than to accept the marginal reading, with which Calvin agrees. See Professor Bush's note on this place. Dathe gives the preference to the Arabic version, which signifies that God will prosper Japheth; but for this there is no sufficient authority. — *Ed*

303 Allusion here seems to be made to the words quoted by James from the prophecy of Amos: "I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up." — Acts 15:16. — *Ed.*

of eternal life was offered generally to all. But the form of the expression, 'Japheth shall dwell in the tabernacles of Shem,'[304] commends to us that mutual society which ought to exist, and to be cherished among the faithful. For whereas God had chosen to himself a Church from the progeny of Shem, he afterwards chose the Gentiles together with them, on this condition, that they should join themselves to that people, who were in possession of the covenant of life.

28. *And Noah lived.* Although Moses briefly states the age of the holy man, and does not record his annals and the memorable events of his life, yet those things which are certain, and which Scripture elsewhere commemorates, ought to recur to our minds. Within one hundred and fifty years, the offspring of his three sons became so numerous, that he had sufficient and even abundant proof of the efficacy of the Divine benediction Increase and multiply. He sees, not one city only, filled with his grandchildren, nor his seed expanded barely to three hundred families; but many nations springing from one of his sons who should inhabit extensive regions. This astonishing increase, since it was a visible representation of the divine favor towards him, would doubtless fill him with unbounded joy. For Abraham was nearly fifty years old when his ancestor Noah died.[305] In the meantime, he was compelled to behold many things, which would afflict his holy breast with incredible grief. To omit other things; he saw in the family of Shem, the sanctuary of God, — into which the sons of Japheth were to be received, — destroyed, or, at least, dilapidated and rent. For whereas the father of Abraham himself, having deserted his proper station, had erected for himself a profane tabernacle; a very small portion indeed remained of those who worshipped God in the harmonious consent of a pure faith. With what tormenting pains this terrible confusion affected him cannot be sufficiently expressed in words. Hence we may know, that his eyes of faith must have been exceedingly penetrating, which did not fail to behold afar of, the grace of God, in preserving the Church, at that time overwhelmed by the wickedness of men.

304 It is not clear whether the original really means that "Japheth," or that "God," "shall dwell in the tents of Shem." If the former, then this is a plain prediction of events which have been in a remarkable manner fulfilled, by the conversion of the Gentiles, and by the diffusion of a vast European population over those regions which were originally occupied by the descendants of Shem. If the original really means the latter, then it has been fulfilled by the manifestation of God's glory among the Israelites, first through the Shechinah which appeared in the tabernacle and temple, and then more especially through the advent of the Messiah, of whom St. John says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," (John 1:14.) — *Ed.*

305 Lightfoot places the death of Noah two years before the birth of Abraham; Dr. A. Clarke two years after it. These chronological differences, however, do not materially affect the general conclusions drawn by Calvin. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 10.

Genesis 10:1-32	
1. Now these *are* the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.	**1.** Porro istae sunt generationes filiorum Noah, Sem, Cham, et Jepheth: quibus nati sunt filii post diluvium.
2. The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.	**2.** Filii Jepheth, Gomer, et Magog, et Madai, et Javan, et Thubal, et Mesech, et Thiras.
3. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.	**3.** Et filii Gomer, Ascenas, et Riphath, et Thogarmah.
4. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.	**4.** Et filii Javan, Elisah, et Tharsis, Chitthim, Dodanim.
5. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.	**5.** Ab istis separatae sunt insulae Gentium secundum terras suas, singulae secundum linguam suam, secundum familias suas, in gentibus suis.
6. And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.	**6.** Et filii Cham, Chus, et Misraim, et Phut, et Chenaan.
7. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.	**7.** Et filii Chus, Seba, et Havilah, et Sabthah, et Rahamah, et Sabtecha. Filii autem Rahamah, Seba, et Dedan.
8. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.	**8.** Et Chus genuit Nimrod: ipse coepit esse potens in terra:
9. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.	**9.** Ipse fuit potens in venatione coram Jehova: idcirco dicitur, Sicut Nimrod poteus venatione coram Jehova.
10. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.	**10.** Et fuit principium regni illius Babel, et Erech, et Achad, et Chalneh, in terra Sinhar.
11. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,	**11.** E terra illa egressus est Assur, et aedificavit Nineven, et Rehoboth civitatem, et Chelah,
12. And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city	**12.** Et Resen inter Nineven et inter Chelah; ipsa est civitas magna.

13. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,	**13.** Misraim autem genuit Ludim, et Hanamim, et Lehabim, et Naphthuhim,
14. And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.	**14.** Et Pathrusim, et Casluhim, unde egressi sunt Pelistim, et Chaphthorim.
15. And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,	**15.** Et Chenaan genuit Sidon primogenitum suum, et Heth,
16. And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,	**16.** Et Jebusi, et Emori, et Girgasi,
17. And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,	**17.** Et Hivvi, et Arci, et Sini,
18. And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.	**18.** Et Arvadi, et Semari, et Hamathi: et postea sparsae sunt familiae Chenaanaei.
19. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.	**19.** Et fuit terminus Chenaanaei a Sidon ingrediente to Gerar usque ad Hazzah, donec ingrediaris Sedom et Hamorah, et Admah, et Seboim, usque ad Lasah.
20. These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.	**20.** Isti filii Cham per familias suas, per linguas suas, in terris suis, in gentibus suis.
21. Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were *children* born.	**21.** Ipsi quoque Sem soboles, etiam ipse *fuit* pater omnium filiorum Eber, frater Jepheth major.
22. The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.	**22.** Filii Sem, Helam, et Assur, et Arphachsad, et Lud, et Aram.
23. And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.	**23.** Et filii Aram, Hus, et Hul, et Gether, et Mas.
24. And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.	**24.** Et Arphachsad genuit Selah, et Selah genuit Eber.
25. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg; for in his days was	**25.** Et ipsi Eber nati sunt duo filii: nomen unius Peleg, quia in diebus ejus divisa est terra: et nomen fratris ejus Joctan.

the earth divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan.	
26. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,	**26.** Et Joctan genuit Almodad, et Seleph, et Hasarmaveth, et Jarah,
27. And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,	**27.** Et Hadoram, et Uzal, et Diclah,
28. And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,	**28.** Et Hobal, et Abimael, et Seba,
29. And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these *were* the sons of Joktan.	**29.** Et Ophir, et Havilah, et Jobab: omnes isti filii Joctan.
30. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east.	**30.** Et fuit habitatio eorum a Mesah, donec ingrediaris Sephar, montem Orientis.
31. These *are* the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.	**31.** Isti filii Sem per familias suas, per linguas suas, in terris suis, in gentibus suis.
32. These *are* the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.	**32.** Istae familiae filiorum Noah per generationes suas in gentibus suis: et ab istis divisae sunt gentes in terra post diluvium.

1. *These are the generations.* If any one pleases more accurately to examine the genealogies related by Moses in this and the following chapter, I do not condemn his industry.[306] And some interpreters have not unsuccessfully applied their diligence and study to this point. Let them enjoy, as far as I am concerned the reward of their labors. It shall, however, suffice

306 For ample information on this interesting subject, which the general plan of Calvin's Commentary scarcely allowed him fully to investigate, the reader cannot do better than consult Dr. Wells' Geography of the Old Testament, chap. 3 From certain expressiones contained in the Mosaic account here given, of the first settlement of nations after the flood, it is clear that the records of the chapter now before us, have reference to the state of things after the confusion of tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel, though the narration of this event occurs in the chapter following; for the settlements are said to be made "according to their languages." But we know that before the attempt to build the tower, the whole earth was of "one language and of one speech;" and therefore the events here placed first, in the order of narration, were subsequent in the order of time. It may be proper here to observe, that according to the division of the earth into three great portions, Europe, Asia, and Africa, speaking generally, Japheth was the progenitor of the Europeans, Shem of the Asiatics, and Ham of the Africans. Yet this line of demarcation is not intended to be accurately drawn. The whole of Lesser Asia, for instance, falls within the province of the sons of Japheth; and Arabia within that of the sons of Ham. — *Ed.*

for me briefly to allude to those things which I deem more useful to be noticed, and for the sake of which I suppose these genealogies to have been written by Moses. First, in these bare names we have still some fragment of the history of the world; and the next chapter will show how many years intervened between the date of the deluge and the time when God made his covenant with Abraham. This second commencement of mankind is especially worthy to be known; and detestable is the ingratitude of those, who, when they had heard, from their fathers and grandfathers of the wonderful restoration of the world in so short a time, yet voluntarily became forgetful of the grace and the salvation of God. Even the memory of the deluge was by the greater part entirely lost. Very few cared by what means or for what end they had been preserved. Many ages afterwards, seeing that the wicked forgetfulness of men had rendered them callous to the judgment and mercy of God, the door was opened to the lies of Satan by whose artifice it came to pass, that heathen poets scattered abroad futile and even noxious fables, by which the truth respecting God's works was adulterated. The goodness of God, therefore, wonderfully triumphed over the wickedness of men, in having granted a prolongation of life to beings so ungrateful, brutal, and barbarous. Now, to captious men, (who yet do not think it absurd to refuse to acknowledge a Creator of the world,) such a sudden increase of mankind seems incredible, and therefore they ridicule it as fabulous. I grant, indeed, that if we choose to estimate what Moses relates by our own reason, it may be regarded as a fable; but they act very perversely who do not attend to the design of the Holy Spirit. For what else, I ask, did the Spirit intend, than that the offspring of three men should be increased, not by natural means, or in a common manner, but by the unwonted exercise of the power of God, for the purpose of replenishing the earth far and wide? They who regard this miracle of God as fabulous on account of its magnitude, should much less believe that Noah and his sons, with their wives, breathed in the waters, and that animals lived nearly a whole year without sun and air. This then, is a gigantic madness,[307] to hold up to ridicule what is said respecting the restoration of the human race: for there the admirable power of God is displayed. How much better would it be, in the history of these events, — which Noah saw with his own eyes, and not without great admiration, — to behold God, to admire his power, to celebrate his goodness, and to acknowledge his hand, not less filled with mysteries in restoring, than in creating the world? We must, however, observe, that in the three catalogues which Moses furnishes,[308] all the heads of the families are not enumerated; but those only, among the grandsons of Noah, are recorded,

307 "Hic ergo Cyclopicus est furor."

308 The first relating to the sons of Japheth the elder brother, from verse 2 to verse 6; the second, to the sons of Ham, from verse 6 to verse 21; the third, to the sons of Shem, from 21 to the end. Shem, though generally named first as a mark of Divine favor, is here placed last, because the subsequent history of Moses principally concerns this race; as Calvin properly argues. — *Ed.*

who were the princes of nations. For as any one excelled among his brethren, in talent, valor, industry, or other endowments, he obtained for himself a name and power, so that others, resting under his shadow, freely conceded to him the priority. Therefore, among the sons of Japheth, of Ham, and of Shem, Moses enumerates those only who had been celebrated, and by whose names the people were called. Moreover, although no certain cause appears why Moses begins at Japheth, and descends in the second place to Ham, yet it is probable that the first place is given to the sons of Japheth, because they, having wandered over many regions, and having even crossed the sea, had receded farther from their country: and since these nations were less known to the Jews, therefore he alludes to them briefly. He assigns the second place to the sons of Ham, the knowledge of whom, on account of their vicinity, was more familiar to the Jews. But since he had determined to weave the history of the Church in one continuous narrative, he postpones the progeny of Shem, from which the church flowed, to the last place. Wherefore, the order in which they are mentioned is not that of dignity; since Moses puts those first, whom he wished slightly to pass over, as obscure. Besides, we must observe, that the children of this world are exalted for a time, so that the whole earth seems as if it were made for their benefit, but their glory being transient vanishes away; while the Church, in an ignoble and despised condition, as if creeping on the ground, is yet divinely preserved, until at length, in his own time, God shall lift up her head. I have already declared that I leave to others the scrupulous investigation of the names here mentioned. The reason of certain of them is manifest from the Scripture, such as Cush, Mizraim, Madai, Canaan, and the like: in respect to some others there are probable conjectures; in others, the obscurity is too great to allow of any certain conclusion; and those figments which interpreters adduce are, in part, very much distorted and forced; in part, vapid, and without any fair pretext. Undoubtedly it seems to be the part of a frivolous curiosity to seek for certain and distinct nations in each of these names.[309] When Moses says, that the islands

309 Doubtless there is truth in these remarks of Calvin. Yet he seems to carry his objection too far. For it is one of the strongest possible confirmations of the truth of the Mosaic history, that (notwithstanding some inevitable obscurity) there should be such a mass of undeniable evidence still existing, that the world was really divided in the manner here described. Far more nations than Calvin supposed may, with the highest degree of probability, be traced upward to the progenitors whose names are here recorded. See Wells' Geography, Mede's Works, and Bishop Patrick's Commentary. A list of the names, with the supposed corresponding nations, is also given in the Commentary of Professor Bush on this chapter. The following extract from Hengstenberg's 'Egypt, and the Books of Moses,' also bears upon this point: — "It has often been asserted that the genealogical table in Genesis 10. cannot be from Moses: since so extended a knowledge of nations lies far beyond the geographical horizon of the Mosaic age. This hypothesis must now be considered as exploded. The new discoveries and investigations in Egypt have shown that they maintained, even from the most ancient times, a vigorous commerce with other nations, and sometimes with very distant nations. . . . But not merely, in general, do the investigations in Egyptian antiquities favor the belief that Moses was the author of the account in this tenth chapter of Genesis.

of the Gentiles were divided by the sons of Japheth, we understand that the regions beyond the sea were parted among them. For Greece and Italy, and other continental lands, — as well as Rhodes and Cyprus, — are called islands by the Hebrews, because the sea interposed. Whence we infer that we are sprung from those nations.

8. *And Cush begat Nimrod*. It is certain that Cush was the prince of the Ethiopians. Moses relates the singular history of his son Nimrod, because he began to be eminent in an unusual degree. Moreover, I thus interpret the passage, that the condition of men was at that time moderate; so that if some excelled others, they yet did not on that account domineer, nor assume to themselves royal power; but being content with a degree of dignity, governed others by civil laws and had more of authority than power. For Justin, from Trogus Pompeius, declares this to have been the most ancient condition of the world. Now Moses says, that Nimrod, as if forgetting that he was a man, took possession of a higher post of honor. Noah was at that time yet living, and was certainly great and venerable in the eyes of all. There were also other excellent men; but such was their moderation, that they cultivated equality with their inferiors, who yielded them a spontaneous rather than a forced reverence. The ambition of Nimrod disturbed and broke through the boundaries of this reverence. Moreover, since it sufficiently appears that, in this sentence of Moses, the tyrant is branded with an eternal mark of infamy, we may hence conclude, how highly pleasing to God is a mild administration of affairs among men. And truly, whosoever remembers that he is a man, will gladly cultivate the society of others. With respect to the meaning of the terms, ⊠⊠⊠ (*tsaid*,) properly signifies *hunting*, as the Hebrew grammarians state; yet it is often taken for *food*[310] But whether Moses says that he was robust in hunting, or in violently seizing upon prey; he metaphorically intimates that he was a furious man, and approximated to beasts rather than to men. The expression, "Before the Lord,"[311] seems to me to declare that Nimrod attempted to raise himself above the order of men; just as proud men become transported by a vain self-confidence, that they may look down as from the clouds upon others.

Wherefore it is said[312] Since the verb is in the future tense, it may be thus explained, Nimrod was so mighty and imperious that it would be proper to say of any powerful tyrant, that he is another Nimrod. Yet the version of Jerome is satisfactory, that thence it became

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On the Egyptian monuments, those especially which represent the conquests of the ancient Pharaohs over foreign nations, . . . not a few names have been found which correspond with those contained in the chapter before us." The learned author then proceeds to adduce instances in proof of his position, which the reader may consult with advantage. — See Hengstenberg's Egypt, and the Books of Moses, chap. v2 p. 195 — *Ed.*

310 "⊠⊠⊠ Metaphorice cibus venatione partus, aut quovis modo paratus, praeter panem." — *Schindler*. — *Ed*

311 Some translate it, "Against the Lord;" yet, perhaps, the words will hardly bear this rendering. — *Ed.*

312 "Qua propter dicetur," etc., "Wherefore it shall be said" In Calvin's text it is, "Idcirco dicitur," "Wherefore it is said."

a proverb concerning the powerful and the violent, that they were like Nimrod.[313] Nor do I doubt that God intended the first author of tyranny to be transmitted to odium by every tongue.

10. *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel.* Moses here designates the seat of Nimrod's empire. He also declares that four cities were subject to him; it is however uncertain whether he was the founder of them, or had thence expelled their rightful lords. And although mention is elsewhere made of Calneh,[314] yet Babylon was the most celebrated of all. I do not however think that it was of such wide extent, or of such magnificent structure, as the profane historians relate. But since the region was among the first and most fruitful, it is possible that the convenience of the situation would afterwards invite others to enlarge the city. Wherefore Aristotle, in his *Politics*, taking it out of the rank of cities, compares it to a province. Hence it has arisen, that many declare it to have been the work of Semiramis, by whom others say that it was not built but only adorned and joined together by bridges. The land of Shinar is added as a note of discrimination, because there was also another Babylon in Egypt, which is now called Cairo.[315] But it is asked, how was Nimrod the tyrant of Babylon, when Moses in the following chapter, Genesis 11:1 subjoins, that a tower was begun there, which obtained this name from the confusion of tongues? Some suppose that a *hysteron proteron*[316] is here employed, and that what Moses is afterwards about to relate concerning the building of the tower was prior in the order of time. Moreover, they add, that because the building of the tower was disastrously obstructed, their design was changed to that of building a city. But I rather think there is a *prolepsis* ; and that Moses called the city by the same name, which afterwards was imposed by a more recent event. The reason of the conjecture is that probably, at this time, the inhabitants of that place, who had engaged in so vast a work, were numerous. It might also happen, that Nimrod, solicitous about his own fame and power, inflamed their insane desire by this pretext, that some famous monument should be erected in which their everlasting memory might remain. Still, since it is the custom of the Hebrews to prosecute more diffusely, afterwards, what they had touched upon briefly, I do not entirely reject the former opinion.[317]

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313 "Ob hoc exivit proverbium, Quasi Nemrod robustus venator eoram Domino." — *Vulgate*

314 Amos 6:2.

315 "Quam hodie Cairum vocant." — "Babylon was a habitation formed by the Persians, which may with probability be referred to the time of the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses. A quarter retaining the name of Baboul or Babilon, in the city commonly called Old Cairo, which overlooks the Nile at some distance above the Delta, shows its true position." — D'Anville's Ancient Geography, vol. 2 p. 152. — *Ed*

316 ὕστερον πρότερον, is when that which really comes last in the order of time, is for some reason put first in the order of narration. — *Ed*

317 A reason why the former of these opinions is to be preferred will be found in a note at page 313, where it is stated that the division of tongues had already taken place, before these nations were settled. — *Ed.*

11. *Out of that land went forth Asshur*. It is credible that Asshur was one of the posterity of Shem. And the opinion has been commonly received, that he is here mentioned, because, when he was dwelling, in the neighborhood of Nimrod, he was violently expelled thence. In this manner, Moses would mark the barbarous ferocity of Nimrod. And truly these are the accustomed fruits of a greatness which does not keep within bounds; whence has arisen the old proverb, 'Great kingdoms are great robberies.' It is indeed necessary that some should preside over others; but where ambition, and the desire of rising higher than is right, are rampant, they not only draw with them the greatest and most numerous injuries, but also verge closely upon the dissolution of human society. Yet I rather adopt the opinion of those who say that Asshur is not, in this place, the name of a man, but of a country which derived its appellation from him; and thus the sense will be, that Nimrod, not content with his large and opulent kingdom, gave the reins to his cupidity, and pushed the boundaries of his empire even into Assyria, where he also built new cities.[318] The passage in Isaiah (Isaiah 23:13) is alone opposed to this opinion, where he says, 'Behold the land of the Chaldeans, the people was not, Asshur founded it when they inhabited the deserts, and he reduced it to ruin.'[319] For the prophet seems to say, that cities were built by the Assyrians in Chaldea, whereas previously, its inhabitants were wandering and scattered as in a desert. But it may be, that the prophet speaks of other changes of these kingdoms, which occurred afterwards. For, at the time in which the Assyrians maintained the sovereignty, seeing that they flourished in unbounded wealth, it is credible that Chaldea, which they had subjected to themselves was so adorned and increased by a long peace, that it might seem to have been founded by them. And we know, that when the Chaldeans, in their turn, seized on the empire, Babylon was exalted on the ruins of Nineveh.

21. *Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber*. Moses, being about to speak of the sons of Shem, makes a brief introduction, which he had not done in reference to the others. Nor was it without reason; for since this was the race chosen by God, he wished to sever it from other nations by some special mark. This also is the reason why he expressly styles him the 'father of the sons of Eber,' and the elder brother of Japheth.[320] For the bene-

318 See the marginal reading of the English version — 'He went out into Assyria.'

319 Bishop Lowth's translation of the passage is as follows: — ***"Behold the land of the Chaldeans;***
This people was of no account;
(The Assyrian founded it for the inhabitants of the desert;
They raised the watch-towers, they set up the palaces thereof;)
This people hath reduced her to ruin." See also his note on this passage, which accords with Calvin's supposition, that the prophet referred to some subsequent period of history. — *Ed.*

320 In the English translation it is, 'The brother of Japheth the elder.' The balance of proof seems to lie in favor of the English translation, and gives the seniority to Japheth. Shem is supposed to be placed first, not on account of his age, but because his was the chosen seed. — *Ed.*

diction of Shem does not descend to all his grandchildren indiscriminately, but remains in one family. And although the grandchildren themselves of Eber declined from the true worship of God, so that the Lord might justly have disinherited them; yet the benediction was not extinguished, but only buried for a season, until Abraham was called, in honor of whom this singular dignity is ascribed to the race and name of Eber. For the same cause, mention is made of Japheth, in order that the promise may be confirmed, 'God shall speak gently unto Japheth, that he may dwell in the tents of Shem.' Shem is not here called the brother of Ham, inasmuch as the latter was cut off from the fraternal order, and was debarred his own right. Fraternity remained only between them and Japheth; because, although they were separated, God had engaged that he would cause them to return from this dissension into union. As it respects the name *Eber*, they who deny it to be a proper name, but deduce it from the word which signifies to *pass over*, are more than sufficiently refuted by this passage alone.

CHAPTER 11.

Genesis 11:1-32	
1. And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.	**1.** Erat autem universa terra labii unius, et verborum eorundem.
2. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.	**2.** Et fuit, quum proficiscerentur ipsi ab Oriente, invenerunt planitiem in terra Sinhar, et habitaverunt ibi.
3. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter.	**3.** Et dixerunt quisqui ad proximum suum, Agite, laterificemus lateres, et coquamus ad coctionem: et fuit eis later pro lapide, et bitumen fuit eis pro caemento.
4. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.	**4.** Et dixerunt, Agite, aedificemus nobis urbem et turrim, cujus caput *pertingat usque* ad coelum, et faciamus nobis nomen, ne forte dispergamur in superficiem universae terrae.
5. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.	**5.** Et descendit Jehova ut videret urbem et turrim, quam aedificabant filii hominum.
6. And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.	**6.** Et dixit Jehova, En, populus unus, et labium unum *est* omnibus ipsis: et hoc *est* incipere eorum ut faciant, et nunc non prohibebitur ab eis quod cogitaverunt ut facerent.
7. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.	**7.** Agite, descendamus, et confundamus ibi labium eorum, ut non audiant unusquisque labium proximi sui.
8. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.	**8.** Et dispersit Jehova eos inde per superficiem omnis terrae, et cessaverunt aedificare civitatem.
9. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.	**9.** Propterea vocavit nomen ejus Babel: quia ibi confudit Jehova labium universae terrae, et inde dispersit eos Jehova in superficiem universae terrae.

10. These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:	**10.** Hae sunt generationes Sem. Sem filius centum annorum genuit Arphachsad duobus annis post diluvium.
11. And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.	**11.** Et vixit Sem, post quam genuit Arphachsad, quingentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
12. And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:	**12.** Et Arphachsad vixit quinque et triginta annos, et genuit Selah.
13. And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.	**13.** Et vixit Arphachsad, postquam genuit Selah, tres annos et quadringentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
14. And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:	**14.** Et Selah vixit triginta annos, et genuit Eber.
15. And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.	**15.** Et vixit Selah, postquam genuit Eber, tres annos et quadringentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
16. And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:	**16.** Et vixit Eber quatuor et triginta annos, et genuit Peleg.
17. And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.	**17.** Et vixit Eber, postquam genuit Peleg, triginta annos et quadringentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
18. And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:	**18.** Et vixit Peleg triginta annos, et genuit Rehu.
19. And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.	**19.** Et vixit Peleg, postquam genuit Rehu, novem annos et ducentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
20. And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:	**20.** Et vixit Rehu duos et triginta annos, et genuit Serug.
21. And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.	**21.** Et vixit Rehu, postquam genuit Serug, septem annos et ducentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
22. And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:	**22.** Et vixit Serug triginta annos, et genuit Nachor.

23. And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.	**23.** Et vixit Serug, postquam genuit Nachor, ducentos annos: et genuit filios et filias.
24. And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:	**24.** Et vixit Nachor novem et viginti annos, et genuit Thare.
25. And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.	**25.** Et vixit Nachor, postquam genuit Thare, novemdecim annos et centum annos: et genuit filios et filias.
26. And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.	**26.** Et vixit Thare septuaginta annos, et genuit Abram, Nachor, et Haran.
27. Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.	**27.** Et istae sunt generationes Thare. Thare genuit Abram, Nachor, et Haran: et Haran genuit Lot.
28. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.	**28.** Et mortuus est Haran coram Thare patre suo in terra nativitatis suae, in Ur Chaldeae.
29. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.	**29.** Et acceperunt Abram et Nachor uxores: nomen uxoris Abram, Sarai: et nomen uxoris Nachor, Milchah, filia Haran patris Milchah, et patris Ischah.
30. But Sarai was barren; she *had* no child.	**30.** At fuit autem Sarai sterilis: nec erat ei filius.
31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.	**31.** Tulit autem Thare Abram filium suum, et Lot filium Haran, filium filii sui, et Sarai nurum suam, uxorem Abram filii sui: et egressi sunt sum eis de Ur Chaldeae, ut pergerent in terram Chenaan: et venerunt usque ad Charan, et habitaverunt ibi.
32. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.	**32.** Et fuerunt dies Thare quinque et ducenti anni: et mortuus est Thare in Charan.

1. *And the whole earth was of one language.* Whereas mention had before been made of Babylon in a single word, Moses now more largely explains whence it derived its name.

For this is a truly memorable history, in which we may perceive the greatness of men's obstinacy against God, and the little profit they receive from his judgments. And although at first sight the atrocity of the evil does not appear; yet the punishment which follows it, testifies how highly God was displeased with that which these men attempted. They who conjecture that the tower was built with the intent that is should prove a refuge and protections if, at any time, God should determine to overwhelm the earth with a deluge, have no other guide, that I can see, but the dream of their own brain. For the words of Moses signify no such thing: nothing, indeed, is here noticed, except their mad ambitions and proud contempt of God. 'Let us build a tower (they say) whose top may reach to heaven, and let us get ourselves a name.' We see the design and the aim of the undertaking. For whatsoever might happen, they wish to have an immortal name on earth; and thus they build, as if in opposition to the will of God. And doubtless ambition not only does injury to men, but exalts itself even against God. To erect a citadel was not in itself so great a crime; but to raise an eternal monument to themselves, which might endure throughout all ages, was a proof of headstrong pride, joined with contempt of God. And hence originated the fable of the giants who, as the poets have feigned, heaped mountains upon mountains, in order to drag down Jove from his celestial throne. This allegory is not very remote from the impious counsel to which Moses alludes; for as soon as mortals, forgetful of themselves; are inflated above measure, it is certain that like the giants, they wage war with God. This they do not openly profess, yet it cannot be otherwise than that every one who transgresses his prescribed bounds, makes a direct attack upon God.

With respect to the time in which this event happened, a fragment of Berosus is extant, (if, indeed, Berosus is to be accounted the author of such trifles,) where, among other things, a hundred and thirty years are reckoned from the deluge to the time when they began to build the tower. This opinion, though deficient in competent authority, has been preferred, by some, to that which commonly obtained among the Jews, and which places about three hundred and forty years between the deluge and the building of the tower. Nor is there anything more plausible in what others relate; namely, that these builders undertook the work, because men were even then dispersed far and wide, and many colonies were already formed; whence they apprehended that as their offspring was daily increasing, they must, in a short time, migrate to a still greater distance. But to this argument we may oppose the fact, that the peculiar blessing of God was to be traced in this multiplication of mankind. Moreover, Moses seems to set aside all controversy. For after he has mentioned Arphaxad as the third of the sons of Shem, he then names Peleg, his great-grandson, in whose days the languages were divided. But from a computation of the years which he sets down, it plainly appears that one century only intervened. It is, however, to be noted, that the languages are not said to have been divided immediately after the birth of Peleg, and that no

definite time was ever specified.[321] It must, indeed, have added greatly to the weight of Noah's sufferings, when he heard of this wicked counsel, which had been taken by his posterity. And it is not to be doubted that he was wounded with the deepest grief, when he beheld them, with devoted minds, rushing to their own destruction. But the Lord thus exercised the holy man, even in extreme old age, to teach us not to be discouraged by a continual succession of conflicts. If any one should prefer the opinion commonly received among the Jews; the division of the earth must be referred to the first transmigrations, when men began to be distributed in various regions: but what has been already recorded in the preceding chapter, respecting the monarchy of Nimrod, is repugnant to this interpretation.[322] Still a middle opinion may be entertained; namely, that the confusion of tongues may perhaps have happened in the extreme old age of Peleg. Now he lived nearly two hundred and forty years; nor will it be absurd to suppose that the empire founded by Nimrod endured two or three centuries. I certainly, — as in a doubtful case, — freely admit that a longer space of time might intervene between the deluge and the design of building the tower. Moreover, when Moses says, 'the earth was of one lip,' he commends the peculiar kindness of God, in having willed that the sacred bond of society among men far separated from each other should be retained, by their possessing a common language among themselves. And truly the diversity of tongues is to be regarded as a prodigy. For since language is the impress of the mind,[323] how does it come to pass, that men, who are partakers of the same reason, and who are born for social life, do not communicate with each other in the same language? This defect, therefore, seeing that it is repugnant to nature, Moses declares to be adventitious; and pronounces the division of tongues to be a punishment, divinely inflicted upon men, because they impiously conspired against God. Community of language ought to have

321 Yet as the name ⊠⊠⊠, (*Peleg*,) signifies division, the probability is that the division took place about the date of his birth, and that the name was given him by his parents in consequence of that event. Now it appears that Peleg was born in the hundred and first year after the flood; see verses 11 to 16. This, therefore, seems to set aside Calvin's calculations, doubtingly expressed, respecting the more recent date of the confusion of tongues. — *Ed*

322 There is no repugnance, if it be admitted that the monarchy of Nimrod is mentioned by anticipation in the former chapter, in order that the course of the narrative might not be interrupted by a detail of the particulars of the confusion of Babel. And then, there is no need for the middle opinion which the Author proceeds to state, and which is encumbered with many difficulties. We may easily conceive that the Sacred Writer goes back, in the present chapter, to give a detailed account of events, which had been only slightly referred to, or altogether omitted in the preceding portion of the narrative. — *Ed*.

323 "Nam quum mentis character sit lingua." The word character means the impression made by a seal upon wax, and the allusion here is a very striking one, though the force of it is not adequately conveyed by the term impress. The term in Greek is applied to Christ, and is there translated "express image." See Hebrews 1:3. — *Ed*

promoted among them consent in religion; but this multitude of whom Moses speaks, after they had alienated themselves from the pure worship of God, and the sacred assembly of the faithful, coalesce to excite war against God. Therefore by the just vengeance of God their tongues were divided.

2. *They found a plain in the land of Shinar*. It may be conjectured from these words, that Moses speaks of Nimrod and of the people whom he had collected around him. If, however, we grant that Nimrod was the chief leader in the construction of so great a pile, for the purpose of erecting a formidable monument of his tyranny: yet Moses expressly relates, that the work was undertaken not by the counsel or the will of one man only, but that all conspired together, so that the blame cannot be cast exclusively upon one, nor even upon a few.

3. *And they said one to another*[324] That is, they mutually exhorted each other; and not only did every man earnestly put his own hand to the work, but impelled others also to the daring attempt.

Let us make brick. Moses intimates that they had not been induced to commence this work, on account of the ease with which it could be accomplished nor on account of any other advantages which presented themselves; he rather shows that they had contended with great and arduous difficulties; by which means their guilt became the more aggravated. For how is it that they harass and wear themselves out in vain on a difficult and labourious enterprise, unless that, like madmen, they rush impetuously against God? Difficulty often deters us from necessary works; but these men, when they had neither stones nor mortar, yet do not scruple to attempt the raising of an edifice which may transcend the clouds. We are taught therefore, by this example, to what length the lust of men will hurry them, when they indulge their ambition. Even a profane poet is not silent on this subject, —

"Man, rashly daring, full of pride,
Most covets what is most denied."[325]
And a little afterwards, —
"Counts nothing arduous, and tries
Insanely to possess the skies."[326]

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324 "Dixit vir ad proximum suum," as it is in the margin of the English version. "A man said to his neighbor."

325 ***"Audax omnia perpeti***
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas."
Hor. Lib. 1 Ode 3.

326 ***"Nil mortalibus arduum est***
Coelum ipsum petimus stultitia."
Ibid.

4. *Whose top may reach unto heaven*. This is an hyperbolical form of speech, in which they boastingly extol the loftiness of the structure they are attempting to raise. And to the same point belongs what they immediately subjoin, Let us make us a name; for they intimate, that the work would be such as should not only be looked upon by the beholders as a kind of miracle, but should be celebrated everywhere to the utmost limits of the world. This is the perpetual infatuation of the world; to neglect heaven, and to seek immortality on earth, where every thing is fading and transient. Therefore, their cares and pursuits tend to no other end than that of acquiring for themselves a name on earth. David, in the forty ninth psalm, deservedly holds up to ridicule this blind cupidity; and the more, because experience (which is the teacher of the foolish) does not restore posterity to a sound mind, though instructed by the example of their ancestors; but the infatuation creeps on through all succeeding ages. The saying of Juvenal is known, — 'Death alone acknowledges how insignificant are the bodies of men.'[327] Yet even death does not correct our pride, nor constrain us seriously to confess our miserable condition: for often more pride is displayed in funerals than in nuptial pomp. By such an example, however, we are admonished how fitting it is that we should live and die humbly. And it is not the least important part of true prudence, to have death before our eyes in the midst of life, for the purpose of accustoming ourselves to moderation. For he who vehemently desires to be great in the world, is first contumelious towards men, and at length, his profane presumption breaks forth against God himself; so that after the example of the giants, he fights against heaven.

Lest we be scattered abroad. Some interpreters translate the passage thus, 'Before we are scattered:' but the peculiarity of the language will not bear this explanation: for the men are devising means to meet a danger which they believe to be imminent; as if they would say, 'It cannot be, that when our number increases, this region should always hold all men; and therefore an edifice must be erected by which their name shall be preserved in perpetuity, although they should themselves be dispersed in different regions.' It is however asked, whence they derived the notion of their future dispersion? Some conjecture that they were warned of it by Noah; who, perceiving that the world had relapsed into its former crimes and corruptions, foresaw, at the same time, by the prophetic spirit, some terrible dispersion; and they think that the Babylonians, seeing they could not directly resist God, endeavored, by indirect methods, to avert the threatened judgment. Others suppose, that these men, by a secret inspiration of the Spirit, uttered prophecies concerning their own punishment, which they did not themselves understand. But these expositions are constrained; nor is there any reason which requires us to apply what they here say, to the curse which was in-

327 ***"Mors sola fatetur***
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula."
Ju5

flicted upon them. They knew that the earth was formed to be inhabited and would everywhere supply its abundance for the sustenance of men; and the rapid multiplication of mankind proved to them that it was not possible for them long to remain shut up within their present narrow limits; wherefore, to whatever other places it would be necessary for them to migrate, they design this tower to remain as a witness of their origin.

5. *And the Lord came down*. The remaining part of the history now follows, in which Moses teaches us with what ease the Lord could overturn their insane attempts, and scatter abroad all their preparations. There is no doubt that they strenuously set about what they had presumptuously devised. But Moses first intimates that God, for a little while, seemed to take no notice of them,[328] in order that suddenly breaking off their work at its commencement, by the confusion of their tongues, he might give the more decisive evidence of his judgment. For he frequently bears with the wicked, to such an extent, that he not only suffers them to contrive many nefarious things, as if he were unconcerned, or were taking repose; but even further, their impious and perverse designs with animating success, in order that he may at length cast them down to a lower depth. The *descent* of God, which Moses here records, is spoken of in reference to men rather than to God; who, as we know, does not move from place to place. But he intimates that God gradually and as with a tardy step, appeared in the character of an Avenger. The Lord therefore descended that he might see; that is, he evidently showed that he was not ignorant of the attempt which the Babylonians were making.

6. *Behold, the people is one*. Some thus expound the words, that God complains of a wickedness in men so refractory, that he excites himself by righteous grief to execute vengeance; not that he is swayed by any passions,[329] but to teach us that he is not negligent of human affairs, and that, as he watches for the salvation of the faithful, so he is intent on observing the wickedness of the ungodly; as it is said in Psalm 34:16,

"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

Others think there is a comparison between the less and the greater, no if it had been said, 'They are hitherto few and only use one language; what will they not dare, if, on account of their multitude, they should become separated into various nations?' But there rather seems to me to be a suppressed irony, as if God would propose to himself a difficult work in subduing their audacity: so that the sense may be, 'This people is compacted together in a firm conspiracy, they communicate with each other in the same language, by what method therefore can they be broken?' Nevertheless, he ironically smiles at their foolish and hasty

328 "Sed prius admonet Moses, dissimulasse aliquantisper Deum."

329 "Non quod in ipsum cadant ulli affectua."

confidence; because, while men are calculating upon their own strength, there is nothing which they do not arrogate to themselves.

This they begin to do. In saying that they *begin*, he intimates that they make a diligent attempts accompanied with violent fervor, in carrying on the work. Thus in the way of concession, God declares, that supposing matters to be so arranged, there would be no interruption of the building.

7. *Go to, let us go down*. We have said that Moses has represented the case to us by the figure *hypotyposis*,[330] that the judgments of God may be the more clearly illustrated. For which reason, he now introduces God as the speaker, who declares that the work which they supposed could not be retarded, shall, without any difficulty, be destroyed. The meaning of the words is of this kind, 'I will not use many instruments, I will only blow upon them, and they, through the confusion of tongues, shall be contemptibly scattered. And as they, having collected a numerous band, were contriving how they might reach the clouds; so on the other hand, God summons his troops, by whose interposition he may ward off their fury. It is, however, asked, what troops he intends? The Jews think that he addresses himself to the angels. But since no mention is made of the angels, and God places those to whom he speaks in the same rank with himself, this exposition is harsh, and deservedly rejected. This passage rather answers to the former, which occurs in the account of man's creation, when the Lord said, "Let us make man after our image." For God aptly and wisely opposes his own eternal wisdom and power to this great multitude; as if he had said, that he had no need of foreign auxiliaries, but possessed within himself what would suffice for their destruction. Wherefore, this passage is not improperly adduced in proof that Three Persons subsist in One Essence of Deity. Moreover, this example of Divine vengeance belongs to all ages: for men are always inflamed with the desire of daring to attempt what is unlawful. And this history shows that God will ever be adverse to such counsels and designs; so that we here behold, depicted before our eyes what Solomon says:

'There is no counsel, nor prudence, nor strength against the Lord,' (Proverbs 21:30.)

Unless the blessing of God be present, from which alone we may expect a prosperous issue, all that we attempt will necessarily perish. Since, then, God declares that he is at perpetual war with the unmeasured audacity of men; anything we undertake without his approval will end miserably, even though all creatures above and beneath should earnestly offer us their assistance. Now, although the world bears this curse to the present day; yet, in the midst of punishment, and of the most dreadful proofs of Divine anger against the pride of men, the admirable goodness of God is rendered conspicuous, because the nations

330 Hypotyposis, in rhetoric, a figure whereby a thing is described, or painted in such vivid colouring, that it seems to stand before the eyes, and to be visible or tangible, rather than the subject of writing, or of discourse. — *Ed.*

hold mutual communication among themselves, though in different languages; but especially because He has proclaimed one gospel, in all languages, through the whole world, and has endued the Apostles with the gift of tongues. Whence it has come to pass, that they who before were miserably divided, have coalesced in the unity of the faith. In this sense Isaiah says, that the language of Canaan should be common to all under the reign of Christ, (Isaiah 19:18;) because, although their language may differ in sound, they all speak the same thing, while they cry, Abba, Father.

8. *So the Lord scattered them abroad.* Men had already been spread abroad; and this ought not to be regarded as a punishment, seeing it rather flowed from the benediction and grace of God. But those whom the Lord had before distributed with honor in various abodes, he now ignominiously scatters, driving them hither and thither like the members of a lacerated body. This, therefore, was not a simple dispersion for the replenishing of the earth, that it might every where have cultivators and inhabitants; but a violent rout, because the principal bond of conjunction between them was, cut asunder.

9. *Therefore is the name of it called Babel.* Behold what they gained by their foolish ambition to acquire a name! They hoped that an everlasting memorial of their origin would be engraven on the tower; God not only frustrates their vain expectation, but brands them with eternal disgrace, to render them execrable to all posterity, on account of the great mischief indicted on the human race, through their fault. They gain, indeed, a name, but not each as they would have chosen: thus does God opprobriously cast down the pride of those who usurp to themselves honors to which they have no title. Here also is refuted the error of those who deduce the origin of Babylon from Jupiter Belus.[331]

10. *These are the generations of Shem.* Concerning the progeny of Shem, Moses had said something in the former chapter Genesis 10:1: but now he combines with the names of the men, the term of their several lives, that we might not be ignorant of the age of the world. For unless this brief description had been preserved, men at this day would not have known how much time intervened between the deluge and the day in which God made his covenant with Abraham. Moreover, it is to be observed, that God reckons the years of the world from the progeny of Shem, as a mark of honor: just as historians date their annals by the names of kings or consuls. Nevertheless, he has granted this not so much on account of the dignity and merits of the family of Shem, as on account of his own gratuitous adoption; for (as we shall immediately see) a great part of the posterity of Shem apostatized from the true worship of God. For which reason, they deserved not only that God should expunge them from his calendar, but should entirely take them out of the world. But he too highly esteems that

331 ⊠⊠⊠, (*Babel*,) is derived from ⊠⊠⊠, (*balel*,) which signifies to confound. See Schindler's Lexicon, sub voce ⊠⊠⊠. The name Babel signifies, as Bishop Patrick says, "confusion; so frivolous is their conceit, who make it to have been called by this name, from Babylon, the son of Belus." — *Ed*

election of his, by which he separated this family from all people, to suffer it to perish on account of the sins of men. And therefore from the many sons of Shem he chooses Arphaxad alone; and from the sons of Arphaxad, Selah alone; and from him also, Eber alone; till he comes to Abram; the calling of whom ought to be accounted the renovation of the Church. As it concerns the rest, it is probable that before the century was completed, they fell into impious superstitions. For when God brings it as a charge against the Jews, that their fathers Terah and Nahor served strange gods, (Joshua 24:2,) we must still remember, that the house of Shem, in which they were born, was the peculiar sanctuary of God, where pure religion ought most to have flourished; what then do we suppose, must have happened to others who might seem, from the very first, to have been emancipated from this service? Hence truly appears, not only the prodigious wickedness and depravity, but also the inflexible hardness of the human mind. Noah and his sons, who had been eye-witnesses of the deluge, were yet living: the narration of that history ought to have inspired men with not less terror than the visible appearance of God himself: from infancy they had been imbued with those elements of religious instruction, which relate to the manner in which God was to be worshipped, the reverence with which his word was to be obeyed, and the severe vengeance which remains for those who should violate the order prescribed by him: yet they could not be restrained from being so corrupted by their vanity, that they entirely apostatized. In the meantime, there is no doubt that holy Noah, according to his extraordinary zeal and heroic fortitude, would contend in every way for the maintenance of God's glory: and that he sharply and severely inveighed, yea, fulminated against the perfidious apostasy of his descendants; and whereas all ought to have trembled at his very look, they are yet moved by no chidings, however loud, from proceeding in the course into which their own fury has hurried them. From this mirror, rather than from the senseless flatteries of sophists, let us learn how fruitful is the corruption of our nature. But if Noah and Shem, and other such eminent teachers could not, by contending most courageously, prevent the prevalence of impiety in the world; let us not wonder, if at this day also, the unbridled lust of the world rushes to impious and perverse modes of worship, against all the obstacles interposed by sound doctrine, admonition, and threats. Here, however, we must observe, in these holy men, how firm was the strength of their faith, how indefatigable their patience, how persevering their cultivation of piety; since they never gave way, on account of the many occasions of offense with which they had to contend. Luther very properly compares the incredible torments, by which they were necessarily afflicted, to many martyrdoms. For such an alienation of their descendants from God did not less affect their minds than if they had seen their own bowels not only lacerated and torn, but cast into the mire of Satan, and into hell itself. But while the world was thus filled with ungodly men, God wonderfully retained a few under obedience to his word, that he might preserve the Church from destruction. And although we have said that the father and grandfather of Abraham were apostates, and that,

probably, the defection did not first begin with them; yet, because the Church by the election of God, was included in that race, and because God had some who worshipped him in purity, and who survived even to the time of Abraham. Moses deduces a continuous line of descent, and thus enroll them in the catalogue of saints. Whence we infer, (as I have a little before observed,) in what high estimation God holds the Church, which, though so small in numbers is yet preferred to the whole world.

Shem was an hundred years old. Since Moses has placed Arphaxad the third in order among the sons of Shem, it is asked how this agrees with his having been born in the second year after the deluge? The answer is easy. It cannot be exactly ascertained, from the catalogues which Moses recites, at what time each was born; because sometimes the priority of place is assigned to one, who yet was posterior in the order of birth. Others answer, that there is nothing absurd in supposing Moses to declare that, after the completion of two years, a third son was born. But the solution I have given is more genuine.

27. *Terah begat Abram*. Here also Abram is placed first among his brethren, not (as I suppose) because he was the firstborn; but because Moses, intent on the scope of his history, was not very careful in the arrangement of the sons of Terah. It is also possible that he had other sons. For, the reason why Moses speaks especially of them is obvious; namely, on account of Lot, and of the wives of Isaac and Jacob. I will now briefly state why I think Abram was not the first born. Moses shortly afterwards says, that Haran died in his own country, before his father left Chaldea, and went to Charran.[332] But Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Charran to dwell in the land of Canaan.[333] And this number of seventy-five years is expressly given after the death of Terah. Now, if we suppose that Abram was born in his father's seventieth year, we must also allow that we have lost sixty years of Terah's age; which is most absurd.[334] The conjecture of Luther, that God buried that time

332 There is evidently a mistake in the original, as it appears in the Amsterdam edition of 1671, and in the Berlin edition, by Hengstenberg, of 1838. Terah's name is here put instead of Haran's, thus, 'Thare paulo post dicet Moses in patria mortuum esse,' etc. The Old English translation has kept the name, and made nonsense of the passage; but Calvin's French version is right: 'Moyse dira un peu apres, que Haran mourut en sen pays, devant que Thare son pere s'en allast demeurer en Charran.' — See verse 28. — Ed.

333 See chapter 12 verse 4.

334 Supposing Terah to be 70 years old at the birth of Abram, and Abram 75 at the death of Terah; it would make Terah 145 years old when he died instead of 205, which is a loss of 60 years. The inference, therefore, is that Abram was not the first-born of the sons mentioned. See also Patrick's Commentary, who says, that Terah "was seventy years old before he had any children; and then had three sons one after another, who are not set down in the order wherein they were born. For Abraham's being first named doth not prove him to have been the eldest son of Terah, no more than Shem's being first named among Noah's three sons proves him to have been the first-born. For there are good reasons to prove that Abraham was born sixty years after Haran, who was the eldest son; having two daughters married to his two brothers, Nahor and Abraham; who seems to have

in oblivion, in order to hide from us the end of the world, in the first place is frivolous, and in the next, may be refuted by solid and convincing arguments. Others violently wrest the words to apply them to a former egress; and think that he lived together with his father at Charran for sixty years; which is most improbable. For to what end should they have protracted their stay so long in the midst of their journey? But there is no need of labourious discussion. Moses is silent respecting the age of Abraham when he left his own country; but says, that in the seventy-fifth year of his age, he came into the land of Canaan, when his father, having reached the two hundredth and fifth year of his life, had died. Who will not hence infer that he was born when his father had attained his one hundredth and thirtieth year?[335] But he is named first among those sons whom Terah is said to have begotten, when he himself was seventy years old. I grant it; but this order of recital does nothing towards proving the order of birth, as we have already said. Nor, indeed, does Moses declare in what year of his life Terah begat sons; but only that he had passed the above age before he begat the three sons here mentioned. Therefore, the age of Abraham is to be ascertained by another mode of computation, namely, from the fact that Moses assigns to him the age of seventy-five when his father died, whose life had reached to two hundred and five years. A firm and valid argument is also deduced from the age of Sarai. It appears that she was not more than ten years younger than Abraham. If she was the daughter of his younger brother, she would necessarily have equalled her own father in age.[336] They who raise an objection, to the effect that she was the daughter-in-law, or only the adopted daughter of Nahor, produce nothing beyond a sheer cavil.

28. *And Haran died.* Haran is said to have died before the face of his father; because he left his father the survivor. It is also said that he died in his country, that is, in Ur. The Jews turn the proper name into an appellative, and say that he died in the *fire*. For, as they are bold in forging fables, they pretend that he, with his brother Abram, were thrown by the Chaldeans into the fire, because they shunned idolatry; but that Abram escaped by the constancy of his faith. The twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua (Joshua 24:1,) however, which I have cited above, openly declares, that this whole family was not less infected with super-

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been the youngest though named first." Le Clerc controverts this view, but it seems the most free from objections. See, however, his Commentary on Genesis 12:1 and 12:4. — *Ed.*

335 Another palpable numerical mistake in the Amsterdam edition, which is also perpetuated in that of Hengstenberg, is here corrected as the sense requires, and under the sanction of the French and Old English versions. In the Latin text it is: "Quis non inde colliget natum fuisse quum pater centessimum annum attigisset?" — *Ed.*

336 Or at least nearly so. "Ergo Haran (si junior fuisset Abrahamo) eam genuisset nondum deceni (imo nec octo) annos natus." — *Lightfoot* et alii in Poli Synopsi. See, however, Lightfoot's Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon the Acts, in his Works, vol. 2 p. 666. Fol. London 1684. — *Ed.*

stition than the country itself. I confess, indeed, that the name Ur is derived from fire: names, however, are wont to be assigned to cities, either from their situation, or from some particular event. It is possible that they there cherished the sacred fire, or that the splendor of the sun was more conspicuous than in other places. Others will have it, that the city was so named, because it was situated in a valley, for the Hebrews call valleys ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Uraim*[337]) But there is no reason why we should be very anxious about such a matter: let it suffice, that Moses, speaking of the country of Abram immediately afterwards declares it to have been Ur of the Chaldeans.

30. *But Sarai was barren*. Not only does he say that Abram was without children, but he states the reasons namely, the sterility of his wife; in order to show that it was by nothing short of an extraordinary miracle that she afterwards bare Isaac, as we shall declare more fully in its proper place. Thus was God pleased to humble his servant; and we cannot doubt that Abram would suffer severe pain through this privation. He sees the wicked springing up everywhere, in great numbers, to cover the earth; he alone is deprived of children. And although hitherto he was ignorant of his own future vocation; yet God designed in his person, as in a mirror, to make it evident, whence and in what manner his Church should arise; for at that time it lay hid, as in a dry root under the earth.

31. *And Terah took Abram his son*. Here the next chapter ought to commence; because Moses begins to treat of one of the principal subjects of his book; namely, the calling of Abram. For he not only relates that Terah changed his country, but he also explains the design and the end of his departure, that he left his native soils and entered on his journey, in order to come to the land of Canaan. Whence the inference is easily drawn, that he was not so much the leader or author of the journey, as the companion of his son.

And it is no obstacle to this inference, that Moses assigns the priority to Terah, as if Abram had departed under his auspices and direction, rather than by the command of God: for this is an honor conferred upon the father's name. Nor do I doubt that Abram, when he saw his father willingly obeying the calling of God, became in return the more obedient to him. Therefore, it is ascribed to the authority of the father, that he took his son with him. For, that Abram had been called of God before he moved a foot from his native soil, will presently appear too plain to be denied. We do not read that his father had been called. It may therefore be conjectured, that the oracle of God had been made known to Terah by the relation of his son. For the divine command to Abram respecting his departure, did not prohibit him from informing his father, that his only reason for leaving him was, that he preferred the command of God to all human obligations. These two things, indeed without controversy, we gather from the words of Moses; that Abram was divinely called, before

337 Vide *Schindler*, sub voce ⊠⊠, col. 42, line 54; but it is doubtful whether any clear evidence of such a meaning of the word can be adduced. — *Ed*

Terah left his own country: and that Terah had no other design than that of coming into the land of Canaan; that is, of joining his son as a voluntary companion. Therefore, I conclude, that he had left his country a short time before his death. For it is absurd to suppose, that when he departed from his own country, to go directly to the land of Canaan, he should have remained sixty years a stranger in a foreign land. It is more probable, that being an old man worn out with years he was carried off by disease and weariness. And yet it may be, that God held them a little while in suspense, because Moses says he dwelt in Charran; but from what follows, it appears that the delay was not long: since, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, Abram departed thence; and he had gone thither already advanced in age, and knowing that his wife was barren. Moreover, the town which by the Hebrews is called Charran, is declared by all writers, with one consent, to be Charran, situated in Mesopotamia; although Lucas, poetically rather than truly, places it in Assyria. The place was celebrated for the destruction of Crassus, and the overthrow of the Roman army.[338]

338 See Wells' Geography of the Old Test. chap. 6 sub fine, and D'Anville's Compendium, vol. 1 436. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 12.

Genesis 12:1-20	
1. Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:	**1.** Dixerat autem Jehova ad Abram, Abi e terra tua, et e cognatione tua, et e domo patris tui, ad terram quam ostendam tibi.
2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:	**2.** Et faciam to in gentem magnam, et benedicam tibi, et magnificabo nomen tuum, et eris benedictio.
3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.	**3.** Et benedicam benedicentibus tibi: et maledicentibus tibi maledicam: et benedicentur in to omnes familae terrae.
4. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.	**4.** Abiit ergo Abram quemadmodum loquutus fuerat ad eum Jehova: et perrexit cum eo Lot: Abram autem erat filius quinque annorum et septuaginta annorum, quando egressus est de Charan
5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.	**5.** Et cepit Abram Sarai uxorem suam, et Lot filium fratris sui, et omnem substantiam quam acquisierant, et animas quas fecerant in Charan, et egressi sunt ut pergerent in terram Chenaan, et venerunt ad terram Chenaan.
6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.	**6.** Et transivit Abram in terram usquead locum Sechem, usque ad quercum Moreh: Chenaanaeus autem tunc erat in terra.
7. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.	**7.** Et visus est Jehova Abrae, et dixit, Semini tuo dabo terram hanc: et aedificavit ibi altare Jehovae qui apparuerat sibi.
8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar	**8.** Et transtulit se inde ad montem ab Oriente ipsi Bethel, tetenditque tabernaculum suum: Bethel erat ab Occidente, et Hai ab Oriente: et aedificavit ibi altare Jehova, et invocavit nomen Jehovae.

unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.	
9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.	**9.** Profectus est et Abram eundo et proficiscendo ad Meridiem.
10. And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.	**10.** Et fuit fames in terra, et descendit Abram in Aegyptum ut peregrinaretur ibi: quia gravis fames erat in terra.
11. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon:	**11.** Et fuit, quando appropinquavit ut ingrederetur Aegyptum, dixit ad Sarai uxorem suam, Ecce, nunc novi quod mulier pulchra aspectu sis:
12. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.	**12.** Erit itaque, quum viderint to Aegyptii, dicent, Uxor ejus est: et occident me, et to servabunt vivam.
13. Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.	**13.** Dic nunc quod soror mea sis, ut bene sit mihi propter to, et vivat anima mea propter to.
14. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair.	**14.** Et fuit quum ingredere tur Abram Aegyptum, viderunt Aegruptii mulierem quod pulchra esset valde.
15. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.	**15.** Quum igitur vidissent eam principes Pharaonis, landaverunt eam Pharaoni: et sublata est mulier in domum Pharaonis.
16. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.	**16.** Et ipsi Abram benefecit propter eam: fueruntque ei pecudes, et boves, et asini, et servi, et ancillae, et asinae, et cameli.
17. And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.	**17.** Percussit autem Jehova Pharaonem percussionibus magnis et domum ejus, causa Sarai uxoris Abram.

18. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife?	**18.** Vocavitque Pharao Abram, et dixit, Cur hoc, fecisti mihi? utquid non indicasti mihi quod uxor tua esset?
19. Why saidst thou, She *is* my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way.	**19.** Utquid dixisti, Soror mea est? et tuli eam mihi in uxorem: et nunc ecce uxor tua, cape et vade.
20. And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.	**20.** Et praecepit super eum Pharao viris, et demiserunt eum et uxorem ejus, et omnia quae erant ei.

1. *Now the Lord had said unto Abram*. That an absurd division of these chapters may not trouble the readers, let them connect this sentence with the last two verses of the previous chapter. Moses had before said, that Terah and Abram had departed from their country to dwell in the land of Canaan. He now explains that they had not been impelled by levity as rash and fickle men are wont to be; nor had been drawn to other regions by disgust with their own country, as morose persons frequently are; nor were fugitives on account of crime; nor were led away by any foolish hope, or by any allurements, as many are hurried hither and thither by their own desires; but that Abram had been divinely commanded to go forth and had not moved a foot but as he was guided by the word of God. They who explain the passage to mean, that God spoke to Abram after the death of his father, are easily refuted by the very words of Moses: for if Abram was already without a country, and was sojourning as a stranger elsewhere, the command of God would have been superfluous, 'Depart from thy land, from thy country, and from thy father's house.' The authority of Stephen is also added, who certainly deserves to be accounted a suitable interpreter of this passage: now he plainly testifies, that God appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran; he then recites this oracle which we are now explaining; and at length concludes, that, for this reason, Abraham migrated from Chaldea. Nor is that to be overlooked which God afterwards repeats, (Genesis 15:7,) 'I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees;' for we thence infer, that the Divine Hand was not for the first time stretched out to him after he had dwelt in Charran, but while he yet remained at home in Chaldea.[339] Truly this command of Gods respecting which doubts are foolishly entertained, ought to

339 Many learned commentators, Dr A. Clarke among the number, suppose this to have been a second call from God, and to have taken place when he was at Charran. But the objections adduced by Calvin against such an interpretation are of great weight, and cannot be easily set aside. — *Ed.*

be deemed by us sufficient to disprove the contrary error. For God could not have spoken thus, except to a man who had been, up to that time, settled in his nest, having his affairs underanged, and living quietly and tranquilly among his relatives, without any change in his mode of life; otherwise, the answer would have been readily given 'I have left my country, I am far removed from my kindred.' In short, Moses records this oracle, in order that we may know that this long journey was undertaken by Abram, and his father Terah, at the command of God. Whence it also appears, that Terah was not so far deluded by superstitions as to be destitute of the fear of God. It was difficult for the old man, already broken and failing in health, to tear himself away from his own country. Some true religion, therefore, although smothered, still remained in his mind. Therefore, when he knew that the place, from which his son was commanded to depart, was accursed, it was his wish not to perish there; but he joined himself as an associate with him whom the Lord was about to deliver. What a witness, I demand, will he prove, in the last day, to condemn our indolence! Easy and plausible was the excuse which he might have alleged; namely that he would remain quietly at home, because he had received no command. But he, though blind in the darkness of unbelief, yet opened his eyes to the beam of light which shot across his path; while we remain unmoved when the Divine vocation directly shines upon us. Moreover, this calling of Abram is a signal instance of the gratuitous mercy of God. Had Abram been beforehand with God by any merit of works? Had Abram come to him, or conciliated his favor? Nay, we must ever recall to mind, (what I have before adduced from the passage in Joshua,) that he was plunged in the filth of idolatry; and now God freely stretches forth his hand to bring back the wanderer. He deigns to open his sacred mouth, that he may show to one, deceived by Satan's wiles, the way of salvation. And it is wonderful, that a man, miserable and lost, should have the preference given him, over so many holy worshippers of God; that the covenant of life should be placed in his possession; that the Church should be revived in him, and he himself constituted the father of all the faithful. But this is done designedly, in order that the manifestation of the grace of God might become the more conspicuous in his person. For he is an example of the vocation of us all; for in him we perceive, that, by the mere mercy of God, those things which are not are raised from nothing, in order that they may begin to be something.

Get thee out of thy country. This accumulation of words may seem to be superfluous. To which also may be added, that Moses, in other places so concise, here expresses a plain and easy matter in three different forms of speech. But the case is quite otherwise. For since exile is in itself sorrowful, and the sweetness of their native soil holds nearly all men bound to itself, God strenuously persists in his command to leave the country, for the purpose of thoroughly penetrating the mind of Abram. If he had said in a single word, Leave thy country, this indeed would not lightly have pained his mind; but Abram is still more deeply affected, when he hears that he must renounce his kindred and his father's house. Yet it is

not to be supposed, that God takes a cruel pleasure in the trouble of his servants; but he thus tries all their affections, that he may not leave any lurking-places undiscovered in their hearts. We see many persons zealous for a short time, who afterwards become frozen; whence is this, but because they build without a foundation? Therefore God determined, thoroughly to rouse all the senses of Abram, that he might undertake nothing rashly or inconsiderately; lest, repenting soon afterwards, he should veer with the wind, and return. Wherefore, if we desire to follow God with constancy, it behaves us carefully to meditate on all the inconveniences, all the difficulties, all the dangers which await us; that not only a hasty zeal may produce fading flowers, but that from a deep and well-fixed root of piety, we may bring forth fruit in our whole life.

Unto a land that I will show thee. This is another test to prove the faith of Abram. For why does not God immediately point out the land, except for the purpose of keeping his servant in suspense, that he may the better try the truth of his attachment to the word of God? As if he would say, 'I command thee to go forth with closed eyes, and forbid thee to inquire whither I am about to lead thee, until, having renounced thy country, thou shalt have given thyself wholly to me.' And this is the true proof of our obedience, when we are not wise in our own eyes, but commit ourselves entirely unto the Lord. Whensoever, therefore, he requires anything of us, we must not be so solicitous about success, as to allow fear and anxiety to retard our course. For it is better, with closed eyes, to follow God as our guide, than, by relying on our own prudence, to wander through those circuitous paths which it devises for us. Should any one object, that this statement is at variance with the former sentence, in which Moses declared that Terah and Abram departed from their own country, that they might come into the land of Canaan: the solution is easy, if we admit a *prolepsis*[340] (that is, an anticipation on something still future) in the expression of Moses; such as follows in this very chapter, in the use of the name Bethel; and such as frequently occurs in the Scriptures. They knew not whither they were going; but because they had resolved to go whithersoever God might call them, Moses, speaking in his own person, mentions the land, which, though hitherto unknown to them both, was afterwards revealed to Abram alone. It is therefore true, that they departed with the design of coming to the land of Canaan; because, having received the promise concerning a land which was to be shown them, they suffered themselves to be governed by God, until he should actually bestow what he had promised. Nevertheless it may be, that God, having proved the devotedness of Abram, soon afterwards removed all doubt from his mind. For we do not know at what precise moment of time, God would intimate to him what it was his will to conceal only for a season.

340 Prolepsis is the figure which anticipates in the discourse something still future; as when the word Bethel is used to designate the place which at the time was called Luz, and which did not receive this name till it was given by Jacob. — *Ed.*

It is enough that Abram declared himself to be truly obedient to God, when, having cast all his care on God's providence, and having discharged, as it were, into His bosom, whatever might have impeded him, he did not hesitate to leave his own country, uncertain where, at length, he might plant his foot; for, by this method, the wisdom of the flesh was reduced to order, and all his affections, at the same time, were subdued. Yet it may be asked, why God sent his servant into the land of Canaan rather than into the East, where he could have lived with some other of the holy fathers? Some (in order that the change may not seem to have been made for the worse) will have it, that he was led thither, for the purpose of dwelling with his ancestor Shem, whom they imagine to have been Melchizedek. But if such were the counsel of God, it is strange that Abram bent his steps in a different direction; nay, we do not read that he met with Melchizedek, till he was returning from the battle in the plain of Sodom. But, in its proper place, we shall see how frivolous is the imagination, that Melchizedek was Shem. As it concerns the subject now in hand, we infer, from the result which at length followed, that God's design was very different from what these men suppose. The nations of Canaan, on account of their deplorable wickedness, were devoted to destruction. God required his servant to sojourn among them for a time, that, by faith, he might perceive himself to be the heir of that land, the actual possession of which was reserved for his posterity to a long period after his own death. Wherefore he was commanded to cross over into that country, for this sole reason, that it was to be evacuated by its inhabitants, for the purpose of being given to his seed for a possession. And it was of great importance, that Abram, Isaac, and Jacob, should be strangers in that land, and should by faith embrace the dominion over it, which had been divinely promised them, in order that their posterity might, with the greater courage, gird themselves to take possession of it.

2. *And I will make of thee a great nation*. Hitherto Moses has related what Abram had been commanded to do; now he annexes the promise of God to the command; and that for no light cause. For as we are slothful to obey, the Lord would command in vain, unless we are animated by a superadded confidence in his grace and benediction. Although I have before alluded to this, in the history of Noah, it will not be useless to inculcate it again, for the passage itself requires something to be said; and the repetition of a doctrine of such great moment ought not to seem superfluous. For it is certain that faith cannot stand, unless it be founded on the promises of God. But faith alone produces obedience. Therefore in order that our minds may be disposed to follow God, it is not sufficient for him simply to command what he pleases, unless he also promises his blessing. We must mark the promise, that Abram, whose wife was still barren, should become a great nation. This promise might have been very efficacious, if God, by the actual state of things, had afforded ground of hope respecting its fulfillment; but now, seeing thatthe barrenness of his wife threatened him with perpetual privation of offspring, the bare promise itself would have been cold, if Abram had not wholly depended upon the word of God; wherefore, though he perceives the sterility of his wife,

he yet apprehends, by hope, that great nation which is promised by the word of God. And Isaiah greatly extols this act of favor, that God, by his blessing, increased his servant Abram whom he found alone and solitary to so great a nations (Isaiah 2:2.) The noun ⊠⊠⊠(*goi*,) "my nation," (Genesis 12:4,) though detestable to the Jews,[341] is in this place, and in many others, taken as a term of honor. And it is here used emphatically, to show that he should not only have posterity from his own seed in great number, but a peculiar people, separated from others, who should be called by his own name.

I will bless thee. This is partly added, to explain the preceding sentence. For, lest Abram should despair, God offers his own blessing, which was able to effect more in the way of miracle, than is seen to be effected, in other cases, by natural means. The benediction, however, here pronounced, extends farther than to offspring; and implies, that he should have a prosperous and joyous issue of all his affairs; as appears from the succeeding context, "And will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." For such happiness is promised him, as shall fill all men everywhere with admiration, so that they shall introduce the name of Abram, as an example, into their formularies of pronouncing benediction. Others use the term in the sense of augmentation, 'Thou shalt be a blessing,' that is, 'All shall bless thee.' But the former sense is the more suitable. Some also expound it actively, as if it had been said, 'My grace shall not reside in thee, so that thou alone mayest enjoy it, but it shall flow far unto all nations. I therefore now so deposit it with thee, that it may overflow into all the world.' But God does not yet proceed to that communication, as I shall show presently.

3. *And I will bless them that bless thee*. Here the extraordinary kindness of God manifests itself, in that he familiarly makes a covenant with Abram, as men are wont to do with their companions and equals. For this is the accustomed form of covenants between kings and others, that they mutually promise to have the same enemies and the same friends. This certainly is an inestimable pledge of special love, that God should so greatly condescend for our sake. For although he here addresses one man only, he elsewhere declares the same affection towards his faithful people. We may therefore infer this general doctrine, that God so embraced us with his favor, that he will bless our friends, and take vengeance on our enemies. We are, moreover, warned by this passage, that however desirous the sons of God may be of peace, they will never want enemies. Certainly, of all persons who ever conducted themselves so peaceably among men as to deserve the esteem of all, Abram might be reckoned among the chief, yet even he was not without enemies; because he had the devil for his adversary, who holds the wicked in his hand, whom he incessantly impels to molest the good. There is then, no reason why the ingratitude of the world should dishearten us, even though

341 The dislike which the Jews have to this word arises from the fact that they confine its application to heathens, barbarians, and Christians, in short, to all who are not of Israel according to the flesh. They are not, however, warranted by Scripture in so doing, as Calvin rightly argues. — *Ed.*

many hate us without cause, and, when provoked by no injury, study to do us harm; but let us be content with this single consolation, that God engages on our side in the war. Besides, God exhorts his people to cultivate fidelity and humanity with all good men, and, further, to abstain from all injury. For this is no common inducement to excite us to assist the faithful, that if we discharge any duty towards them, God will repay it; nor ought it less to alarm us, that he denounces war against us, if we hurt any one belonging to him.

In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Should any one choose to understand this passage in a restricted sense, as if, by a proverbial mode of speech, they who shall bless their children or their friends, shall be called after the name of Abram, let him enjoy his opinion; for the Hebrew phrase will bear the interpretation, that Abram shall be called a signal example of happiness. But I extend the meaning further; because I suppose the same thing to be promised in this place, which God afterwards repeats more clearly, (Genesis 22:18.) And the authority of Paul brings me to this point; who says, that the promise to the seed of Abraham, that is, to Christ, was given four hundred and thirty years before the law, (Galatians 3:17.) But the computation of years requires us to understand, that the blessing was promised him in Christ, when he was coming into the land of Canaan. Therefore God (in my judgment) pronounces that all nations should be blessed in his servant Abram because Christ was included in his loins. In this manner, he not only intimates that Abram would be an *example*, but a *cause* of blessing; so that there should be an understood antithesis between Adam and Christ. For whereas, from the time of the first man's alienation from God, we are all born accursed, here a new remedy is offered unto us. Nor is there any thing contrary to this in the assertion, that we must by no means seek a blessing in Abram himself, inasmuch as the expression is used in reference to Christ. Here the Jews petulantly object, and heap together many testimonies of Scripture, from which it appears that to bless or curse *in any one*, is nothing else than to wish good or evil to another, according to him as a pattern. But their cavil may be set aside without difficulty. I acknowledge, that what they say is often, but not always true. For when it is said, that the tribe of Levi shall bless in the name of God, in Deuteronomy 10:8 Isaiah 65:16, and in similar passages, it is sufficiently evident, that God is declared to be the fountain of all good, in order that Israel may not seek any portion of good elsewhere Seeing, therefore, that the language is ambiguous, let them grant the necessity of choosing this, or the other sense, as may be most suitable to the subject and the occasion. Now Paul assumes it as an axiom which is received among all the pious, and which ought to be taken for granted, that the whole human race is obnoxious to a curse, and therefore that the holy people are blessed only through the grace of the Mediator. Whence he concludes, that the covenant of salvation which God made with Abram, is neither stable nor firm except in Christ. I therefore thus interpret the present place; that God promises to his servant Abram that blessing which shall afterwards flow down to all people.

But because this subject will be more amply explained else where, I now only briefly touch upon it.

4. *So Abram departed.* They who suppose that God was now speaking to Abram in Charran, lay hold of these words in support of their error. But the cavil is easily refuted; for after Moses has mentioned the cause of their departure, namely, that Abram had been constrained by the command of God to leave his native soil, he now returns to the thread of the history. Why Abram for a time should have remained in Charran, we do not know, except that God laid his hand upon him, to prevent him from immediately obtaining a sight of the land, which, although yet unknown, he had nevertheless preferred to his own country. He is now said to have departed from Charran, that he might complete the journey he had begun; which also the next verse confirms, where it is said, that he took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew with him. As under the conduct and auspices of his father Terah, they had departed from Chaldea; so now when Abram is become the head of the family, he pursues and completes what his father had begun. Still it is possible, that the Lord again exhorted him to proceed, the death of his father having intervened, and that he confirmed his former call by a second oracle. It is however certain, that in this place the obedience of faith is commended, and not as one act simply, but as a constant and perpetual course of life. For I do not doubt, but Moses intended to say, that Abram remained in Charran, not because he repented, as if he was inclined to swerve from the straight course of his vocation, but as having the command of God always fixed in his mind. And therefore I would rather refer the clause, "As the Lord had spoken to him" to the first oracle; so that Moses should say, 'he stood firmly in his purpose, and his desire to obey God was not broken by the death of his father.' Moreover, we have here in one word, a rule prescribed to us, for the regulation of our whole life, which is to attempt nothing but by Divine authority. For, however men may dispute concerning virtues and duties, no work is worthy of praise, or deserves to be reckoned among virtues, except what is pleasing to God. And he himself testifies, that he makes greater account of obedience than of sacrifice, (1 Samuel 15:22.) Wherefore, our life will then be rightly constituted, when we depend upon the word of God, and undertake nothing except at his command. And it is to be observed, that the question is not here concerning some one particular work, but concerning the general principle of living piously and uprightly. For the subject treated of, is the vocation of Abram which is a common pattern of the life of all the faithful. We are not indeed all indiscriminately commanded to desert our country; this point, I grant, is special in the case of Abram; but generally, it is God's will that all should be in subjection to his word, and should seek the law, for the regulation of their life, at his mouth, lest they should be carried away by their own will, or by the maxims of men. Therefore by the example of Abram, entire self-renunciation is enjoined, that we may live and die to God alone.

5. *The souls that they had gotten in Haran*. Souls signify male and female servants. And this is the first mention of servitude; whence it appears, that not long after the deluge the wickedness of man caused liberty which by nature, was common to all, to perish with respect to a great part of mankind. Whence servitude originated is not easy to determine, unless according to the opinion which has commonly prevailed it arose from wars; because the conquerors compelled those whom they took in battle to serve them; and hence the name of bondman[342] is derived. But whether they who were first slaves had been subjugated by the laws of war, or had been reduced to this state by want, it is indeed certain, that the order of nature was violently infringed; because men were created for the purpose of cultivating mutual society between each other. And although it is advantageous that some should preside over others, yet an equality, as among brethren ought to have been retained. However, although slavery is contrary to that right government which is most desirable, and in its commencement was not without fault; it does not, on this account, follow, that the use of it, which was afterwards received by custom, and excused by necessity, is unlawful. Abram therefore might possess both servants bought with money, and slaves born in his house. For that common saying, 'What has not prevailed from the beginning cannot be rendered valid by length of time,' admits (as is well known) of some exceptions; and we shall have an example in point in the forty-eighth chapter Genesis 48:1

6. *And Abram passed through the land*. Here Moses shows that Abram did not immediately, on his entering into the land, find a habitation in which he might rest. For the expression passed through, and the position of the place (Sichem) to which he passed, show that the length of his journey had been great. Sichem is not far from Mount Gerizim, which is towards the desert of the Southern region. Wherefore, it is just as Moses had said, that the faith of Abram was again tried, when God suffered him as a wanderer to traverse the whole land, before he gave him any fixed abode. How hard would it seems when God had promised to be his Protector, that not even a little corner is assigned him on which he may set his foot? But he is compelled to wander in a circuitous route, in order that he may the better exercise self denial. The word ⊠⊠⊠ (*Elon*) is by some translated an oak forest, by some a valley;[343] others take it for the proper name of a place. I do not doubt that Moreh is the proper name of the place; but I explain Elon to mean a plain, or an oak, not that it was a single tree, but the singular is put for the plural number;[344] and this latter interpretation I most approve.

342 "Mancipii...A manucapium, quod ab hostibus manu caperetur;" because taken by the hand by the enemy. — *Ed*

343 By others a plain. Vide Poli Synopsis in loco. See our English version, "Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh." — *Ed.*

344 That is, an oak is put for an oak grove, or forest. — *Ed.*

And the Canaanite was then in the land. This clause concerning the Canaanite is not added without reason; because it was no slight temptation to be cast among that perfidious and wicked nation, destitute of all humanity. What could the holy man then think, but that he was betrayed into the hands of these most abandoned men, by whom he might soon be murdered; or else that he would have to spend a disturbed and miserable life amid continual injuries and troubles? But it was profitable for him to be accustomed, by such discipline, to cherish a better hope. For if he had been kindly and courteously received in the land of Canaan, he would have hoped for nothing better than to spend his life there as a guest. But now God raises his thoughts higher in order that he may conclude, that at some future time, the inhabitants being destroyed, he shall be the lord and heir of the land. Besides, he is admonished, by the continual want of repose, to look up towards heaven. For since the inheritance of the land was specially promised to himself, and would only belong to his descendants, for his sake; it follows, that the land, in which he was so ill and inhumanly treated, was not set before him as his ultimate aim, but that heaven itself was proposed to him as his final resting-place.

7. *And the Lord appeared unto Abram*. He now relates that Abram was not left entirely destitute, but that God stretched forth his hand to help him. We must, however, mark, with what kind of assistance God succours him in his temptations. He offers him his bare word, and in such a way, indeed, that Abram might deem himself exposed to ridicule. For God declares he will give the land to his seed: but where is the seed, or where the hope of seed; seeing that he is childless and old, and his wife is barren? This was therefore an insipid consolation to the flesh. But faith has a different taste; the property of which is, to hold all the senses of the pious so bound by reverence to the word, that a single promise of God is quite sufficient. Meanwhile, although God truly alleviates and mitigates the evils which his servants endure, he does it only so far as is expedient for them, without indulging the desire of the flesh. Let us hence learn, that this single remedy ought to be sufficient for us in our sufferings: that God so speaks to us in his word, as to cause our minds to perceive him to be propitious; and let us not give the reins to the importunate desires of our flesh. God himself will not fail on his part; but will, by the manifestation of his favor, raise us when we are cast down.

And there builded he an altar. This altar was a token of gratitude. As soon as God appeared to him he raised an altar: to what end? That he might call upon the name of the Lord. We see, therefore, that he was intent upon giving of thanks; and that an altar was built by him in memory of kindness received. Should any one ask, whether he could not worship God without an altar? I answer, that the inward worship of the heart is not sufficient unless external profession before men be added. Religion has truly its appropriate seat in the heart; but from this root, public confession afterwards arises, as its fruit. For we are created to this end, that we may offer soul and body unto God. The Canaanites had their religion; they had

also altars for sacrifices: but Abram, that he might not involve himself in their superstitions, erects a domestic altar, on which he may offer sacrifice; as if he had resolved to place a royal throne for God within his house. But because the worship of God is spiritual, and all ceremonies which have no right and lawful end, are not only vain and worthless in themselves, but also corrupt the true worship of God by their counterfeited and fallacious appearance; we must carefully observe what Moses says, that the altar was erected for the purpose of calling upon God. The altar then is the external *form* of divine worship; but *invocation* is its substance and truth. This mark easily distinguishes pure worshippers from hypocrites, who are far too liberal in outward pomp, but wish their religion to terminate in bare ceremonies. Thus all their religion is vague, being directed to no certain end. Their ultimate intention, indeed, is (as they confusedly speak) to worship God: but piety approaches nearer to God; and therefore does not trifle with external figures, but has respect to the truth and the substance of religion. On the whole, ceremonies are no otherwise acceptable to God, than as they have reference to the spiritual worship of God.

To invoke the *name* of God, or to invoke *in his name*, admits of a twofold exposition; namely, either to pray to God, or to celebrate his name with praises. But because prayer and thanksgiving are things conjoined, I willingly include both. We have before said, in the fourth chapter (Genesis 4:1), that the whole worship of God was not improperly described, by the figure *synecdoche*, under this particular expression; because God esteems no duty of piety more highly, and accounts no sacrifice more acceptable, than the invocation of his name, as is declared in Psalm 50:23, and Psalm 51:19. As often, therefore, as the word *altar* occurs, let the sacrifices also come into our mind; for from the beginning, God would have mankind informed, that there could be no access to himself without sacrifice. Therefore Abram, from the general doctrine of religion, opened for himself a celestial sanctuary, by sacrifices, that he might rightly worship God.[345] But we know that God was never appeased by the blood of beasts. Wherefore it follows, that the faith of Abram was directed to the blood of Christ.[346]

It may seem, however, absurd, that Abram built himself an altar, at his own pleasure, though he was neither a priest, nor had any express command from God. I answer, that

345 The sentence seems obscure: "Ergo Abram ex generali pietatis doctrina, sacrificiis coeleste sibi sanctuarium aperuit, ut Deum rite coleret." The French translation throws little light upon it: 'Abram donc s'est fait ouverture au sanctuaire celeste par une doctrine generale de piete, afin de bien servir Dieu.' The word sacrifice is here entirely omitted. Nor does the Old English translator seem to have given himself much trouble to render it accurately: 'Abram, out of a general doctrine of godliness, prepared a heavenly was to himself to offer sacrifices, that he might worship God aright.' — *Ed.*

346 And consequently that he regarded all his own sacrifices as typical of the great atoning sacrifice of the cross. — *Ed.*

Moses removes this scruple in the context: for Abram is not said to have made an altar simply to God, but to God who had *appeared* unto him. The altar therefore had its foundation in that revelation; and ought not to be separated from that of which it formed but a part and an appendage. Superstition fabricates for itself such a God as it pleases and then invents for him various kinds of worship; just as the Papists, at this days most proudly boast that they worship God, when they are only trifling with their foolish pageantry. But the piety of Abram is commended, because, having erected an altar, he worshipped God who had been manifested to him. And although Moses declares the design with which Abram built the altar, when he relates that he there called upon God, he yet, at the same time, intimates, that such a service was pleasing to God: for this language implies the approval of the Holy Spirit, who thereby pronounces that he had rightly called upon God. Others, indeed confidently boasted that they worshipped God; but God, in praising Abram only, rejects all the rites of the heathen as a vile profanation of his name.

8. *And he removed from thence*. When we hear that Abram moved from the place where he had built an altar to God, we ought not to doubt that he was, by some necessity, compelled to do so. He there found the inhabitants unpropitious; and therefore transfers his tabernacle elsewhere. But if Abram bore his continual wanderings patiently, our fastidiousness is utterly inexcusable, when we murmur against God, if he does not grant us a quiet nest. Certainly, when Christ has opened heaven to us, and daily invites us thither to dwell with himself; we should not take it amiss, if he chooses that we should be strangers in the world. The sum of the passage is this, that Abram was without a settled residence:[347] which title Paul assigns to Christians, (1Corinthians 4:11.) Moreover, there is a manifest prolepsis in the word Bethel; for Moses gives the place this name, to accommodate his discourse to the men of his own age.

And there he builded an altar. Moses commends in Abram his unwearied devotedness to piety: for by these words, he intimates, that whatever place he visited, he there exercised himself in the external worship of God; both that he might have no religious rites in common with the wicked, and that he might retain his family in sincere piety. And it is probable, that, from this cause, he would be the object of no little enmity; because there is nothing which more enrages the wicked, than religion different from their own, in which they conceive themselves to be not only despised, but altogether condemned as blind. And we know that the Canaanites were cruel and proud, and too ready to avenge insults. This was perhaps the reason of Abram's frequent removals: that his neighbors regarded the altars which he built, as a reproach to themselves. It ought indeed to be referred to the wonderful favor of God, that he was not often stoned. Nevertheless, since the holy man knows that he is justly required

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to bear testimony that he has a God peculiarly his own, whom he must not, by dissimulation, virtually deny,[348] he therefore does not hesitate to prefer the glory of God to his own life.

9. *And Abram journeyed.* This was the third removal of the holy man within a short period, after he seemed to have found some kind of abode. It is certain that he did not voluntarily, and for his own gratification, run hither and thither, (as light-minded persons are wont to do:) but there were certain necessities which drove him forth, in order to teach him, by continual habit, that he was not only a stranger, but a wretched wanderer in the land of which he was the lord. Yet no common fruit was the result of so many changes; because he endeavored, as much as in him lay, to dedicate to God, every part of the land to which he had access, and perfumed it with the odour of his faith.

10. *And there was a famine in the land.* A much more severe temptation is now recorded, by which the faith of Abram is tried to the quick. For he is not only led around through various windings of the country, but is driven into exile, from the land which God had given to him and to his posterity. It is to be observed, that Chaldea was exceedingly fertile; having been, from this cause, accustomed to opulence, he came to Charran, where, it is conjectured, he lived commodiously enough, since it is clear he had an increase of servants and of wealth. But now being expelled by hunger from that land, where, in reliance on the word of God, he had promised himself a happy life, supplied with all abundance of good things, what must have been his thoughts, had he not been well fortified against the devices of Satan? His faith would have been overturned a hundred times. And we know, that whenever our expectation is frustrated, and things do not succeed according to our wishes, our flesh soon harps on this string, 'God has deceived thee.' But Moses shows, in a few words, with what firmness Abram sustained this vehement assault. He does not indeed magnificently proclaim his constancy in verbose eulogies; but, by one little word, he sufficiently demonstrates, that it was great even to a miracle, when he says, that he "went down into Egypt to sojourn there." For he intimates, that Abram, nevertheless, retained in his mind possession of the land promised unto him; although, being ejected from it by hunger, he fled elsewhere, for the sake of obtaining food. And let us be instructed by this example, that the servants of God must contend against many obstacles, that they may finish the course of their vocation. For we must always recall to memory, that Abram is not to be regarded as an individual member of the body of the faithful, but as the common father of them all; so that all should form themselves to the imitation of his example. Therefore, since the condition of the present life is unstable, and obnoxious to innumerable changes; let us remember, that, whithersoever we may be driven by famine, and by the rage of war, and by other vicissitudes which occasionally happen beyond our expectation, we must yet hold our right course; and that, though

348 "Ut testetur se peculiarem habere Deum." — "Qu'il testife avoir un autre Dieu que celui qui estoit la adore:" to testify that he has another God than that which was there adored. — *French Tr*

our bodies may be carried hither and thither, our faith ought to stand unshaken. Moreover, it is not surprising, when the Canaanites sustained life with difficulty, that Abram should be compelled privately to consult for himself. For he had not a single acre of land; and he had to deal with a cruel and most wicked people, who would rather a hundred times have suffered him to perish with hunger, than they would have brought him assistance in his difficulty. Such circumstances amplify the praise of Abram's faith and fortitude: first, because, when destitute of food for the body. he feeds himself upon the sole promise of God; and then, because he is not to be torn away by any violence, except for a short time, from the place where he was commanded to dwell. In this respect he is very unlike many, who are hurried away, by every slight occasion, to desert their proper calling.

11. *He said unto Sarai his wife*. He now relates the counsel which Abram took for the preservation of his life when he was approaching Egypt. Andy since this place is like a rock, on which many strike; it is proper that we should soberly and reverently consider how far Abram was deserving of excuse, and how he was to be blamed. First, there seems to be something of falsehood, mixed with the dissimulations which he persuades his wife to practice. And although afterwards he makes the excuse, that he had not lied nor feigned anything that was untrue: in this certainly he was greatly culpable that it was not owing to his care that his wife was not prostituted. For when he dissembles the fact, that she was his wife, he deprives her chastity of its legitimate defense. And hence certain perverse cavilers take occasion to object,[349] that the holy patriarch was a pander to his own wife; and that, for the purpose of craftily taking care of himself, he spared neither her modesty nor his own honor. But it is easy to refute this virulent abuse; because, it may indeed be inferred, that Abram had far higher ends in view, seeing that in other things, he was endued with a magnanimity so great. Again, how did it happen, that he rather sought to go into Egypt than to Charran, or into his own country, unless that in his journeying, he had God before his eyes, and the divine promise firmly rooted in his mind? Since, therefore, he never allowed his senses to swerve from the word of God, we may even thence gather the reason, why he so greatly feared for his own life, as to attempt the preservation of it from one danger, by incurring a still greater. Undoubtedly he would have chosen to die a hundred times, rather than thus to ruin the character of his wife, and to be deprived of the society of her whom alone he loved. But while he reflected that the hope of salvation was centred in *himself*, that *he* was the fountain of the Church of Gods that unless *he* lived, the benediction promised to him, and to his seed, was vain; he did not estimate his own life according to the private affection of the flesh; but inasmuch as he did not wish the effect of the divine vocation to perish through his death, he was so affected with concern for the preservation of his own life, that he overlooked every thing besides. So far, then, he deserves praise, that, having in

349 "Atque hinc latrandi materiam protervi quidam canes arripiunt."

view a lawful end of living, he was prepared to purchase life at any price. But in devising this indirect method, by which he subjected his wife to the peril of adultery, he seems to be by no means excusable. If he was solicitous about his own life, which he might justly be, yet he ought to have cast his care upon God. The providence of God, I grant, does not indeed preclude the faithful from caring for themselves; but let them do it in such a way, that they may not overstep their prescribed bounds. Hence it follows, that Abram's end was right, but he erred in the way itself; for so it often happens to us, that even while we are tending towards God, yet, by our thoughtlessness in catching at unlawful means, we swerve from his word. And this, especially, is wont to take place in affairs of difficulty; because, while no way of escape appears, we are easily led astray into various circuitous paths. Therefore, although they are rash judges, who entirely condemn this deed of Abram, yet the special fault is not to be denied, namely, that he, trembling at the approach of death, did not commit the issue of the danger to God, instead of sinfully betraying the modesty of his wife. Wherefore, by this example, we are admonished, that, in involved and doubtful matters, we must seek the spirit of counsel and of prudence from the Lord; and must also cultivate sobriety, that we may not attempt anything rashly without the authority of his word.

I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon[350] It is asked whence had Sarai this beauty, seeing she was an old woman? For though we grant that she previously had excelled in elegance of form, certainly years had detracted from her gracefulness; and we know how much the wrinkles of old age disfigure the best and most beautiful faces. In the first place, I answer, there is no doubt that there was then greater vivacity in the human race than there

350 " An aggravation of Abraham's alarm arose from the complexion of his wife, — 'Thou art a fair woman.' Though the Egyptian ladies were not so dark as the Nubians and Ethiopians, they were of a browner tinge than the Syrians and Arabians: we also find on the monuments that ladies of high rank are usually represented in lighter tints than their attendants.... There is ample evidence, that a fair complexion was deemed a high recommendation in the age of the Pharaohs. This circumstance, so fully confirmed by the monuments, is recorded in no history but the book of Genesis; and it is a remarkable confirmation of the veracity of the Pentateuch." — Gliddon's Ancient Egypt, quoted in Hengstenberg's Egypt and the Books of Moses, p.200. It may here be proper to remark, that much learned labor has been expended by the Anti-supernaturalist Divines on the Continent, in the fruitless attempt to prove that the Pentateuch could not be the work of Moses, nor of the age in which he lived; and, consequently, not an inspired production. This has led to a deeper investigation of Egyptian antiquities, the result of which has been to confirm, in every possible way, the authenticity of the Mosaic records. Monuments as ancient as the times of Moses, and bas-reliefs exhibiting different characters, and persons engaged in different occupations, all show, that no writer of comparatively modern times could have composed these books. We have here an additional proof to many which had been given before, that a slight acquaintance with facts may lead to scepticism; but that deep investigation of them invariably confirms the testimony of Scripture. — See note at p. 316. — *Ed*

is now; we also know, that vigor sustains the personal appearance. Again, her sterility availed to preserve her beauty, and to keep her whole habit of body entire; for there is nothing which more debilitates females than frequent parturition. I do not however doubt, that the perfection of her form was the special gift of God; but why he would not suffer the beauty of the holy woman to be so soon worn down by age, we know not; unless it were, that the loveliness of that form was intended to be the cause of great and severe anxiety to her husband. Common experience also teaches us, that they who are not content with a regular and moderate degree of comeliness, find, to their great loss, at what a cost immoderate beauty is purchased.

12. *Therefore it shall come to pass, that when the Egyptians shall see thee, etc.* It may seem that Abram was unjust to the Egyptians, in suspecting evil of them, from whom he had yet received no injury. And, since charity truly is not suspicious; he may appear to deal unfairly, in not only charging them with lust, but also in suspecting them of murder. I answer, that the holy man did, not without reason, fear for himself from that nation, concerning which he had heard many unfavourable reports. And already he had, in other places, experienced so much of the wickedness of men, that he might justly apprehend everything from the profane despisers of God. He does not however pronounce anything absolutely concerning the Egyptians; but, wishing to bring his wife to his own opinion, he gives her timely warning of what might happen. And God, while he commands us to abstain from malicious and sinister judgments, yet allows to be on our guard against unknown persons; and this may take place without any injury to the brethren. Yet I do not deny that this trepidation of Abram exceeded all bounds and that an unreasonable anxiety caused him to involve himself in another fault, as we have already stated.

15. *And commended her before Pharaoh*[351] Although Abram had sinned by fearing too much and too soon, yet the event teaches, that he had not feared without cause: for his wife was taken from him and brought to the king. At first Moses speaks generally of the Egyptians, afterwards he mentions the courtiers; by which course he intimates, that the rumor of Sara's beauty was everywhere spread abroad; but that it was more eagerly received by the courtiers who indulge themselves in greater license. Whereas he adds, that they told the king; we hence infer, how ancient is that corruption which now prevails immeasurably in the courts of kings. For as all things there are full of blandishments and flatteries, so the nobles principally apply their minds to introduce, from time to time, what may be gratifying to royalty.

351 " She must therefore have been unveiled. The monuments show, that, according to Egyptian customs, she could only so appear in public. 'We find from the monuments,' says Taylor, 'that the Egyptian women, in the reign of the Pharaohs, exposed their faces, and were permitted to enjoy as much liberty as the ladies of modern Europe. But this custom was changed after the conquest of the country by the Persians." — Hengstenberg's Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 199.

Therefore we see, that whosoever among them desires to rise high in favor, is addicted not only to servile batteries, but also to pandering for their master's lusts.

And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. Since she was carried off, and dwelt for some time in the palace, many suppose that she was corrupted by the king. For it is not credible, that a lustful man, when he had her in his power, should have spared her modesty. This, truly, Abram had richly deserved, who had neither relied upon the grace of God, nor had committed the chastity of his wife to His faithfulness and care; but the plague which immediately followed, sufficiently proves that the Lord was mindful of her; and hence we may conclude, that she remained uninjured. And although, in this place, Moses says nothing expressly on the subject, yet, from a comparison with a similar subsequent history, we conjecture, that the guardianship of God was not wanting to Abram at this time also. When he was in similar danger, (Genesis 20:1,) God did not suffer her to be violated by the king of Gerar; shall we then suppose that she was now exposed to Pharaoh's lust? Would God have thought more about subjecting her, who had been once dishonored, to a second disgrace, than about preserving her, who had hitherto lived uprightly and chastely? Further, if God showed himself so propitious to Abram, as to rescue his wife whom he exposed a second time to infamy; how is it possible that He should have failed to obviate the previous danger? Perhaps, also, greater integrity still flourished in that age; so that the lusts of kings were not so unrestrained as they afterwards became. Moreover, when Moses adds, that Abram was kindly treated for Sarai's sake; we hence conclude, that she was honorably entertained by Pharaoh, and was not dealt with as a harlot. When, therefore, Moses says, that she was brought into the king's palace; I do not understand this to have been for any other purpose,[352] than that the kings by a solemn rite, might take her as his wife.

17. *And the Lord plagued Pharaoh*. If Moses had simply related, that God had punished the king for having committed adultery, it would not so obviously appear that he had taken care of Sarai's chastity; but when he plainly declares that the house of the king was plagued because of Sarai, Abram's wife, all doubt is, in my judgment, removed; because God, on behalf of his servant, interposed his mighty hand in time, lest Sarai should be violated. And here we have a remarkable instance of the solicitude with which God protects his servants, by undertaking their cause against the most powerful monarchs; as this and similar histories show, which are referred to in Psalm 105:12-15: —

When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'

352 "Non interpretor fuisse factum, ut statim cum rege dormiret, sed ut rex solemni ritu eam duceret uxorem."

From which passage also a confirmation of the opinion just given may be derived. For if God reproved Pharaoh, that he should do Abram no harm; it follows, that he preserved Sarai's honor uninjured. Instructed by such examples, we may also learn, that however the world may hold us in contempt, on account of the smallness of our number, and our weakness; we are yet so precious in the sight of God, that he will, for our sake, declare himself an enemy to kings, and even to the whole world. Let us know, that we are covered by his protection, in order that the lust and violence of those who are more powerful, may not oppress us. But it is asked, whether Pharaoh was justly punished, seeing that he neither intended, by guile nor by force, to gain possession of another man's wife? I answer, that the actions of men are not always to be estimated according to our judgment, but are rather to be weighed in the balances of God; for it often happens, that the Lord will find in us what he may justly punish, while we seem to ourselves to be free from fault, and while we absolve ourselves from all guilt. Let kings rather learn, from this history, to bridle their own power, and moderately to use their authority; and, lastly, to impose a voluntary law of moderation upon themselves. For, although no fault openly appears in Pharaoh; yet, since he has no faithful monitor among men, who dares to repress his licentiousness, the Lord chastises him from heaven. As to his family, it was indeed innocent; but the Lord has always just causes, though hidden from us, why he should smite with his rod those who seem to merit no such rebuke. That he spared his servant Abram, ought to be ascribed to his paternal indulgence.

18. *And Pharaoh called Abram*. Pharaoh justly expostulates with Abram, who was chiefly in fault. No answer on the part of Abram is here recorded; and perhaps he assented to the just and true reprehension. It is, however, possible that the exculpation was omitted by Moses; whose design was to give an example of the Divine providence in preserving Abram, and vindicating his marriage relation. But, although Abram knew that he was suffering the due punishment of his folly, or of his unreasonable caution; He, nevertheless, relapsed, as we shall see in its proper place, a second time into the same fault.

20. *And Pharaoh commanded his men*. In giving commandment that Abram should have a safe-conduct out of the kingdom, Pharaoh might seem to have done it, for the sake of providing against danger; because Abram had stirred up the odium of the nation against himself, as against one who had brought thither the scourge of God along with him; but as this conjecture has little solidity, I give the more simple interpretation, that leave of departure was granted to Abram with the addition of a guard, lest he should be exposed to violence. For we know how proud and cruel the Egyptians were; and how obnoxious Abram was to envy, because having there become suddenly rich, he would seem to be carrying spoil away with him.

CHAPTER 13.

Genesis 13:1-20	
1. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.	**1.** Et ascendit Abram ex Aegypto, ipse et uxor ejus, et omnia quae erant ei, et Lot cum eo ad Meridiem.
2. And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.	**2.** Et Abram dives erat valde pecore, argento et auro.
3. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;	**3.** Et perrexit per profectiones suas a Meridie usque ad Bethel, usque ad locum ubi fuerat tabernaculum ejus in principio, inter Bethel et Hai;
4. Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.	**4.** Ad locum altaris quod fecerat in principio: et invocavit ibi Abram nomen Jehovae.
5. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.	**5.** Et etiam ipsi Lot ambulanti cum Abram erant pecudes, et boves, et tabernacula.
6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.	**6.** Et non ferebat eos terra, ut habitarent pariter: quia erat substantia eorum multa, et non poterant habitare pariter.
7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.	**7.** Et fuit contentio inter pastores pecudum Abram, et pastores pecudum Lot: et Chenaanaeus et Pherizaeus tunc habitabant in terra.
8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.	**8.** Et dixit Abram ad Lot, Ne nunc sit contentio inter me et to, et inter pastores meos et pastores tuos: quia viri fratres sumus.
9. *Is* not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.	**9.** Numquid non omnis terra est coram to? separa to nunc ame: si ieris ad sinistram, dextram tenebo: et si ad dextram ieris, sinistram tenebo.

10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.	**10.** Et levavit Lot oculos suos, et vidit omnem planitiem Jarden, quod tota esset irrigua, antequam disperderet Jehova Sedom et Hamorah, sicuti hortus Jehovae, sicut terra Aegypti, ingrediente to in Sohar.
11. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.	**11.** Et elegit sibi Lot omnem planitiem Jarden, et profectus est Lot ad Oreientem, et separaverunt se alter ab altero.
12. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom.	**12.** Abram habitavit in terra Chanaan, et Lot habitavit in urbibus planitiei, et tetendit tabernaculum Sedom usque.
13. But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.	**13.** Viri autem Sedom erant mali, et scelerati coram Jehova valde.
14. And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:	**14.** Et Jehova dixit ad Abram, postquam separavit se Lot ab eo, Leva nunc oculos tuos, et vide a loco ubi es, ad Aquilonem, Meridiem, Orientem, et Occidentem.
15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.	**15.** Quia omnem terram quam tu vides, tibi dabo et semini tuo usque in saeculum.
16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered.	**16.** Et ponam semen tuum sicut pulverem terrae: quia si poterit quisquam numerare pulverem terrae, etiam semen tuum numerabit.
17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.	**17.** Surge, ambula per terram in longitudinem ejus, et in latitudinem ejus: quia tibi dabo eam.
18. Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.	**18.** Et tetendit tabernaculum Abram, et venit, et habitavit in quercubus Mamre, quae sunt in Hebron: et aedificavit ibi altare Jehovae.

1. *And Abram went up out of Egypt*. In the commencement of the chapter, Moses commemorates the goodness of God in protecting Abram; whence it came to pass, that he not

only returned in safety, but took with him great wealth. This circumstance is also to be noticed, that when he was leaving Egypt, abounding in cattle and treasures, he was allowed to pursue his journey in peace; for it is surprising that the Egyptians would suffer what Abram had acquired among them, to be transferred elsewhere. Moses next shows that riches proved no sufficient obstacle to prevent Abram from having respect continually to his proposed end, and from moving towards it with unremitting pace. We know how greatly even a moderate share of wealth, hinders many from raising their heads towards heaven; while they who really possess abundance, not only lie torpid in indolence, but are entirely buried in the earth. Wherefore, Moses places the virtue of Abram in contrast with the common vice of others; when he relates that he was not to be prevented by any impediments, from seeking again the land of Canaan. For he might (like many others) have been able to flatter himself with some fair pretext: such as, that since God, from whom he had received extraordinary blessings, had been favorable and kind to him in Egypt, it was right for him to remain there. But he does not forget what had been divinely commanded him; and, therefore, as one unfettered, he hastens to the place whither he is called. Wherefore, the rich are deprived of all excuse, if they are so rooted in the earth, that they do not attend the call of God. Two extremes, however, are here to be guarded against. Many place angelical perfection in poverty; as if it were impossible to cultivate piety and to serve God, unless riches are cast away. Few indeed imitate Crates the Theban, who cast his treasures into the sea; because he did not think that he could be saved unless they were lost. Yet many fanatics repel rich men from the hope of salvation; as if poverty were the only gate of heaven; which yet, sometimes, involves men in more hindrances than riches. But Augustine wisely teaches us, that the rich and poor are collected together in the same inheritance of life; because poor Lazarus was received into the bosom of rich Abraham. On the other hand, we must beware of the opposite evil; lest riches should cast a stumblingblock in our way, or should so burden us, that we should the less readily advance towards the kingdom of heaven.

3. *And he went on his journeys*. In these words Moses teaches us, that Abram did not rest till he had returned to Bethel. For although he pitched his tent in many places, yet he nowhere so fixed his foot, as to make it his permanent abode. He does not speak of the south in reference to Egypt; he merely means that he had come into the southern part of Judea; and that, therefore, he had, by a long and troublesome journey, arrived at the place where he had determined to remain. Moses next subjoins, that an altar had before been there erected by him and that he then also began anew to call upon the name of the Lord: whereby we may learn, that the holy man was always like himself in worshipping God, and giving evidence of his piety. The explanation given by some, that the inhabitants of the place had been brought to the pure worship of God, is neither probable, nor to be deduced from the words of Moses. And we have stated elsewhere what is the force of the expression, 'To invoke in the name,' or, 'To call upon the name of the Lord;' namely, to profess the true and pure

worship of God. For Abram invoked God, not twelve times only, during the whole course of his life; but whenever he publicly celebrated him, and by a solemn rite, made it manifest that he had nothing in common with the superstitions of the heathen, then he is also said to have called upon God. Therefore, although he always worshipped God, and exercised himself in daily prayers; yet, because he did not daily testify his piety by outward profession before men, this virtue is here especially commended by Moses. It was therefore proper that invocation should be conjoined with the altar; because by the sacrifices offered, he plainly testified what God he worshipped in order that the Canaanites might know that he was not addicted to their common idolatries.

5. *And Lot also, which went with Abram*. Next follows the inconvenience which Abram suffered through his riches: namely, that he was torn from his nephew, whom he tenderly loved, as if it had been from his own bowels. Certainly had the option been given him he would rather have chosen to cast away his riches, than to be parted from him whom he had held in the place of an only son: yet he found no other method of avoiding contentions. Shall we impute this evil to his own excessive moroseness or to the forwardness of his nephew? I suppose, however, that we must rather consider the design of God. There was a danger lest Abram should be too much gratified with his own success inasmuch as prosperity blinds many. Therefore God allays the sweetness of wealth with bitterness; and does not permit the mind of his servant to be too much enchanted with it. And whenever a fallacious estimate of riches impels us to desire them inordinately, because we do not perceive the great disadvantages which they bring along with them; let the recollection of this history avail to restrain such immoderate attachment to them. Further, as often as the rich find any trouble arising from their wealth; let them learn to purify their minds by this medicine, that they may not become excessively addicted to the good things of the present life. And truly, unless the Lord were occasionally to put the bridle on men, to what depths would they not fall, when they overflow with prosperity? On the other hand, if we are straitened with poverty, let us know, that, by this method also, God corrects the hidden evils of our flesh. Finally, let those who abound remember, that they are surrounded with thorns and must take care lest they be pricked; and let those whose affairs are contracted and embarrassed know, that God is caring for them, in order that they may not be involved in evil and noxious snares. This separation was sad to Abram's mind; but it was suitable for the correction of much latent evil, that wealth might not stifle the armor of his zeal. But if Abram had need of such an antidote, let us not wonder, if God, by inflicting some stroke, should repress our excesses. For he does not always wait till the faithful shall have fallen; but looks forward for them into the future. So he does not actually correct the avarice or the pride of his servant Abram: but, by an anticipated remedy, he causes that Satan shall not infect his mind with any of his allurements.

7. *And there was a strife*. What I hinted respecting riches, is also true respecting a large retinue of attendants. We see with what ambition many desire a great crowd of servants, almost amounting to a whole people. But since the family of Abram cost him so dear; let us be well content to have few servants, or even to be entirely without them, if it seem right to the Lord that it should be so. It was scarcely possible to avoid great confusion, in a house where there was a considerable number of men. And experience confirms the truth of the proverbs that a crowd is commonly turbulent. Now, if repose and tranquility be an inestimable good; let us know, that we best consult for our real welfare, when we have a small house, and privately pass our time, without tumult, in our families. We are also warned, by the example before us, to beware lest Satan, by indirect methods, should lead us into contention. For when he cannot light up mutual enmities between us, he would involve us in other men's quarrels. Lot and Abram were at concord with each other; but a contention raised between their shepherds, carried them reluctantly away; so that they were compelled to separate from each other. There is no doubt that Abram faithfully instructed his own people to cultivate peace; yet he did not so far succeed in his desire and effort, as to prevent his witnessing the most destructive fire of discord kindled in his house. Wherefore, it is nothing wonderful, if we see tumults often arising in churches, where there is a still greater number of men. Abram had about three hundred servants; it is probable that the family of Lot was nearly equal to it:[353] what then may be expected to take place between five or six thousand men, — especially free men, — when they contend with each other? As, however, we ought not to be disturbed by such scandals; so we must, in every way, take care that contentions do not become violent. For unless they be speedily met, they will soon break out into pernicious dissension.

The Canaanite and the Perizzite. Moses adds this for the sake of aggravating the evil. For he declares the heat of the contention to have been so great, that it could neither be extinguished nor assuaged, even by the fear of impending destruction. They were surrounded by as many enemies as they had neighbors. Nothing, therefore, was wanting in order to their destruction, but a suitable occasion; and this they themselves were affording by their quarrels. To such a degree does blind fury infatuate men, when once the vehemence of contention has prevailed, that they carelessly despise death, when placed before their eyes. Now, although we are not continually surrounded by Canaanites, we are yet in the midst

353 "Familiam Lot minime fuisse parem verisimile est." The words are capable of two opposite renderings, according to the different sense in which minime is taken. It may either mean "by no means," or "at least." The Old English translation renders it in the former method. "It is very likely that the household of Lot was much less." The French version adopts the latter meaning. "Il est bien vraye — semblable que la familie de Lot n'a pas este moindre." Neither of the versions give a very probable meaning. The context seems almost to demand the translation which the Editor has ventured to prefer. — *Ed*

of enemies, as long as we sojourn in the world. Wherefore, if we are influenced by any desire for the salvation of ourselves, and of our brethren, let us beware of contentions which will deliver us over to Satan to be destroyed.

8. *And Abram said unto Lot*. Moses first states, that Abram no sooner perceived the strifes which had arisen, than he fulfilled the duty of a good householder, by attempting to restore peace among his domestics; and that afterwards, by his moderation, he endeavored to remedy the evil by removing it. And although the servants alone were contending, he yet does not say in vain, Let there be no strife between me and thee: because it was scarcely possible but that the contagion of the strife should reach from the domestics to their lords, although they were in other respects perfectly agreed. He also foresaw that their friendship could not long remain entire, unless he attempted, in time, to heal the insidious evil. Moreover, he calls to mind the bond of consanguinity between them; not because this alone ought to avail to promote mutual peace, but that he might more easily bend and mollify the mind of his nephew. For when the fear of God is less effectual with us than it ought to be; it is useful to call in other helps also, which may retain us in our duty. Now however since we all are adopted as sons of God, with the condition annexed, that we should be mutually brethren to each other: this sacred bond is less valued by us than it ought to be, if it does not prove sufficient to allay our contentions.

9. *Is not the whole land before thee ?* Here is that moderation of which I have spoken; namely, that Abram for the sake of appeasing strifes voluntarily sacrifices his own right. For as ambition and the desire of victory[354] is the mother of all contentions; so when every one meekly and moderately departs, in some degree, from his just claim, the best remedy is found for the removal of all cause of bitterness. Abram might indeed, with an honorable pretext, have more pertinaciously defended the right which he relinquished, but he shrinks from nothing for the sake of restoring peace: and therefore he leaves the option to his nephew.

10. *And Lot lifted up his eyes*. As the equity of Abram was worthy of no little praise; so the inconsideration of Lot, which Moses here describes, is deserving of censure. He ought rather to have contended with his uncle for the palm of modesty; and this the very order of nature suggested; but just as if he had been, in every respect, the superior, he usurps for himself the better portion; and makes choice of that region which seemed the more fertile and agreeable. And indeed it necessarily follows, that whosoever is too eagerly intent upon his own advantage, is wanting in humanity towards others. There can be no doubt that this injustice would pierce the mind of Abram; but he silently bore it, lest by any means, he should give occasion of new offense. And thus ought we entirely to act, whenever we perceive those with whom we are connected, to be not sufficiently mindful of their duty: otherwise

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there will be no end of tumults. When the neighboring plain of Sodom is compared to the paradise of God, many interpreters explain it as simply meaning, that it was excellent, and in the highest degree fertile; because the Hebrews call anything excellent, divine. I however think, that the place where Adam resided at the beginning, is pointed out. For Moses does not propose a general similitude, but says, 'that region was watered;' just as he related the same thing respecting the first abode of man; namely, that a river, divided into four parts, watered it; he also adds the same thing respecting a part of Egypt. Whence it more clearly appears, that in one particular only, this place is compared with two others.

13. *But the men of Sodom*. Lot thought himself happy that so rich a habitation had fallen to his share: but he learns at length, that the choice to which he had hastened, with a rashness equal to his avarice, had been unhappily granted to him; since he had to deal with proud and perverse neighbors, with whose conduct it was much harder to bear, than it was to contend with the sterility of the earth. Therefore, seeing that he was led away solely by the pleasantness of the prospect, he pays the penalty of his foolish cupidity. Let us then learn by this example, that our eyes are not to be trusted; but that we must rather be on our guard lest we be ensnared by them, and be encircled, unawares, with many evils; just as Lot, when he fancied that he was dwelling in paradise, was nearly plunged into the depths of hell. But it seems wonderful, that Moses, when he wishes to condemn the men of Sodom for their extreme wickedness, should say that they were wicked before the Lord; and not rather before men; for when we come to God's tribunal, every mouth must be stopped, and all the world must be subject to condemnation; wherefore Moses may be thought to speak thus by way of extenuation. But the case is otherwise: for he means that they were not merely under the dominion of those common vices which everywhere prevail among men, but were abandoned to most execrable crimes, the cry of which rose even to heaven, (as we shall afterwards see,) and demanded vengeance from God. That God, however, bore with them for a time: and not only so, but suffered them to inhabit a most fertile region, though they were utterly unworthy of light and of life, affords, as we hence learn, no ground to the wicked of self-congratulation, when God bears also with them for a time, or when, by treating them kindly, and even liberally, he, by his indulgence, strives with their ingratitude. Yet although they exult in their luxury, and even become outrageous against God, let the sons of God be admonished not to envy their fortune; but to wait a little while, till God, arousing them from their intoxication, shall call them to his dreadful judgment. Therefore, Ezekiel, speaking of the men of Sodom, declares it to have been the cause of their destruction, that, being saturated with bread and wine, and filled with delicacies, they had exercised a proud cruelty against the poor, (Ezekiel 16:49.)

14. *And the Lord said unto Abram*. Moses now relates that after Abram was separated from his nephew, divine consolation was administered for the appeasing of his mind. There is no doubt that the wound inflicted by that separation was very severe, since he was obliged

to send away one who was not less dear to him than his own life. When it is said, therefore, that the Lord spoke, the circumstance of time requires to be noted; as if he had said, that the medicine of God's word was now brought to alleviate his pain. And thus he teaches us, that the best remedy for the mitigation and the cure of sadness, is placed in the word of God.

Lift up now thine eyes. Seeing that the Lord promises the land to the seed of Abram, we perceive the admirable design of God, in the departure of Lot. He had assigned the land to Abram alone; if Lot had remained with him, the children of both would have been mixed together. The cause of their dissension was indeed culpable; but the Lord, according to his infinite wisdom, turns it to a good issue, that the posterity of Lot should possess no part of the inheritance. This is the reason why he says 'All the land which is before thee, I assign to thee and to thy seed. Therefore, there is no reason why thou, to whom a reward so excellent is hereafter to be given, shouldst be excessively sorrowful and troubled on account of this solitude and privation.' For although the same thing had been already promised to Abram; yet God now adapts his promise to the relief of the present sorrow. And thus it is to be remembered that not only was a promise here repeated which might cherish and confirm Abram's faith; but that a special oracle was given from which Abram might learn, that the interests of his own seed were to be promoted, by the separation of Lot from him. The speculation of Luther here (as in other places) has no solidity; namely, that God spoke through some prophet. In promising the land "for ever," he does not simply denote perpetuity; but that period which was brought to a close by the advent of Christ. Concerning the meaning of the word ⊠⊠⊠ (*olam*,) the Jews ignorantly contend: but whereas it is taken in various senses in Scripture, it comprises in this place (as I have lately hinted) the whole period of the law; just as the covenant which the Lord made with his ancient people is, in many places, called eternal; because it was the office of Christ by his coming to renovate the world. But the change which Christ introduced was not the *abolition* of the old promises, but rather their *confirmation*. Seeing, therefore, that God has not now one peculiar people in the land of Canaan, but a people diffused throughout all regions of the earth; this does not contradict the assertion, that the eternal possession of the land was rightly promised to the seed of Abram, until the future renovation.

16. *And I will make thy seed as the dust*. Omitting those subtleties, by means of which others argue about nothing, I simply explain the words to signify, that the seed of Abram is compared to the dust, because of its immense multitude; and truly the sense of the term is to be sought for only in Moses' own words. It was, however, necessary to be here added, that God would raise up for him a seed, of which he was hitherto destitute. And we see that God always keeps him under the restraint of his own word; and will have him dependent upon his own lips. Abram is commanded to look at the dust; but when he turns his eyes upon his own family, what similitude is there between his solitariness and the countless

particles of dust? This authority the Lord therefore requires us to attribute to his own word, that it alone should be sufficient for us. It may also give occasion to ridicule, that God commands Abram to travel till he should have examined the whole land. To what purpose shall he do this, except that he may more clearly perceive himself to be a stranger; and that, being exhausted by continual and fruitless disquietude, he may despair of any stable and permanent possession? For how shall he persuade himself that he is lord of that land in which he is scarcely permitted to drink water, although he has with great labor dug the wells? But these are the exercises of faith, in order that it may perceive, in the word, those things which are far off, and which are hidden from carnal sense. For faith is the beholding of absent things, (Hebrews 11:1,) and it has the word as a mirror, in which it may discover the hidden grace of God. And the condition of the pious, at this days is not dissimilar: for since they are hated by all, are exposed to contempt and reproach, wander without a home, are sometimes driven hither and thither, and suffer from nakedness and poverty, it is nevertheless their duty to lay hold on the inheritance which is promised. Let us therefore walk through the world, as persons debarred from all repose, who have no other resource than the mirror of the word.

18. *And Abram removed his tent*[355] Here Moses relates that the holy man, animated by the renewed promise of Gods traversed the land with great courage as if by a look alone he could subdue it to himself. Thus we see how greatly the oracle had profited him: not that he had heard anything from the mouth of God to which he had been unaccustomed, but because he had obtained a medicine so seasonable and suitable to his present grief, that he rose with collected energy towards heaven. At length Moses records that the holy man, having, performed his circuit, returned to the oak, or valley of Mare, to dwell there. But, again, he commends his piety in raising an altar, and calling upon God. I have already frequently explained what this means: for he himself bore an altar in his heart; but seeing that the land was full of profane altars on which the Canaanites and other nations polluted the worship of God, Abram publicly professed that he worshipped the true God; and that not at random, but according to the method revealed to him by the word. Hence we infer, that the altar of which mention is made was not built rashly by his hand, but that it was consecrated by the same word of God.

355 "Et tetendit Abram tabernaculum." Abram pitched his tent. This seems to be the true meaning of the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠; yet the term pitched does not so well agree with the context as the term removed; in the use of which word our translators have followed the Septuagint, (ἀποσκηνώσας,) and the Vulgate, (movens igitur tabernaculum.) The Arabic (according to the Latin translation) brings out the same sense, by a periphrasis, "Abram fixed his tent in divers places till he came and dwelt in the land of Mamre." And this is probably the true solution of the difficulty. — *Ed*

CHAPTER 14.

Genesis 14:1-24

1. And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;	**1.** Et fuit in diebus Amraphel regis Sinhar, Arioch rex Elasar, Cedorlaomer rex Helam, et Thidhal rex gentium,
2. *That these* made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.	**2.** Fecerunt bellum cum Berah rege Sedom, et Birsah rege Hamorah, Sinab rege Admah, et Semeber rege Seboim, et rege Belah: ipsa est Sohar.
3. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.	**3.** Omnes isti conjuncti sunt in valle Siddim: ipsa est *vallis* Maris salis.
4. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.	**4.** Duodecim annos servierant Cedorlaomer, et decimotertio anno defecerant.
5. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that *were* with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,	**5.** Decimoquarto autem anno venit Cedorlaomer, et reges qui erant cum eo, et percusserunt Rephaim in Astheroth Carnaim, et Zuzim in Ham, et Emim in Saveh Ciriathaim,
6. And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which *is* by the wilderness.	**6.** Et Hori in monte suo Sehir, usque ad planitiem Pharan, quae est juxta desertum.
7. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which *is* Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.	**7.** Reversi sunt autem, et venerunt ad Hen — misphat, ipsa est Cades: et percusserunt omnem agrum Amalecitae, et etiam Emoraeum habitantem in Haseson — thamar.
8. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same *is* Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;	**8.** Et egressus est rex Sedom, et rex Hamorah, et rex Admah, et rex Seboim, et rex Belah, ipsa est Sohar, et ordinaverunt cum eis praelium in valle Siddim,
9. With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.	**9.** Cum Cedorlaomer rege Hela, et Thidhal rege gentium et Amraphel rege Sinhar, et Arioch rege Elasar: quatuor reges cum quinque.

10. And the vale of Siddim *was full of* slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.	**10.** Vallis autem Siddim plena erat puteis caementi: et fugerunt rex Sedom et Hamorah, projeceruntque se illuc, et residui in montem fugerunt.
11. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.	**11.** Et ceperunt omnen substantiam Sedom et Hamorah, omnemque escam eorum, et abierunt.
12. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.	**12.** Ceperunt quoque Lot et substantiam ejus, filium fratris Abram, et abierunt, quia ipse habitabat in Sedom.
13. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these *were* confederate with Abram.	**13.** Et venit quidam qui evaserat, et nuntiavit Abram Ebraeo, qui habitabat in quercubus Mamre Emori fratris Eschol, fratris Haner et ipsi erant foederati cum Abram.
14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servents*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.	**14.** Audiens autem Abram quod captivus dusctus esset frater suus, armavit a se institutos pueros domus suae, octodecim et trecentos, et persequutus est usque ad Daniel
15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus.	**15.** Et divisit se super eos nocte, ipse et servi ejus, et percussit eos: persequutusque est eos usque ad IIovah, quae est a laeva Dammesec.
16. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.	**16.** Et reduxit omnem substantiam, et etiam Lot fratrem suum, et substantiam ejus reduxit, atque etiam mulieres et populum.
17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale.	**17.** Et egressus est rex Sedom in occursum ejus, postquam reversus est ipse a caedendo Cedorlaomer, et reges qui erant secum, ad Vallem Saveh: ipsa est Vallis regis.
18. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.	**18.** Et Melchisedec rex Salem protulit panem et vinum: et ipse *erat* sacerdos Deo altissimo.

19. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:	**19.** Et benedixit ei, et dixit, Benedictus Abram Deo excelso, possessori coeli et terrae.
20. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.	**20.** Et benedictus Deus excelsus, qui tradidit hostes tuos in manum tuam: et dedit ei decimam de omnibus.
21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.	**21.** Et dixit rex Sedom ad Abram, Da mihi animas, et substantiam tolle tibi.
22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,	**22.** Et dixit Abram ad regem Sedom, Levavi manum meam ad Jehovam Deum excelsum, possessorem coeli et terrae,
23. That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:	**23.** Si a filo usque ad corrigiam calceamenti, si accepero ex omnibus quae sunt tibi: ne dicas, Ego ditavi Abram.
24. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.	**24.** Praeter ea tantum quae comederunt pueri, et partem virorum qui profecti sunt mecum, Aner, Eschol, et Mamre: ipsi accipiant partem suam.

1. *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel.* The history related in this chapter is chiefly worthy of remembrance, for three reasons: first, because Lot, with a gentle reproof, exhorted the men of Sodom to repentance; they had, however, become altogether unteachable, and desperately perverse in their wickedness. But Lot was beaten with these scourges, because, having been allured and deceived by the richness of the soil, he had mixed himself with unholy and wicked men. Secondly, because God, out of compassion to him, raised up Abram as his avenger and liberator, to rescue him, when a captive, from the hand of the enemy; in which act the incredible goodness and benevolence of God towards his own people, is rendered conspicuous; since, for the sake of one man, he preserves, for a time, many who were utterly unworthy. Thirdly, because Abram was divinely honored with a signal victory, and was blessed by the mouth of Melchizedek, in whose person, as appears from other passages of Scripture, the kingdom and priesthood of Christ was shadowed forth. As it respects the sum of the history, it is a horrible picture both of the avarice and pride of man.

The human race had yet their three progenitors, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, living among them; by the very sight of whom they were admonished, that they all sprung from one family, and one ark. Moreover, the memory of their common origin was a sacred pledge of fraternal connection, which should have bound them to assist each other, by mutual good offices. Nevertheless, ambition so prevailed, that they assailed one another on all sides, with sword and armor, and each attempted to subdue the rest. Wherefore, while we see, at the present day, princes raging furiously, and shaking the earth to the utmost of their power; let us remember that the evil is of ancient date; since the lust of dominion has, in all ages, been too prevalent among men. Let us, however, also remark, that no fault is worse than that loftiness of mind, which many deem a most heroical disposition. The ambition of Chedorlaomer was the torch of the whole war: for he, inflamed with the desire of triumphing, drew three others into a hostile confederacy. And pride compelled the men of Sodom and their allies to take arms, for the purpose of shaking off the yoke.

That Moses, however, records the names of so many kings, while Shem was yet living, (although derided by profane men as fabulous,) will not appear absurd, if we only reflect that this great propagation of the human race, was a remarkable miracle of God. For when the Lord said to Noah himself, and to his sons, Increase and multiply, he intended to raise them to the hope of a far more excellent restoration than would have taken place, in the ordinary course of nature. This benediction is indeed perpetual, and shall flourish even to the end of the world: but it was necessary that its extraordinary efficacy should then appear; in order that these earliest fathers might know, that a new world had been divinely inclosed within the ark. By the Poets, Deucalion with his wife, is feigned to have sown the race of men after the deluge, by throwing stones behind him.[356] But it followed of necessity, that the miserable minds of men should be deluded with such trifles, when they departed from the pure truth of God; and Satan has made use of this artifice, for the purpose at discrediting the veracity of the miracles of God. For since the memory of the deluge, and the unwonted propagation of a new world, could not be speedily obliterated, he scattered abroad clouds and smoke; introducing puerile conceits, in order that what had before been held for certain truth, might now be regarded as a fable. It is however to be observed, that all are called kings by Moses, who held the priority in any town, or in any considerable assembly of men. It is asked, whether those kings who followed Chedorlaomer dwelt at a great distance; because Tidal is called the king of nations? There are those who imagine that he reigned over different nations far and wide; as if he was a king of kings. The ancient interpreter fetches Arioch from Pontus;[357] which is most absurd. I rather think the true reason of the name was, that he had a band composed of deserters and vagrants, who, having left their own country, had

356 See Ovid's Metamorphosis 1.

357 "Arioch rex Ponti." — *Vulgate*

resorted to him. Therefore, since they were not one body — natives of his own country — but gathered together from a promiscuous multitude, he was properly called king of nations. In saying that the battle was fought in the vale of Siddim, or in the open plain, which, when Moses wrote, had become the Salt Sea, it is not to be doubted that the Dead Sea, or the lake Asphaltites, is meant. For he knew whom he was appointed to instruct, and therefore he always accommodated his words to the rude capacity of the people; and this is his common custom in reference to the names of places, as I have previously intimated. Before, however, the battle was fought, Moses declares that the inhabitants of the region were partially beaten. It is probable that all had been scattered, because they had no leader, under whose auspices they might fight, until five kings advanced to meet them with a disciplined army. Now, though Chedorlaomer had rendered so many people tributary to him by tyranny rather than by lawful authority, and on that account his ambition is to be condemned; yet his subjects are justly punished for having rashly rebelled. For although liberty is by no means to be despised, yet the subjection which is once imposed upon us cannot, without implied rebellion against God, be shaken off; because 'every power is ordained by God,' notwithstanding, in its commencement, it may have flowed from the lust of dominion, (Romans 13:1.) Therefore some of the rebels are slaughtered like cattle; and others, though they have clothed themselves in armor, and are prepared to resist, are yet driven to flight; thus, unhappily to all concerned, terminates the contumacious refusal to pay tribute. And such narratives are to be noticed that we may learn from them, that all who strive to produce anarchy, fight against God.

10. *And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled*. Some expound that they had fallen into pits: but this is not probable, since they were by no means ignorant of the neighboring places: such an event would rather have happened to foreign enemies. Others say, that they went down into them for the sake of preserving their lives. I, however, understand them to have exchanged one kind of death for another, as is common in the moment of desperation; as if Moses had said, the swords of the enemy were so formidable to them, that, without hesitation, they threw themselves headlong into the pits. For he immediately afterwards subjoins, that they who escaped fled to the mountains. Whence we infer, that they who had rushed into the pits had perished. Only let us know, that they fell, not so much deceived through ignorance of the place, as disheartened by fear.

12. *And they took Lot*. It is doubtful whether Lot remained at home while others went to the battle, and was there captured by the enemy; or whether he had been compelled to take arms with the rest of the people. As, however, Moses does not mention him till he speaks of the plundering of the city, the conjecture is probable, that at the conclusion of the battle, he was taken at home, unarmed. We here see, first, that sufferings are common to the good and the evil; then, that the more closely we are connected with the wicked and the

ungodly, when God pours down his vengeance on them, the more quickly does the scourge come upon us.

13. *And there came one that had escaped*. This is the second part of the chapter, in which Moses shows, that when God had respect to his servant Lot, he gave him Abram as his deliverer, to rescue him from the hands of the enemy. But here various questions arise; as, whether it was lawful for Abram, a private person, to arm his family against kings, and to undertake a public war. I do not, however, doubt, that as he went to the war endued with the power of the Spirit, so also he was guarded by a heavenly command, that he did not transgress the bounds of his vocation. And this ought not to be regarded as a new thing, but as his special calling; for he had already been created king of that land. And although the possession of it was deferred to a future time; yet God would give some remarkable proof of the power which he had granted him, and which was hitherto unknown to men.[358] A similar prelude of what was to follow, we read in the case of Moses, when he slew the Egyptian, before he openly presented himself as the avenger and deliverer of his nation. And for this reason the subject ought to be noticed, that they who wish to defend themselves by armed force, whenever any force is used against them, may note from this fact, frame a rule for themselves. We shall hereafter see this same Abram bearing patiently and with a submissive mind, injuries which had at least, an equal tendency to provoke his spirit. Moreover, that Abram attempted nothing rashly, but rather, that his design was approved by God, will appear presently, from the commendation of Melchizedek. We may therefore conclude, that this war was undertaken by him, under the special direction of the Spirit. If any one should take exception, that he proceeded further than was lawful, when he spoiled the victors of their prey and captives, and restored them wholly to the men of Sodom, who had, by no means been committed to his protection; I answer, since it appears that God was his Guide and Ruler in this affair, — as we infer from His approbation, — it is not for us to dispute respecting His secret judgment. God had destined the inhabitants of Sodom, when their neighbors were ruined and destroyed, to a still more severe judgment; because they were themselves the worst of all. He, therefore, raised up his servant Abram, after they had been admonished by a chastisement sufficiently severe, to deliver them, in order that they might be rendered the more inexcusable. Therefore, this peculiar suggestion of the Holy Spirit ought no more to be drawn into a precedent, than the whole war which Abram had carried on. With respect to the messenger who had related to Abram the slaughter at Sodom, I do not accept what some suppose, that he was a pious man. We may rather conjecture that, as a fugitive from home, who had been deprived of all his goods, he came to Abram to elicit something from his humanity. That Abram is called a Hebrew, I do not explain from

358 "Dieu a voulu donner un patron singulier de la puissance qu'il luy avoit bailee, laquelle estoit encore incognue aux hommes." — *French Tr*

the fact of his having passed over the river, as is the opinion of some; but from his being of the progeny of Eber. For it is a name of descent. And the Holy Spirit here again honorably announces that race as blessed by God.

And these were confederate with Abram. It appears, that in the course of time, Abram was freely permitted to enter into covenant and friendship with the princes of the land: for the heroical virtues of the man, caused them to regard him as one who was not, by any means, to be despised. Nay, as he had so great a family, he might also have been numbered among kings, if he had not been a stranger and a sojourner. But God purposed thus to provide for his peace, by a covenant relating to temporal things in order that he never might be mingled with those nations. Moreover, that this whole transaction was divinely ordered we may readily conjecture from the fact, that his associates did not hesitate, at great risk, to assail four kings, who (according to the state of the times) were sufficiently strong, and were flushed with the confidence of victory. Surely they would scarcely ever have been thus favorable to a stranger, except by a secret impulse of God.

14. *When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive*. Moses briefly explains the cause of the war which was undertaken; namely, that Abram might rescue his relation from captivity. Meanwhile, what I have before said is to be remembered, that he did not rashly fly to arms; but took them as from the hand of God, who had constituted him lord of that land. With reference to the words themselves, I know not why the ancient interpreter has rendered them, 'Abram numbered his trained servants.' For the word ⊠⊠⊠ (*rik*) signifies to unsheathe, or to draw out.[359] Now Moses calls these servants ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*chanichim*,) not as having been educated and trained for military service, as many suppose; but rather (in my opinion) as having been brought up under his own authority, and imbued from childhood with his discipline; so that they fought the more courageously, being stimulated by his faith, and going forth under his auspices;[360] and were ready to undergo every kind of danger for his sake. But in this great household troop, we must notice, not only the diligence of the holy patriarch, but the special blessing of God, by which it had been increased beyond the common and usual manner.

15. *And he divided himself against them*. Some explain the words to mean that Abram alone, with his domestic troops, rushed upon the enemy. Others, that he and his three confederates divided their bands, in order to strike greater terror into the foe. A third class suppose the phrase to be a Hebraism, for making an irruption into the midst of the enemy. I rather embrace the second exposition; namely, that he invaded the enemy on different sides, and suddenly inspired them with terror. For the circumstance of time favors this view,

359 "Comme s'il disoit, Il tira hors de sa maison trois cens dixhuit serviteurs." — "As if he had said, He drew out of his house three hundred and eighteen servants." — *French Tr*

360 "Animosius sub fide et auspiciis ejus bellarent."

because he attacked them by night. And although examples of similar bravery occur in profane history; yet it ought to be ascribed to the faith of Abram, that with a small band, he dared to assail a numerous army elated with victory. But that he came off conqueror with little trouble, and with intrepidity pursued those who far exceeded him in number, we must ascribe to the favor of God.

17. *And the king of Sodom went out*. Although the king of Sodom knew that Abram had taken arms only on account of his nephew, yet he went to meet him with due honor, in order to show his gratitude. For it is a natural duty to acknowledge benefits conferred upon us, even when not intentionally rendered, but only from unexpected circumstances and occasions, or (as we say) by accident. Moreover, the whole affair yields greater glory to God, because the victory of Abram was celebrated in this manner. He also marks the place where the king of Sodom met Abram, namely, "the king's dale," which I think was so called, rather after some particular king, than because those kings met there for their pleasure.[361]

18. *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth*. This is the last of the three principal points of this history, that Melchizedek, the chief father of the Church, having entertained Abram at a feast, blessed him, in virtue of his priesthood, and received tithes from him. There is no doubt that by the coming of this king to meet him, God also designed to render the victory of Abram famous and memorable to posterity. But a more exalted and excellent mystery was, at the same time, adumbrated: for seeing that the holy patriarch, whom God had raised to the highest rank of honor, submitted himself to Melchizedek, it is not to be doubted that God had constituted him the only head of the whole Church;[362] for, without controversy, the solemn act of benediction, which Melchizedek assumed to himself, was a symbol of preeminent dignity. If any one replies, that he did this as a priest; I ask, was not Abram also a priest? Therefore God here commends to us something peculiar in Melchizedek, in preferring him before the father of all the faithful. But it will be more satisfactory to examine the passage word by word, in regular order, that we may thence better gather the import of the whole. That he received Abram and his companions as guests belonged to his *royalty* ; but the benediction pertained especially to his *sacerdotal office*. Therefore, the words of Moses ought to be thus connected: Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and seeing he was the priest of God, he blessed Abram; thus to each character is distinctly attributed what is its own. He refreshed a wearied and famishing army with royal liberality; but because he was a priest, he blessed, by the rite of solemn prayer, the firstborn son of God, and the father of the Church. Moreover, although I do not deny that it was the most ancient custom, for those who were kings to fulfill also the office of the priesthood;

361 "Quan quod animi causa reges illuc convenirent."

362 "Non dubium est quin illum constituerit unicum totius ecclesiae caput." — "Il ne faut pas douter que Dieu ne l'ait constitue chef unique de toute l'Egilise." — *French Tr*

yet this appears to have been, even in that age, extraordinary in Melchizedek. And truly he is honored with no common eulogy, when the Spirit ratifies his priesthood. We know how, at that time, religion was everywhere corrupted since Abram himself, who was descended from the sacred race of Shem and Eber, had been plunged in the profound vortex of superstitions with his father and grandfather. Therefore many imagine Melchizedek to have been Shem; to whose opinion I am, for many reasons, hindered from subscribing. For the Lord would not have designated a man, worthy of eternal memory, by a name so new and obscure, that he must remain unknown. Secondly, it is not probable that Shem had migrated from the east into Judea; and nothing of the kind is to be gathered from Moses. Thirdly, if Shem had dwelt in the land of Canaan, Abram would not have wandered by such winding courses, as Moses has previously related, before he went to salute his ancestor. But the declaration of the Apostle is of the greatest weight; that this Melchizedek, whoever he was, is presented before us, without any origin, as if he had dropped from the clouds, and that his name is buried without any mention of his death. (Hebrews 7:3.) But the admirable grace of God shines more clearly in a person unknown; because, amid the corruptions of the world, he alone, in that land, was an upright and sincere cultivator and guardian of religion. I omit the absurdities which Jerome, in his Epistle to Evagrius, heaps together; lest, without any advantage, I should become troublesome, and even offensive to the reader. I readily believe that Salem is to be taken for Jerusalem; and this is the generally received interpretation. If, however, any one chooses rather to embrace a contrary opinion, seeing that the town was situated in a plain, I do not oppose it. On this point Jerome thinks differently: nevertheless, what he elsewhere relates, that in his own times some vestiges of the palace of Melchizedek were still extant in the ancient ruins, appears to me improbable.

It now remains to be seen how Melchizedek bore the image of Christ, and became, as it were, his representative, ἀντίτυπος (*avtitupos.*[363]) These are the words of David,

"The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek," (Psalm 110:4.)

First, he had placed him on a royal throne, and now he gives him the honor of the priesthood. But under the Law, these two offices were so distinct, that it was unlawful for kings to usurp the office of the priesthood. If, therefore, we concede as true, what Plato declares, and what occasionally occurs in the poets, that it was formerly received, by the common custom of nations, that the same person should be both king and priest; this was by no means the case with David and his posterity, whom the Law peremptorily forbade to intrude on the priestly office. It was therefore right, that what was divinely appointed under the old law, should be abrogated in the person of this priest. And the Apostle does not

363 "Il faut voir comment Melchisedech a cu la figure de Christ engravee ea soy, et est comme la representation et correspondance." — *French Tr*

contend without reason, that a more excellent priesthood than that old and shadowy one, was here pointed out; which priesthood is confirmed by an oath. Moreover, we never find that king and priest, who is to be preeminent over all, till we come to Christ. And as no one has arisen except Christ, who equalled Melchizedek in dignity, still less who excelled him; we hence infer that the image of Christ was presented to the fathers, in his person. David, indeed, does not propose a similitude framed by himself; but declares the reason for which the kingdom of Christ was divinely ordained, and even confirmed with an oath; and it is not to be doubted that the same truth had previously been traditionally handed down by the fathers. The sum of the whole is, that Christ would thus be the king next to God, and also that he should be anointed priest, and that for ever; which it is very useful for us to know, in order that we may learn that the royal power of Christ is combined with the office of priest. The same Person, therefore who was constituted the only and eternal Priest, in order that he might reconcile us to God, and who, having made expiation, might intercede for us, is also a King of infinite power to secure our salvation, and to protect us by his guardian care. Hence it follows, that relying on his advocacy, we may stand boldly in the presence of God, who will, we are assured, be propitious to us; and that trusting in his invincible arm, we may securely triumph over enemies of every kind. But they who separate one office from the other, rend Christ asunder, and subvert their own faith, which is deprived of half its support. It is also to be observed, that Christ is called an eternal King, like Melchizedek. For since the Scripture, by assigning no end to his life, leaves him as if he were to survive through all ages; it certainly represents or shadows forth to us, in his person, a figure, not of a temporal, but of an eternal kingdom. But whereas Christ, by his death, has accomplished the office of Priest, it follows that God was, by that one sacrifice, once appeased in such a manner, that now reconciliation is to be sought in Christ alone. Therefore, they do him grievous wrong, and wrest from him by abominable sacrilege, the honor divinely conferred upon him by an oaths who either institute other sacrifices for the expiation of sins, or who make other priests.[364] And I wish this had been prudently weighed by the ancient writers of the Church. For then would they not so coolly, and even so ignorantly, have transferred to the bread and wine the similitude between Christ and Melchizedek, which consists in things very different. They have supposed that Melchizedek is the image of Christ, because he offered bread and wine. For they add, that Christ offered his body, which is life-giving bread, and his blood, which is spiritual drink. But the Apostle, while in his Epistle to the Hebrews, he most accurately collects, and specifically prosecutes, every point of similarity between Christ and Melchizedek, says not a word concerning the bread and wine. If the subtleties of Tertullian, and of others like him, were true, it would have been a culpable

364 "Ceux qui dressent d'autres sacrifices pour nettoyer les pechez, on forgent d'autres sacrificateurs." Those who prepare other sacrifices to cleanse from sins, or make others sacrificing priests. — *French Tr*

negligence, not to bestow a single syllable upon the principal point, while discussing the separate parts, which were of comparatively trivial importance. And seeing the Apostle disputes at so great length, and with such minuteness, concerning the priesthood; how gross an instance of forgetfulness would it have been, not to touch upon that memorable sacrifice, in which the whole force of the priesthood was comprehended? He proves the honor of Melchizedek from the benediction given, and tithes received: how much better would it have suited this argument to have said, that he offered not lambs or calves, but the life of the world, (that is, the body and blood of Christ,) in a figure? By these arguments the fictions of the ancients are abundantly refuted. Nevertheless, from the very words of Moses a sufficiently lucid refutation may be taken. For we do not there read that *anything* was offered to God; but in one continued discourse it is stated, 'He offered bread and wine; and seeing he was priest of the Most High God, he blessed him.' Who does not see that the same relative pronoun is common to both verbs; and therefore that Abram was both refreshed with the wine, and honored with the benediction? Utterly ridiculous truly are the Papists, who distort the offering[365] of bread and wine to the sacrifice of their mass. For in order to bring Melchizedek into agreement with themselves, it will be necessary for them to concede that *bread* and *wine* are offered in the mass. Where, then, is transubstantiation, which leaves nothing except the bare *species* of the elements? Then, with what audacity do they declare that the body of Christ is immolated in their sacrifices? Under what pretext, since the Son of God is called the only successor of Melchizedek, do they substitute innumerable successors for him? We see, then, how foolishly they not only deprave this passage, but babble without the color of reason.

19. *And he blessed him*. Unless these two members of the sentence, 'He was the priest of God,' and 'He blessed,' cohere together, Moses here relates nothing uncommon. For men mutually bless each other; that is, they wish well to each other. But here the priest of God is described, who, according to the right of his office, sanctifies one inferior and subject to himself. For he would never have dared to bless Abram, unless he had known, that in this respect he excelled him. In this manner the Levitical priests are commanded to bless the people; and God promises that the blessing should be efficacious and ratified, (Numbers 6:23.) So Christ, when about to ascend up to heaven, having lifted up his hands, blessed the Apostles, as a minister of the grace of God, (Luke 24:51;) and then was exhibited the truth of this figure. For he testifies that the office of blessing the Church, which had been adumbrated in Melchizedek, was assigned him by his Father.

365 *Oblationem*; yet the word ought not to be rendered oblation, because this term in English always implies that the offering is made to God; whereas Calvin speaks of the bread and wine simply as being presented by Melchizedek to Abram. — *Ed.*

Blessed be Abram of the most high God. The design of Melchizedek is to confirm and ratify the grace of the Divine vocation to holy Abram; for he points out the honor with which God had peculiarly dignified him by separating him from all others, and adopting him as his own son. And he calls God, by whom Abram had been chosen, the Possessor of heaven and earth, to distinguish him from the fictitious idols of the Gentiles. Afterwards, indeed, God invests himself with other titles; that, by some peculiar mark, he may render himself more clearly known to men, who, because of the vanity of their mind, when they simply hear of God as the Framer of heaven and earth, never cease to wander, till at length they are lost in their own speculations. But because God was already known to Abram, and his faith was founded upon many miracles, Melchizedek deems it sufficient to declare that, by the title of Creator,[366] He whom Abram worshipped, is the true and only God. And although Melchizedek himself maintained the sincere worship of the true God, he yet calls Abram blessed of God, in respect of the eternal covenant: as if he would say, that, by a kind of hereditary right, the grace of God resided in one family and nation, because Abram alone had been chosen out of the whole world. Then is added a special congratulation on the victory obtained; not such as is wont to pass between profane men, who puff each other up with inflated encomiums; but Melchizedek gives thanks unto God, and regards the victory which the holy man had gained as a seal of his gratuitous calling.

20. *And he gave him tithes of all.* There are those who understand that the tithes were given to Abram; but the Apostle speaks otherwise, in declaring that Levi had paid tithes in the loins of Abram, (Hebrews 7:9,) when Abram offered tithes to a more excellent Priest. And truly what the expositors above-mentioned mean, would be most absurd; because, if Melchizedek was the priest of God, it behaved him to receive tithes rather than to give them. Nor is it to be doubted but Abram offered the gift to God, in the person of Melchizedek, in order that, by such first-fruits, he might dedicate all his possessions to God. Abram therefore voluntarily gave tithes to Melchizedek, to do honor to his priesthood. Moreover, since it appears that this was not done wrongfully nor rashly, the Apostle properly infers, that, in this figure, the Levitical priesthood is subordinate to the priesthood of Christ. For other reasons, God afterwards commanded tithes to be given to Levi under the Law; but, in the age of Abram, they were only a holy offering, given as a pledge and proof of gratitude. It is however uncertain whether he offered the title of the spoils or of the goods which he possessed at home. But, since it is improbable that he should have been liberal with other persons' goods, and should have given a very a tenth part of the prey, of which he had resolved not to touch even a thread, I rather conjecture, that these tithes were taken out of his own property. I do not, however, admit that they were paid annually, as some imagine, but rather,

366 "Creationis elogio testari," etc. — "De donner a Dieu ce titre de Possesseur du ciel et de la terre." To give to God this title of Possessor of heaven and earth. — *French Tr*

in my judgment, he dedicated this present to Melchizedek once, for the purpose of acknowledging him as the high priest of God: nor could he, at that time, (as we say,) hand it over;[367] but there was a solemn stipulation, of which the effect shortly after followed.

21. *And the king of Sodom said*. Moses having, by the way, interrupted the course of his narrative concerning the king of Sodom, by the mention of the king of Salem, now returns to it again; and says that the king of Sodom came to meet Abram, not only for the sake of congratulating him, but of giving him a due reward. He therefore makes over to him the whole prey, except the men; as if he would says 'It is a great thing that I recover the men; let all the rest be given to thee as a reward for this benefit.' And thus to have shown himself grateful to man, would truly have been worthy of commendation; had he not been ungrateful to God, by whose severity and clemency he remained alike unprofited. It was even possible that this man, when poor and deprived of all his goods, might, with a servile affectation of modesty, try to gain the favor of Abram, by asking to have nothing but the captives and the empty city for himself. Certainly we shall afterwards see that the men of Sodom were unmindful of the benefit received, when they proudly and contemptuously vexed righteous Lot.

22. *And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand, etc*[368] This ancient ceremony was very appropriate to give expression to the force and nature of an oath. For by raising the hand towards heaven, we show that we appeal to God as a witness, and also as an avenger, if we fail to keep our oath. Formerly, indeed, they raised their hands in giving votes; whence the Greeks derive the word (χειροτονεῖν,)[369] which signifies to decree: but in the rite of swearing, the reason for doing so was different. For men hereby declared, that they regarded themselves as in the presence of God, and called upon him to be both the Guardian of truth, and the Avenger of perjury. Yet it may seem strange that Abram should so easily have put himself forward to swear; for he knew that a degree of reverence was due to the name of God, which should constrain us to use it but sparingly, and only from necessity. I answer, there were two reasons for his swearing. First, since inconstant men are wont to measure others by their own standard, they seldom place confidence in bare assertions. The king of Sodom, therefore, would have thought that Abram did not seriously remit his right, unless the name of God had been interposed. And, secondly, it was of great consequence, to make it manifest to all, that he had not carried on a mercenary war. The histories of all times sufficiently declare, that even they who have had just causes of war have, never-

367 "Nec tunc potuit de manu (quod aiunt) in manum tradere." — "Ne luy a peu lors builler de main a main, comme on dit." Nor was he then able to commit it to him, from hand to hand, as they say. — *French Tr*

368 A portion of the 22d verse, which is commented upon without being given in the original, is here inserted, in order to make the whole more clear to the reader; it also appears in the French Translation. — *Ed*.

369 Literally, to stretch forth the hand.

theless, been invited to it by the thirst of private gain. And as men are acute in devising pretexts, they are never at a loss to find plausible reasons for war, even though covetousness may be their only real stimulant. Therefore, unless Abram had resolutely refused the spoils of war, the rumor would immediately have spread, that, under the pretense of rescuing his nephew, he had been intent upon grasping the prey. Against which it was necessary for him carefully to guard, not so much for his own sakes as for the glory of God, which would otherwise have received some mark of disparagement. Besides, Abram wished to arm himself with the name of God, as with a shield, against all the allurements of avarice. For the king of Sodom would not have desisted from tempting his mind by various methods, if the occasion for using bland insinuations had not been promptly cut off.

23. *That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe - latchet*. The Hebrews have an elliptical form of making oath, in which the imprecation of punishment is understood. In some places, the full expression of it occurs in the Scriptures, "The Lord do so to me and more also," (1 Samuel 14:44.) Since however, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, in order that the obligation of oaths may be the more binding, this abrupt form of speech admonishes men to reflect on what they are doing; for it is just as if they should put a restraint upon themselves, and should stop suddenly in the midst of their discourse. This indeed is most certain, that men never rashly swear, but they provoke the vengeance of God against them, and make Him their adversary.

Lest thou shouldst say. Although these words seem to denote a mind elated, and too much addicted to fame, yet since Abram is on this point commended by the Spirit, we conclude that this was a truly holy magnanimity. But an exception is added namely that he will not allow his own liberality to be injurious to his allies, nor make them subject to his laws. For this also is not the least part of virtue, to act rightly, yet in such a manner, that we do not bind others to our example, as to a rule. Let every one therefore regard what his own vocation demands, and what pertains to his own duty, in order that men may not prejudge one another according to their own will. For it is a moroseness too imperious, to wish that what we ourselves follow as right, and consonant with our duty, should be prescribed as a law to others.

CHAPTER 15.

Genesis 15:1-21

1. After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.	**1.** Post haec fuit verbum Jehovae ad Abram in visione, dicendo, Ne timeas Abram, ego scutum *ero* tibi, merces tua multa valde.
2. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?	**2.** Et dixit Abram, Dominator Jehova, quid dabis mihi? Et ego incedo orbus, et filius derelictionis domus meae erit iste Dammescenus Elihezer.
3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.	**3.** Et dixit Abram, Ecce, mihi non dedisti semen: et ecce, filius domus meae haeres meus est.
4. And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.	**4.** Et ecce verbum Jehovae ad eum, dicendo, Non erit haeres tuus iste, sed qui egredietur de visceribus tuis, ipse haeres tuus erit.
5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.	**5.** Et eduxit eum foras, et dixit, Suspice nunc coelum, et numera stellas, si poteris numerare eas. Et dixit ei, Sic erit semen tuum.
6. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.	**6.** Et credidit Jehovae, et reputavit illud ei ad justitiam.
7. And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.	**7.** Et dixit ad eum, Ego Jehova qui eduxi to de Ur Chaldeae, ut darem tibi terram istam, ut haeredites eam.
8. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?	**8.** Et dixit, Dominator Jehova, in quo cognoscam quod haereditabo eam?
9. And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.	**9.** Et dixit ad eum, Tolle mihi vitulam triennem, et capram triennem, et arietem triennem, et turturem, et pullum columbarum.
10. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece	**10.** Et tulit sibi omnia ista, et divisit ea per medium, et posuit quamlibet *partem* divi-

one against another: but the birds divided he not.	sionis suae e regione sociae suae; sed aves non divisit.
11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.	**11.** Et descenderunt aves super cadavera, et abigebat eas Abram.
12. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.	**12.** Et fuit, sole occumbente sopor cecidit super Abram: et ecce, terror tenebrosus et magnus cadens super eum.
13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;	**13.** Et dixit ad Abram, Cognoscendo cognosce quod peregrinum erit semen tuum in terra non sua: et servient eis, affligentque eos per quadringentos annos.
14. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.	**14.** Sed etiam gentem cui servierint, ego judicabo, et postea egredientur cum substantia magna.
15. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.	**15.** Et tu ingredieris ad patres tuos in pace, sepelieris in canitie bona.
16. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.	**16.** Et generatione quarta revertentur huc: quia nondum est completa iniquitas Emoraei.
17. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.	**17.** Et fuit, sole occumbente caligo erat, et ecce furnus fumans, et lampas ignis quae transibat inter divisiones ipsas.
18. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:	**18.** In die ipso pepigit, Jehova cum Abram foedus dicendo, Semini tuo dabo terram hanc a flumine Aegypti, usque ad flumen magnum, flumen Euphratem:
19. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,	**19.** Cenaeum, et Cenizaeum, et Cadmonaeum,
20. And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,	**20.** Et Hitthaeum, et Perizaeum, et Rephaim,

21. And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.	**21.** Et Emoraeum, et Chenaanaeum, et Girgasaeum, et Jebusaeum.

1. *The word of the Lord came.* When Abram's affairs were prosperous and were proceeding according to his wish, this vision might seem to be superfluous; especially since the Lord commands his servant, as one sorrowful and afflicted with fear, to be of good courage. Therefore certain writers conjecture, that Abram having returned after the deliverance of his nephew, was subjected to some annoyance of which no mention is made by Moses; just as the Lord often humbles his people, lest they should exult in their prosperity; and they further suppose that when Abram had been dejected he was again revived by a new oracle. But since there is no warrant for such conjecture in the words of Moses, I think the cause was different. First, although he was on all sides applauded, it is not to be doubted that various surmises entered into his own mind. For, not withstanding Chedorlaomer and his allies had been overcome in battle, yet Abram had so provoked them, that they might with fresh troops, and with renewed strength, again attack the land of Canaan. Nor were the inhabitants of the land free from the fear of this danger. Secondly, as signal success commonly draws its companion envy along with it, Abram began to be exposed to many disadvantageous remarks, after he had dared to enter into conflict with an army which had conquered four kings. An unfavourable suspicion might also arise, that perhaps, by and by, he would turn the strength which he had tried against foreign kings, upon his neighbors, and upon those who had hospitably received him. Therefore, as the victory was an honor to him, so it cannot be doubted, that it rendered him formidable and an object of suspicion to many, while it inflamed the hatred of others; since every one would imagine some danger to himself, from his bravery and good success. It is therefore not strange, that he should have been troubled, and should anxiously have revolved many things, until God animated him anew, by the confident expectation of his assistance. There might be also another end to be answered by the oracle; namely, that God would meet and correct a contrary fault in his servant. For it was possible that Abram might be so elated with victory as to forget his own calling, and to seek the acquisition of dominion for himself, as one who, wearied with a wandering course of life and with perpetual vexations, desired a better fortune, and a quiet state of existence. And we know how liable men are to be ensnared by the blandishments of prosperous and smiling fortune. Therefore God anticipates the danger; and before this vanity takes possession of the mind of the holy man, recalls to his memory the spiritual grace vouchsafed to him to the end that he, entirely acquiescing therein, may despise all other things. Yet because this expression, Fear not, sounds as if God would soothe his sorrowing and anxious servant with some consolation; it is probable that he had need of such confirmation, because he perceived that many malignantly stormed against his victory, and that his old age would be exposed to severe annoyances. It might however be, that God did not forbid him to fear, because he

was already afraid; but that he might learn courageously to despise, and to account as nothing, all the favor of the world, and all earthly wealth; as if he had said, 'If only I am propitious to thee, there is no reason why thou shouldst fear; contented with me alone in the world, pursue, as thou hast begun, thy pilgrimage; and rather depend on heaven, than attach thyself to earth.' However this might be, God recalls his servant to himself, showing that far greater blessings were treasured up for him in God; in order that Abram might not rest satisfied with his victory. Moses says that God spoke to him in a vision, by which he intimates that some visible symbol of God's glory was added to the word, in order that greater authority might be given to the oracle. And this was one of two ordinary methods by which the Lord was formerly wont to manifest himself to his prophets, as it is stated in the book of Numbers, (Genesis 12:6.)

Fear not, Abram. Although the promise comes last in the text, it yet has precedence in order; because on it depends the confirmation, by which God frees the heart of Abram from fear. God exhorts Abram to be of a tranquil mind; but what foundation is there for such security, unless by faith we understand that God cares for us, and learn to rest in his providence? The promise, therefore, that God will be Abram's shield and his exceeding great reward, holds the first place; to which is added the exhortation, that, relying upon such a guardian of his safety, and such an author of his felicity, he should not fear. Therefore, to make the sense of the words more clear, the causal particle is to be inserted. 'Fear not, Abram, because I am thy shield.' Moreover, by the use of the word "shield," he signifies that Abram would always be safe under his protection. In calling himself his "reward," He teaches Abram to be satisfied with Himself alone. And as this was, with respect to Abram, a general instruction, given for the purpose of showing him that victory was not the chief and ultimate good which God had designed him to pursue; so let us know that the same blessing is promised to us all, in the person of this one man. For, by this voice, God daily speaks to his faithful ones; inasmuch as having once undertaken to defend us, he will take care to preserve us in safety under his hand, and to protect us by his power. Now since God ascribes to himself the office and property of a shield, for the purpose of rendering himself the protector of our salvation; we ought to regard this promise as a brazen wall, so that we should not be excessively fearful in any dangers. And since men, surrounded with various and innumerable desires of the flesh, are at times unstable, and are then too much addicted to the love of the present life; the other member of the sentence follows, in which God declares, that he alone is sufficient for the perfection of a happy life to the faithful. For the word "reward" has the force of *inheritance,* or *felicity*. Were it deeply engraven on our minds, that in God alone we have the highest and complete perfection of all good things; we should easily fix bounds to those wicked desires by which we are miserably tormented. The meaning then of the passage is this, that we shall be truly happy when God is propitious to us; for he not only pours upon us the abundance of his kindness, but offers himself to us, that we may enjoy him. Now

what is there more, which men can desire, when they really enjoy God? David knew the force of this promise, when he boasted that he had obtained a goodly lot, because the Lord was his inheritance, (Psalm 16:6.) But since nothing is more difficult than to curb the depraved appetites of the flesh, and since the ingratitude of man is so vile and impious, that God scarcely ever satisfies them; the Lord calls himself not simply "a reward," but an exceeding great reward, with which we ought to be more than sufficiently contented. This truly furnishes most abundant material, and most solid support, for confidence. For whosoever shall be fully persuaded that his life is protected by the hand of God, and that he never can be miserable while God is gracious to him; and who consequently resorts to this haven in all his cares and troubles, will find the best remedy for all evils. Not that the faithful can be entirely free from fear and care, as long as they are tossed by the tempests of contentions and of miseries; but because the storm is hushed in their own breast; and whereas the defense of God is greater than all dangers, so faith triumphs over fear.

2. *And Abram said, Lord God.* The Hebrew text has ▯▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯ (*Adonai Jehovah.*) From which appellation it is inferred that some special mark of divine glory was stamped upon the vision; so that Abram, having no doubt respecting its author, confidently broke out in this expression. For since Satan is a wonderful adept at deceiving, and deludes men with so many wiles in the name of God, it was necessary that some sure and notable distinction should appear in true and heavenly oracles, which would not suffer the faith and the minds of the holy fathers to waver. Therefore in the vision of which mention is made, the majesty of the God of Abram was manifested, which would suffice for the confirmation of his faith. Not that God appeared as he really is, but only so far as he might be comprehended by the human mind. But Abram, in overlooking a promise so glorious, in complaining that he is childless, and in murmuring against God, for having hitherto given him no seed, seems to conduct himself with little modesty. What was more desirable than to be received under God's protection, and to be happy in the enjoyment of Him? The objection, therefore, which Abram raised, when disparaging the incomparable benefit offered to him, and refusing to rest contented until he receives offspring, appears to be wanting in reverence. Yet the liberty which he took admits of excuse; first, because the Lord permits us to pour into his bosom those cares by which we are tormented, and those troubles with which we are oppressed. Secondly, the design of the complaint is to be considered; for he does not simply declare that he is solitary, but, seeing that the effect of all the promises depended upon his seed, he does, not improperly, require that a pledge so necessary should be given him. For if the benediction and salvation of the world was not to be hoped for except through his seed; when that principal point seemed to fail him, it is not to be wondered at, that other things should seem to vanish from his sight, or should at least not appease his mind, nor satisfy his wishes. And this is the very reason why God not only regards with favor the complaint of his servant, but immediately gives a propitious answer to his prayer. Moses indeed ascribes to Abram

that affection which is naturally inherent in us all; but this is no proof that Abram did not look higher when he so earnestly desired to be the progenitor of an heir. And certainly these promises had not faded from his recollection; 'To thy seed will I give this land,' and 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed;' the former of which promises is so annexed to all the rest, that if it be taken away, all confidence in them would perish; while the latter promise contains in it the whole gratuitous pledge of salvation. Therefore Abram rightly includes in it, every thing which God had promised.

I go childless. The language is metaphorical. We know that our life is like a race. Abram, seeing he was of advanced age, says that he has so far proceeded, that little of his course still remains. 'Now,' he says, 'I am come near the goal; and the course of my life being finished, I shall die childless.' He adds, for the sake of aggravating the indignity, 'that a foreigner would be his heir.' For I do not doubt that Damascus is the name of his *country*, and not the proper name of his *mother*, as some falsely suppose; as if he had said, 'Not one of my own relatives will be my heir, but a Syrian from Damascus.' For, perhaps, Abram had bought him in Mesopotamia. He also calls him the son of ⊠⊠⊠(*mesek*,) concerning the meaning of which word grammarians are not agreed. Some derive it from ⊠⊠⊠ (*shakak*,) which means to run to and fro, and translate it, *steward* or *superintendent*, because he who sustains the care of a large house, runs hither and thither in attending to his business. Others derive it from ⊠⊠⊠ (*shook*,) and render it *cup-bearer*, which seems to me incongruous. I rather adopt a different translation, namely, that he was called the son of the deserted house, (*filius derelictionis*[370]), because ⊠⊠⊠ *mashak* sometimes signifies to *leave*. Yet I do not conceive him to be so called because Abram was about to leave all things to him; but because Abram himself had no hope left in any other. It is therefore (in my judgment) just as if he called him the son of a house destitute of children,[371] because this was a proof of a deserted and barren house, that the inheritance was devolving upon a foreigner who would occupy the empty and deserted place. He afterwards contemptuously calls him his servant, or his home-born slave, 'the son of my house (he says) will be my heir.' He thus speaks in contempt, as if he would say, 'My condition is wretched, who shall not have even a freeman for my successor.' It is however asked, how he could be both a Damascene and a home-born slave of

370 "Et filius derelictionis domus meae erit iste Dammescenus Elihezer." That is, according to the usual interpretation of the Hebrew phrase, the son or person to whom the house was left in charge by its master; though Calvin gives it a different turn. The various ancient versions, except the Syriac, agree in this interpretation. Dathe prefers the translation of Schultens, who refers the word to an Arabic root, ⊠⊠⊠, which signifies to comb, to dress, or polish, and which he supposes may be applied generally to the care which a steward takes of everything in the house. But this is fanciful. — *Ed*

371 "Acsi vocaret, Filium orbitatis." — "Comme s'il l'appeloit, Fils de la maison, ou il n'y a point d'enfans." — *French Tr*

Abram? There are two solutions of the difficulty, either that he was called the son of the house, not because he was *born*, but only because he was *educated* in it; or, that he sprang from Damascus, because his father was from Syria.

4. *This shall not be thine heir*. We hence infer that God had approved the wish of Abram. Whence also follows the other point, that Abram had not been impelled by any carnal affection to offer up this prayer, but by a pious and holy desire of enjoying the benediction promised to him. For God not only promises him a seed, but a great people, who in number should equal the stars of heaven. They who expound the passage allegorically; implying that a heavenly seed was promised him which might be compared with the stars, may enjoy their own opinion: but we maintain what is more solid; namely, that the faith of Abram was increased by the sight of the stars. For the Lord, in order more deeply to affect his own people, and more efficaciously to penetrate their minds, after he here reached their ears by his word, also arrests their eyes by external symbols, that eyes and ears may consent together. Therefore the sight of the stars was not superfluous; but God intended to strike the mind of Abram with this thought, 'He who by his word alone suddenly produced a host so numerous by which he might adorn the previously vast and desolate heaven; shall not He be able to replenish my desolate house with offspring?' It is, however, not necessary to imagine a nocturnal vision, because the stars, which, during the day, escape our sight, would then appear; for since the whole was transacted in vision, Abram had a wonderful scene set before him, which would manifestly reveal hidden things to him. Therefore though he perhaps might not move a step, it was yet possible for him in vision to be led forth out of his tent. The question now occurs, concerning what seed the promise is to be understood. And it is certain that neither the posterity of Ishmael nor of Esau is to be taken into this account, because the legitimate seed is to be reckoned by the promise, which God determined should remain in Isaac and Jacob; yet the same doubt arises respecting the posterity of Jacob, because many who could trace their descent from him, according to the flesh, cut themselves off, as degenerate sons and aliens, from the faith of their fathers. I answer, that this term seed is, indiscriminately, extended to the whole people whole God has adopted to himself. But since many were alienated by their unbelief, we must come for information to Christ, who alone distinguishes true and genuine sons from such as are illegitimate. By pursuing this method, we find the posterity of Abram reduced to a small numbers that afterwards it may be the more increased. For in Christ the Gentiles also are gathered together, and are by faith ingrafted into the body of Abram, so as to have a place among his legitimate sons. Concerning which point more will be said in the seventeenth chapter Genesis 17:1

6. *And he believed in the Lord*. None of us would be able to conceive the rich and hidden doctrine which this passage contains, unless Paul had borne his torch before us. (Romans 4:3.) But it is strange, and seems like a prodigy, that when the Spirit of God has kindled so great a light, yet the greater part of interpreters wander with closed eyes, as in the darkness

of night. I omit the Jews, whose blindness is well known. But it is (as I have said) monstrous, that they who have had Paul as their luminous expositor; should so foolishly have depraved this place. However it hence appears, that in all ages, Satan has labored at nothing more assiduously than to extinguish, or to smother, the gratuitous justification of faith, which is here expressly asserted. The words of Moses are, "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." In the first place, the faith of Abram is commended, because by it he embraced the promise of God; it is commended, in the second place, because hence Abram obtained righteousness in the sight of God, and that by imputation. For the word ⊠⊠⊠ (*chashab*,) which Moses uses, is to be understood as relating to the judgment of God, just as in Psalm 106:31, where the zeal of Phinehas is said to have been counted to him for righteousness. The meaning of the expression will, however, more fully appear by comparison with its opposites.[372] In Leviticus 7:18, it is said that when expiation has been made, iniquity 'shall not be imputed' to a man. Again, in Leviticus 17:4, 'Blood shall be imputed unto that man.' So, in 2 Samuel 19:19, Shimei says, 'Let not the king impute iniquity unto me.' Nearly of the same import is the expression in 2 Kings 12:15, 'They reckoned not with the man into whose hand they delivered the money for the work;' that is, they required no account of the money, but suffered them to administer it, in perfect confidence. Let us now return to Moses. Just as we understand that they to whom iniquity is imputed are guilty before God; so those to whom he imputes righteousness are approved by him as just persons; wherefore Abram was received into the number and rank of just persons by the imputation of righteousness. For Paul, in order that he may show us distinctly the force and nature, or quality of this righteousness, leads us to the celestial tribunal of God. Therefore, they foolishly trifle who apply this term to his character as an honest man;[373] as if it meant that Abram was personally held to be a just and righteous man. They also, no less unskilfully, corrupt the text, who say that Abram is here ascribing to God the glory of righteousness seeing that he ventures to acquiesce surely in His promises, acknowledging Him to be faithful and true; for although Moses does not expressly mention the name of God, yet the accustomed method of speaking in the Scriptures removes all ambiguity. Lastly, it is not less the part of stupor than of impudence, when this faith is said to have been imputed to him for righteousness, to mingle with it some other meaning, than that the faith of Abram was accepted in the place of righteousness with God.

372 "Melius ex antitheto patebit." — "Toutefois on entendra mieux par l'antithese, c'est a dire, par ce qui est opposite, ce qu' emporte ceci." — *French Tr*

373 The French version is strongly expressed. "Et pourtant ceus — la gazouillent bien sottement, qui tirent ceci au bruit et renom de preud'hommie." Especially do they chatter foolishly enough, who draw this aside to the fame and renown of honesty. — *French Tr.*

It seems, however, to be absurd, that Abram should be justified by believing that his seed would be as numerous as the stars of heaven; for this could be nothing but a particular faith, which would by no means suffice for the complete righteousness of man. Besides, what could an earthly and temporal promise avail for eternal salvation? I answer, first, that the *believing* of which Moses speaks, is not to be restricted to a single clause of the promise here referred to, but embraces the whole; secondly that Abram did not form his estimate of the promised seed from this oracle alone, but also from others, where a special benediction is added. Whence we infer that he did not expect some common or undefined seed, but that in which the world was to be blessed. Should any one pertinaciously insist, that what is said in common of all the children of Abram, is forcibly distorted when applied to Christ; in the first place, it cannot be denied that God now again repeats the promise before made to his servant, for the purpose of answering his complaint. But we have said — and the thing itself clearly proves — that Abram was impelled thus greatly to desire seed, by a regard to the promised benediction. Whence it follows, that this promise was not taken by him separately from others. But to pass all this over; we must, I say, consider what is here treated of, in order to form a judgment of the faith of Abram. God does not promise to his servant this or the other thing only, as he sometimes grants special benefits to unbelievers, who are without the taste of his paternal love; but he declares, that He will be propitious to him, and confirms him in the confidence of safety, by relying upon His protection and His grace. For he who has God for his inheritance does not exult in fading joy; but, as one already elevated towards heaven, enjoys the solid happiness of eternal life. It is, indeed, to be maintained as an axiom, that all the promises of God, made to the faithful, flow from the free mercy of God, and are evidences of that paternal love, and of that gratuitous adoption, on which their salvation is founded. Therefore, we do not say that Abram was justified because he laid hold on a single word, respecting the offspring to be brought forth, but because he embraced God as his Father. And truly faith does not justify us for any other reason, than that it reconciles us unto God; and that it does so, not by its own merit; but because we receive the grace offered to us in the promises, and have no doubt of eternal life, being fully persuaded that we are loved by God as sons. Therefore, Paul reasons from contraries, that he to whom faith is imputed for righteousness, has not been justified by works. (Romans 4:4.) For whosoever obtains righteousness by works, his merits come into the account before God. But we apprehend righteousness by faith, when God freely reconciles us to himself. Whence it follows, that the merit of works ceases when righteousness is sought by faith; for it is necessary that this righteousness should be freely given by God, and offered in his word, in order that any one may possess it by faith. To render this more intelligible, when Moses says that faith was imputed to Abram for righteousness, he does not mean that faith was that first cause of righteousness which is called the *efficient*, but only the *formal* cause; as if he had said, that Abram was therefore justified, because, relying on the paternal loving-kindness of God, he

trusted to His mere goodness, and not to himself, nor to his own merits. For it is especially to be observed, that faith borrows a righteousness elsewhere, of which we, in ourselves, are destitute; otherwise it would be in vain for Paul to set faith in opposition to works, when speaking of the mode of obtaining righteousness. Besides, the mutual relation between the free promise and faith, leaves no doubt upon the subject.

We must now notice the circumstance of *time*. Abram was justified by faith many years after he had been called by God; after he had left his country a voluntary exile, rendering himself a remarkable example of patience and of continence; after he had entirely dedicated himself to sanctity and after he had, by exercising himself in the spiritual and external service of God, aspired to a life almost angelical. It therefore follows, that even to the end of life, we are led towards the eternal kingdom of God by the righteousness of faith. On which point many are too grossly deceived. For they grant, indeed, that the righteousness which is freely bestowed upon sinners and offered to the unworthy is received by faith alone; but they restrict this to a moment of time, so that he who at the first obtained justification by faith, may afterwards be justified by good works. By this method, faith is nothing else than the beginning of righteousness, whereas righteousness itself consists in a continual course of works. But they who thus trifle must be altogether insane. For if the angelical uprightness of Abram faithfully cultivated through so many years, in one uniform course, did not prevent him from fleeing tofaith, for the sake of obtaining righteousness; where upon earth besides will such perfection be found, as may stand in God's sight? Therefore, by a consideration of the time in which this was said to Abram,[374] we certainly gather, that the righteousness of works is not to be substituted for the righteousness of faith, in any such way, that one should perfect what the other has begun; but that holy men are only justified by faith, as long as they live in the world. If any one object, that Abram previously believed God, when he followed Him at His call, and committed himself to His direction and guardianship, the solution is ready; that we are not here told when Abram first began to be justified, or to believe in God; but that in this one place it is declared, or related, how he had been justified through his whole life. For if Moses had spoken thus immediately on Abram's first vocation, the cavil of which I have spoken would have been more specious; namely, that the righteousness of faith was only *initial* (so to speak) and not perpetual. But now since after such great progress, he is still said to be justified by faith, it thence easily appears that the saints are justified freely even unto death. I confess, indeed, that after the faithful are born again by the Spirit of God, the method of justifying differs, in some respect, from the former. For God reconciles to himself those who are born only of the flesh, and who are destitute of all good; and since he finds nothing in them except a dreadful mass of evils, he counts them just, by imputation.

374 "Ergo ex ratione temporis certo colligimus." — "Nous recueillons donc pour certain, selon la raison du temps auquel ceci fut dit a Abram." — *French Tr*

But those to whom he has imparted the Spirit of holiness and righteousness, he embraces with his gifts. Nevertheless, in order that their good works may please God, it is necessary that these works themselves should be justified by gratuitous imputation; but some evil is always inherent in them. Meanwhile, however, this is a settled point, that men are justified before God by believing not by working; while they obtain grace by faith, because they are unable to deserve a reward by works. Paul also, in hence contending, that Abram did not merit by works the righteousness which he had received before his circumcision, does not impugn the above doctrine. The argument of Paul is of this kind: The circumcision of Abram was posterior to his justification in the order of time, and therefore could not be its cause, for of necessity the cause precedes its effect. I also grant, that Paul, for this reason, contends that works are not meritorious, except under the covenant of the law, of which covenant, circumcision is put as the earnest and the symbol. But since Paul is not here defining the force and nature of circumcision, regarded as a pure and genuine institution of God, but is rather disputing on the sense attached to it, by those with whom he deals, he therefore does not allude to the covenant which God before had made with Abram, because the mention of it was unnecessary for the present purpose. Both arguments are therefore of force; first, that the righteousness of Abram cannot be ascribed to the covenant of the law, because it preceded his circumcision; and, secondly, that the righteousness even of the most perfect characters perpetually consists in faith; since Abram, with all the excellency of his virtues, after his daily and even remarkable service of God, was, nevertheless, justified by faith. For this also is, in the last place, worthy of observation, that what is here related concerning one man, is applicable to all the sons of God. For since he was called the father of the faithful, not without reason; and since further, there is but one method of obtaining salvation; Paul properly teaches, that a real and not personal righteousness is in this place described.

7. *I am the Lord that brought thee.* Since it greatly concerns us, to have God as the guide of our whole life, in order that we may know that we have not rashly entered on some doubtful way, therefore the Lord confirms Abram in the course of his vocation, and recalls to his memory the original benefit of his deliverance; as if he had said, 'I, after I had stretched out my hand to thee, to lead thee forth from the labyrinth of death, have carried my favor towards thee thus far. Thou, therefore, respond to me in turn, by constantly advancing; and maintain steadfastly thy faith, from the beginning even to the end.' This indeed is said, not with respect to Abram alone, in order that he, gathering together the promises of God, made to him from the very commencement of his life of faith, should form them into one whole;[375] but that all the pious may learn to regard the beginning of their vocation as flowing perpetually from Abram, their common father; and may thus securely boast with Paul, that they

375 "Corpus unum efficeret." — "Et les joindre ensemble comme en un corps." And should join them together, as in one body. — *French Tr.*

know in whom they have believed, (2 Timothy 1:12,) and that God, who, in the person of Abram, had separated a church unto himself; would be a faithful keeper of the salvation deposited with Him. That, for this very end, the Lord declares himself to have been the deliverer of Abram appears hence; because he connects the promise which he is now about to give with the prior redemption; as if he were saying, 'I do not now first begin to promise thee this land. For it was on this account that I brought thee out of thy own country, to constitute thee the lord and heir of this land. Now therefore I covenant with thee in the same form; lest thou shouldst deem thyself to have been deceived, or fed with empty words; and I command thee to be mindful of the first covenant, that the new promise, which after many years I now repeat, may be the more firmly supported.'

8. *Lord God, whereby shall I know*. It may appear absurd, first, that Abram, who before had placed confidence in the simple word of God, without moving any question concerning the promises given to him, should now dispute whether what he hears from the mouth of God be true or not. Secondly, that he ascribes but little honor to God, not merely by murmuring against him, when he speaks, but by requiring some additional pledge to be given him. Further, whence arises the knowledge which belongs to faith, but from the word? Therefore Abram in vain desires to be assured of the future possession of the land, while he ceases to depend upon the word of God. I answer, the Lord sometimes concedes to his children, that they may freely express any objection which comes into their mind. For he does not act so strictly with them, as not to suffer himself to be questioned. Yea, the more certainly Abram was persuaded that God was true, and the more he was attached to His word, so much the more familiarly did he disburden his cares into God's bosom. To this may be added, that the protracted delay was no small obstacle to Abram's faith. For after God had held him in suspense through a great part of his life, now when he was worn down with age, and had nothing before his eyes but death and the grave, God anew declares that he shall be lord of the land. He does not, however, reject, on account of its difficulty, what might have appeared to him incredible, but brings before God the anxiety by which he is inwardly oppressed. And therefore his questioning with God is rather a proof of faith, than a sign of incredulity. The wicked, because their minds are entangled with various conflicting thoughts, do not in any way receive the promises, but the pious, who feel the impediments in their flesh, endeavor to remove them, lest they should obstruct the way to God's word; and they seek a remedy for those evils of which they are conscious. It is, nevertheless, to be observed, that there were some special impulses in the saints of old, which it would not now be lawful to draw into a precedent. For though Hezekiah and Gideon required certain miracles, this is not a reason why the same thing should be attempted by us in the present day; let it suffice us to seek for such confirmation only as the Lord himself according to his own pleasure, shall judge most eligible.

9. *Take me an heifer of three years old*. Some, instead of an heifer of three years old translate the passage, 'three heifers' and in each species of animals enumerated, would make the number three. Yet the opinion of those who apply the word three to the age of the heifer, is more general. Moreover, although God would not deny his servant what he had asked; he yet, by no means, granted what would gratify the desire of the flesh. For, what certainty could be added to the promise, by the slaughter of an heifer, or goat, or ram? For the true design of sacrifice, of which we shall see more presently, was hitherto hidden from Abram. Therefore by obeying the command of God, of which, however, no advantage was apparent, he hence proves the obedience of his faith; nor did his wish aim at any other end than this; namely, that the obstacle being removed, he might, as was just, reverently acquiesce in the word of the Lord. Let us, therefore, learn meekly to embrace those helps which God offers for the confirmation of our faith; although they may not accord with our judgment, but rather may seem to be a mockery; until, at length, it shall become plain from the effect, that God was as far as possible from mocking us.

10. *And divided them in the midst*. That no part of this sacrifice may be without mystery, certain interpreters weary themselves in the fabrication of subtleties; but it is our business, as I have often declared, to cultivate sobriety. I confess I do not know why he was commanded to take three kinds of animals besides birds; unless it were, that by this variety itself, it was declared, that all the posterity of Abram, of whatever rank they might be, should be offered up in sacrifice, so that the whole people, and each individual, should constitute one sacrifice. There are also some things, concerning which, if any one curiously seeks the reason, I shall not be ashamed to acknowledge my ignorance, because I do not choose to wander in uncertain speculations. Moreover, this, in my opinion, is the sum of the whole: That God, in commanding the animals to be killed, shows what will be the future condition of the Church. Abram certainly wished to be assured of the promised inheritance of the land. Now he is taught that it would take its commencement from death; that is that he and his children must die before they should enjoy the dominion over the land. In commanding the slaughtered animals to be cut in parts, it is probable that he followed the ancient rite in forming covenants whether they were entering into any alliance, or were mustering an army, a practice which also passed over to the Gentiles. Now, the allies or the soldiers passed between the severed parts, that, being enclosed together within the sacrifice, they might be the more sacredly united in one body. That this method was practiced by the Jews, Jeremiah bears witness, (Jeremiah 34:18,) where he introduces God as saying, 'They have violated my covenant, when they cut the calf in two parts, and passed between the divisions of it, as well the princes of Judas, and the nobles of Jerusalem, and the whole people of the land.' Nevertheless, there appears to me to have been this special reason for the act referred to; that the Lord would indeed admonish the race of Abram, not only that it should be like a dead carcass, but even like one torn and dissected. For the servitude with which they were oppressed for

a time, was more intolerable than simple death; yet because the sacrifice is offered to God, death itself is immediately turned into new life. And this is the reason why Abram, placing the parts of the sacrifice opposite to each other, fits them one to the other, because they were again to be gathered together from their dispersion. But how difficult is the restoration of the Church and what troubles are involved in it, is shown by the horror with which Abram was seized. We see, therefore, that two things were illustrated; namely, the hard servitude, with which the sons of Abram were to be pressed almost to laceration and destruction; and then their redemption, which was to be the signal pledge of divine adoption; and in the same mirror the general condition of the Church is represented to us, as it is the peculiar province of God to create it out of nothing, and to raise it from death.

11. *And when the fowls came down*. Although the sacrifice was dedicated to God, yet it was not free from the attack and the violence of birds. So neither are the faithful, after they are received into the protection of God, so covered with his hand, as not to be assailed on every side; since Satan and the world cease not to cause them trouble. Therefore, in order that the sacrifice we have once offered to God may not be violated, but may remain pure and uninjured, contrary assaults must be repulsed, with whatever inconvenience and toil.

12. *A deep sleep fell upon Abram*. The vision is now mingled with a dream. Thus the Lord here joins those two kinds of communication together, which I have before related from Numbers 12:6, where it is said,

'When I appear unto my servants the prophets,
I speak to them in a vision or a dream.'

mention has already been made of a vision: Moses now relates, that a dream was superadded. A horrible darkness intervened, that Abram might know that the dream is not a common one, but that the whole is divinely conducted; it has, nevertheless, a correspondence with the oracle then present, as God immediately afterwards explains in his own words, "Thou shalt surely know that thy seed shall be a stranger," etc. We have elsewhere said, that God was not wont to dazzle the eyes of his people with bare and empty spectres; but that in visions, the principal parts always belonged to the word. Thus here, not a mute apparition is presented to the eyes of Abram, but he is taught by an oracle annexed, what the external and visible symbol meant. It is, however, to be observed, that before one son is given to Abram, he hears that his seed shall be, for a long time, in captivity and slavery. For thus does the Lord deal with his own people; he always makes a beginning from death, so that by quickening the dead, he the more abundantly manifests his power. It was necessary, in part, on Abram's account, that this should have been declared; but the Lord chiefly had regard to his posterity, lest they should faint in their sufferings, of which, however, the Lord had promised a joyful and happy issue; especially since their long continuance would produce great weariness. And three things are, step by step, brought before them; first, that the sons of Abram must wander four hundred years, before they should attain the promised inherit-

ance; secondly, that they should be slaves; thirdly that they were to be inhumanly and tyrannically treated. Wherefore the faith of Abram was admirable and singular, seeing that he acquiesced in an oracle so sorrowful, and felt assured, that God would be his Deliverer, after his miseries had proceeded to their greatest height.

It is, however, asked, how the number of years here given agrees with the subsequent history? Some begin the computation from the time of his departure out of Charran. But it seems more probable that the intermediate time only is denoted;[376] as if he would say, 'It behoves thy posterity to wait patiently; because I have not decreed to grant what I now promise, until the four hundredth year: yea, up to that very time their servitude will continue.' According to this mode of reckoning, Moses says, (Exodus 12:40,) that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt four hundred and thirty years: while yet, from the sixth chapter (Genesis 6:1,) we may easily gather, that not more than two hundred and thirty years, or thereabouts, elapsed from the time that Jacob went down thither, to their deliverance. Where then, shall we find the remaining two hundred years, but by referring to the oracle? Of this matter all doubt is removed by Paul, who (Galatians 3:17) reckons the years from the gratuitous covenant of life, to the promulgation of the Law. In short, God does not indicate how long the servitude of the people should be from its commencement to its close, but how long he intended to suspend, or to defer his promise. As to his omitting the thirty years, it is neither a new nor unfrequent thing, where years are not accurately computed, to mention only the larger sums. But we see here, that for the sake of brevity, the whole of that period is divided into four centuries. Therefore, there is no absurdity in omitting the short space of time: this is chiefly to be considered, that the Lord, for the purpose of exercising the patience of his people, suspends his promise more than four centuries.

14. *Also that nations whom they serve.* A consolation is now subjoined, in which this is the first thing, God testifies that he will be the vindicator of his people. Whence it follows, that he will take upon himself the care of the salvation of those whom he has embraced, and will not suffer them to be harassed by the ungodly and the wicked with impunity. And although he here expressly announces that he will take vengeance on the Egyptians; yet all the enemies of the Church are exposed to the same judgment: even as Moses in his song extends to all ages and nations the threat that the Lord will exact punishment for unjust persecutions.[377]

'Vengeance is mine, I, saith he, will repay,'
(Deuteronomy 32:35.)

376 "Sed magis probabile videtur, notari duntaxat tempus intermedium." Calvin evidently means the time which was to intervene between the giving of the oracle and the exodus from Egypt. — *Ed*

377 "De justis persequutionibus." Most probably a misprint for injustis; as both the Old French and English translations agree in rendering the word unjust.

Therefore, whenever we happen to be treated with inhumanity by tyrants, (which is very usual with the Church,) let this be our consolation, that after our faith shall be sufficiently proved by bearing the cross, God, at whose pleasure we are thus humbled, will himself be the Judge, who will repay to our enemies the due reward of the cruelty which they now exercise. Although they now exult with intoxicated joy, it will at length appear by the event itself, that our miseries are happy ones, but their triumphs wretched; because God, who cares for us, is their adversary. But let us remember that we must give place unto the wrath of God, as Paul exhorts, in order that we may not be hurried headlong to seek revenge. Place also must be given to hope, that it may sustain us when oppressed and groaning under the burden of evils. To judge the nation, means the same thing as to summon it to judgment, in order that God, when he has long reposed in silence, may openly manifest himself as the Judge.

15. *And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace*. Hitherto the Lord had respect to the posterity of Abram as well as to himself, that the consolation might be common to all; but now he turns his address to Abram alone, because he had need of peculiar confirmation. And the remedy proposed for alleviating his sorrow was, that he should die in peace, after he had attained the utmost limit of old age. The explanation given by some that he should die a natural death, exempt from violence; or an easy death, in which his vital spirits should spontaneously and naturally fail, and his life itself should fall by its own maturity, without any sense of pain, is, in my opinion, frigid. For Moses wishes to express that Abram should have not only a long, but a placid old age, with a corresponding joyful and peaceful death. The sense therefore is that although through his whole life, Abram was to be deprived of the possession of the land, yet he should not be wanting in the essential materials of quiet and joy, so that having happily finished his life, he should cheerfully depart to his fathers. And certainly death makes the great distinction between the reprobate and the sons of God, whose condition in the present life is commonly one and the same, except that the sons of God have by far the worst of it. Wherefore peace in death ought justly to be regarded as a singular benefit, because it is a proof of that distinction to which I have just alluded.[378] Even profane writers, feeling their way in the dark, have perceived this. Plato, in his book on the Republic, (lib.1) cites a song of Pindar, in which he says, that they who live justly and homily, are attended by a sweet hope, cherishing their hearts and nourishing their old age; which hope chiefly governs the fickle mind of men. Because men, conscious of guilt, must necessarily be miserably harassed by various torments; the Poet, when he asserts that hope is the reward of a good conscience, calls it the nurse of old age.[379] For as young men, while far

378 "Quod nuper attigit," — should doubtless be attigi; as the sense requires, and as it is rendered in the French version, with which the Old English Translation corresponds. — *Ed*

379 "Eam γηροτρόφον appellat."

removed from death, carelessly take their pleasure;[380] the old are admonished by their own weakness, seriously to reflect that they must depart. Now unless the hope of a better life inspires them, nothing remains for them but miserable fears. Finally, as the reprobate indulge themselves during their whole life, and stupidly sleep in their vices, it is necessary that their death should be full of trouble; while the faithful commit their souls into the hand of God without fear and sadness. Whence also Balaam was constrained to break forth in this expression,

'Let my soul die the death of the righteous,'

(Numbers 23:10.)

Moreover, since men have not such a desirable close of life in their own power; the Lord, in promising a placid and quiet death to his servant Abram, teaches us that it is his own gift. And we see that even kings, and others who deem themselves happy in this world, are yet agitated in death; because they are visited with secret compunctions for their sins, and look for nothing in death but destruction. But Abram willingly and joyfully went forward to his death, seeing that he had in Isaac a certain pledge of the divine benediction, and knew that a better life was laid up for him in heaven.

16. *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* The reason here given is deemed absurd, as seeming to imply that the sons of Abram could not otherwise be saved, than by the destruction of others. I answer, that we must with modesty and humility yield to the secret counsel of God. Since he had given that land to the Amorites, to be inhabited by them in perpetuity, he intimates, that he will not, without just cause, transfer the possession of it to others; as if he would say, 'I grant the dominion of this land to thy seed without injury to any one. The land, at present, is occupied by its lawful possessors, to whom I delivered it. Until, therefore, they shall have deserved, by their sins, to be rightfully expelled, the dominion of it sill not come to thy posterity.' Thus God teaches him that the land must be evacuated, in order that it may lie open to new inhabitants. And this passage is remarkable, as showing, that the abodes of men are so distributed in the world, that the Lord will preserve quiet people, each in their several stations, till they cast themselves out by their own wickedness. For by polluting the place of their habitation, they in a certain sense tear away the boundaries fixed by the hand of God, which would otherwise have remained immovable. Moreover, the Lord here commends his own longsuffering. Even then the Amorites had become unworthy to occupy the land, yet the Lord not only bore with them for a short time, but granted them four centuries for repentance. And hence it appears, that he does not, without reason, so frequently declare how slow he is to anger. But the more graciously he waits for men, if, at length, instead of repenting they remain obstinate, the more severely does he avenge such great ingratitude. Therefore Paul says, that they who indulge themselves

380 "Secure delicientur." — "Prenent leurs plaisirs sans souci ne crainte." — *French Tr*

in sin, while the goodness and clemency of God invite them to repentance, heap up for themselves a treasure of wrath, (Romans 2:4;) and thus they reap no advantage from delay, seeing that the severity of the punishment is doubled; just as it happened to the Amorites, whom, at length, the Lord commanded to be so entirely cut off, that not even infants were spared. Therefore when we hear that God out of heaven is silently waiting until iniquities shall fill up their measure; let us know, that this is no time for torpor, but rather let every one of us stir himself up, that we may be beforehand with the celestial judgment. It was formerly said by a heathen, that the anger of God proceeds with a slow step to avenge itself, but that it compensates for its tardiness by the severity of its punishment. Hence there is no reason why reprobates should flatter themselves, when he seems to let them pass unobserved,[381] since he does not so repose in heaven, as to cease to be the Judge of the world; nor will he be unmindful of the execution of his office, in due time.[382] We infer, however, from the words of Moses, that though space for repentance is given to the reprobate, they are still devoted to destruction. Some take the word ⌧⌧⌧ (*ayon*) for punishment, as if it had been said that *punishment* was not yet matured for them. But the former exposition is more suitable; namely, that they will set no bound to their *wickedness*, until they bring upon themselves final destruction.

17. *Behold, a smoking furnace.* Again a new vision was added, to confirm his faith in the oracle. At first, Abram was horror-struck with the thick darkness; now, in the midst of a smoking furnace, he sees a burning lamp. Many suppose that a sacrifice was consumed with this fire; but I rather interpret it as a symbol of future deliverance, which would well agree with the fact itself. For there are two things contrary to each other in appearance; the obscurity of smoke, and the shining of a lamp. Hence Abram knew that light would, at length, emerge out of darkness. An analogy is always to be sought for between signs, and the things signified, that there may be a mutual correspondence between them. Then, since the symbol, in itself, is but a lifeless carcass, reference ought always to be made to the word which is annexed to it. But here, by the word, liberty was promised to Abram's seed, in the midst of servitude. Now the condition of the Church could not be painted more to the life, than when God causes a burning torch to proceed out of the smoke, in order that the darkness of afflictions may not overwhelm us, but that we may cherish a good hope of life even in death; because the Lord will, at length, shine upon us, if only we offer up ourselves in sacrifice to Him.

381 "Eo dissimulante."

382 "Nec officii sui in tempore obliviscatur." The sense given in the translation would perhaps scarcely have been elicited from these words, without the aid of Calvin's own French translation, which thus renders the passage, 'Et ne s'oublie point de faire son office en temps due.' The Old English version, by adhering to a barely literal rendering, deprives the sentence of all meaning; "neither doth he in time forget his duty." — *Ed*

18. *In the same day the Lord made a covenant*. I willingly admit what I have alluded to above, that the covenant was ratified by a solemn rite, when the animals were divided into parts. For there seems to be a repetition, in which he teaches what was the intent of the sacrifice which he has mentioned. Here, also, we may observe, what I have said, that the word is always to be joined with the symbols, lest our eyes be fed with empty and fruitless ceremonies. God has commanded animals to be offered to him; but he has shown their end and use, by a covenant appended to them. If, then, the Lord feeds us by sacraments, we infer, that they are the evidences of his grace, and the tokens of those spiritual blessings which flow from it.

He then enumerates the nations, whose land God was about to give to the sons of Abram, in order that he may confirm what he before said concerning a numerous offspring. For that was not to be a small band of men, but an immense multitude, for which the Lord assigns a habitation of such vast extent. God had before spoken only of the Amorites, among whom Abram then dwelt; but now, for the sake of amplifying his grace, he recounts all the others by name.

CHAPTER 16.

Genesis 16:1-16

1. Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Hagar.	**1.** Porro Sarai uxor Abram non pepererat ei: erat autem ei ancilla Aegyptia, et nomen ejus Hagar.
2. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.	**2.** Et dixit Sarai ad Abram, Ecce, nunc conclusit me Jehova, ne parerem: ingredere nunc ad ancillam meam, si forte aedificer ex ea: et paruit Abram voci Sarai.
3. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.	**3.** Et tulit Sarai uxor Abram, Hagar Aegyptiam ancillam suam in fine decem annorum, quibus habitavit Abram in terra Chenaan, et dedit eam Abram viro suo in uxorem.
4. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.	**4.** Et ingressus est ad Hagar, et concepit: et videns quod concepisset, despectui habuit dominam suam in oculis suis.
5. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.	**5.** Tunc dixit Sarai ad Abram, Injuria mea super to: ego dedi ancillam meam in sinu tuo, et ubi vidit quod concepisset, despectui sum in oculis ejus: judicet Jehova inter me et to.
6. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.	**6.** Et dixit Abram ad Sarai, Ecce, ancilla tua in manu tua, fac ei quod bonum est in oculis tuis: et afflixit eam Sarai, et fugit a facie ejus.
7. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.	**7.** Et invenit eam Angelus Jehovae juxta fontem aquae in deserto, juxta fontem in via Sur.
8. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.	**8.** Et dixit, Hagar ancilla Sarai, unde venis, et quo vadis? Et dixit, A facie Sarai dominae meae ego fugio.

9. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.	**9.** Et dixit ei Angelus Jehovae, Revertere ad dominam tuam, et humilia to sub manibus ejus.
10. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.	**10.** Adhaec dixit ei Angelus Jehovae, Multiplicando multiplicabo semen tuum, et non numerabitur prae multitudine.
11. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.	**11.** Praeterea dixit ei Angelus Jehovae, Ecce, es praegnans, et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Ismael: quia audivit Jehova afflictionem tuam.
12. And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.	**12.** Et ipse erit ferus homo, manus ejus in omnes, et manus omnium in eum: et coram omnibus fratribus suis habitabit.
13. And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?	**13.** Et vocavit nomen Jehovae qui loquebatur sibi, Tu Deus videns me: quia dixit, Nonne etiam hie vidi post videntem me?
14. Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.	**14.** Idcirco vocavit puteum, Puteum viventis videntis me. Ecce, *est* inter Cades et Bared.
15. And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.	**15.** Et peperit Hagar ipsi Abram filium: et vocavit Abram nomen filii sui, quem peperit Hagar, Ismael.
16. And Abram *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.	**16.** Abram autem erat octoginta annorum et sex annorum, quando peperit Hagar Ismael ipsi Abram.

1. *Now Sarai, Abram's wife*. Moses here recites a new history, namely, that Sarai, through the impatience of long delay, resorted to a method of obtaining seed by her husband, at variance with the word of God. She saw that she was barren, and had passed the age of bearing. And she inferred the necessity of a new remedy, in order that Abram might obtain the promised blessing. Moses expressly relates, that the design of marrying a second wife did not originate with Abram himself, but with Sarai, to teach us that the holy man was not impelled by lust to these nuptials; but that when he was thinking of no such thing, he was

induced to engage in them, by the exhortation of his wife. It is, however, asked, whether Sarai substituted her handmaid in her place, through the mere desire of having offspring? So it seems to some; yet to me it is incredible, that the pious matron should not have been cognizant of those promises, which had been so often repeated to her husband. Yea, it ought to be fully taken for granted, among all pious persons, that the mother of the people of God, was a participator of the same grace with her husband. Sarai, therefore, does not desire offspring (as is usual) from a merely natural impulse; but she yields her conjugal rights to another, through a wish to obtain that benediction, which she knew was divinely promised: not that she makes a divorce from her husband, but assigns him another wife, from whom he might receive children. And certainly if she had desired offspring in the ordinary manner, it would rather have come into her mind to do it by the adoption of a son, than by giving place to a second wife. For we know the vehemence of female jealousy. Therefore, while contemplating the promise, she becomes forgetful of her own right, and thinks of nothing but the bringing forth of children to Abram. A memorable example, from which no small profit accrues to us. For however laudable was Sarai's wish, as regards the end, or the scope to which it tended; nevertheless, in the pursuit of it, she was guilty of no light sin, by impatiently departing from the word of God, for the purpose of enjoying the effect of that word. While she rejects upon her own barrenness and old age, she begins to despair of offspring, unless Abram should have children from some other quarter; in this there is already some fault. Yet, however desperate the affair might be, still she ought not to have attempted anything at variance with the will of God and the legitimate order of nature. God designed that the human race should be propagated by sacred marriage. Sarai perverts the law of marriage, by defiling the conjugal bed, which was appointed only for two persons. Nor is it an available excuse, that she wished Abram to have a concubine and not a wife; since it ought to have been regarded as a settled point, that the woman is joined to the man, 'that they two should be one flesh.' And though polygamy had already prevailed among many; yet it was never left to the will of man, to abrogate that divine law by which two persons were mutually bound together. Nor was even Abram free from fault, in following the foolish and preposterous counsel of his wife. Therefore, as the precipitancy of Sarai was culpable, so the facility with which Abram yielded to her wish was worthy of reprehension. The faith of both of them was defective; not indeed with regard to the substance of the promise, but with regard to the method in which they proceeded;[383] since they hastened to acquire the offspring which was to be expected from God, without observing the legitimate ordinance of God. Whence also we are taught that God does not in vain command his people to be quiet, and to wait with patience, whenever he defers or suspends the accomplishment of their wishes.

383 "Sed in medio ipso (ut loquunter) vel agendi ratione." — "Mais au moyen, et en la facon de proceder." — *French Tr*

For they who hasten before the time, not only anticipate the providence of God, but being discontented with his word, precipitate themselves beyond their proper bounds. But it seems that Sarai had something further in view; for she not only wished that Abram should become a father, but would fain acquire to herself maternal rights and honors. I answer, since she knew that all nations were to be blessed in the seed of Abram, it is no wonder that she should be unwilling to be deprived of participation in his honor; lest she should be cut off, as a putrid member, from the body which had received the blessing, and should also become an alien from the promised salvation.

Bare him no children. This seems added as an excuse. And truly Moses intimates that she did not seek help from the womb of her maid, before necessity compelled her to do so. Her own words also show, that she had patiently and modestly waited to see what God would do, until hope was entirely cut off, when she says, that she was restrained from bearing by the Lord. (Genesis 16:2.) What fault then shall we find in her? Surely, that she did not, as she ought, cast this care into the bosom of God, without binding his power to the order of nature, or restraining it to her own sense. And then, by neglecting to infer from the past what would take place in future, she did not regard herself as in the hand of God, who could again open the womb which he had closed.

2. *That I may obtain children by her*[384] This is a Hebrew phrase, which signifies to become a mother. Some however, expound the word as simply meaning, *to have a son*. And certainly ⊠⊠ (*ben*,) which, among the Hebrews, signifies son, corresponds with the verb here used.[385] But since sons are so called metaphorically as being the maintainers of the race, and thus building up the family, therefore the primary signification of the word is to be retained. But Sarai claims for herself by right of dominion, the child which Hagar shall bring forth: because handmaids do not bring forth for themselves, since they have not power over their own body. By first speaking to her husband, she does not barely *allow* of a concubine, who should be as a harlot; but *introduces* and *obtrudes* one. And hence it appears, that when persons are wiser in their own eyes than they ought to be, they easily fall into the snare of trying illicit means. The desire of Sarai proceeds from the zeal of faith; but because it is not so subjected to God as to wait his time, she immediately has recourse to polygamy, which is nothing else than the corruption of lawful marriage. Moreover, since Sarai, that holy woman, yet fanned in her husband the same flame of impatience with which she burned, we may hence learn, how diligently we ought to be on our guard, lest Satan should surprise us by any secret fraud. For not only does he induce wicked and ungodly men openly to oppose our faith; but sometimes, privately and by stealth, he assails us through the medium of good

384 "Si forte aedificer ex ea." "If perhaps I may be built up by her." See margin of English version.

385 ⊠⊠⊠

and simple men, that he may overcome us unawares. On every side, therefore, we must be on our guard against his wiles; lest by any means he should undermine us.

And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. Truly the faith of Abram wavers, when he deviates from the word of God, and suffers himself to be borne away by the persuasion of his wife, to seek a remedy which was divinely prohibited. He, however, retains the foundation, because he does not doubt that he shall, at length, perceive that God is true. By which example we are taught, that there is no reason why we should despond, if, at any time, Satan should shake our faith; provided that the truth of God be not overthrown in our hearts. Meanwhile, when we see Abram, who, through so many years, had bravely contended like an invincible combatant, and had surmounted so many obstacles, now yielding, in a single moment, to temptation; who among us will not fear for himself in similar danger? Therefore, although we may have stood long and firmly in the faith, we must daily pray, that God would not lead us into temptation.

3. *And gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife*. Moses states what was the design of Sarai; for neither did she intend to make her house a brothel, nor to be the betrayer of her maid's chastity, nor a pander for her husband. Yet Hagar is improperly called a wife; because she was brought into another person's bed, against the law of God. Wherefore, let us know that this connection was so far illicit, as to be something between fornication and marriage. The same thing takes place with all those inventions which are appended to the word of God. For with whatever fair pretext they may be covered, there is an inherent corruption, which degenerates from the purity of the word, and vitiates the whole.

4. *Her mistress was despised in her eyes*. Here Moses relates that the punishment of excessive precipitancy quickly followed. The chief blame, indeed, rested with Sarai; yet because Abram had proved himself too credulous, God chastises both as they deserve. Sarai is grievously and bitterly tried, by the proud contempt of her handmaid; Abram is harassed by unjust complaints; thus we see that both pay the penalty of their levity, and that the contrivance devised by Sarai, and too eagerly embraced by Abram, fails of success. Meanwhile, in Hagar, an instance of ingratitude is set before us; because she, having been treated with singular kindness and honor, begins to hold her mistress in contempt. Since, however, this is an exceedingly common disease of the mind, let the faithful accustom themselves to the endurance of it; if, at any time, a return so unjust be made to them, for their acts of kindness. But especially, let the infirmity of Sarai move us thus to act, since she was unable to bear the contempt of her maid.

5. *My wrong be upon thee*. This also was a part of her punishment, that Sarai was brought so low as to forget herself for a while; and being vehemently excited, conducted herself with so much weakness. Certainly, to the utmost of her power, she had impelled her husband to act rashly; and now she petulantly insults him, although innocent. For she adduces nothing for which Abram was to be blamed. She reproaches him with the fact, that she had given

her maid into his bosom; and complains that she is condemned by this maid, without having first ascertained, whether he intended to assist the bad cause, by his countenance, or not. Thus blind is the assault of anger; it rushes impetuously hither and thither; and condemns, without inquiry, those who are entirely free from blame. If ever any woman was of a meek and gentle spirit, Sarai excelled in that virtue. Whereas, therefore, we see that her patience was violently shaken by a single offense, let every one of us he so much the more resolved to govern his own passions.

The Lord judge between me and thee. She makes improper use of the name of God, and almost forgets that due reverence, which is so strongly enforced on those who are godly. She makes her appeal to the judgment of God. What else is this, than to call down destruction on her own head? For if God had interposed as judge, he must of necessity have executed punishment upon one or other of them. But Abram had done no injury. It remains, therefore, that she must have felt the vengeance of God, whose anger she had so rashly imprecated upon herself, or her husband. Had Moses spoken this of any heathen woman, it might have been passed over as a common thing. But now, the Lord shows us, in the person of the mother of the faithful; first, how vehement is the flame of anger, and to what lengths it will hurry men; then, how greatly they are blinded who, in their own affairs, are too indulgent to themselves; whence we should learn to suspect ourselves, whenever our own concerns are treated of. Another thing also is here chiefly worthy of remark; namely, that the best ordered families are sometimes not free from contentions; nay, that this evil reaches even to the Church of God; for we know that the family of Abram, which was disturbed with strifes, was the living representation of the Church. As to domestic broils, we know that the principal part of social life, which God hallowed among men, is spent in marriage; and yet various inconveniences intervene, which defile that good state, as with spots. It behoves the faithful to prepare themselves to cut off these occasions of trouble. For this end, it is of great importance to reflect on the origin of the evil; for all the troubles men find in marriage, they ought to impute to sin.

6. *Behold, thy maid is in thy hand*. The greatness of Abram's humanity and modesty appears from his answer. He does not quarrel with his wife; and though he has the best cause, yet he does not pertinaciously defend it, but voluntarily dismisses the wife who had been given him. In short, for the sake of restoring peace, he does violence to his feelings, both as a husband, and a father. For, in leaving Hagar to the will of her enraged mistress, he does not treat her as his wife; he also, in a certain way, undervalues that object of his hope which was conceived in her womb. And it is not to be doubted that he was thus calm and placid in bearing the vehemence of his wife; because, throughout her whole life, he had found her to be obedient. Still it was a great excellence, to restrain his temper under an indignity so great. It may, however, here be asked, how it was that his care for the blessed seed had then vanished from his mind? Hagar is great with child; he hopes that the seed through

which the salvation of the world was promised, is about to proceed from her. Why then does he not set Sarai aside, and turn his love and desire still more to Hagar? Truly we hence infer, that all human contrivances pass away and vanish in smoke, as soon as any grievous temptation is presented. Having taken a wife against the divine command, he thinks the matter is succeeding well, when he sees her pregnant, and pleases himself in foolish confidence; but when contention suddenly arises, he is at his wit's end, and rejects all hope, or, at least, forgets it. The same thing must necessarily happen to us, as often as we attempt anything contrary to the word of God. Our minds will fail at the very first blast of temptation;[386] since our only ground of stability is, to have the authority of God for what we do. In the meantime, God purifies the faith of his servant from its rust; for by mixing his own and his wife's imagination with the word of God, he, in a sense, had stifled his faith; wherefore, to restore its brightness, that which was superfluous is cut of. God, by opposing himself in this manner to our sinful designs, recalls us from our stupidity to a sound mind. A simple promise had been given 'I will bless thy seed.' Sarai's gloss supervened,[387] namely, that she could have no seed but a supposititious one by Hagar: this mire of human imagination, with which the promise had been defiled must be purged away, that Abram might derive his knowledge from no other source, than the pure word of God.

And Sarai dealt hardly with her[388] The word ⊠⊠⊠ (*anah*,) which Moses uses, signifies to afflict and to humble. I therefore explain it as being put for reducing Hagar to submission. But it was difficult for an angry woman to keep within bounds, in repressing the insolence of her maid. Wherefore, it is possible that she became immoderately enraged against her; not so much considering her own duty as revolving the means of being avenged for the offenses committed. Since Moses brings no heavier charge, I confine myself to what is certain; that Sarai made use of her proper authority in restraining the insolence of her maid. And, doubtless, from the event, we may form a judgments that Hagar was impelled to flee, not so much by the cruelty of her mistress, as by her own contumacy. Her own conscience accused her; and it is improbable that Sarai should have been so greatly incensed, except by many, and, indeed atrocious offenses. Therefore, the woman being of servile temper, and of indomitable ferocity, chose rather to flee, than to return to favor, through the humble acknowledgment of her fault.

7. *And the angel of the Lord found her*. We are here taught with what clemency the Lord acts towards his own people, although they have deserved severe punishment. As he had previously mitigated the punishment of Abram and Sarai, so now he casts a paternal look upon Hagar, so that his favor is extended to the whole family. He does not indeed altogether

386 "Ventum trepidationis." — "Wind of trembling."

387 "Additamentum Sarai supervenerat." — "L'addition ou glose de Sarai estoit survenue." — *French Tr*

388 "Et afflixit eam Sarai." "And Sarah afflicted her." See margin of English version.

spare them, lest he should cherish their vices; but he corrects them with gentle remedies. It is indeed probable, that Hagar, in going to the desert of Sur, meditated a return to her own country. Yet mention seems to be made of the desert and the wilderness, to show that she, being miserably afflicted, wandered from the presence of men, till the angel met her. Although Moses does not describe the form of the vision, yet I do not doubt, that it was clothed in a human body; in which, nevertheless, manifest tokens of celestial glory were conspicuous.

8. *And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid.* By the use of this epithet, the angel declares, that she still remained a servant, though she had escaped the hands of her mistress; because liberty is not to be obtained by stealth, nor by flight, but by manumission. Moreover, by this expression, God shows that he approves of civil government, and that the violation of it is inexcusable. The condition of servitude was then hard; and thanks are to be given to the Lord, that this barbarity has been abolished; yet God has declared from heaven his pleasure, that servants should bear the yoke; as also by the mouth of Paul, he does not give servants their freedom, nor deprive their masters of their use; but only commands them to be kindly and liberally treated. (Ephesians 6:5.) It is to be inferred also, from the circumstance of the time, not only that civil government is to be maintained, as matter of necessity, but that lawful authorities are to be obeyed, for conscience' sake. For although the fugitive Hagar could no longer be compelled to obedience by force, yet her condition was not changed in the sight of God. By the same argument it is proved, that if masters at any time deal too hardly with their servants, or if rulers treat their subjects with unjust asperity, their rigour is still to be endured, nor is there just cause for shaking off the yoke, although they may exercise their power too imperiously. In short, whenever it comes into our mind to defraud any one of his right, or to seek exemption from our proper calling, let the voice of the angel sound in our ears, as if God would draw us back, by putting his own hand upon us. They who have proudly and tyrannically governed shall one day render their account to God; meanwhile, their asperity is to be borne by their subjects, till God, whose prerogative it is to raise the abject and to relieve the oppressed, shall give them succor. If a comparison be made, the power of magistrates is far more tolerable, than that ancient dominion was.[389] The paternal authority is in its very nature amiable, and worthy of regard. If the flight of Hagar was prohibited by the command of God, much less will he bear with the licentiousness of a people, who rebel against their prince; or with the contumacy of children, who withdraw themselves from obedience to their parents.

Whence camest thou ? He does not inquire, as concerning a doubtful matter, but knowing that no place for subterfuge is left to Hagar, he peremptorily reproves her for her flight; as if he had said, 'Having deserted thy station, thou shalt profit nothing by thy wan-

389 For this ancient dominion implied slavery. The French translation has it, "Le droit des magistrats est bien plus tolerable, que n'a point este ceste ancienne domination sur les serfs." — *Ed.*

dering, since thou canst not escape the hand of God, which had placed thee there.' It might also be, that he censured her departure from that house, which was then the earthly sanctuary of God. For she was not ignorant that God was there worshipped in a peculiar manner. And although she indirectly charges her mistress with cruelty, by saying that she had fled from her presence; still the angel, to cut off all subterfuges, commands her to return and to humble herself. By which words he first intimates, that the bond of subjection is not dissolved either by the too austere, or by the impotent dominion of rulers; he then retorts the blame of the evil upon Hagar herself, because she had obstinately placed herself in opposition to her mistress, and, forgetful of her own condition, had exalted herself more insolently and boldly than became a handmaid. In short, as she is justly punished for her faults, he commands her to seek a remedy by correcting them. And truly, since nothing is better than, by obedience and patience, to appease the severity of those who are in authority over us; we must more especially labor to bend them to mildness by our humiliation, when we have offended them by our pride.

10. *I will multiply thy seed exceedingly* For the purpose of mitigating the offense, and of alleviating what was severe in the precept, by some consolation, he promises a blessing in the child which she should bear. God might indeed, by his own authority, have strictly enjoined what was right; but in order that Hagar might the more cheerfully do what she knew to be her duty, he allures her, as by blandishments, to obedience. And to this point those promises tend, by which he invites us to voluntary submission. For he would not draw us by servile methods, so that we should obey his commands by constraint; and therefore he mingles mild and paternal invitations with his commands, dealing with us liberally, as with sons. That the angel here promises to do what is peculiar to God alone, involves no absurdity, for it is sufficiently usual with God to invest his ministers whom he sends with his own character, that the authority of their word may appear the greater. I do not, however, disapprove the opinion of most of the ancients; that Christ the Mediator was always present in all the oracles, and that this is the cause why the majesty of God is ascribed to angels.[390] On which subject I have already touched and shall have occasion to say more elsewhere.

11. *And shalt bear a son*. The angel explains what he had briefly said respecting her seed; namely, that it should not be capable of being numbered on account of its multitude; and he commences with Ishmael, who was to be its head and origin. Although we shall afterwards see that he was a reprobate, yet an honorable name is granted to him, to mark the temporal benefit of which Ishmael became a partakers as being a son of Abram. For I thus explain the passage, God intended that a monument of the paternal kindness, with which he embraced the whole house of Abram, should endure to posterity. For although the covenant of eternal life did not belong to Ishmael; yet, that he might not be entirely without favor,

390 See on this subject, Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, Book 2 Chap. 4 Sect. 33. — *Ed.*

God constituted him the father of a great and famous people. And thus we see that, with respect to this present life, the goodness of God extended itself to the seed of Abram according to the flesh. But if God intended the name of Ishmael (which signifies God will hear) to be a perpetual memorial of his *temporal* benefits; he will by no means bear with our ingratitude, if we do not celebrate his *celestial* and everlasting mercies, even unto death.

The Lord has heard thy affliction. We do not read that Hagar, in her difficulties, had recourse to prayer; and we are rather left to conjecture, from the words of Moses, that when she was stupefied by her sufferings, the angel came of his own accord. It is therefore to be observed, that there are two ways in which God looks down upon men, for the purpose of helping them; either when they, as suppliants, implore his aid; or when he, even unasked, succours them in their afflictions. He is indeed especially said to hearken to them who, by prayers, invoke him as their Deliverer. Yet, sometimes, when men lie mute, and because of their stupor, do not direct their wishes to him, he is said to listen to their miseries. That this latter mode of hearing was fulfilled towards Hagar, is probable, because God freely met her wandering through the desert. Moreover, because God frequently deprives unbelievers of his help, until they are worn away with slow disease, or else suffers them to be suddenly destroyed; let none of us give indulgence to our own sloth; but being admonished by the sense of our evils, let us seek him without delay. In the meantime, however, it is of no small avail to the confirmation of our faith, that our prayers will never be despised by the Lord, seeing that he anticipates even the slothful and the stupid, with his help; and if he is present to those who seek him not, much more will he be propitious to the pious desires of his own people.

12. *And he will be a wild man*. The angel declares what kind of person Ishmael will be. The simple meaning is, (in my judgment,) that he will be a warlike man, and so formidable to his enemies, that none shall injure him with impunity. Some expound the word ⌧⌧⌧ (*pereh*) to mean a forester, and one addicted to the hunting of wild beasts. But the explanation must not, it seems, be sought elsewhere than in the context; for it follows immediately after, *'His hand shall be against all men, and the hand of all men against him.'* It is however asked, whether this ought to be reckoned among benefits conferred by God, that he is to preserve his rank in life by force of arms; seeing that nothing is, in itself, more desirable than peace. The difficulty may be thus solved; that Ishmael, although all his neighbors should make war upon him, and should, on every side, conspire to destroy him; shall yet though alone, be endued with sufficient power to repel all their attacks. I think, however, that the angel, by no means, promises Ishmael complete favor, but only that which is limited. Among our chief blessings, we must desire to have peace with all men. Now, since this is denied to Ishmael, that blessing which is next in order is granted to him; namely, that he shall not be overcome by his enemies; but shall be brave and powerful to resist their force. He does not, however, speak of Ishmael's person, but of his whole progeny; for what follows is not strictly

suitable to one man. Should this exposition be approved, no simple or unmixed blessing is here promised; but only a tolerable or moderate condition; so that Ishmael and his posterity might perceive that something was divinely granted to them, for the sake of their father Abram. Therefore, it is, by no means, to be reckoned among the benefits given by God, that he shall have all around him as enemies, and shall resist them all by violence: but this is added as a remedy and an alleviation of the evil; that he, who would have many enemies, should be equal to bear up against them.

And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. As this is properly applicable only to a nation, we hence the more easily perceive, that they are deceived who restrict the passage to the person of Ishmael. Again, others understand, that the posterity of Ishmael was to have a fixed habitation in the presence of their brethren, who would be unwilling to allow it; as if it were said, that they should forcibly occupy the land they inhabit, although their brethren might attempt to resist them. Others adduce a contrary opinion; namely, that the Ishmaelites, though living among a great number of enemies, should yet not be destitute of friends and brethren. I approve, however, of neither opinion: for the angel rather intimates, that this people should be separate from others; as if he would say, 'They shall not form a part or member of any one nation; but shall be a complete body, having a distinct and special name.'

13. *And she called the name of the Lord.* Moses, I have no doubt, implies that Hagar, after she was admonished by the angel, changed her mind: and being thus subdued, retook herself to prayer; unless, perhaps, here the confession of the tongue, rather than change of mind, is denoted. I rather incline, however, to the opinion, that Hagar, who had before been of a wild and intractable temper, begins now at length to acknowledge the providence of God. Moreover, as to that which some suppose; namely, that God is called 'the God of vision,[391] because he appears and manifests himself to men, it is a forced interpretation. Rather let us understand that Hagar, who before had appeared to herself to be carried away by chance, through the desert; now perceives and acknowledges that human affairs are under divine government. And whoever is persuaded that he is looked upon by God, must of necessity walk as in his sight.

Have I also here seen after him that seeth me ?[392] Some translate this, 'Have I not seen after the vision?'[393] But it really is as I have rendered it. Moreover, the obscurity of the

391 "Deum visionis." Though Calvin regards this interpretation as forced, it must not be denied that it has the sanction of the highest literary authorities. Le Clerc, Peter Martyr, Rosenmuller, Dathe, Gesenius, Lee, Professor Bush, and many others, all regard the word ⊠⊠⊠, (roi,) as a substantive, not as a participle, — and consequently God is here spoken of as the God who reveals himself, not as the God who sees. — *Ed*

392 "Nonne etiam hic vidi post videntem me?" "Have I not also here looked after him who seeth me?"

393 "Annon video, (h. e. vivo,) post videntem me, i.e., post visionem divinam, vel post visionem videntis me?" Do I not see, (that is, live,) after him who seeth me? that is, after the divine vision, or after the vision of

sentence has procured for us various interpretations. Some among the Hebrews say that Hagar was astonished at the sight of the angel; because she thought that God was nowhere *seen* but in the house of Abram. But this is frigid, and in this way the ambition of the Jews often compels them to trifle; seeing that they apply their whole study to boasting on the glory of their race. Others so understand the passage, 'Have I seen after my vision?' that is, so late, that during the vision I was blind?[394] According to these interpreters, the vision of Hagar was twofold: the former erroneous; since she perceived nothing celestial in the angel; but the other true, after she had been affected with a sense of the divine nature of the vision. To some it seems that a negative answer is implied; as if she would say, I did not see him departing; and then from his sudden disappearance, she collects that he must have been an angel of God.

Also, on the second member of the sentence, interpreters disagree. Jerome renders it, 'the back parts of him that seeth me:'[395] which many refer to an obscure vision, so that the phrase is deemed metaphorical. For as we do not plainly perceive men from behind; so they are said to see the back parts of God, to whom he does not openly nor clearly manifest himself; and this opinion is commonly received. Others think that Moses used a different figure; for they take the seeing of the back parts of God, for the sense of his anger; just as his face is said to shine upon us, when he shows himself propitious and favorable. Therefore, according to them, the sense is, 'I thought that I had escaped, so that I should no more be obnoxious to the rod or chastening of God; but here also I perceive that he is angry with me.' So far I have briefly related the opinion of others.[396] And although I have no intention to pause for the purpose of refuting each of these expositions; I yet freely declare, that not one of these interpreters has apprehended the meaning of Moses. I willingly accept what some adduce, that Hagar wondered at the goodness of God, by whom she had been regarded even in the desert: but this, though something, is not the whole. In the first place, Hagar chides herself, because, as she had before been too blind, she even now opened her eyes too slowly and indolently to perceive God. For she aggravates the guilt of her torpor by the cir-

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him that seeth me. — *Junius*, *Piscator*, etc., in Poli Syn. Ainsworth gives this version, 'Have I also here seen after him that seeth me?' Where stress is laid on the word here, as is done by Calvin, for the purpose of contrasting the desert with Abram's house. The opinion, also, that the term 'see' is equivalent to 'live,' is supported by high authority. The meaning of the passage would then be, 'Do I see, that is, live, after having beheld such a vision?' — *Ed*

394 *Vatablus* in Poli Syn. Perhaps the following paraphrase may bring out the sense of this obscure interpretation. We may suppose Hagar to exclaim: 'Have I indeed seen at last? yet, not till after the vision itself had passed away; so that when I saw it literally, I was mentally blind, and did not know what I was looking at.' — *Ed*.

395 See *Vulgate*.

396 These different interpretations, with others, may be seen in Poole's Synopsis. — *Ed*.

cumstance both of place and time. She had frequently found, by many proofs, that she was regarded by the Lord; yet becoming blind, she had despised his providence, as if, with closed eyes, she had passed by him when he presented himself before her. She now accuses herself for not having more quickly awoke when the angel appeared. The consideration of place is also of great weight,[397] because God, who had always testified that he was present with her in the house of Abram, now pursued her as a fugitive, even into the desert. It implied, indeed, a base ingratitude on her part, to be blind to the presence of God; so that even when she knew he was looking upon her, she did not, in return, raise her eyes to behold him. But it was a still more shameful blindness, that she, being regarded by the Lord, although a wanderer and an exile, paying the just penalty of her perverseness, still would not even acknowledge him as present. We now see the point to which her self-reproach tends; 'Hitherto I have not sought God, nor had respect to him, except by constraint; whereas, he had before deigned to look down upon me: even now in the desert, where being afflicted with evils, I ought immediately to have roused myself, I have, according to my custom, been stupefied: nor should I ever have raised my eyes towards heaven, unless I had first been looked upon by the Lord.'

14. *Wherefore the well was called*[398] I subscribe to the opinion of those who take the word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*yekra*,) indefinitely, which is usual enough in the Hebrew language. In order that the sense may be the clearer it is capable of being resolved into the passive voice, that 'the well was called.'[399] Yet I think this common appellation originated with Hagar, who, not content with one simple confession, wished that the mercy of God should be attested in time to come; and therefore she transmitted her testimony, as from hand to hand. Hence we infer how useful it is, that they who do not freely humble themselves, should be subdued by stripes. Hagar, who had always been wild and rebellious, and who had, at length, entirely shaken off the yoke; now, when the hardness of her heart was broken by afflictions, appears altogether another person. She was not, however, reduced to order by stripes only; but a celestial vision was also added, which thoroughly arrested her. And the same thing is necessary for us; namely, that God, while chastising us with his hand, should also bring us into a state of submissive meekness by his Spirit. Some among the Hebrews say that the name of the well was given to it, as being a testimony of a twofold favor, because Ishmael was revived from death, and God had respect to Hagar, his mother. But they foolishly mutilate

397 "Loci enim notatio," is in the French translation rendered, "Le changement du lieu." The change of place, as if it had been mutatio. — *Ed*

398 "Idcirco vocavit puteum, Puteum viventis videntis me." "Therefore she called the well, The well of him who liveth and seeth me."

399 As in the English version.

things joined together: for Hagar wished to testify that she had been favourably regarded by Him who was the Living God, or the Author of life.

15. *And Abram called* Hagar had been commanded to give that name to her son; but Moses follows the order of nature; because fathers, by the imposition of the name, declare the power which they have over their sons. We may easily gather, that Hagar, when she returned home, related the events which had occurred. Therefore, Abram shows himself to be obedient and grateful to God: because he both names his son according to the command of the angel, and celebrates the goodness of God in having hearkened to the miseries of Hagar.

CHAPTER 17.

Genesis 17:1-27

1. And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.	**1.** Et fuit Abram nonaginta et novem annorum: et visus est Jehova Abram, dixitque ad eum, Ego Deus Omnipotens, ambula coram me, et esto perfectus.
2. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.	**2.** Et ponam pactum meum inter me et to, et multiplicabo to vehementissime.
3. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,	**3.** Tunc prostravit se Abram super faciem suam, et loquutus est cum eo Deus, dicendo,
4. As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.	**4.** Ego, ecce pactum meum tecum, et eris in patrem multitudinis gentium.
5. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.	**5.** Et non vocabitur ultra nomen tuum Abram, sed erit nomen tuum Abraham: quia patrem multitudinis gentium posui to.
6. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.	**6.** Et multiplicabo to valde, et ponam to in gentes, et reges ex to egredientur.
7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.	**7.** Et statuam foedus meum inter me et to, et inter semen tuum post to in generationes suas, in foedus perpetuum, ut sim tibi in Deum et semini tuo post to.
8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.	**8.** Daboque tibi et semini tuo post to terram peregrinationum tuarum, omnem terram Chenaan in possessionem perpetuam, et ero eis in Deum.
9. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.	**9.** Praeterea dixit Deus ad Abraham, et tu pactum meum custodies, tu et semen tuum post to in generationibus suis.
10. This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee;	**10.** Hoc pactum meum quod custodietis inter me et vos, et inter semen tuum post to, ut circumcidatur in vobis omnis masculus:

Every man child among you shall be circumcised.	
11. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.	**11.** Et circumcidetis carnem praeputii vestri: et erit in signum foederis inter me et vos.
12. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.	**12.** Et filius octo dierum circumcidetur in vobis: omnis masculus in generations vestras, verna, et emptus argento ab omni filio alienigenae, qui non est de semine tuo.
13. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.	**13.** Circumcidendo circumcidetur verna tuus, et emptus argento tuo: et erit pactum meum in carne vestra in pactum perpetuum.
14. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.	**14.** Et praeputiatus masculus, cui non circumcisa fuerit carno praeputii sui, exterminabitur anima ipsa de populis suis, quia pactum meum irritum fecit.
15. And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name *be*	**15.** Et dixit Deus ad Abraham, Sarai uxoris tuae non vocabis nomen Sarai, sed Sarah est nomen ejus.
16. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.	**16.** Et benedicam ei, atque etiam dabo ex ea tibi filium, cui benedicam, et erit in gentes: reges populorum ex ea erunt.
17. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?	**17.** Et prostravit se Abraham in faciem suam, et risit, dixitque in corde suo, Numquid viro centum annorum nascetur proles? Et an Sarah mulier nonaginta annorum pariet?
18. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!	**18.** Et dixit Abraham ad Deum, Utinam Ismael vivat coram to.
19. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his	**19.** Et dixit Deus, Vere Sarah uxor tua pariet tibi filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Isaac: et

name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.	statuam pactum meum cum eo in pactum perpetuum, et cum semine ejus post eum.
20. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.	**20.** Et pro Ismael audivi to: ecce, benedixi ei, et crescere faciam eum, et multiplicare faciam eum supra modum: duodecim principes generabit, et ponam eum in gentem magnam.
21. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.	**21.** Et pactum meum statuam cum Isaac, quem pariet tibi Sarah in tempore hoc, anno altero.
22. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.	**22.** Et finivit loqui cum co, et ascendit Deus ab Abraham.
23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.	**23.** Tunc Abraham tulit Ismael filium suum, et omnes vernas domus suae, et omnem acquisitum argento suo: omnis masculi in viris domus suae circumcidit carnem praeputii eorum in ipsomet die, sicut loquutus fuerat cum eo Deus.
24. And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.	**24.** Abraham autem erat vir nonaginta et novem annorum, quando circumcisa fuit carno praeputii ipsius.
25. And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.	**25.** Et Ismael filius ejus erat tredecim annorum, quando circumcisus est ipse in carne praeputii sui,
26. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.	**26.** In ipsomet die circumcisus est Abraham et Ismael filius ejus.
27. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.	**27.** Et omnes viri domus ejus, verna domus, et emptus argento a filio alienigenae, circumcisi sunt cum ipso.

1. *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine* Moses passes over thirteen years of Abram's life, not because nothing worthy of remembrance had in the meantime occurred; but because the Spirit of God, according to his own will, selects those things which are most necessary to be known. He purposely points out the length of time which had elapsed from

the birth of Ishmael to the period when Isaac was promised, for the purpose of teaching us that he long remained satisfied with that son who should, at length, be rejected, and that he was as one deluded by a fallacious appearance. Meanwhile, we see in what a circuitous course the Lord led him. It was even possible that he brought this delay upon himself by his own fault, in having precipitately entered into second nuptials; yet as Moses declares no such thing, I leave it undetermined. Let it suffice to accept what is certain; namely, that Abram being contented with his only son, ceased to desire any other seed. The want of offspring had previously excited him to constant prayers and sighings; for the promise of God was so fixed in his mind, that he was ardently carried forward to seek its fulfillment. And now, falsely supposing that he had obtained his wish, he is led away by the presence of his son according to the flesh, from the expectation of a spiritual seed. Again the wonderful goodness of God shows itself, in that Abram himself is raised, beyond his own expectation and desire, to a new hope, and he suddenly hears, that what it never came into his mind to ask, is granted unto him. If he had been daily offering up importunate prayers for this blessing, we should not so plainly have seen that it was conferred upon him by the free gift of God, as when it is given to him without his either thinking of it or desiring it. Before however we speak of Isaac, it will repay our labor, to notice the order and connection of the words.

First, Moses says that the Lord *appeared* unto him, in order that we may know that the oracle was not pronounced by secret revelation, but that a vision at the same time was added to it. Besides the vision was not speechless, but had the word annexed, from which word the faith of Abram might receive profit. Now that word summarily contains this declaration, that God enters into covenant with Abram: it then unfolds the nature of the covenant itself, and finally puts to it the seal, with the accompanying attestations.

I am the Almighty God[400] The Hebrew noun *El*, which is derived from power, is here put for God. The same remark applies to the accompanying word ⊠⊠⊠ (*shaddai*,) as if God would declare, that he had sufficient power for Abram's protection: because our faith can only stand firmly, while we are certainly persuaded that the defense of God is alone sufficient for use and can sincerely despise everything in the world which is opposed to our salvation. God, therefore, does not boast of that power which lies concealed within himself; but of that which he manifests towards his children; and he does so, in order that Abram might hence derive materials for confidence. Thus, in these words, a promise is included.

400 ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠, (*El Shaddai*,) a title of Jehovah, apparently of plural form, *Gesenius* calls it the plural of majesty. It seems chiefly intended to convey the notion of Omnipotence. Some render the words, 'God all sufficient; 'but the original root of ⊠⊠⊠ conveys the notion, rather of overwhelming, than of sustaining power. The word is therefore better rendered, as in our version, Almighty. It corresponds with the Greek παντοκράτωρ, and with the Latin Omnipotens. — *Ed*

Walk before me The force of this expression we have elsewhere explained. In making the covenant, God stipulates for obedience, on the part of his servant. Yet He does not in vain prefix the declaration that he is 'the Almighty God,' and is furnished with power to help his own people: because it was necessary that Abram should be recalled from all other means of help, [401] that he might entirely devote himself to God alone. For no one will ever retake himself to God, but he who keeps created things in their proper place, and looks up to God alone. Where, indeed, the power of God has been once acknowledged, it ought so to transport us with admiration, and our minds ought so to be filled with reverence for him, that nothing should hinder us from worshipping him. Moreover, because the eyes of God look for faith and truth in the heart, Abram is commanded to aim at integrity. For the Hebrews call him a *man of perfections*, who is not of a deceitful or double mind, but sincerely cultivates rectitude. In short, the integrity here mentioned is opposed, to hypocrisy. And surely, when we have to deal with God, no place for dissimulation remains. Now, from these words, we learn for what end God gathers together for himself a church; namely, that they whom he has called, may be holy. The foundation, indeed, of the divine calling, is a gratuitous promise; but it follows immediately after, that they whom he has chosen as a peculiar people to himself, should devote themselves to the righteousness of God.[402] For on this condition, he adopts children as his own, that he may, in return, obtain the place and the honor of a Father. And as he himself cannot lie, so he rightly demands mutual fidelity from his own children. Wherefore, let us know, that God manifests himself to the faithful, in order that they may live as in his sight; and may make him the arbiter not only of their works, but of their thoughts. Whence also we infer, that there is no other method of living piously and justly than that of depending upon God.

2. *And I will make my covenant* He now begins more fully and abundantly to explain what he had before alluded to briefly. We have said that the covenant of God with Abram had two parts. The first was a declaration of gratuitous love; to which was annexed the promise of a happy life. But the other was an exhortation to the sincere endeavor to cultivate uprightness, since God had given, in a single word only, a slight taste of his grace; and then immediately had descended to the design of miscalling; namely, that Abram should be upright. He now subjoins a more ample declaration of his grace, in order that Abram may endeavor more willingly to form his mind and his life, both to reverence towards God, and to the cultivation of uprightness; as if God had said 'See how kindly I indulge thee: for I do not require integrity from thee simply on account of my authority, which I might justly do; but whereas I owe thee nothing, I condescend graciously to engage in a mutual covenant.'

401 "Ab aliis omnibus." "De tous autres moyens." "From all other means." — *French Tr*

402 "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:13. — *Ed*

He does not, however, speak of this as of a new thing: but he recalls the memory of the covenant which he had before made, and now fully confirms and establishes its certainty. For God is not wont to utter new oracles, which may destroy the credit, or obscure the light, or weaken the efficacy of those which preceded; but he continues, as in one perpetual tenor, those promises which he has once given. Wherefore, by these words, he intends nothing else than that the covenant, of which Abram had heard before should be established and ratified: but he expressly introduces that principal point, concerning the multiplication of seed, which he afterwards frequently repeats.

3. *And Abram fell on his face* We know that this was the ancient rite of adoration. Moreover, Abram testifies, first, that he acknowledges God, in whose presence all flesh ought to keep silence, and to be humbled; and, secondly that he reverently receives and cordially embraces whatever God is about to speak. If, however, this was intended as a confession of faith, we must observe, that the faith which relies upon the grace of God cannot be disjoined from a pure conscience. God, in offering his grace to Abram, requires of him a sincere disposition to live justly and homily. Abram, in prostrating himself, declares that he obediently receives both.[403] Let us therefore remember, that in one and the same bond of faith, the gratuitous adoption in which our salvation is placed, is to be combined with newness of life. And although Abram utters not a word, he declares more fully by his silence, than if he had spoken with a loud and sounding voice, that he yields obedience to the word of God.

4. *As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee*[404] They who translate the passage, 'Behold, I make a covenant with thee,' or, 'Behold, I and my covenant with thee;' do not seem to me faithfully to represent the meaning of Moses. For, first, God declares that he is the speaker, in order that absolute authority may appear in his words. For since our faith can rest on no other foundation than his eternal veracity, it becomes, above all things, necessary for us to be informed that what is proposed to us, has proceeded from his sacred mouth. Therefore, the pronoun I, is to be read separately as a preface to the rest; in order that Abram might have a composed mind, and might engage, without hesitation, in the proposed covenant. Whence a useful doctrine is deduced, that faith necessarily has reference to God: because, although all angels and men should speak to us, never would their authority appear sufficiently great to confirm our minds. And it cannot but be, that we should at times waver, until that voice sounds from heaven, 'I am.' Whence also it appears what kind of religion is that of the Papacy: where, instead of the word of God, the fictions of men are alone the subject of boast. And they are justly exposed to continual fluctuation, who, depending upon the word of men, act unjustly towards God, by ascribing to them more than is right. But let us have no other foundation of our faith than this word 'I', not as spoken indifferently by

403 That is, both the promise of grace, and the command to yield obedience. — *Ed.*

404 "Ego, ecce pactum meum tecum." "I, behold, my covenant is with thee."

any mouth whatever, but by the mouth of God alone. If, however, myriads of men set themselves in opposition, and proudly exclaim, 'We, we,' let this single word of God suffice to dissipate the empty sound of multitudes.

And thou shalt be a father of many nations[405] It is asked what is this multitude of nations? It obviously appears, that different nations had their origin from the holy Patriarch: for Ishmael grew to a great people: the Idumeans, from another branch were spread far and wide; large families also sprung from other sons, whom he had by Keturah. But Moses looked still further, because, indeed, the Gentiles were to be, by faith, inserted into the stock of Abram, although not descended from him according to the flesh: of which fact Paul is to us a faithful interpreter and witness. For he does not gather together the Arabians, Idumeans, and others, for the purpose of making Abram the father of many nations; but he so extends the name of father, as to make it applicable to the whole world, in order that the Gentiles, in other respects strangers, and separated from each other, might, from all sides combine in one family of Abram. I grant, indeed, that, for a time, the twelve tribes were as so many nations; but only in order to form a prelude to that immense multitude, which, at length, is collected together as the one family of Abram. And that Moses speaks of those sons, who, being regenerate by faith, acquire the name, and pass over into the stock of Abram, is sufficiently proved by this one consideration. For the carnal race of Abram could not be divided into different nations, without causing those who had departed from the unity, to be immediately accounted strangers. Thus the Church rejected the Ishmaelites, the Idumeans, and others, and regarded them as foreigners. Abram therefore was not called the father of many nations, because his seed was to be divided into many nations; but rather, because many nations were to be gathered together unto him. A change also of his name is added as a token. For he begins to be called Abraham, in order that the name itself may teach him, that he should not be the father of one family only; but that a progeny should rise up to him from an immense multitude, beyond the common course of nature. For this reason, the Lord so often renews this promise; because the very repetition of it shows that no common blessing was promised.

7. *And thy seed after thee* There is no doubt that the Lord distinguishes the race of Abraham from the rest of the world. We must now see what people he intends. Now they are deceived who think that his elect alone are here pointed out; and that all the faithful are indiscriminately comprehended, from whatever people, according to the flesh, they are descended. For, on the contrary, the Scripture declares that the race of Abraham, by lineal descent, had been peculiarly accepted by God. And it is the evident doctrine of Paul concerning the natural descendants of Abraham, that they are holy branches which have proceeded from a holy root, (Romans 11:16.) And lest any one should restrict this assertion to the

405 "Multitudinis gentium." "Of a multitude of nations."

shadows of the law, or should evade it by allegory, he elsewhere expressly declares, that Christ came to be a minister of the circumcision, (Romans 15:8.) Wherefore, nothing is more certain, than that God made his covenant with those sons of Abraham who were naturally to be born of him. If any one object, that this opinion by no means agrees with the former, in which we said that they are reckoned the children of Abraham, who being by faith ingrafted into his body, form one family; the difference is easily reconciled, by laying down certain distinct degrees of adoption, which may be collected from various passages of Scripture. In the beginning, antecedently to this covenant, the condition of the whole world was one and the same. But as soon as it was said, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee,' the Church was separated from other nations; just as in the creation of the world, the light emerged out of the darkness. Then the people of Israel was received, as the flock of God, into their own fold: the other nations wandered, like wild beasts, through mountains, woods, and deserts. Since this dignity, in which the sons of Abraham excelled other nations, depended on the word of God alone, the gratuitous adoption of God belongs to them all in common. For if Paul deprives the Gentiles of God and of eternal life, on the ground of their being aliens from the covenant, (Ephesians 4:18,) it follows that all Israelites were of the household of the Church, and sons of God, and heirs of eternal life. And although it was by the grace of God, and not by nature, that they excelled the Gentiles; and although the inheritance at the kingdom of God came to them by promise, and not by carnal descent; yet they are sometimes said to differ by nature from the rest of the world. In the Epistle to the Galatians, (Galatians 2:15), and elsewhere, Paul calls them saints 'by nature,' because God was willing that his grace should descend,[406] by a continual succession, to the whole seed. In this sense, they who were unbelievers among the Jews, are yet called the children of the celestial kingdom by Christ. (Matthew 8:12.) Nor does what St Paul says contradict this; namely, that not all who are from Abraham are to be esteemed legitimate children; because they are not the children of the promise, but only of the flesh. (Romans 9:8.) For there, the promise is not taken generally for that outward word, by which God conferred his favor as well upon the reprobate as upon the elect; but must be restricted to that efficacious calling, which he inwardly seals by his Spirit. And that this is the case, is proved without difficulty; for the promise by which the Lord had adopted them all as children, was common to all: and in that promise, it cannot be denied, that eternal salvation was offered to all. What, therefore, can be the meaning of Paul, when he denies that certain persons have any right to be reckoned among children, except that he is no longer reasoning about the extern-

406 "Quia continua serie prosequi nolebat Deus, gratiem suam ergo totum semen." So it is, both in the Amsterdam edition, and in that of Hengstenberg; but the word nolebat (was unwilling) seems so contrary to the writer's line of argument, that the French version is followed in the translation, which is, "Pource que Dieu vouloit poursuyure," etc. — *Ed*

ally offered grace, but about that of which only the elect effectually partake? Here, then, a twofold class of sons presents itself to us, in the Church; for since the whole body of the people is gathered together into the fold of God, by one and the same voice, all without exception, are in this respects accounted children; the name of the Church is applicable in common to them all: but in the innermost sanctuary of God, none others are reckoned the sons of God, than they in whom the promise is ratified by faith. And although this difference flows from the fountain of gratuitous election, whence also faith itself springs; yet, since the counsel of God is in itself hidden from us, we therefore distinguish the true from the spurious children, by the respective marks of faith and of unbelief. This method and dispensation continued even to the promulgation of the gospel; but then the middle wall was broken down, (Ephesians 2:14,) and God made the Gentiles equal to the natural descendants of Abraham. That was the renovation of the world, by which they, who had before been strangers, began to be called sons. Yet whenever a comparison is made between Jews and Gentiles, the inheritance of life is assigned to the former, as lawfully belonging to them; but to the latter, it is said to be adventitious. Meanwhile, the oracle was fulfilled in which God promises that Abraham should be the father of many nations. For whereas previously, the natural sons of Abraham were succeeded by their descendants in continual succession, and the benediction, which began with him, flowed down to his children; the coming of Christ, by inverting the original order, introduced into his family those who before were separated from his seed: at length the Jews were cast out, (except that a hidden seed of the election remained among them,) in order that the rest might be saved. It was necessary that these things concerning the seed of Abraham should once be stated, that they may open to us an easy introduction to what follows.

In their generations This succession of generations clearly proves that the posterity of Abraham were taken into the Church, in such a manner that sons might be born to them, who should be heirs of the same grace. In this way the covenant is called perpetual, as lasting until the renovation of the world; which took place at the advent of Christ. I grant, indeed, that the covenant was without end, and may with propriety be called eternal, as far as the whole Church is concerned; it must, however always remain as a settled point, that the regular succession of ages was partly broken, and partly changed, by the coming of Christ, because the middle wall being broken down, and the sons by nature being, at length, disinherited, Abraham began to have a race associated with himself from all regions of the world.

To be a God unto thee In this single word we are plainly taught that this was a spiritual covenant, not confirmed in reference to the present life only; but one from which Abraham might conceive the hope of eternal salvations so that being raised even to heaven, he might lay hold of solid and perfect bliss. For those whom God adopts to himself, from among a people — seeing that he makes them partakers of his righteousness and of all good things — he also constitutes heirs of celestial life. Let us then mark this as the principal part of the

covenant, that He who is the God of the living, not of the dead, promises to be a God to the children of Abraham. It follows afterwards, in the way of augmentation of the grant, that he promised to give them the land. I confess, indeed, that something greater and more excellent than itself was shadowed forth by the land of Canaan; yet this is not at variance with the statement, that the promise now made was an accession to that primary one, 'I will be thy God.' Now, although God again affirms, as before, that He will give the land to Abraham himself, we nevertheless know, that Abraham never possessed dominion over it; but the holy man was contented with his title to it alone, although the possession of it was not granted him; and, therefore, he calmly passed from his earthly pilgrimage into heaven. God again repeats that He will be a God to the posterity of Abraham, in order that they may not settle upon earth, but may regard themselves as trained for higher things.

9. *Thou shalt keep my covenant* As formerly, covenants were not only committed to public records, but were also wont to be engraven in brass, or sculptured on stones, in order that the memory of them might be more fully recorded, and more highly celebrated; so in the present instance, God inscribes his covenant in the flesh of Abraham. For circumcision was as a solemn memorial of that adoption, by which the family of Abraham had been elected to be the peculiar people of God. The pious had previously possessed other ceremonies which confirmed to them the certainty of the grace of God; but now the Lord attests the new covenant with a new kind of symbol. But the reason why He suffered the human race to be without this testimony of his grace, during so many ages, is concealed from us; except that we see it was instituted at the time when he chose a certain nation to himself; which thing itself depends on his secret counsel. Moreover, although it would, perhaps, be more suitable for the purpose of instruction, were we to give a summary of those things which are to be said concerning circumcision; I will yet follow the order of the text, which I think more appropriate to the office of an interpreter. In the first place; since circumcision is called by Moses, the covenant of God, we thence infer that the promise of grace was included in it. For had it been only a mark or token of external profession among men, the name of covenant would be by no means suitable, for a covenant is not otherwise confirmed, than as faith answers to it. And it is common to all sacraments to have the word of God annexed to them, by which he testifies that he is propitious to us, and calls us to the hope of salvation; yea, a sacrament is nothing else than a visible word, or sculpture and image of that grace of God, which the word more fully illustrates. If, then, there is a mutual relation between the word and faith; it follows, that the proposed end and use of sacraments is to help, promote and confirm faith. But they who deny that sacraments are supports to faith, or that they aid the word in strengthening faith, must of necessity expunge the name of covenant; because, either God there offers himself as a Promiser, in mockery and falsely, or else, faith there finds that on which it may support itself, and from which it may confirm its own assurance. And although we must maintain the distinction between the word and the sign; yet let us

know, that as soon as the sign itself meets our eyes, the word ought to sound in our ears. Therefore, while, in this place, Abraham is commanded to keep the covenant, God does not enjoin upon him the bare use of the ceremony, but chiefly designs that he should regard the end; and certainly, since the promise is the very soul of the sign, whenever it is torn away from the sign, nothing remains but a lifeless and vain phantom. This is the reason why we say, that sacraments are abolished by the Papists; because, the voice of God having become extinct, nothing remains with them, except the residuum of mute figures. Truly frivolous is their boasts that their magical exorcisms stand in the place of the word. For nothing can be called a covenants but what is perceived by us to be clearly revealed, so that it may edify our faith; these actors, who by gesture alone, or by a confused murmuring, play as on pipes, have nothing like this.

We now consider how the covenant is rightly kept; namely, when the word precedes, and we embrace the sign as a testimony and pledge of grace; for as God binds himself to keep the promise given to us; so the consent of faith and of obedience is demanded from us. What follows further on this subject is worthy of notice.

Between me and you[407] Whereby we are taught that a sacrament has not respect only to the external confession, but is an intervening pledge between God and the conscience of man. And, therefore, whosoever is not directed to God through the sacraments, profanes their use. But by the figure metonymy, the name of covenant is transferred to circumcision which is so conjoined with the word, that it could not be separated from it.

10. *Every man-child among you shall be circumcised* Although God promised alike to males and females, what he afterwards sanctioned by circumcision, he nevertheless consecrated, in one sex, the whole people to himself. For whereas, by this symbol, the promise which was given, indiscriminately, to males and females, is confirmed, and it is certain that females as well as males had need of confirmation, it is hence evident, that the symbol was ordained for the sake of both sexes. Nor is it of any force in opposition to this reasoning to say that each individual is commanded to communicate in the sacraments, if he would derive any benefit from them, on the ground that no profit is received by those who neglect their use. For the covenant of God was graven on the bodies of the males, with this condition annexed, that the females also should as their associates be partakers of the same sign.

11. *Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin* Very strange and unaccountable would this command at first sight appear. The subject treated of, is the sacred covenant, in which righteousness, salvation, and happiness are promised; whereby the seed of Abraham is distinguished from other nations, in order that it may be holy and blessed; and who can say that it is reasonable for the sign of so great a mystery to consist in circumcision?[408] But as

407 'Inter me et to' But in the chapter itself it stands, 'Inter me et vos;' as in the English version. — *Ed.*

408 "Tanti mysterii insigne statui in pudendis partibus."

it was necessary for Abraham to become a fool, in order to prove himself obedient to God; so whosoever is wise, will both soberly and reverently receive what God seems to us foolishly to have commanded. And yet we must inquire, whether any analogy is here apparent between the visible sign, and the thing signified. For the signs which God has appointed to assist our infirmity, should be accommodated to the measure of our capacity, or they would be unprofitable. Moreover, it is probable that the Lord commanded circumcision for two reasons; first, to show that whatever is born of man is polluted; then, that salvation would proceed from the blessed seed of Abraham. In the first place, therefore, whatever men have peculiar to themselves, by generation, God has condemned, in the appointment of circumcision; in order that the corruption of nature being manifest, he might induce them to mortify their flesh. Whence also it follows, that circumcision was a sign of repentance. Yet, at the same time, the blessing which was promised in the seed of Abraham, was thereby marked and attested. If then it seem absurd to any one, that the token of a favor so excellent and so singular, was given in that part of the body, let him become ashamed of own salvation, which flowed from the loins of Abraham; but it has pleased God thus to confound the wisdom of the world, that he may the more completely abase the pride of the flesh. And hence we now learn, in the second place, how the reconciliation between God and men, which was exhibited in Christ, was testified by this sign. For which reason it is styled by Paul a seal of the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:11.) Let it suffice thus briefly to have touched upon the analogy between the thing signified and the sign.

12. *And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised*[409] God now prescribes the eighth day for circumcision; whence it appears that this was a part of that discipline, under which he intended to keep his ancient people; for greater liberty is at this day, permitted in the administration of baptism. Some, however maintain that we must not contend earnestly about the number of days, because the Lord spared the children on account of their tenderness, since it was not without danger to inflict a wound upon those who were newly born. For although he might have provided that circumcision should produce no harm or injury; yet there would be no absurdity in saying, that He has respect to their tender age, in order to prove to the Jews his paternal love towards their children. To others this seems to be too frigid; therefore they seek a spiritual mystery in the number of days. They think that the present life is allegorically signified by the seven days; that God commanded infants to be circumcised on the eighth day, in order to show that though we must give attention to the mortification of the flesh during the whole course of our life, it will not be completed till the end. Augustine also thinks that it had reference to the resurrection of Christ; whereby external circumcision was abolished and the truth of the figure was set forth. It is probable and consonant with reason, that the number seven designated the course of the present life.

409 "Et filius octo dierum circumcidetur." — "And a son of eight days shall be circumcised."

Therefore the eighth day might seem to be fixed upon by the Lord, to prefigure the beginning of a new life. But because such a reason is never given in Scripture, I dare affirm nothing. Wherefore, let it suffice to maintain what is certain and solid; namely, that God, in this symbol, has so represented the destruction of the old man, as yet to show that he restores men to life.

He that is born in the house, or bought with money When God commands Abraham to circumcise all whom he has under his power, his special love towards holy Abraham is conspicuous in this, that He embraces his whole family in His grace. We know that formerly slaves were scarcely reckoned among the number of men. But God, out of regard to his servant Abraham, adopts them as his own sons: to this mercy nothing whatever can be added. The pride also of the flesh is cast down; because God, without respect of persons, gathers together both freemen and slaves. But in the person of Abraham, he has prescribed it as a law to all his servants, that they should endeavor to bring all who are subject to them, into the same society of faith with themselves. For every family of the pious ought to be a church. Therefore, it we desire to prove our piety, we must labor that every one of us may have his house ordered in obedience to God. And Abraham is not only commanded to dedicate and to offer unto God those born in his house, but whomsoever he might afterwards obtain.

13. *For an everlasting covenant* The meaning of this expression may be twofold: either that God promises that his grace, of which circumcision was a sign and pledge, should be eternal; or that he intended the sign itself to be perpetually observed. Indeed, I have no doubt that this perpetuity ought to be referred to the visible sign. But they who hence infer, that the use of it ought to flourish among the Jews even of the present time, are (in my opinion) deceived. For they swerve from that axiom which we ought to regard as fixed; that since Christ is the end of the law, the perpetuity which is ascribed to the ceremonies of the law, was terminated as soon as Christ appeared. The temple was the perpetual habitation of God, according to that declaration,

"This is my rest forever, here will I dwell," (Psalm 132:14.)

The Sabbath indicated not a temporal but a perpetual sanctification of the people. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied, that Christ brought them both to an end. In the same way must we also think of circumcision. If the Jews object, that in this manner, the law was violated by Christ; the answer is easy; that the external use of the law was so abrogated, as to establish its truth. For, at length, by the coming of Christ, circumcision was substantially confirmed, so that it should endure forever, and that the covenant which God had before made, should be ratified. Moreover, lest the changing of the visible sign should perplex any one, let that renovation of the world, of which I have spoken, be kept in mind; which renovation — notwithstanding some interposed variety — has perpetuated those things which would otherwise have been fading. Therefore, although the use of circumcision has ceased; yet it does not cerise to be an everlasting, or perpetual covenant, if only Christ be

regarded as the Mediator; who, though the sign be changed, has confirmed the truth. And that, by the coming of Christ, external circumcision ceased, is plain from the words of Paul; who not only teaches that we are circumcised by the death of Christy spiritually, and not through the carnal sign: but who expressly substitutes baptism for circumcision; (Colossians 2:11;) and truly baptism could not succeed circumcision, without taking it away. Therefore in the next chapter he denies that there is any difference between circumcision and uncircumcision; because, at that time, the thing was indifferent, and of no importance. Whence we refute the error of those, who think that circumcision is still in force among the Jews, as if it were a peculiar symbol of the nation, which never ought to be abrogated. I acknowledge, indeed, that it was permitted to them for a time, until the liberty obtained by Christ should be better known; but though permitted, it by no means retained its original force. For it would be absurd to be initiated into the Church by two different signs; of which the one should testify and affirm that Christ was come, and the other should shadow him forth as absent.

14. *And the uncircumcised man-child* In order that circumcision might be the more attended to, God denounces a severe punishment on any one who should neglect it. And as this shows God's great care for the salvation of men; so, on the other hand, it rebukes their negligence. For since God thus benignantly offers a pledge of his love, and of eternal life, for what purpose does he add threatening but to rouse the sluggishness of those whose duty it is to run with diligence? Therefore, this denunciation of punishment virtually charges men with foul ingratitude, because they either reject or despise the grace of God. The passage however teaches, that such contempt shall not pass unpunished. And since God threatens punishment only to despisers, we infer that the uncircumcision of children would do them no harm, if they died before the eighth day. For the bare promise of God was effectual to their salvation. He did not so attest this salvation by external signs, as to restrict his own effectual working to those signs. Moses, indeed, sets aside all controversy on this subject, by adducing as a reason, that they would make void the covenant of God: for we know, that the covenant was not violated, when the power of keeping it was taken away. Let us then consider, that the salvation of the race of Abraham was included in that expression, 'I will be a God to thy seed.' And although circumcision was added as a confirmation, it nevertheless did not deprive the word of its force and efficacy. But because it is not in the power of man to sever what God has joined together; no one could despise or neglect the sign, without both rejecting the word itself; and depriving himself of the benefit therein offered. And therefore the Lord punished bare neglect with such severity. But if any infants were deprived by death of the tokens of salvation, he spared them, because they had done nothing derogatory to the covenant of God. The same reasoning is at this day in force respecting baptism. Whoever, having neglected baptism, feigns himself to be contented with the bare promise, tramples, as much as in him lies, upon the blood of Christ, or at least does not suffer it to

flow for the washing of his own children. Therefore, just punishment follows the contempt of the sign, in the privation of grace; because, by an impious severance of the sign and the word, or rather by a laceration of them, the covenant of God is violated. To consign to destruction those infants, whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for baptism, before any neglect of parents could intervene, is a cruelty originating in superstition. But that the promise belongs to such children, is not in the least doubtful. For what can be more absurd than that the symbol, which is added for the sake of confirming the promise, should really enervate its force? Wherefore, the common opinion, by which baptism is supposed to be necessary to salvation, ought to be so moderated, that it should not bind the grace of Gods or the power of the Spirit, to external symbols, and bring against God a charge of falsehood.

He hath broken my covenant For the covenant of God is ratified, when by faith we embrace what he promises. Should any one object, that infants were guiltless of this fault, because they hitherto were destitute of reason: I answer, we ought not to press this divine declaration too closely, as if God held the infants as chargeable with a fault of their own: but we must observe the antithesis, that as God adopts the infant son in the person of his father, so when the father repudiates such a benefit, the infant is said to cut himself off from the Church. For the meaning of the expression is this, 'He shall be blotted out from the people whom God had chosen to himself'. The explanation of some, that they who remained in uncircumcision would not be Jews, and would have no place in the census of that people, is too frigid. We must go farther, and say, that God, indeed, will not acknowledge those as among his people, who will not bear the mark and token of adoption.

15. *As for Sarai thy wife* God now promises to Abraham a legitimate seed by Sarai. She had been (as I have said) too precipitate, when she substituted, without any command from God, her handmaid in her own place. Abraham also bad been too pliant in following his wife, who foolishly and rashly wished to anticipate the design of God; nevertheless, their united fault did not prevent God from making it known to them that he was about to give them that seed, from the expectation of which, they had, in a manner, cut themselves off. Whence the gratuitous kindness of God shines the more clearly, because, although men impede the course of it by obstacles of their own, it nevertheless comes to them. Moreover, God changes the name of Sarai, in order that he may extend her preeminence far and wide, which in her former name had been more restricted. For the letter ☐ (*yod*) has the force among the Hebrews of the possessive pronoun: this being now taken away, God designs that Sarah should every where, and without exception, be celebrated as a sovereign and princess.[410] And this is expressed in the context, when God promises that he will give her

410 Sarah shall her name be. Heb., ☐☐☐, *Sarah*. Sarai properly signifies "my princess," as if sustaining that relation to a single individual or to a family. The restriction implied in the possessive "my" is now to be done away: her limited pre-eminence is to be unspeakably enlarged. Thus, instead of "my princess," she is henceforth

a son, from whom at length nations and kings should be born. And although at first sight this benediction appears most ample, it is still far richer than it seems to be, in the words here used, as we shall see in a little time.

17. *And Abraham fell upon his face* This was in token, not only of his reverence, but also of his faith. For Abraham not only adores God, but in giving him thanks, testifies that he receives and embraces what was promised concerning a son. Hence also we infer that he laughed, not because he either despised, or regarded as fabulous, or rejected, the promise of God; but, as is commonly wont to happen in things which are least expected, partly exulting with joy, and partly being carried beyond himself in admiration, he breaks forth into laughter. For I do not assent to the opinion of those who suppose, that this laughter flowed solely from joy; but I rather think that Abraham was as one astonished; which his next interrogation also confirms, shall a child be born to him that an hundred years old? For although he does not reject as vain what had been said by the angel, he yet shows that he was no otherwise affected, than as if he had received some incredible tidings. The novelty of the thing so strikes him, that for a short time he is confounded; yet he humbles himself before God, and with confused mind, prostrating himself on the earth, he, by faith, adores the power of God. For, that this was not the language of one who doubts, Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, is a witness, (Romans 4:19,) who denies that Abraham considered his body now dead, or the barren womb of Sarah, or that he staggered through unbelief; but declares that he believed in hope against hope. And that which Moses relates, that Abraham said in his heart, I do not so explain as if he had distinctly conceived this in his mind: but as many things steal upon us contrary to our purpose, the perplexing thought suddenly rushed upon his mind, 'What a strange thing is this, that a son should be born to one a hundred years old!' This, however, seems to some, to be a kind of contest between carnal reason and faith; for although Abraham, reverently prostrating himself before God, submits his own mind to the divine word, he is still disturbed by the novelty of the affair. I answer, that this admiration, which did not obstruct the course of God's power, was not contrary to faith; nay, the strength of faith shone the more brightly, in having surmounted an obstacle so arduous. And therefore he is not reprehended for laughing, as Sarah is in the next chapter Genesis 18:1

18. *And Abraham said unto God* Abraham does not now wonder silently within himself, but pours forth his wish and prayer. His language, however, is that of a mind still perturbed and vacillating, O that (or I wish that) Ishmael might live! For, as if he did not dare to hope for all that God promises, he fixes his mind upon the son already born; not because he would reject the promise of fresh offspring, but because he was contented with the favor already received, provided the liberality of God should not extend further. He does not, then, reject

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to bear an appellation importing "princess of a multitude," and corresponding with the magnificent promise made to her, ver. 16. — *Bush, Notes on Genesis*

what the Lord offers; but while he is prepared to embrace it, the expression, *O that Ishmael!* yet flows from him through the weakness of his flesh. Some think that Abraham spoke thus, because he was afraid for his firstborn. But there is no reason why we should suppose that Abraham was smitten with any such fear, as that God, in giving him another son, would take away the former, or as if the latter favor should absorb that which had preceded. The answer of God, which follows shortly after, refutes this interpretation. What I have said is more certain; namely, that Abraham prayed that the grace of God, in which he acquiesced, might be ratified and confirmed to him. Moreover, without reflection, he breaks forth into this wish, when, for very joy, he could scarcely believe what he had heard from the mouth of God. 'To live before Jehovah' is as much as, to be preserved in safety under his protection, or to be blessed by Him. Abraham therefore desires of the Lord, that he will preserve the life which he has given to Ishmael.

19. *Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed* Some take the adverb ⌧⌧ (*abal*,) to mean 'Truly.' Others, however, more rightly suppose it to be used for increasing the force of the expression. For God rouses the slumbering mind of his servant; as if he would say, 'The sight of one favor prevents thee from raising thyself higher; and thus it happens that thou dost confine thy thoughts within too narrow limits. Now, therefore, enlarge thy mind, to receive also what I promise concerning Sarah. For the door of hope ought to be sufficiently open to admit the word in its full magnitude.'

And I will establish my covenant with him He confines the spiritual covenant to one family, in order that Abraham may hence learn to hope for the blessing before promised; for since he had framed for himself a false hope, not founded on the word of God, it was necessary that this false hope should first be dislodged from his heart, in order that he might now the more fully rely upon the heavenly oracles, and might fix the anchor of his faith, which before had wavered in a fallacious imagination, on the firm truth of God. He calls the covenant everlasting, in the sense which we have previously explained. He then declares that it shall not be bound to one person only, but shall be common to his whole race, that it may, by continual succession, descend to his posterity. Yet it may seem absurd, that God should command Ishmael, whom he deprives of his grace, to be circumcised. I answer; although the Lord constitutes Isaac the firstborn and the head, from whom he intends the covenant of salvation to flow, he still does not entirely exclude Ishmael, but rather, in adopting the whole family of Abraham, joins Ishmael to his brother Isaac as an inferior member, until Ishmael cut himself off from his father's house, and his brother's society. Therefore his circumcision was not useless, until he apostatized from the covenant: for although it was not deposited with him, he might, nevertheless, participate in it, with his brother Isaac. In short, the Lord intends nothing else, by these words, than that Isaac should be the legitimate heir of the promised benediction.

20. *And as for Ishmael.* He here more clearly discriminates between the two sons of Abraham. For in promising to the one wealth, dignity, and other things pertaining to the present life, he proves him to be a son according to the flesh. But he makes a special covenant with Isaac, which rises above the world and this frail life: not for the sake of cutting Ishmael off from the hope of eternal life, but in order to teach him that salvation is to be sought from the race of Isaac, where it really dwells. We infers however, from this passage, that the holy fathers were by no means kept down to earth, by the promises of God, but rather were borne upwards to heaven. For God liberally and profusely promises to Ishmael whatever is desirable with respect to this earthly life: and yet He accounts as nothing all the gifts He confers on him, in comparison with the covenant which was to be established in Isaac. It therefore follow, that neither wealth, nor power, nor any other temporal gift, is promised to the sons of the Spirit, but an eternal blessing, which is possessed only by hope, in this world. Therefore, however we may now abound in delights, and in all good things, our happiness is still transient, unless by faith we penetrate into the celestial kingdom of God, where a greater and higher blessing is laid up for us.

It is however asked, whether Abraham had respect only to this earthly life when he prayed for his son? For this the Lord seems to intimate, when he declares that he had granted what Abraham asked, and yet only mentions the things we have recorded. But it was not God's design to fulfill the whole wish of Abraham on this point; only he makes it plain that he would have some respect to Ishmael, for whom Abraham had entreated; so as to show that the fathers prayer had not been in vain. For he meant to testify that he embraced Abraham with such love, that, for his sake, he had respect to his whole race, and dignified it with peculiar benefits.

22. *God went up from Abraham* This expression contains a profitable doctrine, namely, that Abraham certainly knew this vision to be from God; for the ascent here spoken implies as much. And it is necessary for the pious to be fully assured that what they hear proceeds from God, in order that they may not be carried hither and thither but may depend alone upon heaven. And whereas God now, when he has spoken to us, does not openly ascend to heaven before our eyes; this ought to diminish nothing from the certainty of our faith; because a full manifestation of Him has been made in Christ, with which it is right that we should be satisfied. Besides, although God does not daily ascend upwards in a visible form, yet, in this his majesty is not less resplendent, that he raises us upwards by transforming us into his own image. Further, he gives sufficient authority to his word, when he seals it upon our hearts by his spirit.

23. *And Abraham took Ishmael* Moses now commends the obedience of Abraham because he circumcised the whole of his family as he had been commanded. For he must, of necessity, have been entirely devoted to God, since he did not hesitate to inflict upon himself a wound attended with acute pain, and not without danger of life. To this may be added the

circumstance of the time; namely, that he does not defer the work to another day, but immediately obeys the Divine mandate. There is, however, no doubt, that he had to contend with various perplexing thoughts. Not to mention innumerable others, this might come into his mind, 'As for me, who have been so long harassed with many adverse affairs, and tossed about in different exiles, and yet have never swerved from the word of God; if, by this symbol, he would consecrate me to himself as a servant, why has he put me off to extreme old age? What does this mean, that I cannot be saved unless I, with one foot almost in the grave, thus mutilate myself?' But this was an illustrious proof of obedience, that having overcome all difficulties, he quickly, and without delay, followed where God called him. And he gave, in so doing, an example of faith not less excellent; because, unless he had certainly embraced the promises of God, he would by no means have become so prompt to obey. Hence, therefore, arose his great alacrity, because he set the word of God in opposition to the various temptations which might disturb his mind, and draw him in contrary directions.

Two things also here are worthy of observation. First, that Abraham was not deterred by the difficulty of the work from yielding to God the duty which he owed him. We know that he had a great multitude in his house, nearly equal to a people. It was scarcely credible that so many men would have suffered themselves to be wounded apparently to be made a laughingstock. Therefore it was justly to be feared, that he would excite a great tumult in his tranquil family; yea, that, by a common impulses the major part of his servants would rise up against him; nevertheless, relying upon the word of God, he strenuously attempts what seemed impossible.

We next see, how faithfully his family was instructed; because not only his home-born slaves, but foreigners, and men bought with money, meekly receive the wounds which was both troublesome, and the occasion of shame to carnal sense. It appears then that Abraham diligently took care to have them prepared for due obedience. And since he held them under holy discipline, he received the reward of his own diligences in finding them so tractable in a most arduous affair. So, at this day, God seems to enjoin a thing impossible to be done, when he requires his gospel to be preached every where in the whole world, for the purpose of restoring it from death to life. For we see how great is the obstinacy of nearly all men, and what numerous and powerful methods of resistance Satan employs; so that, in short, all the ways of access to these principles are obstructed. Yet it behoves individuals to do their duty, and not to yield to impediments; and, finally our endeavors and our labors shall by no means fail of that success which is not yet apparent.

CHAPTER 18.

Genesis 18:1-33

1. And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;	**1.** Deinde visus est illi Jehova in Querceto Mamre, quum ipse sederet in ostio tabernaculi, quando incalescebat dies.
2. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,	**2.** Et elevavit oculos suos, et vidit, et ecce tres virri stabant juxta eum: et vidit, et cucurrit in occursum eorum ab ostio tabernaculi, et incurvavit se super terram.
3. And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:	**3.** Et dixit, Domine mi, si nunc inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, ne nunc transeas a servo tuo.
4. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:	**4.** Tollatur nunc parum aquae, et lavate pedes vestros, et considite sub arbore.
5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.	**5.** Et capiam buccellam panis, et fulcite cor vestrum, postea transibitis: quia idcirco transiistis ad servum vestrum. Et dixerunt, Sicfacias quemadmodum loquutus es.
6. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.	**6.** Itaque festinavit Abraham ad tabernaculum ad Sarah, et dixit, Festina, tria sata farinae similae consperge, et fac subcinercios panes.
7. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.	**7.** Et ad boves cucurrit Abraham, et tulit vitulum tenerum et bonum, et dedit puero, et festinavit ut paraet eum.
8. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.	**8.** Et tulit butyrum, et lac, et vitulum quem paraverat, et posuit ante eos: et ipse stabat juxta eos sub arbore, et comederunt.
9. And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.	**9.** Et dixerunt ad eum, Ubi est Sarah uxor tua? Et dixit, Ecce, in tabernaculo.

10. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which *was* behind him.	**10.** Et dixit, Revertendo revertar ad to secundum tempus vitae, et ecce, filius *erit* Sarah uxori tuae, Sarah autem audiebat in ostio tabernaculi, quod erat post eum.
11. Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.	**11.** Et Abraham et Sarah erant senes et provectae aetatis, desieratque esse ipsi Sarah via secundum mulieres.
12. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?	**12.** Risit ergo, Sarah intra sesse, dicendo, Postquam senui, erit mihi voluptas? Et dominus meus senuit.
13. And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?	**13.** Et dixit Jehova ad Abraham, Utquid risit Sarah dicendo, Num etiam vere pariam, et ego senui?
14. Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.	**14.** Numquid abscondetur a Jehova quicquam? ad tempus revertar ad to secundum tempus vitae, et ipse Sarah erit filius.
15. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.	**15.** Et negavit Sarah, dicendo, Non risi: quia timuit. Et dixit, Nequaquam, quia risisti.
16. And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.	**16.** Et surrexerunt inde viri, et respexerunt contra faciem Sedom: et Abraham ibat cum eis, ut deduceret eos.
17. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;	**17.** Tunc Jehova dixit, An ego celabo Abraham quod ego facio?
18. Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?	**18.** Et Abraham erit in gentem magnum et fortem, et benedicent sibi in eo omnes gentes terrae.
19. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may	**19.** Quia novi eum: propterea praecipiet filiis suis, et domui suae post se, et custodient viam Jehovae, ut faciant justitiam et judicium, ut venire faciat Jehova super Abraham, quod loquutus est super eum.

bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.	
20. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;	**20.** Itaque dixit Jehova, Clamor Sedom et Hamorah certe multiplicatus est, et peccatum eorum utique aggravatum est valde.
21. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.	**21.** Descendam nunc, et videbo an secundum clamorem ejus, qui venit ad me, fecerint consummationem: et si non, sciam.
22. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.	**22.** Et verterunt se inde viri, et perrexerunt in Sedom: ipse vero Abraham adhuc stabat coram Jehova.
23. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?	**23.** Et accessit Abraham, et dixit, Numquid etiam disperdes justum cum impio?
24. Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?	**24.** Si forte fuerint quinquaginta justi intra civitatem numquid etiam disperdes, et non parces loco propter quinquaginta justos, qui sunt intra eam?
25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?	**25.** Absit tibi ut facias secundum rem hanc, ut mori facias justum cum impio, et sit justus sicut impius: absit tibi, an qui judex est omnis terrae, non faciet judicium?
26. And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.	**26.** Et dixit Jehova, Si invenero in Sedom quinquaginta justos intra civitatem, parcam toti loco propter eos.
27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes:	**27.** Et repondit Abraham, et dixit, Ecce, nunc coepi loqui ad Jehovam, et sum pulvis et cinis:
28. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of* five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*	**28.** Si forsitan defuerint de quinquaginta justis quinque, numquid disperdes propter quinque totam civitatem? Et dixit, Non dis-

	perdam, si invenero ibi quadraginta et quinque.
29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.	**29.** Et addidit adhuc ut loqueretur ad eum, et dixit, Si forte inventi fuerint ibi quadraginta. Et dixit, Non faciam propter quadraginta.
30. And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.	**30.** Et dixit, Ne nunc sit ira Domino meo, et loquar, Si forte inventi fuerint ibi triginta? Et dixit, Non faciam, si invenero ibi triginta.
31. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.	**31.** Et dixit, Ecce, nunc coepi loqui ad Jehovam, Si forsitan inventi fuerint ibi viginti? Et dixit, Non disperdam propter viginti.
32. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.	**32.** Et dixit, Ne nunc sit ira Domino meo, et loquar tantummodo semel, Si forsitan inventi fuerint ibi decem? Et dixit, Non disperdam propter decem.
33. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.	**33.** Et perrexit Jehova, quando finivit loqui ad Abraham, et Abraham reversus est ad locum suum.

1. *And the Lord appeared unto him* It is uncertain whether Moses says, that God afterwards appeared again unto Abraham; or whether, reverting to the previous history, he here introduces other circumstances, which he had not before mentioned. I prefer, however, the former of these interpretations; namely, that God confirmed the mind of his servant witha new vision; just as the faith of the saints requires, at intervals, renewed assistance. It is also possible that the promise was repeated for the sake of Sarah. What shall we say, if in this manner, he chose to do honor to the greatness of his grace? For the promise concerning Isaac, from whom, at length, redemption and salvation should shine forth to the world, cannot be extolled in terms adequate to its dignity. Whichever of these views be taken, we perceive that there was sufficient reason why Isaac was again promised. Concerning the word Mamre we have spoken in the thirteenth chapter Genesis 13:1. Probably a grove of oaks was in that place, and Abraham dwelt there, on account of the convenience of the situation.

2. *And, lo, three men stood by him.* Before Moses prceeds to his principal subject, he describes to us, the hospitality of the holy man; and he calls the angels men, because, being clothed with human bodies, they appeared to be nothing else than men. And this was done designedly, in order that he, receiving them as men, might give proof of his charity. For angels do not need those services of ours, which are the true evidences of charity. Moreover, hospitality holds the chief place among these services; because it is no common virtue to assist strangers, from whom there is no hope of reward. For men in general are wont, when they do favors to others, to look for a return; but he who is kind to unknown guests and persons, proves himself to be disinterestedly liberal. Wherefor the humanity of Abraham deserves no slight praise; because he freely invites men who were to him unknown, through whom he had no advantage, and from whom he had no hope of mutual favors. What, therefore, was Abraham's object? Truly, that he might relieve the necessity of his guests. He sees them wearied with their journey, and has no doubt that they are overcome by heat; he considers that the time of day was becoming dangerous to travelers; and therefore he wishes both to comfort, and to relieve persons thus oppressed. And certainly, the sense of nature itself dictates, that the strangers are to be especially assisted; unless blind self love rather impels us to mercenary services. For none are more deserving of compassion and help than those whom we see deprived of friends, and of domestic comforts. And therefore the right of hospitality has been held most sacred among all people, and no disgrace was ever more detestable than to be called inhospitable. For it is a brutal cruelty, proudly to despise those who, being destitute of ordinary, have recourse to our assistance. It is however asked, whether Abraham was wont, thus to receive indiscriminately all kinds of guests? I answer that, according to his accustomed prudence, he made his distinction between his guests. And truly, the invitation, which Moses here relates, has something uncommon. Undoubtedly, the angels bore, in their countenance and manner, marks of extraordinary dignity; so that Abraham would conclude them to be worthy not only of meat and drink, but also of honor. They who think that he was thus attentive to his office, because he had been taught, by his fathers, that the angels often appeared in the world in human form, reasons too philosophically. Even the authority of to Apostle is contrary to this; for he denies that they were, at first, known to be angels either by Abraham, or by Lot, since they thought they were entertaining men. (Hebrews 13:2) This, then is to be maintained; that when he saw men of reverend aspect, and having marks of singular excellence, advancing on their journey, he saluted them with honor, and invited them to repose. But at that time, there was greater honesty than is at present, to be found amid the prevailing perfidy of mankind; so that the right of hospitality might be exercised with less danger. Therefore, the great number of inns are evidence of our depravity, and prove it to have arisen from our own fault, that the principal duty of humanity has become obsolete among us.

And bowed himself toward the ground. This token of reverence was in common use with oriental nations. The mystery which some of the ancient writers have endeavored to elicit from this act; namely, that Abraham adored one out of the three, whom he saw, and, therefore perceived by faith, that there are three persons in one God, since it is frivolous, and obnoxious to ridicule and calumny, I am more than content to omit. For we have before said, that the angels were so received by the holy man, as by one who intended to discharge a duty towards men. But the fact that God honored his benignity, and granted it to him as a reward, that angels should be presented to him for guests, was that he was not aware of, till they had made themselves known at the conclusion of the meal. It was therefore a merely human and civil honor, which he paid them. As to his having saluted one in particular, it was probably done because he excelled the other two. For we know that angels often appeared with Christ their Head; here, therefore, among the three angels, Moses points out one, as the Chief of the embassy.

3. *Pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant* In asking thus meekly, and even suppliantly, there is no doubt that Abraham does it, moved by the reason which I have stated. For if he had slaughtered calves for all kinds of travelers, his house would soon have been emptied by his profuse expenditure. He, therefore, did honor to their virtue and their excellent endowments, lest he should pour contempt upon God. Thus, neither was he so liberal as to invite wanderers, or other men of all kinds, who herd together; nor did ambition induce him to deal thus bountifully with these three persons, but rather his love and affection for those gifts of God, and those virtues which appeared in them. As to his offering them simply a morsel of bread, he makes light of an act of kindness which he was about to do, not only for the sake of avoiding all boasting, but in order that they might the more easily yield to his counsel and his entreaties, when they were persuaded that they should not prove too burdensome and troublesome to him. For modest persons do not willingly put others to expense or trouble. The washing of feet, in that age, and in that region of the world, was very common, perhaps, because persons traveled with naked feet, under burning suns: and it was the great remedy for the alleviation of weariness, to wash the feet parched with heat.

5. *For therefore are ye come to your servant* He does not mean that they had come designedly, or for the express purpose of seeking to be entertained, as his guests; but he intimates that their coming had occurred opportunely, as if he would say, 'You have not slipped into this place by chance; but have been led hither by the design and the direction of God.' He, therefore, refers it to the providence of God, that they had come, so conveniently, to a place where they might refresh themselves a little while, till the heat of the sun should abate. Moreover, as it is certain that Abraham spoke thus in sincerity of mind; let us after his examples conclude that, whenever our brethren, who need our help, meet us, they are sent unto us by God.

6. *And Abraham hastened into the tent* Abraham's care in entertaining his guests is here recorded; and Moses, at the same time, shows what a well-ordered house he had. In short, he presents us, in a few words, with a beautiful picture of domestic government. Abraham runs, partly, to command what he would have done; and partly, to execute his own duty, as the master of the house. Sarah keeps within the tent; not to indulge in sloth, but rather to take her own part also, in the labor. The servants are all prompt to obey. Here is the sweet concord of a well-conducted family; which could not have thus suddenly arisen, unless each had, by long practice, been accustomed to right discipline. A question, however; arises out of the assertion of Moses, that the angels did eat. Some expound it, that they only appeared as persons eating; which fancy enters their minds through the medium of another error; since they imagine them to have been mere spectres, and not endued with real bodies. But, in my judgment, the thing is far otherwise. In the first place, this was no prophetical vision, in which the images of absent things are brought before the eyes; but the angels really came into the house of Abraham. Wherefore, I do not doubt that God, — who created the whole world out of nothing, and who daily proves himself to be a wonderful Artificer in forming creatures, — gave them bodies, for a time, in which they might fulfill the office enjoined them. And as they truly walked, spoke, and discharged other functions; so I conclude, they did truly eat; not because they were hungry, but in order to conceal themselves, until the proper time for making themselves known. Yet as God speedily annihilated those bodies, which had been created for a temporary use; so there will be no absurdity in saying, that the food itself was destroyed, together with their bodies. But, as it is profitable briefly to touch upon such questions; and, as religion in no way forbids us to do so; there is on the other hand, nothing better than that we should content ourselves with a sober solution of them.

9. *Where is Sarah?* Hitherto God permitted Abraham to discharge an obvious duty. But, having given him the opportunity of exercising charity, God now begins to manifest himself in his angels. The reason why Moses introduces, at one time, three speakers, while, at another, he ascribes speech to one only, is, that the three together represent the person of one God. We must also remember what I have lately adduced, that the principal place is given to one; because Christ, who is the living image of the Father, often appeared to the fathers under the form of an angel, while, at the same time, he yet had angels, of whom he was the Head, for his attendants. And as to their making inquiry respecting Sarah; we may hence infer, that a son is again here promised to Abraham, because she had not been present at the former oracle.

10. *I will certainly return unto thee* Jerome translates its 'I will return, life attending me:'[411] as if God, speaking in the manner of men, had said, 'I will return if I live.' But it

411 "Vita comite revertar." See *Vulgate*, where the expression is "Revertens veniam ad to tempore illo, vita comite."

would be absurd, that God, who here so magnificently proclaims his power, should borrow from man a form of speech which would suppose him to be mortal. What majesty, I pray, would this remarkable oracle possess, which treats of the eternal salvation of the world? That interpretation, therefore, can by no means be approved, which entirely enervates the force and authority of the promise. Literally it is, according to the time of life. Which some expound of Sarah; as if the angel had said, Sarah shall survive to that period. But it is more properly explained of the child; for God promises that He will come, at the just and proper time of bringing forth, that Sarah might become the mother of a living child.

11. *Were old, and well stricken in age* Moses inserts this verse to inform us that what the angel was saying, justly appeared improbable to Sarah. For it is contrary to nature that children should be promised to decrepit old men. A doubt, however, may be entertained on this point, respecting Abraham: because men are sometimes endued with strength to have children, even in extreme old age: and especially in that period, such an occurrence was not uncommon. But Moses here speaks comparatively: for since Abraham, during the vigor of his life, had remained with his wife childless; it was scarcely possible for him, now that his body was half dead, to have children; he had indeed begotten Ishmael in his old age, which was contrary to expectation. But that now, twelve years afterwards, it should be possible to become a father, through his aged wife,[412] was scarcely credible. Moses however chiefly insists upon the case of Sarah; because the greatest impediment was with her. It ceased, he says, to be with Sarah after the manner of women.[413] With this expression, he soberly speaks about the monthly stream of the women. At the same moment with this, the possibility of conceiving ceases.

12. *Therefore Sarah laughed within herself* Abraham had laughed before, as appears in the preceding chapter Genesis 17:1: but the laughter of both was, by no means, similar. For Sarah is not transported with admiration and joy, on receiving the promise of God; but foolishly sets her own age and that of her husband in opposition to the word of God; that she may withhold confidence from God, when he speaks. Yet she does not, avowedly, charge God with falsehood or vanity; but because, having her mind fixed on the contemplation of the thing proposed, she only weighs what might be accomplished by natural means, without raising her thoughts to the consideration of the power of God, and thus rashly casts discredit on God who speaks to her. Thus, as often as we measure the promises and the works of God, by our own reason, and by the laws of nature, we act reproachfully towards him, though we may intend nothing of the sort. For we do not pay him his due honor, except we regard every obstacle which presents itself in heaven and on earth, as placed under subjection to

412 "Patrem ex vetula effoetaque muliere fieri posse."

413 The following passage is not translated: — "Quo genere loquendi verecunde menses notat qui mulieribus fluunt. Una autem cum fluxu menstruo desinit concipiendi facultas."

his word. But although the incredulity of Sarah is not to be excused; she, nevertheless, does not directly reject the favor of God; but is only so kept back by shame and modesty, that she does not altogether believe what she hears. Even her very words declare the greatest modesty; 'After we are grown old shall we give ourselves up to lust?' Wherefore, let us observe, that nothing was less in Sarah's mind, than to make God a liar. But herein consisted in this alone, that, having fixed her thoughts too much on the accustomed order of nature, she did not give glory to God, by expecting from him a miracle which she was unable to conceive in her mind. We must here notice the admonition which the Apostle gathers from this passage, because Sarah here calls Abraham her *lord*. (1 Peter 3:6.) For he exhorts women, after her example, to be obedient and well-behaved towards their own husbands. Many women, indeed, without difficulty, give their husbands this title, when yet they do not scruple to bring them under rule, by their imperious pride: but the Apostle takes it for granted that Sarah testifies, from her heart, what she feels, respecting her husband: nor is it doubtful that she gave proof, by actual services, of the modesty which she had professed in words.

13. *And the Lord said*. Because the majesty of God had now been manifested in the angels, Moses expressly mentions his Name. We have before declared, in what sense the name of God is transferred to the angel; it is not, therefore, now necessary to repeat it: except, as it is always important to remark, that the word of the Lord is so precious to himself, that he would be regarded by us as present, whenever he speaks through his ministers. Again, whenever he manifested himself to the fathers, Christ was the Mediator between him and them; who not only personates God in proclaiming his word, but is also truly and essentially God. And because the laughter of Sarah had not been detected by the eye of man, therefore Moses expressly declares that she was reprehended by God. And to this point belong the following circumstances, that the angel had his back turned to the tent, and that Sarah laughed within herself, and not before others. The censure also shows that the laughter of Sarah was joined with incredulity. For there is no little weight in this sentence, 'Can anything be wonderful with God?' But the angel chides Sarah, because she limited the power of God within the bounds of her own sense. An antithesis is therefore implied between the immense power of God, and the contracted measure which Sarah imagined to herself, through her carnal reason. Some translate the word ⊠⊠⊠ (*pala*,) *hidden*, as if the angel meant that nothing was hidden from God: but the sense is different; namely, that the power of God ought not to be estimated by human reason.[414] It is not surprising, that in arduous affairs *we* fail, or that *we* succumb to difficulties: but God's way is far otherwise, for he looks down with contempt, from above, upon those things which alarm us by their lofty elevation. We now see what was the sin of Sarah; namely, that she did wrong to God, by not acknowledging the greatness of his power. And truly, we also attempt to rob God of his power, whenever

414 Does not the English version fully express this meaning? "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" — *Ed.*

we distrust his word. At the first sight, Paul seems to give cold praise to the faith of Abraham, in saying, that he did not consider his body, now dead, but gave glory to God, because he was persuaded that he could fulfill what he had promised. (Romans 4:19.) But if we thoroughly investigate the source of distrust, we shall find that the reason why we doubt of God's promises is, because we sinfully detract from his power. For as soon as any extraordinary difficulty occurs, then, whatever God has promised, seems to us fabulous; yea, the moment he speaks, the perverse thought insinuates itself, How will he fulfill what he promises? Being bound down, and preoccupied by such narrow thoughts, we exclude his power, the knowledge of which is better to us than a thousand worlds. In short, he who does not expect more from God than he is able to comprehend in the scanty measure of his own reason, does him grievous wrong. Meanwhile, the *word* of the Lord ought to be inseparably joined with his power; for nothing is more preposterous, than to inquire what God *can* do, to the setting aside of his *declared* will. In this way the Papists plunge themselves into a profound labyrinth, when they dispute concerning the absolute power of God. Therefore, unless we are willing to be involved in absurd dotings, it is necessary that the word should precede us like a lamp; so that his power and his will may be conjoined by an inseparable bond. This rule the Apostle prescribes to us, when he says,

'Being certainly persuaded, that what he has promised,
he is able to perform,' (Romans 4:21.)

The angel again repeats the promise that he would come 'according to the time of life,' that is, in the revolving of the year, when the full time of bringing forth should have arrived.

15. *Then Sarah denied.* Another sin of Sarah's was, that she endeavored to cover and hide her laughter by a falsehood. Yet this excuse did not proceed from obstinate wickedness, according to the manner in which hypocrites are wont to snatch at subterfuges, so that they remain like themselves, even to the end. Sarah's feelings were of a different kind; for while she repents of her own folly, she is yet so terrified, as to deny that she had done, what she now perceives to be displeasing to God. Whence we infer, how great is the corruption of our nature, which causes even the fear of God, — the highest of all virtues, — to degenerate into a fault. Moreover, we must observe whence that fear, of which Moses makes mention, suddenly entered the mind of Sarah; namely, from the consideration that God had detected her secret sin. We see, therefore, how the majesty of God, when it is seriously felt by us, shakes us out of our insensibility. We are more especially constrained to feel thus, when God ascends his tribunal, and brings our sins to light.

Nay; but thou didst laugh. The angel does not contend in a multiplicity of words, but directly refutes her false denial of the fact. We may hence learn, that we gain no advantage by tergiversation, when the Lord reproves us, because he will immediately dispatch our case with a single word. Therefore, we must beware lest we imitate the petulance of those who mock God with false pretences, and at length rush into gross contempt of Him. However

he may seem to leave us unnoticed for a time, yet he will fulminate against us with that terrible voice, 'It is not as you pretend.' In short, it is not enough that the judgment of God should be reverenced, unless we also confess our sins ingenuously and without shifts or evasions. For a double condemnation awaits those who, from a desire to escape the judgment of God, retake themselves to the refuge of dissimulation. We must, therefore bring a sincere confession, that, as persons openly condemned, we may obtain pardon. But seeing that God was contented with giving a friendly reprehension, and that he did not more severely punish the double offense of Sarah; we hence perceive with what tender indulgence he sometimes regards his own people. Zacharias was more severely treated, who was struck dumb for nine months. (Luke 1:9.) But it is not for us to prescribe a perpetual law to God; who, as he generally binds his own people to repentance by punishments, often sees it good to humble them sufficiently, without inflicting any chastisement. In Sarah, truly, he gives a singular instance of his compassion; because he freely forgives her all, and still chooses that she should remain the mother of the Church. In the meantime, we must observe, how much better it is that we should be brought before him as guilty, and that like convicted persons we should be silent, than that we should delight ourselves in sin, as a great part of the world is accustomed to do.

16. *And the men rose up from thence*. Moses again calls those men, whom he had openly declared to be *angels*. But he gives them the name from the form which they had assumed. We are not, however, to suppose that they were surrounded with human bodies, in the same manner in which Christ clothed himself in our nature, together with our flesh; but God invested them with temporary bodies, in which they might be visible to Abraham, and might speak familiarly with him. Abraham is said to have brought them on the way; not for the sake of performing an office of humanity, as when he had received them at first, but in order to render due honor to the angels. For frivolous is the opinion of some who imagine that they were believed to be prophets, who had been banished, on account of the word. He well knew that they were angels as we shall soon see more clearly. But he follows those in the way, whom he did not dare to detain.

17. *Shall I hide from Abraham?* Seeing that God here takes counsel, as if concerning a doubtful matter, he does it for the sake of men; for he had already determined what he would do. But he designed, in this manner, to render Abraham more intent upon the consideration of the causes of Sodom's destruction. He adduces two reasons why He wished to manifest his design to Abraham, before he carried it into execution. The former is, that he had already granted him a singularly honorable privilege; the second, that it would be useful and fruitful in the instruction of posterity. Therefore, in this expression, the scope and use of revelation is briefly noted.

18. *Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation*. In Hebrew it is, 'And being, he shall be,' etc. But the copulative ought to be resolved into the causal adverb.[415] For this is the reasons to which we have already alluded, why God chose to inform his servant of the terrible vengeance He was about to take upon the men of Sodom; namely, that He had adorned him, above all others, with peculiar gifts. For, in this way, God continues his acts of kindness towards the faithful, yea, even increases them, and gradually heaps new favors upon those before granted. And he daily deals with us in the same manner. For what is the reason why he pours innumerable benefits upon us, in constant succession, unless that, having once embraced us with paternal love, he cannot deny himself? And, therefore, in a certain way, he honors himself and his gifts in us. For what does he here commemorate, except his own gratuitous gifts? Therefore, he traces the cause of his beneficence to himself, and not to the merits of Abraham; for the blessing of Abraham flowed from no other source than the Divine Fountain. And we learn from the passage, what experience also teaches, that it is the peculiar privilege of the Church, to know what the Divine judgments mean, and what is their tendency. When God inflicts punishment upon the wicked, he openly proves that he is indeed the Judge of the world; but because all things seem to happen by chance, the Lord illuminates his own children by his word, lest they should become blind, with the unbelievers. So formerly, when he stretched forth his hand over all regions of the world, he yet confined his sacred word within Judea; that is, when he smote all nations with slaughter and with adversity, he yet taught his only elect people, by his word through the prophets, that he was the Author of these punishments; yea, he predicted beforehand that they would take place; as it is written in Amos, (Amos 3:7,)

'Shall there be anything which the Lord will hide
from his servants the prophets?'

Let us therefore remember, that from the time when God begins to be kind towards us, he is never weary, until, by adding one favor to another, he completes our salvation. Then, after he has once adopted us, and has shone into our minds by his word, he holds the torch of the same word burning before our eyes, that we may, by faith, consider those judgments and punishments of iniquity which the impious carelessly neglect. Thus it becomes the faithful to be employed in reflecting on the histories of all times, that they may always form their judgment from the Scripture, of the various destructions which, privately and publicly,

415 "Copulativa in causalem resolvenda est." — *Vatablus* in Poli Syn. The meaning of the expression is, that the word "and," at the beginning of the verse, should be translated "for." The ו (*vau*) not being intended as a copulative, simply to connect this sentence with the former, but as a causal conjunction, or one which stated the reason for the course before determined upon. In calling the conjunction an adverb, Calvin follows the practice of many writers, who give this as a common title to prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. — *Ed*

have befallen the ungodly. But it is asked; was it necessary that the destruction of Sodom should be explained to Abraham, before it happened? I answer, since we are so dull in considering the works of God, this revelation was by no means superfluous. Although the Lord proclaims aloud that adversity is the rod of his anger; scarcely any one hearkens to it, because, through the depraved imaginations of our flesh, we ascribe the suffering to some other cause. But the admonition, which precedes the event, does not suffer us to be thus torpid, nor to imagine that fortune, or any thing else which we may fancy, stands in the place of God's word. Thus it necessarily happened, in former times, that the people, although iron-hearted, were more affected by these predictions than they would have been had they been admonished by the prophets, after they had received punishment. Wherefore, from them, it will be proper for us to assume a general rule, in order that the judgments of God, which we daily perceive, may not be unprofitable to us.

The Lord declares to his servant Abraham that Sodom was about to perish, while it was yet entire, and in the full enjoyment of its pleasures. Hence no doubt remains, that it did not perish by chance, but was subjected to divine punishment. Hence also, when the cause of the punishment is thus declared beforehand, it will necessarily far more effectually pierce and stimulate the minds of men. We must afterwards come to the same conclusion, concerning other things; for although God does not declare to us, what he is about to do, yet he intends us to be eyewitnesses of his works and prudently to weigh their causes, and not to be dazzled by a confused beholding of them, like unbelievers, 'who seeing, see not,' and who pervert their true design.

19. *For I know him, that he will command his children*. The second reason why God chooses to make Abraham a partaker of his counsel is, because he foresees that this would not be done in vain, and without profit. And the simple meaning of the passage is, that Abraham is admitted to the counsel of God, because he would faithfully fulfill the office of a good householder, in instructing his own family. Hence we infer, that Abraham was informed of the destruction of Sodom, not for his own sake alone, but for the benefit of his race. Which is carefully to be observed; for this sentence is to the same effect, as if God, in the person of Abraham, addressed all his posterity. And truly, God does not make known his will to us, that the knowledge of it may perish with us; but that we may be his witnesses to posterity and that they may deliver the knowledge received through us, from hand to hand, (as we say,) to their descendants. Wherefore, it is the duty of parents to apply themselves diligently to the work of communicating what they have learned from the Lord to their children. In this manner the truth of God is to be propagated by us, so that no one may retain his knowledge for his own private use; but that each may edify others, according to his own calling, and to the measure of his faith. There is however no doubt, that the gross ignorance which reigns in the world, is the just punishment of men's idleness. For whereas the greater part close their eyes to the offered light of heavenly doctrine; yet there are those

who stifle it, by not taking care to transmit it to their children. The Lord therefore righteously takes away the precious treasure of his word, to punish the world for its sloth. The expression after him is also to be noticed; by which we are taught that we must not only take care of our families, to govern them duly, while we live; but that we must give diligence, in order that the truth of God, which is eternal, may live and flourish after our death; and that thus, when we are dead, a holy course of living may survive and remain. Moreover, we hence infer, that those narratives which serve to inspire terror, are useful to be known. For our carnal security requires sharp stimulants whereby we may be urged to the fear of God. And lest any one should suppose that this kind of doctrine belongs only to strangers, the Lord specially appoints it for the sons of Abraham, that is, for the household of the Church. For those interpreters are infatuated and perverse, who contend that faith is overturned if consciences are alarmed. For whereas nothing is more contrary to faith than contempt and torpor; that doctrine best accords with the preaching of grace, which so subdues men to the fear of God, that they, being afflicted and famishing, may hasten unto Christ.

And they shall keep the way of the Lord. Moses intimates, in these words, that the judgment of God is proposed, not only in order that they who, by negligence, please themselves in their vices, may be taught to fear, and that being thus constrained, they may sigh for the grace of Christ; but also to the end that the faithful themselves, who are already endued with the fear of God, may advance more and more in the pursuit of piety. For he wills that the destruction of Sodom should be recorded, both that the wicked may be drawn to God, by the fear of the same vengeance, and that they who have already begun to worship God, may be better formed to true obedience. Thus the Law avails, not only for the beginning of repentance, but also for our continual progress. When Moses adds, to do justice and judgment, he briefly shows the nature of the way of the Lord, which he had before mentioned. This, however, is not a complete definition; but from the duties of the Second Table, he briefly shows, by the figure *synecdoche*, what God chiefly requires of us. And it is not unusual in Scripture, to seek a description of a pious and holy life, from the Second Table of the Law; not because charity is of more account than the worship of God, but because they who live uprightly and innocently with their neighbors, give evidence of their piety towards God. In the names of justice and judgment he comprehends that equity, by which to every one is given what is his own. If we would make a distinction, *justice* is the name given to the rectitude and humanity which we cultivate with our brethren, when we endeavor to do good to all, and when we abstain from all wrong, fraud, and violence. But *judgment* is to stretch forth the hand to the miserable and the oppressed, to vindicate righteous causes, and to guard the weak from being unjustly injured. These are the lawful exercises in which the Lord commands his people to be employed.

That the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Moses intimates that Abraham should become possessed of the grace promised to him, if he instructed

his children in the fear of the Lord, and governed his household well. But under the person of one man, a rule common to all the pious is delivered: for they who are negligent in this part of their duty, cast off or suppress, as much as in them lies, the grace of God. Therefore, that the perpetual possession of the gifts of God may remain to us, and survive to posterity, we must beware lest they be lost through our neglect. Yet it would be false for any one hence to infer, that the faithful could either cause or deserve, by their own diligence, that God should fulfill those things which he has promised. For it is an accustomed method of speaking in Scripture, to denote by the word *that* the consequence rather than the cause. For although the grace of God alone begins and completes our salvation; yet, since by obeying the call of God, we fulfill our course, we are said, also in this manner, to obtain the salvation promised by God.

20. *The cry of Sodom*. The Lord here begins more clearly to explain to Abraham his counsel concerning the destruction of the five cities; although he only names Sodom and Gomorrah, which were much more famous than the rest. But before he makes mention of punishment, he brings forward their iniquities, to teach Abraham that they justly deserved to be destroyed: otherwise the history would not tend to instruction. But when we perceive that the anger of God is provoked by the sin of man, we are inspired with a dread of sinning. In saying that the "cry was great,"[416] he indicates the grievousness of their crimes, because, although the wicked may promise themselves impunity, by concealing their evils, and although these evils may be silently and quietly borne by men; yet their sin will necessarily sound aloud in the ears of God. Therefore this phrase signifies, that all our deeds, even those of which we think the memory to be buried, are presented before the bar of God, and that they, even of themselves, demand vengeance, although there should be none to accuse.

21. *I will go down now*. Since this was a signal example of the wrath of God, which He intends to be celebrated through all ages, and to which he frequently refers in the Scripture; therefore Moses diligently records those things which are especially to be considered in divine judgments; just as, in this place, he commends the moderation of God, who does not immediately fulminate against the ungodly and pour out his vengeance upon them; but who, when affairs were utterly desperate, at length executes the punishment which had been long held suspended over them. And the Lord does not testify in vain, that he proceeds to inflict punishment in a suitable and rightly attempered order; because, whenever he chastises us, we are apt to think that he acts towards us more severely than is just. Even when, with astonishing forbearance, he waits for us, until we have come to the utmost limit of impiety, and our wickedness has become too obstinate to be spared any longer; still we complain of the excessive haste of his rigour. Therefore he presents as in a conspicuous picture, his equity in bearing with us, in order that we may know, that he never breaks forth to inflict punish-

416 "Clamorem pro scelerum gravitate multiplicatum fuisse."

ment, except on those who are mature in crime. Now, if, on the other hand, we look at Sodom; there a horrible example of stupor meets our eyes. For the men of Sodom go on, as if they had nothing to do with God; their sense of good and evil being extinguished, they wallow like cattle in every kind of filth; and just as if they should never have to render an account of their conduct, they flatter themselves in their vices. Since this disease too much prevails in all ages, and is at present far too common, it is important to mark this circumstance, that at the very time when the men of Sodom, having dismissed all fear of God, were indulging themselves, and were promising themselves impunity, however they might sin, God was taking counsel to destroy them, and was moved, by the tumultuous cry of their iniquities, to descend to earth, while they were buried in profound sleep. Wherefore, if God, at any time, defers his judgments; let us not, therefore, think ourselves in a better condition; but before the cry of our wickedness shall have wearied his ears may we, aroused by His threats, quickly hasten to appease Him. Since, however, such forbearance of God cannot be comprehended by us, Moses introduces Him as speaking according to the manner of men.

Whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it.[417] The Hebrew noun ⌧⌧⌧ (*cala*,) which Moses here uses, means the perfection, or the end of a thing, and also its destruction. Therefore, Jerome turns it, 'If they shall have completed it in act.' I have, indeed, no doubt but Moses intimates, that God came down, in order to inquire whether or not their sins had risen to the highest point: just as he before said, that the iniquities of the Amorites were not yet full. The sum of the whole then is; the Lord was about to see whether they were altogether desperate, as having precipitated themselves into the lowest depths of evil; or whether they were still in the midst of a course, from which it was possible for them to be recalled to a sound mind; forasmuch as he was unwilling utterly to destroy those cities, if, by any method, their wickedness was curable. Others translate the passage, 'If they have done this, their final destruction is at hand: but if not, I will see how far they are to be punished.' But the former sense is most accordant with the context.

22. *But Abraham stood yet before the Lord*. Moses first declares that the men proceeded onwards, conveying the impression, that having finished their discourse, they took leave of Abraham, in order that he might return home. He then adds, that Abraham stood before the Lord, as persons are wont to do, who, though dismissed, do not immediately depart, because something still remains to be said or done. Moses, when he makes mention of the journey, with propriety attributes the name of men to the angels; but he does not, however, say, that Abraham stood before *men*, but before the face of God; because, although with his eyes, he beheld the appearance of men, he yet, by faith, looked upon God. And his words sufficiently show, that he did not speak as he would have done with a mortal man. Whence

417 "Fecerint consummationem." If they have brought it to a consummation. "Assavoir s'ils ont accompli." If indeed they have accomplished, etc. — *French Tr*

we infer, that we act preposterously, if we allow the external symbols, by which God represents himself, to retard or hinder us from going directly to Him. By nature, truly, we are prone to this fault; but so much the more must we strive, that, by the sense of faith, we may be borne upwards to God himself, lest the external signs should keep us down to this world. Moreover, Abraham approaches God, for the sake of showing reverence. For he does not, in a contentious spirit, oppose God, as if he had a right to intercede; he only suppliantly entreats: and every word shows the great humility and modesty of the holy man. I confess, indeed, that at times, holy men, carried away by carnal sense, have no self-government, but that, indirectly at least, they murmur against God. Here, however, Abraham addresses God with nothing but reverence, nor does anything fall from him worthy of censure; yet we must notice the affection of mind by which Abraham had been impelled to interpose his prayers on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom. Some suppose, that he was more anxious concerning the safety of his nephew alone than for Sodom and the rest of the cities; but that, being withheld by modesty, he would not request one man expressly to be given to him, while he entirely neglected a great people. But it is, by no means, probable that he made use of such dissimulation. I certainly do not doubt, that he was so touched with a common compassion towards the five cities that he drew near to God as their intercessor. And if we weigh all things attentively, he had great reasons for doing so. He had lately rescued them from the hand of their enemies; he now suddenly hears that they are to be destroyed. He might imagine that he had rashly engaged in that war; that his victory was under a divine curse, as if he had taken arms against the will of God, for unworthy and wicked men; and it was possible that he would be not a little tormented by such thoughts. Besides, it was difficult to believe them all to have been so ungrateful, that no remembrance of their recent deliverance remained among them. But it was not lawful for him, by a single word, to dispute with God, after having heard what He had determined to do. For God alone best knows what men deserve, and with what severity they ought to be treated. Why then does not Abraham acquiesce? Why does he imagine to himself that there are some just persons in Sodom, whom God has overlooked, and whom he hastens to overwhelm in a common destruction with the rest? I answer, that the sense of humanity by which Abraham was moved, was pleasing to God. Firsts because, as was becoming, he leaves the entire cognizance of the fact with God. Secondly, because he asks with sobriety and submission, for the sole cause of obtaining consolation. There is no wonder that he is terrified at the destruction of so great a multitude. He sees men created after the image of God; he persuades himself that, in that immense crowd, there were, at least, a few who were upright, or not altogether unjust, and abandoned to wickedness. He therefore alleges before God, what he thinks available to procure their forgiveness. He may, however, be thought to have acted rashly, in requesting impunity to the evil, for the sake of the good; for he desired God to spare the place, if he should find fifty good men there. I answer, that the prayers of Abraham did not extend so far as to ask God

not to scourge those cities, but only not to destroy them utterly; as if he had said 'O Lord, whatever punishment thou mayest inflict upon the guilty, wilt thou not yet leave some dwelling place for the righteous? Why should that region utterly perish, as long as a people shall remain, by whom it may be inhabited?' Abraham, therefore, does not desire that the wicked, being mixed with the righteous, should escape the hand of God: but only that God, in inflicting public punishment on a whole nation, should nevertheless exempt the good who remained from destruction.

23. *Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?* It is certain that when God chastises the body of a people, he often involves the good and the reprobate in the same punishment. So Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, and others like them, who worshipped God in purity in their own country, were suddenly hurried away into exile, as by a violent tempest: notwithstanding it had been said

'The land vomiteth out her inhabitants, because of their iniquities,' (Leviticus 18:25.)

But when God thus seems to be angry with all in common, it behoves us to fix our eyes on the end, which shall evidently discriminate the one from the other. For if the husband man knows how to separate the grains of wheat in his barn, which with the chaff are trodden under the feet of the oxen, or are struck out with the flail; much better does God know how to gather together his faithful people, — when he has chastised them for a time, — from among the wicked, (who are like worthless refuse,) that they may not perish together; yea, by the very event, he will, at length, prove that he would not permit those whom he was healing by his chastisements to perish. For, so far is he from hastening to destroy his people, when he subjects them to temporal punishments, that he is rather administering to them a medicine which shall procure their salvation. I do not however doubt, that God had denounced the final destruction of Sodom; and in this sense Abraham now takes exception, that it was by no means consistent, that the same ruin should alike fall on the righteous and the ungodly. There will, however, be no absurdity in saying, that Abraham, having good hope of the repentance of the wicked, asked God to spare them; because it often happens that God, out of regard to a few, deals gently with a whole people. For we know, that public punishments are mitigated, because the Lord looks upon his own with a benignant and paternal eye. In the same sense the answer of God himself ought to be understood, 'If in the midst of Sodom I find fifty righteous, I will spare the whole place for their sake.' Yet God does not here bind himself by a perpetual rule, so that it shall not be lawful for him, as often as he sees good, to bring the wicked and the just together to punishment. And, in order to show that he has free power of judging, he does not always adhere to the same equable moderation in this respect. He who would have spared Sodom on account of ten righteous persons, refused to grant the same terms of pardon to Jerusalem. (Matthew 11:24.) Let us know, therefore, that God does not here lay himself under any necessity; but that he speaks

thus, in order to make it better known, that he does not, on light grounds, proceed to the destruction of a city, of which no portion remained unpolluted.

25. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* He does not here teach God His duty, as if any one should say to a judge, 'See what thy office requires, what is worthy of this place, what suits thy character;' but he reasons from the nature of God, that it is impossible for Him to intend anything unjust. I grant that, in using the same form of speaking, the impious often murmur against God, but Abraham does far otherwise. For although he wonders how God should think of destroying Sodom, in which he was persuaded there was a number of good men; he yet retains this principle, that it was impossible for God, who is the Judge of the world, and by nature loves equity yea, whose will is the law of justice and rectitude, should in the least degree swerve from righteousness. He desires, however, to be relieved from this difficulty with which he is perplexed. So, whenever different temptations contend within our minds, and some appearance of contradiction presents itself in the works of God, only let our persuasion of His justice remain fixed, and we shall be permitted to pour into His bosom the difficulties which torment us, in order that He may loosen the knots which we cannot untie. Paul seems to have taken from this place the answer with which he represses the blasphemy of those who charge God with unrighteousness.

'Is God unrighteous? Far from it, for how should there be unrighteousness with Him who judges the world?'
(Romans 3:5,6.)

This method of appeal would not always avail among earthly judges; who are sometimes deceived by error, or perverted by favor, or inflamed with hatred, or corrupted by gifts, or misled by other means, to acts of injustice. But since God, to whom it naturally belongs to judge the world, is liable to none of these evils, it follows, that He can no more be drawn aside from equity, than he can deny himself to be God.

27. *Which am but dust and ashes.* Abraham speaks thus for the sake of obtaining pardon. For what is mortal man when compared with God? He therefore confesses that he is too bold, in thus familiarly interrogating God; yet he desires that this favor may be granted unto him, by the Divine indulgence. It is to be noted, that the nearer Abraham approaches to God, the more fully sensible does he become of the miserable and abject condition of men. For it is only the brightness of the glory of God which covers with shame and thoroughly humbles men, when stripped of their foolish and intoxicated self-confidence. Whosoever, therefore, seems to himself to be something, let him turn his eyes to God, and immediately he will acknowledge himself to be nothing. Abraham, indeed was not forgetful that he possessed a living soul; but he selects what was most contemptible, in order to empty himself of all dignity. It may seem, however, that Abraham does but sophistically trifle with God, when, diminishing gradually from the number first asked, he proceeds to his sixth interrogation. I answer, that this was rather to be considered as the language of a perturbed mind.

At first he anxiously labors for the men of Sodom, wherefore he omits nothing which may serve to mitigate his solicitude. And as the Lord repeatedly answers him so mildly, we know that he had not been deemed importunate, nor troublesome. But if he was kindly heard, when pleading for the inhabitants of Sodom, even to his sixth petition; much more will the Lord hearken to the prayers which any one may pour out for the Church and household of faith. Moreover, the humanity of Abraham appears also in this, that although he knows Sodom to be filled with vilest corruptions, he cannot bring his mind to think that all are infected with the contagion of wickedness; but he rather inclines to the equitable supposition, that, in so great a multitude, some just persons may be concealed. For this is a horrible prodigy, that the filth of iniquity should so pervade the whole body, as to allow no member to remain pure. We are, however, taught by this example, how tyrannically Satan proceeds when once the dominion of sin is established. And certainly, seeing the propensity of men to sin, and the facility for sinning are so great, it is not surprising that one should be corrupted by another, till the contagion reached every individual. For nothing is more dangerous than to live where the public license of crime prevails; yea, there is no pestilence so destructive, as that corruption of morals, which is opposed neither by laws nor judgments, nor any other remedies. And although Moses, in the next chapter Genesis 18:1, explains the most filthy crime which reigned in Sodom, we must nevertheless remember what Ezekiel teaches (Ezekiel 16:48,49,) that the men of Sodom did not fall at once into such execrable wickedness; but that in the beginning, luxury from the fullness of bread prevailed, and that, afterwards, pride and cruelty followed. At length, when they were given up to a reprobate mind, they were also driven headlong into brutal lusts. Therefore if we dread this extreme of inordinate passion, let us cultivate temperance and frugality; and let us always fear, lest a superfluity of food should impel us to luxury; lest our minds should be infected with pride on account of our wealth, and lest delicacies should tempt us to give the reins to our lusts.

CHAPTER 19.

Genesis 19:1-38

1. And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;	**1.** Et venerunt duo angeli in Sedom vesperi, Lot autem sedebat in porta Sedom: et vidit Lot et surrexit in occursum eorum, et incurvavit se facie super terram.
2. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.	**2.** Et dixit, Ecce, nunc domini mei, declinate obsecro ad domum servi vestri, et pernoctate, et lavate pedes vestros: et mane surgetis, et pergetis in viam vestram. Et dixerunt, Nequaquam, sed in platea pernoctabimus.
3. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.	**3.** Et vehementer compulit eos, et declinaverunt ad eum, veneruntque ad domum ejus: et fecit eis convivium, et infermentata coxit, et comederunt.
4. But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:	**4.** Antequam dormirent, viri civitatis, viri Sedom gyro cinxerunt domum a puero usque ad senem, omnis populus ab extremo.
5. And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.	**5.** Et vocaverunt Lot, et dixerunt ei, Ubi *sunt* viri qui venerunt ad to nocte? educ eos ad nos, et cognoscemus eos.
6. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,	**6.** Et egressus est ad eos Lot ad ostium, et ostium clausit post se.
7. And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.	**7.** Et dixit, Ne quaeso, fratres mei, malefaciatis.
8. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.	**8.** Ecce, nunc mihi sunt duae filiae, quae non cognoverunt virum, educam nunc eas ad vos, et facite eis sicut bonum erit oculis vestris: tantum viris istis ne faciatis quicquam, eo quod venerunt in umbram tigni mei.

9. And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.	**9.** Verum dixerunt, Accede huc. Dixerunt praeterea, Unus venit ad perigrinandum, et judicabit judicando? nunc magis malefaciemus tibi quam ipsis. Et vim fecerunt in virum ipsum Lot valde: et appropinquaverunt ut frangerent ostium.
10. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.	**10.** At miserunt viri manum suam, et introduxerunt Lot ad se in domum, et ostium clauserunt.
11. And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.	**11.** Viros autem, qui erant ad ostium domus, percusserunt caecitate, a minimo usque ad maximum, et laboraverunt ut invenirent ostium.
12. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place:	**12.** Et dixerunt viri ad Lot, Adhuc est aliquis tibi hic? generum, et filios tuos, et filias tuas, et omnia, quae sunt tibi in civitate, educ de loco:
13. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.	**13.** Quia disperdimus nos locum hunc, eo quod crevit clamor eorum coram Jehova: et misit nos Jehova ad perdendum eum.
14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.	**14.** Et egressus est Lot, et loquutus est ad generos suos, qui acceperant filias ejus, et dixit, Surgite, egredimini de loco isto, quia disperdit Jehova civitatem: et fuit sicut ludens in oculis generorum suorum.
15. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.	**15.** Quum vero aurora ascendisset, instabant angeli ipsi Lot, dicendo, Surge, cape uxorem tuam, et duas filias tuas, quae adsunt, ne forte pereas in punitione civitatis.
16. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daugh-	**16.** Et tardabat: et apprehenderunt viri manum ejus, et manum uxoris ejus, et manum duarum filiarum ejus, eo quod par-

ters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.	ceret Jehova ei: et eduxerunt eum, et posuerunt eum extra urbem.
17. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.	**17.** Et fuit, quum eduxissent ipsi eos foras, dixit, Evade pro anima tua, ne respicias post to, nec stes in tota planitie: in monte serva to, ne forte pereas.
18. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:	**18.** Et dixit Lot ad eos, Ne quaeso domini mei:
19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:	**19.** Ecce, nuncinvenit servus tuus gratiam in oculis tuis, et magnificasti misericordiam tuam, quam fecisti mecum, ut vivificares animam meam: et ego non potero servare me in monte, ne forte haereat mihi malum, et moriar:
20. Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.	**20.** Ecce, nunc civitas ista propinqua, ut fugiam illuc, et est parva: evadam nunc illuc: numquid non parva est, et vivet anima mea?
21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.	**21.** Et dixit ad eum, Ecce, suscepi faciem tuam etiam in hoc, ut non suvbertam civitatem, ut loquutus es.
22. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.	**22.** Festina, serva to illuc: quia non potero facere quicquam, donec ingrediaris illuc: idcirco vocavit nomen civitatis Sohar.
23. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.	**23.** Sol egressus est super terram, et Lot ingressus est Sohar.
24. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;	**24.** Et Jehova pluit super Sedom et super Hamorah sulphur et ignem a Jehova e coelis.

25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.	**25.** Et subvertit civitates istas, et omnem planitiem, et omnes habitatores urbium, et germen terrae.
26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.	**26.** Et respexit uxor ejus post eum, et effecta est statua salis.
27. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:	**27.** Et surrexit Abraham mane ad locum, ubi steterat coram Jehova.
28. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.	**28.** Et respexit super faciem Sedom et Hamorah, et super omnem faciem terrae planitiei: et videt, et ecce, ascendebat fumus terrae sicut fumus fornacis.
29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.	**29.** Et fuit, quum disperderet Deus urbes planitiei, recordatus est Deus Abraham, et emisit Lot e medio subversionis, quando subvertit civitates, in quarum una habitabat Lot.
30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.	**30.** Et ascendit Lot de Sohar, et habitavit in monte, et duae filiae ejus cum eo: quia timuit habitare in Sohar, et habitavit in spelunca, ipse et duae filiae ejus.
31. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:	**31.** Et dixit primogenita ad minorem, Pater noster senex est, et vir non est in terra, ut ingrediatur ad nos secundum morem universae terrae.
32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.	**32.** Veni, potum demus patri nostro vinum, et dormiamus cum eo, et vivificemus de patre nostro semen.
33. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.	**33.** Et potum dederunt patri suo vinum, nocte ipsa: et ingressa est primogenita, et dormivit cum patre suo, qui non cognovit, quando dormivit ipsa, nec quando surrexit ipsa.

34. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.	**34.** Et fuit postridie, dixit primogenita ad minorem, Ecce, dormivi heri sero cum patre meo: potum demus ei vinum etiam hac nocte, et ingredere, dormi cum eo, et vivificemus de patre nostro semen.
35. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.	**35.** Et potum dederunt etiam nocte ipsa patri suo vinum: et surrexit minor, et dormivit cum eo: nec cognovit quando dormivit ipsa, nec quando surrexit ipsa.
36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.	**36.** Et conceperunt duae filiae Lot de patre suo.
37. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.	**37.** Et peperit primogenita filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Moab: ipse est pater Moab usque ad diem hanc.
38. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.	**38.** Et minor etiam ipsa peperit filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Ben — Hammi: ipse est pater filiorum Hammon usque ad diem hanc.

1. *And there came two angels to Sodom*. The question occurs, why one of the three angels has suddenly disappeared, and two only are come to Sodom? The Jews (with their wonted audacity in introducing fables) pretend that one came to destroy Sodom, the other to preserve Lot. But from the discourse of Moses, this appears to be frivolous: because we shall see that they both assisted in the liberation of Lot. What I have before adduced is more simple; namely, that it was granted to Abraham, as a peculiar favor, that God would not only send him two messengers from the angelic host, but that, in a more familiar manner, he would manifest himself to him, in his own Son. For (as we have seen) one of the messengers held the principal place, as being superior to the others in dignity. Now, although Christ was always the Mediator, yet, because he manifested himself more obscurely to Lot than he did to Abraham, the two angels only came to Sodom. Since Moses relates, that Lot sat in the gate of the city about evening, many contend that he did so, according to daily custom, for the purpose of receiving guests into his house; yet, as Moses is silent respecting the cause, it would be rash to affirm this as certain. I grant, indeed, that he did not sit as idle persons are wont to do; but the conjecture is not less probable, that he had come forth to meet his shepherds, in order to be present when his sheep were folded. That he was hospitable, the

courteous invitation which is mentioned by Moses clearly demonstrates; yet, why he then remained in the gate of the city is uncertain; unless it were, that he was unwilling to omit any opportunity of doing an act of kindness, when strangers presented themselves on whom he might bestow his services. What remains, on this point, may be found in the preceding chapter Genesis 17:1

2. *Nay, but we will abide in the street.* The angels do not immediately assent, in order that they may the more fully investigate the disposition of the holy man. For he was about to bring them to his own house, not merely for the sake of supplying them with a supper, but for the purpose of defending them from the force and injury of the citizens. Therefore the angels act, as if it were safe to sleep on the highway; and thus conceal their knowledge of the abandoned wickedness of the whole people. For if the gates of cities are shut, to prevent the incursions of wild beasts and of enemies; how wrong and absurd it is that they who are within should be exposed to still more grievous dangers? Therefore the angels thus speak, in order to make the wickedness of the people appear the greater. And Lot, in urging the angels to come unto him, for the purpose of protecting them from the common violence of the people, the more clearly shows, how careful he was of his guests, lest they should suffer any dishonor or injury.

3. *And he made them a feast.* By these words, and others following, Moses shows that the angels were more sumptuously entertained than was customary: for Lot did not act thus, indiscriminately, with all. But, when he conceived, from the dignity of their mien and dress, that they were not common men, he baked cakes, and prepared a plentiful feast. Again, Moses says that the angels did eat: not that they had any need to do so; but because the time was not yet come, for the manifestation of their celestial nature.

4. *Before they lay down.* Here, in a single crime, Moses sets before our eyes a lively picture of Sodom. For it is hence obvious, how diabolical was their consent in all wickedness, since they all so readily conspired to perpetrate the most abominable crime. The greatness of their iniquity and wantonness, is apparent from the fact, that, in a collected troop, they approach, as enemies, to lay siege to the house of Lot. How blind and impetuous is their lust; since, without shame, they rush together like brute animals! how great their ferocity and cruelty; since they reproachfully threaten the holy man, and proceed to all extremities! Hence also we infer, that they were not contaminated with one vice only, but were given up to all audacity in crime, so that no sense of shame was left them. And Ezekiel (as we have above related) accurately describes from what beginnings of evil they had proceeded to this extreme turpitude, (Ezekiel 16:49) What Paul says, also refers to the same point: that God punished the impiety of men, when he cast them into such a state of blindness, that they gave themselves up to abominable lusts, and dishonored their own bodies. (Romans 1:18.) But when the sense of shame is overcome, and the reins are given to lust, a vile and outrageous barbarism necessarily succeeds, and many kinds of sin are blended together, so that a most confused

chaos is the result. But if this severe vengeance of God so fell upon the men of Sodom, that they became blind with rage, and prostituted themselves to all kinds of crime, certainly we shall scarcely be more mildly treated, whose iniquity is the less excusable, because the truth of God has been more clearly revealed unto us.

Both old and young. Moses passes over many things in silence which may come unsought into the reader's mind: for instance, he does not mention by whom the multitude had been stirred up. Yet it is probable that there were some who fanned the flame: nevertheless, we hence perceive how freely they were disposed to commit iniquity; since, as at a given signal, they immediately assemble. It also shows how completely destitute they were of all remaining shame; for, neither did any gravity restrain the old, nor any modesty, suitable to their age, restrain the young: finally, he intimates, that all regard to honor was gone, and that the order of nature was perverted, when he says, that young and old flew together from the extreme parts of the city.

5. *Where are the men* ? Although it was their intention shamefully to abuse the strangers to their outrageous appetite, yet, in words, they pretend that their object is different. For, as if Lot had been guilty of a fault in admitting unknown men into the city, wherein he himself was a stranger, they command these men to be brought out before them. Some expound the word know in a carnal sense; and thus the Greek interpreters have translated it.[418] But I think the word has here a different meaning; as if the men had said, We wish to know whom thou bringest, as guests, into our city. The Scripture truly is accustomed modestly to describe an act of shame by the word know; and therefore we may infer that the men of Sodom would have spoken, in coarser language, of such an act: but, for the sake of concealing their wicked design, they here imperiously expostulate with the holy man, for having dared to receive unknown persons into his house. Here, however, a question arises; for if the men of Sodom were in the habit of vexing strangers, of all kinds, in this manner, how shall we suppose they had acted towards others? For Lot was not now for the first time beginning to be hospitable; and they, too, had always been addicted to lust. Lot was prepared to expose his own daughters to dishonor, in order to save his guests; how often, then, might it have been necessary to prostitute them before, if the fury of men of such character could not be otherwise assuaged?[419] Now truly, if Lot had known that such danger was impending; he ought rather to have exhorted his guests to withdraw in time. In my opinion, however, although Lot knew the manners of the city; he had, nevertheless, no suspicion of what really happened, that they would make an assault upon his house; this, indeed, seems to have been quite a new thing. It was, however, fitting, when the angels were sent to investigate the true state of the people, that they should all break out into this detestable crime. So the wicked,

418 "Ινα συγγενώμεθα αὐτοῖς." — *Sept*

419 "Si non alio remedio placari poterat eorum radies, qui viros ad stuprum flagitabant."

after they have long securely exulted in their iniquity, at length, by furiously rushing onward, accelerate their destruction in a moment. God therefore designed, in calling the men of Sodom to judgment, to exhibit, as it were, the extreme act of their wicked life; and he impelled them, by the spirit of deep infatuation, to a crime, the atrocity of which would not suffer the destruction of the place to be any longer deferred. For as the hospitality of the holy man, Lot, was honored with a signal reward; because he, unawares, received angels instead of men, and had them as guests in his house; so God avenged, with more severe punishment, the shameful lust of the others; who, while endeavoring to do violence to angels, were not only injurious towards men; but, to the utmost of their power, dishonored the celestial glory of God, by their sacrilegious fury.

6. *And Lot went out at the door unto them*. It appears from the fact that Lot went out and exposed himself to danger, how faithfully he observed the sacred right of hospitality. It was truly a rare virtue, that he preferred the safety and honor of the guests whom he had once undertaken to protect, to his own life: yet this degree of magnanimity is required from the children of God, that where duty and fidelity are concerned, they should not spare themselves. And although he was already grievously injured by the besieging of his house; he yet endeavors, by gentle words, to soothe ferocious minds, while he suppliantly entreats them to lay aside their wickedness, and addresses them by the title of brethren. Now it appears, how savage was their cruelty, and how violent the rage of their lust, when they were in no degree moved by such extraordinary mildness. But the description of a rage so brutal, tends to teach us that punishment was not inflicted upon them, until they had proceeded to the last stage of wickedness. And let us remember, that the reprobate, when they have been blinded by the just judgment of God, rush, as with devoted minds, through every kind of crime, and leave nothing undone, until they render themselves altogether hateful and detestable to God and men.

8. *I have two daughters*. As the constancy of Lot, in risking his own life for the defense of his guests, deserves no common praise; so now Moses relates that a defect was mixed with this great virtue, which sprinkled it with some imperfection. For, being destitute of advice, he devises (as is usual in intricate affairs) an unlawful remedy. He does not hesitate to prostitute his own daughters, that he may restrain the indomitable fury of the people. But he should rather have endured a thousand deaths, than have resorted to such a measure. Yet such are commonly the works of holy men: since nothing proceeds from them so excellent, as not to be in some respect defective. Lot, indeed, is urged by extreme necessity; and it is no wonder that he offers his daughters to be polluted, when he sees that he has to deal with wild beasts; yet he inconsiderately seeks to remedy one evil by means of another. I can easily excuse some for extenuating his fault; yet he is not free from blame, because he would ward off evil with evil. But we are warned by this example, that when the Lord has furnished us with the spirit of invincible fortitude, we must also pray that he may govern us by the

spirit of prudence; and that he will never suffer us to be deprived of a sound judgment, and a well-regulated reason. For then only shall we rightly proceed in our course of duty, when, in complicated affairs, we perceive, with a composed mind, what is necessary, what is lawful, and what is expedient to be done; then shall we be prepared promptly to meet any danger whatever. For, that our minds should be carried hither and thither by hastily catching at wicked counsels, is not less perilous than that they should be agitated by fear. But when reduced to the last straits, let us learn to pray, that the Lord would open to us some way of escape. Others would excuse Lot by a different pretext, namely, that he knew his daughters would not be desired. But I have no doubt that, being willing to avail himself of the first subterfuge which occurred to him, he turned aside from the right way. This, however, is indisputable; although the men of Sodom had not yet, in express terms, avowed the base desire with which they were inflamed, yet Lot, from their daily crimes, had formed his judgment respecting it. If any one should raise the objection that such a supposition is absurd;[420] I answer, that, since by custom they had imagined the crime to be lawful, the crowd was easily excited by a few instigators, as it commonly happens, where no distinction is maintained between right and wrong. When Lot says, Therefore came they under the shadow of my roof; his meaning is, that they had been committed to him by the Lord, and that he should be guilty of perfidy, unless he endeavored to protect them.[421]

9. *And they said, Stand back.* That Lot, with all his entreaties, than which nothing could be adduced more likely to soothe their rage, was thus harshly repelled, shows the indomitable haughtiness of this people. And, in the first place, they threaten that, if he persists in interceding, they will deal worse with him than with those whom he defends. Then they reproach him with the fact, that he, a foreigner, assumes the province of a judge. Every word proves the pride with which they swell. They place one man in opposition to a multitude, as if they would say, 'By what right hast thou alone challenge to thyself authority over the whole city?' They next boast that, while they are natives, he is but a stranger. Such is, at the present time, the boasting of the Papists against the pious ministers of God's word: they allege against us, as a disgrace, the paucity of our numbers, in contrast with their own great multitude.[422] Then they pride themselves upon their long succession, and contend that it is intolerable

420 "Siquis absurdum esse objiciat, totum populum duos viros ad stuprum captasse," etc.

421 It will be thought that Calvin has said enough, and more than enough, in excuse of this strange conduct of Lot. It serves to show the low tone of morals, not only in the world at large, but among those who had enjoyed the advantages of a religious education. At the same time, it affords evidence of the kind of chivalrous regard which was paid to strangers, and of which so much is read in profane writers. — *Ed.*

422 "Car ils objectent comme pour reproche, que nous ne sommes que une pongnee de gens, et qu'eux sont bien en plus grand nombre." — *French Tr*

for them to be reproved by *new* men.[423] But however contumaciously the wicked may strive, rather than submit to reason, let us know that they are exalted only to their own ruin.

10. *But the men put forth their hand.* Moses again gives the name of men to those who were not so, but who had appeared as such; for although they begin to exert their celestial force, they do not yet declare that they are angels divinely sent from heaven. But here Moses teaches, that the Lord, although he may for a time seem regardless, while the faithful are engaged in conflict, yet never deserts his own, but stretches out his hand, (so to speak,) at the critical moment. Thus, in preserving Lot, he defers his aid until the last extremity. Let us, therefore, with tranquil minds, wait on his providence; and let us intrepidly follow what belongs to our calling, and what he commands; for although he may suffer us to be exposed to dangers he will still show, that he has never been unmindful of us. For we see, that as Lot had shut the door of his house for the protection of his guests, so he is repaid, when the angels not only receive him again, through the opened door, but by opposing the barriers of divine power, prevent the impious men from approaching it. For, (as I have before intimated), they afford him not merely human help, but they come to bring him assistance, armed with divine power. Whereas, Moses says, that the men were smitten with blindness, we are not so to understand it, as if they had been deprived of eyesight; but that their vision was rendered so dull, that they could distinguish nothing. This miracle was more illustrious, than if their eyes had been thrust out, or entirely blinded; because with their eyes open, they feel about, just like blind men, and seeing, yet do not see. At the same time, Moses wishes to describe their iron obstinacy: they do not find Lot's door; it follows then, that they had labored in seeking it; but, in this manner, they furiously wage war with God. This, however, has happened, not once only, and not with the men of Sodom alone; but is daily fulfilled in the reprobate, whom Satan fascinates with such madness, that when stricken by the mighty hand of God, they proceed with stupid obstinacy to advance against him. And we need not seek far, for an instance of such conduct; we see with what tremendous punishments God visits wandering lusts; and yet the world ceases not, with desperate audacity, to rush into the certain destruction which is set before their eyes.

12. *Hast thou here any besides?* At length the angels declare for what purpose they came, and what they were about to do. For so great was the indignity of the last act of this people, that Lot must now see how impossible it was for God to bear with them any longer. And, in the first place, they declare, that they are come to destroy the city, because the cry of it was waxen great. By which words they mean, that God was provoked, not by one act of wickedness only, but that, after he had long spared them, he was now, at last, almost compelled, by their immense mass of crimes, to come down to inflict punishment. For we must maintain, that the more sins men heap together, the higher will their wickedness rise, and

423 As the Reformation was styled the new religion, so the reformers were stigmatized as new men. — Ed.

the nearer will it approach to God, to cry aloud for vengeance. Wherefore, as the angels testify, that God had been hitherto longsuffering, and of great forbearance; so they declare, on the other hand, what issue awaits all those, who, having gathered together mountains of guilt, exalt themselves with daily increasing audacity, as if, like the giants, they were about to assail heaven. They, however, explain the cause of this destruction, not only that Lot may ascribe praise to the divine righteousness and equity, but that he, being impressed with fear, may the more quickly hasten his departure. For, such is the indolence of our flesh, that we slowly and coldly set ourselves to escape the judgment of God, unless we are deeply stirred by the dread of it: thus Noah, alarmed by the terror of the deluge, applied his industry to the framing of the ark. Meanwhile, the angels inspire the mind of the holy man with hope; lest he should tremble, or should be so possessed by fear, and so desponding respecting his deliverance, as to be too slow to depart. For they not only promise that he shall be safe, but also grant, unasked, the life of his family. And truly, he ought not to have doubted respecting his own life, when he saw others freely given him, as by a superabundance of favor. It is however asked, 'Why was God willing to offer his kindness to ungrateful men, by whom he knew it would be rejected?' The same question may be put respecting the preaching of the gospel; for God was not ignorant that few would become partakers of that salvation, which nevertheless, he commands to be offered indiscriminately to all. In this way, unbelievers are rendered more inexcusable, when they reject the message of salvation. The chief reason, however, why Lot is commanded to set before his own family the hope of deliverance, is, that he may embrace, with greater confidence, the offered favor of God, and may strenuously and quickly prepare himself to depart, not doubting of his own preservation. It is, with probability, inferred from this place, that he had, then, no sons in that city; for, in consequence of the exhortation of the angels he would immediately have attempted to draw them out of it. We have before seen, that he had an ample and numerous band of servants; but no mention is made of them, since the freemen are here only reckoned. It is, nevertheless, probable, that some servants went forth with him, to carry provisions and some portion of furniture. For, whence did his daughters obtain in the desert mountain, the wine which they gave their father, unless some things, which Moses does not mention, had been conveyed by asses, or camels, or wagons? It was however possible, that, in so great a number, many chose rather to perish with the men of Sodom, than to become associates and companions of their lord, in seeking safety. But it is better to leave as we find them, those things which the Spirit of God has not revealed.

13. *The Lord has sent us to destroy it*. This place teaches us, that the angels are the ministers of God's wrath, as well as of his grace. Nor does it form any objection to this statement, that elsewhere the latter service is peculiarly ascribed to holy angels: as when the Apostle says, they were appointed for the salvation of those whom God had adopted as sons. (Hebrews 1:14.) And the Scripture, in various places, testifies, that the guardianship of the pious is

committed to them, (Psalm 91:11;) while, on the other hand, it declares that God executes his judgments by reprobate angels. (Psalm 78:49.) For it must be maintained, that God causes his elect angels to preside over those judgments which he executes by means of the reprobate. For it would be absurd to attribute to devils, the honor of presiding over the judgments of God, since they do not yield him voluntary obedience; but rather, while raging contumaciously against him, are yet reluctantly compelled to become his executioners. Let us therefore know, that it is not foreign to the office of elect angels, to descend armed for the purpose of executing Divine vengeance and of inflicting punishment. As the angel of the Lord destroyed, in one night, the army of Sennacherib which besieged Jerusalem, (2 Kings 19:35;) so also the angel of the Lord appeared to David with his drawn sword, when the pestilence was raging against the people. (2 Samuel 24:16.) But, as I have before said, the angels repeat what they had previously said to Abraham, concerning the cry of Sodomy that they may the more urgently impel Lot, by a detestation of the place, to take his flight, and may induce him by the fear of the wrath of God, to seek for safety.

14. *And Lot went out*. The faith of the holy man, Lot, appeared first in this, that he was completely awed and humbled at the threatening of God; secondly, that in the midst of destruction, he yet laid hold of the salvation promised to him. In inviting his sons-in-law to join him, he manifests such diligence as becomes the sons of God; who ought to labor, by all means, to rescue their own families from destruction. But when Moses says, 'he appeared as one who mocked;' the meaning is, that the pious old man was despised and derided and that what he said was accounted a fable; because his sons-in-law supposed him to be seized with delirium, and to be vainly framing imaginary dangers. Lot, therefore, did not seem to them to mock purposely or to have come for the sake of trifling with them; but they deemed his language fabulous; because, where there is no religion, and no fear of God, whatever is said concerning the punishment of the wicked, vanishes as a vain and illusory thing. And hence we perceive how fatal an evil security is, which son inebriates, yea, fascinates, the minds of the wicked, that they no longer think God sits as Judge in heaven; and thus they stupidly sleep in sin, till, while they're saying, Peace and safety, they are overwhelmed in sudden ruin. And especially, the nearer the vengeance of God approaches, the more does their obstinacy increase and become desperate. There is nothing more full of fear, and even of terror, than wicked men are, when the hand of God presses closely on them; but until, constrained by force, they perceive their destruction to be imminent, they either reject all threats with proud scorn, or contemptuously pass them by. But their indolence ought to awaken us to the fear of God, so that we may be always careful; but more especially when some token of the wrath of God presents itself before us.

15. *The angels hastened Lot*. Having praised the faith and piety of Lot, Moses shows that something human still adhered to him; because the angels hastened him, when he was lingering. The cause of his tardiness might be, that he thought he was going into exile: thus

a multiplicity of cares and fears disturb his anxious mind. For he doubts what would happen to him, as a fugitives when, having left his house and furniture, naked and in want, he should retake himself to some desert place. In the meantime, he does not consider that he must act like persons shipwrecked, who, in order that they may come safe into port, cast into the sea their cargo, and every thing they have. He does not indeed doubt, that God is speaking the truth; nor does he refuse to remove elsewhere, as he is commanded; but, as if sinking under his own infirmity, and entangled with many cares, he, who ought to have run forth hastily, and without delay, moves with slow and halting pace. In his person, however, the Spirit of God presents to us, as in a mirror, our own tardiness; in order that we, shaking off all sloth, may learn to prepare ourselves for prompt obedience, as soon as the heavenly voice sounds in our ears; otherwise, in addition to that indolence which, by nature, dwells within us, Satan will interpose many delays. The angels, in order the more effectually to urge Lot forward, infuse the fear, lest he should be destroyed in the *iniquity*, or the *punishment* of the city. For the word ⊠⊠⊠(*ayon*) signifies both. Not that the Lord rashly casts the innocent on the same heap with the wicked, but because the man, who will not consult for his own safety, and who, even being warned to beware, yet exposes himself, by his sloth, to ruin, deserves to perish.

16 *And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand.* The angels first urged him by words; now seizing him by the hand, and indeed with apparent violence, they compel him to depart. His tardiness is truly wonderful, since, though he was certainly persuaded that the angels did not threaten in vain, he could yet be moved, by no force of words, until he is dragged by their hands out of the city. Christ says,

'Though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak,'
(Matthew 26:41)

here a worse fault is pointed out; because the flesh, by its sluggishness, so represses the alacrity of the spirit, that with slow halting, it can scarcely creep along. And, indeed, as every man's own experience bears him witness of this evil, the faithful ought to endeavor, with the greater earnestness, to prepare themselves to follow God; and to beware lest as with deaf ears, they disregard his threats. And truly, they will never so studiously and forcibly press forward as not still to be retarded more than enough, in the discharge of their duty. For what Moses says is worthy of attention, that the Lord was merciful to his servant, when, having laid hold of his hand by the angels, He hurried him out of the city. For so it is often necessary for us to be forcibly drawn away from scenes which we do not willingly leave. If riches, or honors, or any other things of that kind, prove an obstacle to any one, to render him less free and disengaged for the service of God, when it happens that he is abridged of his fortune, or reduced to a lower rank, let him know that the Lord has laid hold of his hand; because words and exhortations had not sufficiently profited him. We ought not, therefore, to deem it hard, that those diseases, which instruction did not suffice effectually to correct,

should be healed by more violent remedies. Moses even seems to point to something greater; namely, that the mercy of God strove with the sluggishness of Lot; for, if left to himself, he would, by lingering, have brought down upon his own head the destruction which was already near. Yet the Lord not only pardons him, but, being resolved to save him, seizes him by the hand, and draws him away, although making resistance.

17. *Escape for thy life*. This was added by Moses, to teach use that the Lord not only stretches out his hand to us for a moment, in order to begin our salvation; but that without leaving his work imperfect, he will carry it on even to the end. It certainly was no common act of grace, that the ruin of Sodom was predicted to Lot himself, lest it should crush him unawares; next, that a certain hope of salvation was given him by the angels; and, finally, that he was led by the hand out of the danger. Yet the Lord, not satisfied with having granted him so many favors, informs him of what was afterwards to be done, and thus proves himself to be the Director of his course, till he should arrive at the haven of safety.[424] Lot is forbidden to look behind him, in order that he may know, that he is leaving a pestilential habitation. This was done, first, that he might indulge no desire after it, and then, that he might the better reflect on the singular kindness of God, by which he had escaped hell. Moses had before related, how fertile and rich was that plain; Lot is now commanded to depart thence, that he may perceive himself to have been delivered, as out of the midst of a shipwreck. And although, while dwelling in Sodom, his heart was continually vexed; it was still scarcely possible that he should avoid contracting some defilement from a sink of wickedness so profound: being now, therefore, about to be purified by the Lord, he is deprived of those delights in which he had taken too much pleasure. Let us also hence learn, that God best provides for our salvation, when he cuts off those superfluities, which serve to the pampering of the flesh; and when, for the purpose of correcting excessive self-indulgence, he banishes us from a sweet and pleasant plain, to a desert mountain.

18. *And Lot said unto them*. Here another fault of Lot is censured, because he does not simply obey God, nor suffer himself to be preserved according to His will, but contrives some new method of his own. God assigns him a mountain as his future place of refuge, he rather chooses for himself a city. They are therefore under a mistake, who so highly extol his faith, as to deem this a perfect example of suitable prayer; for the design of Moses is rather to teach, that the faith of Lot was not entirely pure, and free from all defects. For it is to be held as an axiom, that our prayers are faulty, so far as they are not founded on the word. Lot, however, not only departs from the word, but preposterously indulges himself in opposition to the word; such importunity has, certainly, no affinity with faith. Afterwards, a sudden change of mind was the punishment of his foolish cupidity. For thus do all necessarily vacillate, who do not submit themselves to God. As soon as they attain one wish, im-

424 "Ad salutis metam." — "Au port de salut." — *French Tr*

mediately a new disquietude is produced, which compels them to change their opinion. It must then, in short, be maintained, that Lot is by no means free from blame, in wishing for a city as his residence; for he both sets himself in opposition to the command of God, which it was his duty to obey; and desires to remain among those pleasures, from which it was profitable for him to be removed. He, therefore, acts just as a sick person would do, who should decline an operation, or a bitter draught, which his physician had prescribed. Nevertheless, I do not suppose, that the prayer of Lot was altogether destitute of faith; I rather think, that though he declined from the right way, he not only did not depart far from it, but was even fully purposed in his mind to keep it. For he always depended upon the word of God; but in one particular he fell from it, by entreating that a place should be given to him, which had been denied. Thus, with the pious desires of holy men, some defiled and turbid admixture is often found. I am not however ignorant, that sometimes they are constrained, by a remarkable impulse of the Spirit, to depart in appearance from the word, yet without really transgressing its limits. But the immoderate carnal affection of Lot betrays itself, in that he is held entangled by those very delights which he ought to have shunned. Moreover, his inconstancy is a proof of his rashness, because he is soon displeased with himself for what he has done.

19. *Behold now, they servant has found grace in thy sight*. Though Lot saw two persons, he yet directs his discourse to one. Whence we infer, that he did not rely upon the angels; because he was well convinced that they had no authority of their own, and that his salvation was not placed in their hands. He uses therefore their presence in no other way than as a mirror, in which the face of God may be contemplated. Besides, Lot commemorates the kindness of God, not so much for the sake of testifying his gratitude, as of acquiring thence greater confidence in asking for more. For since the goodness of God is neither exhausted, nor wearied, by bestowing; the more ready we find him to give, the more confident does it become us to be, in hoping for what is good. And this truly is the property of faith, to take encouragement[425] for the future, from the experience of past favor. And Lot does not err on this point; but he acts rashly in going beyond the word for the sake of self-gratification. Therefore I have said, that his prayer, though it flowed from the fountain of faith, yet drew something turbid from the mire of carnal affection. Let us then, relying upon the mercy of God, not hesitate to expect all things from him; especially those which he himself has promised, and which he permits us to choose.

I cannot escape to the mountain. He does not indeed rage against God, with determined malice as the wicked are wont to do; yet, because he rests not upon the word of God, he slides, and almost falls away. For why does he fear destruction in the mountain, where he was to be protected by the hand of God, and yet expect to find a safe abode in that place,

425 "Confirmationem patere." Quaere, capere. "Elle prene confirmation." — *French Tr.* — *Ed*

which is both near to Sodom, and obnoxious to similar vengeance, on account of its impure and wicked inhabitants? But this verily is the nature of men, that they choose to seek their safety in hell itself, rather than in heaven, whenever they follow their own reason. We see, then, how greatly Lot errs, in seeing from, and entertaining suspicions of, a mountain infected with no contagion of iniquity and choosing a city which, overflowing with crimes, could not but be hateful to God. He pretends that it is a little one, in order that he may the more easily obtain his request. As if he had said, that he only wanted a corner where he might be safely sheltered. This would have been right, if he had not declined the asylum divinely granted to him and rashly contrived another for himself.

21. *See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also*. Some ignorantly argue from this expression, that Lot's prayer was pleasing to God, because he assented to his request, and gave him what he sought. For it is no new thing for the Lord sometimes to grant, as an indulgence, what he, nevertheless, does not approve. And he now indulges Lot, but in such way, that he soon afterwards corrects his folly. Meanwhile, however, since God so kindly and gently bears with the evil wishes of his own people, what will he not do for us if our prayers are regulated according to the pure direction of his Spirit, and are drawn from his word? But after the angel has granted him his wish respecting the place, he again reproves his indolence, by exhorting him to make haste.

22. *I cannot do any thing*. Since the angel had not only been sent as an avenger to destroy Sodom, but also had received a command for the preservation of Lot; he therefore declares, that he will not do the former act, unless this latter be joined with it; because it is not at the option of the servant to divide those things which God has joined together. I am not, however, dissatisfied with the explanation of some, who suppose the angel to speak in the person of God. For although in appearance the language is harsh, yet there is no absurdity in saying, that God is unable to destroy the reprobate without saving his elect. Nor must we, therefore, deem his power to be limited, when he lays himself under any such necessity;[426] or that anything of his liberty and authority is diminished, when he willingly and freely binds himself. And let us especially remember, that his power is connected by a sacred bond with his grace, and with faith in his promises. Hence it may be truly and properly said, that he can do nothing but what he wills and promises. This is a true and profitable doctrine. There will, however, be less ground of scruple if we refer the passage to the angels; who had a positive commandment, from which it was not lawful for them to abate the smallest portion.

24. *Then the Lord rained*. Moses here succinctly relates in very unostentatious language, the destruction of Sodom and of the other cities. The atrocity of the case might well demand a much more copious narration, expressed in tragic terms; but Moses, according to his manner, simply recites the judgment of God, which no words would be sufficiently vehement

426 "Dum sibi ipse est necessitas." Literally, "When he is his own necessity."

to describe, and then leaves the subject to the meditation of his readers. It is therefore our duty to concentrate all our thoughts on that terrible vengeance, the bare mention of which, as it did not take place without so mighty concussion of heaven and earth, ought justly to make us tremble; and therefore it is so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. And it was not the will of God that those cities should be simply swallowed up by an earthquake; but in order to render the example of his judgment the more conspicuous, he hurled fire and brimstone upon them out of heaven. To this point belongs what Moses says, that the Lord rained fire from the Lord. The repetition is emphatical, because the Lord did not then cause it to rain, in the ordinary course of nature; but, as if with a stretched out hand, he openly fulminated in a manner to which he was not accustomed, for the purpose of making it sufficiently plain, that this rain of fire and brimstone was produced by no natural causes. It is indeed true, that the air is never agitated by chance; and that God is to be acknowledged as the Author of even the least shower of rain; and it is impossible to excuse the profane subtlety of Aristotle, who, when he disputes so acutely concerning second causes, in his Book on Meteors, buries God himself in profound silence. Moses, however, here expressly commends to us the extraordinary work of God; in order that we may know that Sodom was not destroyed without a manifest miracle. The proof which the ancients have endeavored to derive, from this testimony, for the Deity of Christ, is by no means conclusive: and they are angry, in my judgment, without cause, who severely censure the Jews, because they do not admit this kind of evidence. I confess, indeed, that God always acts by the hand of his Son, and have no doubt that the Son presided over an example of vengeance so memorable; but I say, they reason inconclusively, who hence elicit a plurality of Persons, whereas the design of Moses was to raise the minds of the readers to a more lively contemplation of the hand of God. And as it is often asked, from this passage, 'What had infants done, to deserve to be swallowed up in the same destruction with their parents?' the solution of the question is easy; namely, that the human race is in the hand of God, so that he may devote whom he will to destruction, and may follow whom he will with his mercy. Again, whatever we are not able to comprehend by the limited measure of our understanding, ought to be submitted to his secret judgment. Lastly, the whole of that seed was accursed and execrable so that God could not justly have spared, even the least.

26. *But his wife looked back*. Moses here records the wonderful judgment of God, by which the wife of Lot was transformed into a statue of salt. But under the pretext of this narrative, captious and perverse men ridicule Moses; for since this metamorphosis has no more appearance of truth, than those which Ovid has feigned, they boast that it is undeserving of credit. But I rather suppose it to have happened through the artifice of Satan, that Ovid, by fabulously trifling, has indirectly thrown discredit on this most signal proof of Divine vengeance. But whatever heathens might please to fabricate, is no concern of ours. It is only of importance to consider, whether the narrative of Moses contains anything absurd or in-

credible. And, first, I ask; Since God created men out of nothing, why may he not, if he sees fit, reduce them again to nothing? If this is granted, as it must be; why, if he should please, may he not turn them into stones? Yea, those excellent philosophers, who display their own acuteness, in derogating from the power of God, daily see miracles as great in the course of nature. For how does the crystal acquire its hardness? and — not to refer to rare examples — how is the living animal generated from lifeless seed? how are birds produced from eggs? Why then does a miracle appear ridiculous to them, in this one instance, when they are obliged to acknowledge innumerable examples of a similar kind? and how can they, who deem it inconsistent, that the body of a woman should be changed into a mass of salt, believe that the resurrection will restore to life, a carcass reduced to putrefaction? When, however, it is said, that Lot's wife was changed into a statue of salt, let us not imagine that her soul passed into the nature of salt; for it is not to be doubted, that she lives to be a partaker of the same resurrection with us, though she was subjected to an unusual kind of death, that she might be made an example to all. However, I do not suppose Moses to mean, that the statue had the taste of salt; but that it had something remarkable, to admonish those who passed by. It was therefore necessary, that some marks should be impressed upon it, whereby all might know it to be a memorable prodigy. Others interpret the statue of salt to have been an incorruptible one, which should endure for ever; but the former exposition is the more genuine. It may now be asked, why the Lord so severely punished the imprudence of the unhappy woman; seeing that she did not look back, from a desire to return to Sodom? Perhaps, being yet doubtful, she wished to have more certain evidence before her eyes; or, it might be, that, in pity to the perishing people, she turned her eyes in that direction. Moses, certainly, does not assert that she purposely struggled against the will of God; but, forasmuch as the deliverance of her, and her husband, was an incomparable instance of Divine compassion, it was right that her ingratitude should be thus punished. Now, if we weigh all the circumstances, it is clear that her fault was not light. First, the desire of looking back proceeded from incredulity; and no greater injury can be done to God, than when credit is denied to his word. Secondly we infer from the words of Christ, that she was moved by some evil desire; (Luke 17:32;) and that she did not cheerfully leave Sodom, to hasten to the place whither God called her; for we know that he commands us to remember Lot's wife, lest, indeed, the allurements of the world should draw us aside from the meditation of the heavenly life. It is therefore probable, that she, being discontented with the favor God had granted her, glided into unholy desires, of which thing also her tardiness was a sign; for Moses intimates that she was following after her husband, when he says, that she looked back *from behind* him; for she did not look back *towards* him; but because by the slowness of her pace, she was less advanced, she, therefore, was behind him. And although it is not lawful to affirm any thing respecting her eternal salvation; it is nevertheless probable that God, having inflicted temporal punishment, spared her soul; inasmuch as he often chastises his own people

in the flesh, that their soul may he saved from eternal destruction. Since, however, the knowledge of this is not very profitable, and we may without danger remain in ignorance, let us rather attend to the example which God designs for the common benefit of all ages. If the severity of the punishment terrifies us; let us remember, that they sin, at this days not less grievously, who, being delivered, not from Sodom, but from hell, fix their eyes on some other object than the proposed prize of their high calling.

27. *And Abraham got up early in the morning.* Moses now reverts to Abraham, and shows that he, by no means, neglected what he had heard from the mouth of the angel; for he relates that Abraham came to a place where he might see the judgment of God. For we must not suspect that (as we have lately said respecting Lot's wife) he trusted more to his own eyes than to the word of God; and that he came to explore, because he was in doubt. But we rather infers from the text, that he, being already persuaded that the angel had not spoken in vain, sought confirmation, by the actual beholding of the event; which confirmation would be useful both to himself and to posterity. And it is not to be doubted, that during the whole night, he suffered severe anguish respecting the safety of his nephew Lot. Whether he became satisfied on this point or note we do not know; yet I rather incline to the conjecture, that he remained anxious about him. And it is possible that, hesitating between hope and fear, he went forward to meet him, in order that he might see whether he wag delivered or not. And although he beholds nothing but the smoke, which generally remains after a great fire; yet this sign is given him from the Lord, for a testimony to posterity, of a punishment so memorable. God indeed designs, that, in the very appearance of the place, a monument of his wrath should exist for ever: but because, through the readiness of the world to cast a doubt upon the judgments of God, it might be easily believed, that such had been the nature of the place from the beginning; or that the change had occurred accidentally; the Lord was pleased to exhibit his act of vengeance before the eyes of Abraham, in order that he might discharge the office of a herald to posterity.

29. *God remembered Abraham.* Although Moses does not assert that the deliverance of Abraham's nephew was made known to him; yet since he says, that Lot was saved from destruction for Abraham's sake, it is probable that he was not deprived of that consolation which he most needed; and that he was conscious of the benefit, for which it became him to give thanks. If it seems to any one absurd, that the holy man Lot should be granted for the sake of another; as if the Lord had not respect to his own piety: I answer, these two things well agree with each other; that the Lord, since he is wont to aid his own people, cared for Lot, whom he had chosen, and whom he governed by his Spirit; and yet that, at the same time, he would show, in the preservation of his life, how greatly he loved Abraham, to whom he not only granted personal protection, but also the deliverance of others. It is however right to observe, that what the Lord does gratuitously, — induced by no other cause than his own goodness, — is ascribed to the piety or the prayers of men, for this reason; that we

may be stirred up to worship God, and to pray to him. We have seen, a little while before, how merciful God proved himself to be, in preserving Lot; and truly, he would not have perished, even if he had not been the nephew of Abraham. Yet Moses says, it was a favor granted to Abraham, that Lot was not consumed in the same destruction with Sodom. But if the Lord extended the favor which he had vouchsafed to his servant, to the nephew also, who now was as a stranger from his family; how much more confidently ought every one of the faithful to expect, that the same grace shall, by no means be wanting to his own household? And, if the Lord, when he favors us, embraces others also who are connected with us, for our sake, how much more will he have respect to ourselves? In saying that Lot dwelt in those cities, the figure *synecdoche*, which puts the whole for a part, is used, but it is expressly employed to make the miracle more illustrious; because it happened, only by the singular providence of God, that when five cities were destroyed a single person should escape.

30. *And Lot went up out of Zoar*. This narration proves what I have before alluded to, that those things which men contrive for themselves, by rash counsels drawn from carnal reason, never prosper: especially when men, deluded by vain hope, or impelled by depraved wishes, depart from the word of God. For although temerity commonly seems to be successful at the beginning; and they who are carried away by their lusts, exult over the joyful issue of affairs; yet the Lord, at length, curses whatever is not undertaken with his approval; and the declaration of Isaiah is fulfilled,

'Woe to them who begin a work and not by the Spirit of the Lord;
who take counsel, but do not ask at his mouth,'
(Isaiah 30:1.)

Lot, when commanded to retake himself to the mountain, chose rather to dwell in Zoar. After this habitation was granted to him, according to his own wish, he soon repents and is sorry for he trembles at the thought that destruction is every moment hastening on a place so near to Sodom, in which perhaps the same impiety and wickedness was reigning. But let the readers recall to memory what I have said, that it was only through the wonderful kindness of God, that he did not receive either immediate, or very severe punishment. For the Lord, by pardoning him at the time, caused him finally to become judge of his own sin. For he was neither expelled from Zoar by force nor by the hand of man; but a blind anxiety of mind drove him and hurried him into a cavern, because he had followed the lust of his flesh rather than the command of God. And thus in chastising the faithful, God mitigates their punishments so as to render it their best medicine. For if he were to deal strictly with their folly they would fall down in utter confusion. He therefore gives them space for repentance that they may willingly acknowledge their fault.

31. *And the firstborn said*[427] Here Moses narrates a miracle, which rightly brings the readers to astonishment. For, how could that unchaste intercourse come into the mind of the daughters of Lot, while the terrible punishment of God of the Sodomites stood still before her eyes, and while they knew that the scandalous and sinful lusts were the chief causes thereof? True, they were not so much moved through sensual lusts, as through a foolish desire for the procreation of their family; nevertheless, this urge was too absurd, because it forces the nature to forget all chastity and sense of shame, and, like the beasts, to destroy all difference between scandalous and honorable. To understand the better the whole of the case, I will deal with the separate parts, in order.

In the first place, concerning the plan of Lot's oldest daughter, whom the younger obeyed, concerning that I take for granted that none of both is urged trough fleshy lust, but that they both have only thought about the propagation of the family. For, what kind of passion would that have been, to desire for intercourse with an already old father?

That the oldest furtively comes in for but one night, and puts her sister in her stead, the next night, and that they, being pregnant, not think to return to the embrace of their father; from that we decide in the second place, that they have had no other goal but to become mother. But I do not approve of what some conjecture, who say that they were mislead by a great error, thinking that the whole world had perished together with Sodom. For, they had just dwelt in Zoar, also there were sweet regions before their eyes, which were surely not without inhabitants, and also they had learned from their father that a special punishment was inflicted upon the Sodomites and the other neighbors. They also were not ignorant of the family whence their father came, and what kind of uncle he had followed out of his fatherland. So, what must we think? That, because they were assured that families are maintained by children, it was hard for them and it was a continual cause of grief, that they were without children. Also the emptiness, when their father would be dead, could seem to be unbearable for them, because they saw that they then would be lonely, and without any help. So, hence their impudent desire, and that absurd urgency to seek this unchaste intercourse, as they were afraid of a lonely life, which was liable to many concerns. Also I doubt not, that Moses not narrates what they have used as a pretext, but what they have said in a

427 "Et dixit primogenita." — "Hic prodigium narratur a Mose, quod lectores merito obstupefacere debet," etc. The lengthened comment on this and the following verses, it has been deemed necessary entirely to omit. Perhaps the only points worthy of notice in it, are the following: 1. Calvin supposes Lot to have been under judicial infatuation in consequence of his intemperance on the occasion. "Ego quidem ita omnino statuo non tam vino fuisse obrutum, quam propter suam intemperiem divinitus percussum spiritu stuporis." 2. He explains, as other commentators do, the names of the children of Lot's daughters; the first ⊠⊠⊠, (*Moab*,) which signifies "from a father;" the other ⊠⊠-⊠, (*Ben-ammi*,) which signifies "the son of my people." These were the progenitors of the Moabites and Ammonites. — *Ed*

sincere feeling of their hearts. So, they wanted to bring forth seed, like the custom of all the nations. They adduce the example of the entire world, because they would deem it unfair when their state would be worse then that of the others. Everywhere, they say, the young women are praised, who conceive children, and thus build their families; why must we then be condemned to be always childless? In the mean time, they well know that they commit a great sin. For, why make they their father drunken? Is it not, because they guess, that he cannot be made willing? When he has had an aversion to unchastity, the daughters must necessarily have had the same notion in their consciences. So, in no wise they are to be excused, that they lend themselves to a scandalous intercourse, which all the nation abhor by nature. While the people, with normal crimes, are forced to admit their crimes; how will they plead themselves free with important crimes, as if no fear for God's judgement prickled them? Therefore, with suppression of the conscience, Lot's daughters devote themselves to that crime. The reason to mislead their father was no other then this, that they knew the disgrace, which they themselves necessarily had to condemn, because they knew that it was against the order of the nature. From this appears, whereto the people come when they follow their own will; for nothing can be so absurd or bestial, that we not decay to that, when we give free rein to our flesh. Let this, therefore, be the beginning of al our desires, to examine what the Lord allows, in order that it comes not in our mind to ask something, what according His Word is free to us.

There is not a man in the earth. They mean not that all the nations are destroyed, as many explainers drivel, but because they are by fear driven in the cave, leading a lonely life, they complain, that they are cut off from any hope of marriage. And yes, being secluded from the rest of the nations, they lived as if they were sent away to some separated world. Might one object that they could ask husbands of their father, then I answer, that it absolutely not a miracle, that they, beaten down through fear, could not seek another medicine, than what was at hand. For, they thought that they on that solitary mountain, locked up in the den of a rock, had no more the least connection with the human race. It could be (as I have reminded before) that some slaves dwelt with them. This is even probable, for otherwise it was difficult to have wine in the cave, when this was not taken with them on a wagon with the other foods. Yet they say that there were no husbands for them, because they have an aversion to a marriage with slaves.

Further I mean, that the name earth in the first member, is put for region or area, as if they said: This region has no more men left, who could marry us after the custom of the entire world. For there is here a tacit contrast between the whole earth and a certain part thereof. But this is their first crime, that they, in a zeal to propagate the human race, violate the holy law of nature. Next, it is wrong and wicked, that they not flee to the Creator of the world Himself, to cure them from that desolation, about which they were worried. Thirdly, they show their negligence when they aim their hearts only on the earthly life, and not worry

about the heavenly life. Though I dare not to give security concerning the time, which has elapsed between the destruction of Sodom, and the unchaste intercourse of Lot with his daughters, yet, it is probable that they, as soon as they had come in the cave, in aversion to the solitude, have made up this scandalous and execrable plan. It could not take a long time, that Lot lived in the cave, or there came lack of food and drink. And like a sudden fear had carried away their father, like a storm, likewise the daughters could not restrain themselves, even for some days. Without calling upon God, or asking their father for advice, they are carried away through a bestial instinct. Herein we see how soon the deliverance and the punishment of the Sodomites has left their memory, although both had always to be kept in their heart. Oh, that this vice also among us were not so great; but we show too clearly in both ways our ingratitude.

33. *And he perceived not.* Though Lot not sinned knowingly, yet, because his drunkenness was the cause of his sin, his guilt is diminished, but not annulled. Without doubt the Lord has chastised his dissatisfaction in this manner. This is something rare and strange, that his senses are so under influence of the wine, that he, like a dead man pours out his lust. Therefore I assume that he not so much is fuddled through the wine, but that his excessiveness is beat by God through the spirit of ignorance. And when God has not spared the holy Patriarch, how can we then think to be unpunished, when we do the same excessiveness? Let we therefore realize through this example, that the law of modesty is prescribed us, in order that we eat modestly and moderately. Yet, there are some unholy people, who consider Lot as the protector of their wickedness.

Why do we not rather think to which horrible scandal he has decayed, because he excessively used wine? We must, as I already have said, not simply consider what the drunkenness drags along with it, and with which other vices it is connected, but we must consider the punishment of God. Therefore he willed openly spread this tragic crime, in order that the drunkenness will be abhorred. Daily the Lord testifies by heavy punishments, how much this vice displeases Him. When we see that Abraham's nephew, the host of Angels, a man adored with extraordinary fame of holiness, is defiled by unchaste intercourse, because he has drunk too much, what will then happen to the guzzlers and the whores, who daily drink themselves drunken? But we have at great length spoken about this in the ninth chapter Genesis 9:1, what men can reread. Concerning the words, when Moses says, that Lot did not perceive it, that his daughter lay down and arose — some explain it thus that he saw no difference between a stranger and his own daughter. But when he was not totally blinded, he could in the morning, having slept out his intoxication, know that he has had intercourse with his daughter. Some say, to diminish his guilt, that he not so much is fuddled through much drinking, but that he was depressed through sadness. But I retain this, that he, as he was endowed with more splendid gifts, also deserved the more punishment, and that

therefore his reason was taken away from him, so that he, like a unreasonable beast, lost himself in sensual lust.

35. *And the younger arose, and lay with him*. This place teaches us how dangerous it is, to fall in the snares of satan. For, who once is caught therein, involves himself deeper and deeper in it. It is sure that Lot has been a modest man, but either, that the daughters have overtaken him while he was overcome with sadness, or that he allured by any other means to excessive drinking, once being decayed to excessiveness, he is again deceived the next day. We must therefore diligently resist the first beginning, for it is nearly impossible that they, who are once stupefied through its sweetness, totally lose themselves in the vices. Therefore, men ought to be on their guard against stimulus to evil, as deadly evils; and men ought to fear each flattering temptation as something poisonous. And this circumstance deserves attention, that Lot, among the Sodomites by the accumulation of crimes which nearly defiled heaven and earth, was chaste and clean, like an angel.

Whence did he keep such a cleanness in Sodom, else then through the knowledge of the evil, that surrounded him, which made him worried and careful? Presently, being safe on the mountain, satan besieges him with new pitfalls. Through this example, the Spirit admonishes us to watchfulness, that, when we think the least about it, an invisible enemy stretches snared for us. Likewise has Moses told earlier that Adam was deceived in Paradise. When we take care for ourselves, that will that watchfulness make us being on our guard against all guiles of our enemy. For there is nobody who not carries with him thousands of temptation to his own deceit.

37. *And the firstborn bare*. This was a terrible blindness, that the daughters of Lot, shaking off all feeling of shame, raised up a memorial of their virtue, and through an eternal sign have exhibited their dishonor before their posterity. To their sons, or better, two nation in their persons, they give names, whence everybody can know that it was a family, originating from adultery and unchaste intercourse. The eldest boasts that she had obtained her son from her father, the other that her son was born of close relationship. Thus both unashamedly spread their crime, while they rather, through shame of their crime, had hidden themselves in eternal hideouts. Not content with the infamousness in their time, the propagate their crime into other times. Therefore, there is no doubt that they, enchanted by satan, have forgotten all difference between what is scandalous and honest. Paul says, (Romans 2:5,) that wicked, after a long pleasure in sinning, are at the end deprived of all feel of grief thereof. Such stupidity undoubtedly had caught those girls, because they did not shame themselves to spread their dishonor everywhere. Further, such an example of God's punishment is revealed us, in order that we not allow any sin, and we will not lose ourselves in licentiousness, but that we, through fear of God, spur ourselves on to penitence.

CHAPTER 20.

Genesis 20:1-18

1. And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.	**1.** Postea profectus est inde Abraham ad terram Meridianam, et habitavit inter Cades et Sur, peregrinatusque est in Gerar.
2. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.	**2.** Et dixit Abraham de Sarah uxore sua, Soror mea est. Et misit Abimelech rex Gerar, et accepit Sarah.
3. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she *is* a man's wife.	**3.** Et venit Jehova ad Abimelech in somnio noctis, et dixit et, Ecce es mortuus, propter uxorem quam accepisti: quum ipsa maritata sit marito.
4. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?	**4.** Abimelech autem non appropinquaverat ad eam: itaque dixit, Jehova, num gentem etiam justam occides?
5. Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.	**5.** Numquid non ipse dixit mihi, Soror mea est: et ipsa etiam dixit, Frater meus est? in integritate cordis mei, et in munditia manuum mearum feci hoc.
6. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.	**6.** Et dixit ad eum Deus in somnio, Etiam ego novi quod in integritate cordis tui fecisti hoc, et prohibui etiam ego to, ne peccares mihi: idcirco non permisi tibi, ut tangeres eam.
7. Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.	**7.** Et nunc redde uxorem viro, quia propheta est, et orabit pro to, et vives: quodsi tu non reddideris, scito quod moriendo morieris tu et omne quod est tibi.
8. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.	**8.** Et surrexit Abimelech mane, et vocavit omnes servos suos, et loquutus est omnia verba ista in auribus eorum, et timuerunt viri valde.
9. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and	**9.** Et vocavit Abimelech Abraham, et dixit ei, Quid fecisti nobis? et quid peccavi tibi,

what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.	quia induxisti super me et super regnum meum peccatum grande? opera quae non debent fieri, fecisti mecum.
10. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?	**10.** Et dixit Abimelech ad Abraham, Quid vidisti quia fecisti rem hanc?
11. And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.	**11.** Et dixit Abraham, Quia dixi, Vere non est timor Dei in loco isto: et occident me propter uxorem meam.
12. And yet indeed *she is* my sister; she *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.	**12.** Et etiam vere soror mea filia patris mei est, veruntamea non filia matris meae: et fuit mihi in uxorem meam.
13. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.	**13.** Et fuit, quando circumduxerunt me Angeli de domo patris mei, dixi ei, Haec est misericordia tua quam facies mecum, in omni loco ad quem veniemus, dic de me, Frater meus est.
14. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.	**14.** Et cepit Abimelech pecudes, et boves, et servos, et ancillas, et dedit Abraham: et restituit ei Sarah, uxorem ejus.
15. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.	**15.** Et dixit Abimelech, Ecce, terra mea coram to, in *loco* bono coram oculis tuis habita.
16. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.	**16.** Et ad Sarah dixit, Ecce, dedi mille argenteos fratri tuo: ecce, est tibi operimentum oculorum, omnibus qui sunt tecum: et in omnibus correcta fuit.
17. So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare *children*	**17.** Et oravit Abraham ad Deum, et sanavit Deus Abimelech et uxorem ejus, et ancillas ejus, et pepererunt:

18. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.	**18.** Quia claudendo clauserat Jehova super omnum vulvam domus Abimelech propter Sarah uxorem Abraham.

1. *And Abraham journeyed from thence*. What Moses related respecting the destruction of Sodom, was a digression. He now returns to the continuation of his history, and proceeds to show what happened to Abraham; how he conducted himself, and how the Lord protected him; till the promised seed, the future source of the Church, should be born unto him. He also says, that Abraham came into the South country; not that he traveled beyond the limits of the inheritance given to him, but left his former abode, and went towards the South. Moreover; the region which he points out fell chiefly, afterwards, to the lot of the tribe of Judah. It is, however, unknown what was his intention in removing, or what necessity impelled him to change his place: we ought, however, to be persuaded, that he had not transferred his abode to another place for any insufficient cause; especially since a son, whom he had not even dared to wish for, had been lately promised him, through Sarah. Some imagine that he fled from the sad spectacle which was continually presented before his eyes; for he saw the plain, which had lately appeared so pleasant to the view, and so replenished with varied abundance of fruits, transformed into a misshapen chaos. And certainly, it was possible that the whole neighborhood might be affected with the smell of sulphur, as well as tainted with other corruptions, in order that men might the more clearly perceive this memorable judgment of God. Therefore, there is nothing discordant with facts, in the supposition, that Abraham, seeing the place was under the curse of the Lord, was, by his detestation of it, drawn elsewhere. It is also credible, that (as it happened to him in another place) he was driven away by the malice and injuries of those among whom he dwelt. For the more abundantly the Lord had manifested his grace towards him, the more necessary was it, in return, for his patience to be exercised, in order that he might reflect upon his conditions as a pilgrim upon earth. Moses also expressly declares, that he dwelt as a stranger in the land of Gerar. Thus we see, that this holy family was driven hither and thither as refuse, while a fixed abode was granted to the wicked. But it is profitable to the pious to be thus unsettled on earth; lest, by setting their minds on a commodious and quiet habitation, they should lose the inheritance of heaven.

2. *And Abraham said of Sarah his wife*. In this history, the Holy Spirit presents to us a remarkable instance, both of the infirmity of man, and of the grace of God. It is a common proverb, that even fools become wise by suffering evil. But Abraham, forgetful of the great danger which had befallen him in Egypt, once more strikes his foot against the same stone; although the Lord had purposely chastised him, in order that the warning might be useful to him, throughout his whole life. Therefore we perceive, in the example of the holy patriarch, how easily the oblivion, both of the chastisements and the favors of God, steals over us. For

it is impossible to excuse his gross negligence, in not calling to mind, that he had once tempted God; and that he would have had himself alone to blame, if his wife had become the property of another man. But if we thoroughly examine ourselves scarcely any one will be found who will not acknowledge, that he has often offended in the same way. It may be added, that Abraham was not free from the charge of ingratitude; because, if he had rejected that his wife had been wonderfully preserved to him by the Lord, he would never again, knowingly and willingly, have cast himself into similar danger. For he makes the former favor divinely offered unto him, so far as he is able, of none effect. We must, however, notice the nature of the sin, on which we have touched before. For Abraham did not, for the sake of providing for his own safety prostitute his wife, (as impious men cavil.) But, as he had before been anxious to preserve his life, till he should receive the seed divinely promised to him; so now, seeing his wife with child, in the hope of enjoying so great a blessing, he thought nothing of his wife's danger.[428] Therefore if we thoroughly weigh all things, he sinned through unbelief, by attributing less than he ought to the providence of God. Whence also, we are admonished, how dangerous a thing it is, to trust our own counsels. For Abraham's disposition is right, while fixing his attention on the promise of God; but inasmuch as he does not patiently wait for God's helps but turns aside to the use of unlawful means, he is, in this respect, worthy of censure.

And Abimelech sent. There is no doubt that the Lord purposed to punish his servant, for the counsel he had so rashly taken. And such fruits of distrust do all receive, who rely not, as they ought, on the providence of God. Some perverse men quarrel with this passage; because nothing seems to them more improbable than that a decrepit old woman should be desired by the king, and taken from the bosom of her husband. But we answer, first, that it is not known what her appearance was, except that Moses before declared her to be a person of singular beauty. And it is possible that she was not much worn with age. For we often see some women in their fortieth year more wrinkled than others in their seventieth. But here another thing is to be considered, that, by the unwonted favor of God, her comeliness was preeminent among her other endowments. It might also be, that king Abimelech was less attracted by the elegance of her form, than by the rare virtues with which he saw her, as a matron, to be endued. Lastly, we must remember, that this whole affair was directed by the hand of God, in order that Abraham might receive the due reward of his folly. And as we find that they who are exceedingly acute in discerning the natural causes of things, are yet most blind in reference to the divine judgments; let this single fact suffice us, that Abimelech, being a minister to execute the divine chastisement, acted under a secret impulse.

428 There seems too much of special pleading in the reasoning of Calvin, both on this occasion, and on that referred to, of a similar kind, in the twelfth chapter. — *Ed.*

3. *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night*. Here Moses shows that the Lord acted with such gentleness, that in punishing his servant, he yet, as a father, forgave him: just as he deals with us, so that, while chastising us with his rod, his mercy and his goodness far exceed his severity. Hence also we infer, that he takes greater care of the pious than carnal sense can understand; since he watches over them while they sleep. This also is to be carefully noticed; that however we may be despised by the worlds we are yet precious to him, since for our sake he reproves even kings, as it is written in Psalm 105:14. But as this subject was more fully discussed in the twelfth chapter, (Genesis 12:1) let the readers there seek what I now purposely omit. Whereas, God is said to have come, this is to be applied to the perception of the king, to whom undoubtedly the majesty of God was manifested; so that he might clearly perceive himself to be divinely reproved and not deluded with a vain spectre.

Behold, thou art but a dead man. Although God reproved king Abimelech, for the sake of Abraham, whom he covered with his special protection; he yet intends to show, generally, his high displeasure against adultery. And, in truth, here is no express mention of Abraham; but rather a general announcement is made, for the purpose of maintaining conjugal fidelity. 'Thou shalt die, because thou hast seized upon a women who was joined to a husband.' Let us therefore learn, that a precept was given in these words, to mankind, which forbids any one to touch his neighbor's wife. And, truly, since nothing in the life of man is more sacred than marriage, it is not to be wondered at, that the Lord should require mutual fidelity to be cherished between husbands and wives and should declare that he will be the Avenger of it, as often as it is violated. He now addresses himself, indeed, only to one man; but the warning ought to sound in the ears of all, that adulterers — although they may exult with impunity for a time — shall yet feel that God, who presides over marriage, will take vengeance on them. (Hebrews 13:4.)

4. *But Abimelech had not come near her*. Though Abraham had deprived himself of his wife, the Lord interposed in time to preserve her uninjured. When Moses previously relates, that she was taken away by Pharaoh, he does not say whether her chastity was assailed or not; but since the Lord then also declared himself the vindicator of her whom he now saved from dishonor, we ought not to doubt that her integrity was preserved both times. For why did he now forbid the king of Gerar to touch her, if he had previously suffered her to be corrupted in Egypt? We see, however, that when the Lord so defers his aid as not to stretch out his hand to the faithful, till they are in extreme peril, he shows the more clearly how admirable is his Providence.

Wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? The explanation given by some, that Abimelech here compares himself with the men of Sodom, is perhaps too refined. The following meaning appears to me more simple; namely 'O Lord, although thou dost severely punish adultery, shall thy wrath pour itself out on unoffending men, who have rather fallen into error, than sinned knowingly and willingly?' Moreover, Abimelech seems so to clear himself,

as if he were entirely free from blame: and yet the Lord both admits and approves his excuse. We must, however, mark in what way, and to what extent he boasts that his heart and hands are guiltless. For he does not arrogate to himself a purity which is altogether spotless; but only denies that he was led by lust, either tyrannically or purposely, to abuse another man's wife. We know how great is the difference between a *crime* and a *fault* ;[429] thus Abimelech does not exempt himself from every kind of charge, but only shows that he had been conscious of no such wickedness as required this severe punishment. The 'simplicity of heart,' of which he speaks, is nothing else than that ignorance which stands opposed to consciousness of guilt; and 'the righteousness of his hands,' is nothing but that selfgovernment, by which men abstain from force and acts of injustice. Besides, the interrogation which Abimelech used proceeded from a common feeling of religion. For nature itself dictates, that God preserves a just discrimination in inflicting punishments.

6. *Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart*. We infer from this answer of God, (as I have lately remarked,) that Abimelech did not testify falsely concerning his own integrity. Yet, while God allows that his excuse is true, He nevertheless chastises him. Let us hence learn, that even they who are pure, according to human judgment, are not entirely free from blame. For no error may be deemed so excusable, as to be without some deteriorating admixture. Wherefores it is not for any one to absolve himself by his own judgment; rather let us learn to bring all our conduct to the standard of God. For Solomon does not say in vain, that

'the ways of men seem right to themselves,
but the Lord pondereth the hearts,' (Proverbs 21:2.)

But if even they who are unconscious to themselves of any evil, do not escape censure; what will be our condition, if we are held inwardly bound by our own conscience?

I also withheld thee. This declaration implies that God had respect, not only to Abraham, but also to the king. For because he had no intention of defiling another man's wife, God had compassion on him. And it frequently happens, that the Spirit restrains, by his bridle, those who are gliding into error; just as, on the other hand, he drives those headlong, by infatuations and a spirit of stupor, who, with depraved affections and lusts, knowingly transgress. And as God brought to the heathen king, who had not been guilty of deliberate wickedness, a timely remedy, in order that his guilt should not be increased; so He proves himself daily to be the faithful guardian of his own people, to prevent them from rushing forward, from lighter faults to desperate crimes.

7. *Now therefore, restore the man his wife*. God does not now speak of Abraham as of a common man, but as of one who is so peculiarly dear unto himself, that He undertakes the defense of his conjugal bed, by a kind of privilege. He calls Abraham a prophet, for the sake

429 "Inter scelus et delictum." — "Between an act of abandoned wickedness and a mere fault." — *Ed*

of honor; as if he were charging Abimelech with having injured a man of great and singular excellence; that he might not wonder at the greatness of the punishment inflicted upon him. And although the word prophet is properly the name of an office; yet I think it has here a more comprehensive import, and that it is put for a chosen man, and one who is familiar with God. For since at that time, no Scripture was in existence, God not only made himself known by dreams and visions but chose also to himself rare and excellent men, to scatter abroad the seed of piety, by which the world would become more inexcusable. But since Abraham is a prophet, he is constituted, as it were, a mediator between God and Abimelech. Christ, even then, was the only Mediator; but this was no reason why some men should not pray for others; especially they who excelled in holiness, and were accepted by God; as the Apostle teaches, that

'the fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much.'
(James 5:16.)

And we ought not, at this day, to neglect such intercession, provided it does not obscure the grace of Christ, nor lead us away from Him. But that, under this pretext, the Papists resort to the patronage of the dead, is absurd. For as the Lord does not here send the king of Gerar to Noah, or to any one of the dead fathers, but into the presence of the living Abraham; so the only precept we have on this subject is, that, by mutually praying for each other, we should cultivate charity among ourselves.

And if thou restore her not. Hence we are to learn, the intention of those threats and denunciations with which God terrifies men; namely, forcibly to impel those to repentance, who are too backward. In the beginning of this discourse, it had been absolutely declared, 'Thou art a dead man;' now the condition is added, 'Unless thou restore her.' Yet the meaning of both expressions is the same; though at first God speaks more sharply, that he may inspire the offender with the greater terror. But now, when he is subdued, God expresses his intention more clearly, and leaves him the hope of pardon and salvation. Thus is the knot untied, with which many entangle themselves, when they perceive that God does not always, or instantly, execute the punishments which he has denounced; because they deem it a sign, either that God has changed his purpose, or that he pretends a different thing by his word, from that which he has secretly decreed. He threatens destruction to the Ninevites, by Jonah, and afterwards spared them. (Jonah 3:4.) The unskilful do not perceive how they can escape from one of two absurdities; namely, that God has retracted his sentence; or that he had feigned himself to be about to do what he really did not intend. But if we hold fast this principle, that the inculcation of repentance is included in all threats, the difficulty will be solved. For although God, in the first instance, addresses men as lost; and, therefore, penetrates them with the present fear of death, still the end is to be regarded. For if he invites them to repentance, it follows, that the hope of pardon is left them, provided they repent.

8. *Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning.* Moses teaches how efficacious the oracle had been. For Abimelech, alarmed at the voice of God, arose in the morning, not only that he himself might quickly obey the command enjoined upon him but that he might also exhort his own people to do the same. An example of such ready obedience is shown us in a heathen king, that we may no more make excuses for our torpor, when we are so little profited by the Divine remonstrances. God appeared to *him* in a dream; but since he daily cries aloud in *our* ears, by Moses, by the prophets and by the apostles, and finally, by his only-begotten Son, it were absurd to suppose that so many testimonies should avail less than the vision of a single dream.

9. *Then Abimelech called Abraham.* There are those who suppose that the king of Gerar did not make a complaint against Abraham; but rather declared his own repentance. If, however we fairly weigh his words we find confession mixed with expostulation. Although he complains that Abraham had acted unjustly, he yet does not so transfer the blame to him, as to free himself from all fault. And he may, with justice, impute part of the blame to Abraham, as he does; provided he also acknowledges his own sin. Let we therefore know, that this king did not act as hypocrites are in the habit of doing. For, as soon as ever a pretext is furnished for inculpating others, they confidently absolve themselves: they even esteem it a lawful purgation for themselves, if they can draw others into a participation of their crime. But Abimelech, while he complains that he had been deceived, and had fallen through impudence, yet does not, meanwhile, scruple to condemn himself as guilty of a great sin, 'It is not,' he says, 'through thee, that I and my whole kingdom have been prevented from falling into the greatest wickedness.' No one therefore may exonerate himself from blame, under the pretense that he had been induced by others to sin. It is, however to be noted, that adultery is here called a great sin; because it binds not one man only, but a whole people, as in a common crime. The king of Gerar could not indeed have spoken thus, had he not acknowledged the sacred right of marriage. But, at the present time, Christians — at least they who boast of the name — are not ashamed jocularly to extenuate so great a crime, from which even a heathen shrinks with the greatest horror. Let us however know, that Abimelech was a true herald of that divine judgment, which miserable men in vain endeavor to elude by their cavils. And let that expression of Paul ever recur to our memory, 'Be not deceived; because of those things cometh the wrath of God upon the disobedient.' (1 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 5:6.) It is not without reason, that he makes this sin common to the whole nation; for when crimes are committed with impunity, a whole region is, in a certain sense, polluted. And it is especially notorious, that the anger of God is provoked against the whole body of the people, in the person of the king. Hence, with so much the greater earnestness and care, must we beseech God to govern, by his Spirit, those whom he has placed in authority over us; and then, to preserve the country, in which he has granted us a dwelling-place, exempt and pure from all iniquity.

10. *What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing* ? By this question the king provides against the future. He thinks that Abraham had not practiced this dissimulation inconsiderately; and, since God was grievously offended, he fears to fall again into the same danger. He therefore testifies, by an inquiry so earnest, that he wishes to remedy the evil. Now, it is no common sign of a just and meek disposition in Abimelech, that he allows Abraham a free defense. We know how sharply, and fiercely, they expostulate, who think themselves aggrieved: so much the greater praise, then, was due to the moderation of this king, towards an unknown foreigner. Meanwhile, let us learn, by his example, whenever we expostulate with our brethren, who may have done us any wrong, to permit them freely to answer us.

11. *And Abraham said*. There are two points contained in this answer. For, first, he confesses that he had been induced by fear to conceal his marriage. He then denies that he had lied for the purpose of excusing himself. Now, although Abraham declares with truth, that he had not concealed his marriage with any fraudulent intention, nor for the purpose of injuring any one; yet he was worthy of censure, because, through fear, he had submitted, so far as he was concerned, to the prostitution of his wife. Wherefore, much cannot be said in his excuse: since he ought to have been more courageous and resolute in fulfilling the duty of a husband, by vindicating, the honor of his wife whatever danger might threaten him. Besides, it was a sign of distrust, to resort to an unlawful subtlety. With regard to his suspicion; although he had everywhere perceived that a monstrous licentiousness prevailed; it was, nevertheless, unjust to form a judgment so unfavourable of a people whom he had not yet known; for he supposes them all to be homicides. But as I have treated, at some length, on these subjects, in the tenth chapter (Genesis 10:1); it may now suffice to have alluded to them, by the way. Meanwhile, we come to the conclusion, that Abraham does not contend for the justice of his cause before God; but only shows his earnestness to appease Abimelech. His particular form of expression is, however, to be noticed; for wherever the fear of God does not reign, men easily rush onwards to every kind of wickedness; so that they neither spare human blood, nor restrain themselves from rapine, violence, and contumelies. And doubtless it is the fear of God alone, which unites us together in the bonds of our common humanity which keeps us within the bounds of moderation, and represses cruelty; otherwise we should devour each other like wild beasts. It will, indeed, sometimes happen, that they who are destitute of the fear of God, may cultivate the appearance of equity. For God, in order that he may preserve mankind from destruction, holds in check, with his secret rein, the lusts of the ungodly. It must, however, be always taken into the account, that the door is opened to all kinds of wickedness, when piety and the fear of God have vanished. Of this, at the present day, too clear a proof is manifest, in the horrible deluge of crime, which almost covers the whole earth. For, from what other cause than this arise such a variety of deceptions and frauds, such perfidy and cruelty, that all sense of justice is extinguished by the contempt of God? Now, whenever we have a difficult contest with the

corruptions of our own age, let us reflect on the times of Abraham, which, although they were filled with impiety and other crimes yet did not divert the holy man from the course of duty.

12. *And yet indeed she is my sister*. Some suppose Sarah to have been Abraham's own sister, yet not by the same mothers but born from a second wife. As, however, the name sister has a wider signification among the Hebrews, I willingly adopt a different conjecture; namely, that she was his sister in the second degree; thus it will be true that they had a common father, that is, a grandfather, from whom they had descended by brothers. Moreover, Abraham extenuates his offense, and draws a distinction between his silence and a direct falsehood; and certainly he professed with truth, that he was the brother of Sarah. Indeed it appears that he feigned nothing in words which differed from the facts themselves; yet when all things have been sifted, his defense proves to be either frivolous, or, at least, too feeble. For since he had purposely used the name of sister as a pretext, lest men should have some suspicion of his marriage; he sophistically afforded them an occasion of falling into error. Wherefore, although he did not lie in words, yet with respect to the matter of fact, his dissimulation was a lie, by implication. He had, however, no other intention than to declare that he had not dealt fraudulently with Abimelech; but that, in an affair of great anxiety, he had caught at an indirect method of escape from death, by the pretext of his previous relationship to his wife.

13. *When God caused me to wander*[430] Because the verb is here put in the plural number, I freely expound the passage as referring to the angels, who led Abraham through his various wanderings. Some, with too much subtlety, infer from it a Trinity of Persons: as if it had been written: *The gods caused me to wander*. I grant, indeed, that the *noun* ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*Elohim*,) is frequently taken for God in the Scripture: but then the *verb* with which it is connected is always singular. Wherever a plural verb is added then it signifies angels or princes.[431] There are those who think that Abraham, because he was speaking with one who was not rightly instructed, spoke thus in conformity with the common custom of the heathen; but, in my opinion, most erroneously. For to what purpose did he, by erecting altars, make it manifest that he was devoted to the service of the only true God, if it were lawful for him afterwards to deny, in words, the very God whom he had worshipped? On which subject we have before spoken, as the case required. Abraham, however, does not complain respecting, the angels,

430 "Quando circumduxerunt me angeli." — "When the angels led me about."

431 The reasoning of Calvin is not conclusive. There are cases, though but few, in which Elohim, as here, when joined to a verb plural, signifies, not angels nor princes, but the true God. See Genesis 35:7. Calvin, however, in this passage also, translates the word, "angels." Still there seems no sufficient reason for departing from our own received version. Dathe agrees with it. "Deinde cum Deus me ex patria mea migrare juberet." It is also confirmed by the *Septuagint* version. — See the Commentary of Professor Bush, in loco. — *Ed.*

that he had been led astray by their fallacious guidance: but he points out what his own condition formerly was; namely, that having left his own country, he had not only migrated into a distant land, but had been constantly compelled to change his abode. Wherefore there is no wonder, that necessity drove him into new designs. Should any one inquire, why he makes angels the guides of his pilgrimage? the answer is ready; Although Abraham knew that he was wandering by the will and providence of God alone, he yet refers to angels, who, as he elsewhere acknowledges, were given him to be the guides of his journey. The sum of the address is of this tendency; to teach Abimelech, that Abraham was alike free from malicious cunning, and from falsehood: and then, that because he was passing a wandering and unquiet life; Sarah, by agreement, had always said the same thing which she had done in Gerar. This wretched anxiety of the holy man might so move Abimelech to compassion as to cause his anger to cease.

14. *And Abimelech took sheep*. Abraham had before received possessions and gifts in Egypt; but with this difference, that whereas Pharaoh had commanded him to depart elsewhere; Abimelech offers him a home in his kingdom. It therefore appears that both kings were stricken with no common degree of fear. For when they perceived that they were reproved by the Lord, because they had been troublesome to Abraham; they found no method of appeasing God, except that of compensating, by acts of kindness, for the injury they had brought on the holy man. The latter difference alluded to flowed hence; that Pharaohs being more severely censured, was so terrified, that he could scarcely bear the sight of Abraham: whereas Abimelech, although alarmed, was yet soon composed by an added word of consolation, when the Lord said to him, He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee. For there is no other remedy for the removal of fear, than the Lord's declaration that he will be propitious. It is indeed of little advantage for the sinner to present to God only what fear extorts. But it is a true sign of penitence, when, with a composed mind and quiet conscience, he yields himself, as obedient and docile, to God. And seeing that Abimelech allowed Abraham a habitation in his realm, a blessing of no trivial kind followed this act of humanity; because Isaac was born there, as we shall see in the next chapter (Genesis 20:1.)

16. *He is to thee a covering of the eyes*. Because there is, in these words, some obscurity, the passage is variously explained. The beginning of the verse is free from difficulty. For when Abimelech had given a thousand pieces of silver; in order that his liberality might not be suspected, he declare6 that he had given them to Abraham; and that since Abraham had been honorably received, his wife was not to be regarded as a harlot. But what follows is more obscure, 'He shall be a veil to thee.' Many interpreters refer this to the gift; in which they seem to me to be wrong. The Hebrews, having no neuter gender, use the feminine instead of it. But Moses, in this place, rather points to the husband; and this best suits the sense. For Sarah is taught that the husband to whom she is joined was as a veil, with which she ought to be covered lest she should be exposed to others. Paul says, that the veil which the woman

carries on her head, is the symbol of subjection. (1 Corinthians 11:10.) This also belongs to unmarried persons, as referring to the end for which the sex is ordained; but it applies more aptly to married women; because they are veiled, as by the very ordinance of marriage. I therefore thus explain the words, 'Thou, if thou hadst no husband, wouldst be exposed to many dangers; but now, since God has appointed for thee a guardian of thy modesty, it behoves thee to conceal thyself under that veil. Why then hast thou of thine own accords thrown off this covering?' This was a just censure; because Sarah, pretending that she was in the power of her husband, had deprived herself of the divine protection.

Thus she was reproved. Interpreters distort this clause also. The natural exposition seems to me to be, that the Lord had suffered Sarah to be reproved by a heathen king, that he might the more deeply affect her with a sense of shame. For Moses draws especial attention to the person of the speaker; because it seemed a disgrace that the mother of the faithful should be reprehended by such a master. Others suppose that Moses speaks of the profit which she had received; seeing that she, instructed by such a lesson, would henceforth learn to act differently. But Moses seems rather to point out that kind of correction of which I have spoken; namely, that Sarah was humbled, by being delivered over to the discipline of a heathen man.

17. *So Abraham prayed.* In two respects the wonderful favor of God towards Abraham was apparent; firsts that, with outstretched hand, He avenged the injury done to him; and, secondly, that, through Abraham's prayer, He became pacified towards the house of Abimelech. It was necessary to declare, that the house of Abimelech had been healed in answer to Abraham's prayers; in order that, by such a benefit, the inhabitants might be the more closely bound to him. A question, however, may be agitated respecting the kind of punishment described in the expression, the whole house was barren. For if Abraham had gone into the land of Gerar, after Sarah had conceived, and if the whole of what Moses has here related was fulfilled before Isaac was born, how was it possible that, in so short a time, this sterility should be manifest? If we should say, that the judgment of God was then made plain, in a manner to us unknown, the answer would not be inappropriate. Yet I am not certain, that the series of the history has not been inverted. The more probable supposition may seem to be, that Abraham had already been resident in Gerar, when Isaac was promised to him; but that the part, which had before been omitted, is now inserted by Moses. Should any one object, that Abraham dwelt in Mamre till the destruction of Sodom, there would be nothing absurd in the belief, that what Moses here relates had taken place previously. Yet, since the correct notation of time does little for the confirmation of our faith, I leave both opinions undecided.

CHAPTER 21.

Genesis 21:1-34	
1. *And* the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.	**1.** Porro Jehova visitavit Sarah, quemadmodum dixit: et fecit Jehova ipsi Sarah, quemadmodum loquutus erat.
2. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.	**2.** Itaque concepit et peperit Sarah ipsi Abraham filium in senectute ejus, in tempore quod illi dixerat Deus.
3. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.	**3.** Et vocavit Abraham nomen filii sui, qui natus erat ei, quem peperit ei Sarah, Ishac.
4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.	**4.** Et circumcidit Abraham Ishac filium suum, filium octo dierum, quemadmodum praeceperat ei Deus.
5. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.	**5.** Abraham autem erat centum annorum, quando natus est ei Ishac filius suus.
6. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, *so that* all that hear will laugh with me.	**6.** Et dixit Sarah, Risum fecit mihi Deus: omnis qui audierit, ridebit mihi.
7. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born *him* a son in his old age.	**7.** Et dixit, Quis nuntiasset Abrahae lactare filios Sarah? quia peperi filium in senectute ejus.
8. And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.	**8.** Et crevit puer, et ablactatus est: et fecit Abraham convivium magnum in die qua ablactatus est Ishac.
9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.	**9.** Et vidit Sarah filium Hagar Aegyptiae, quem peperit ipsi Abraham, ridentem.
10. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.	**10.** Et dixit ad Abraham, Ejice ancillam hanc et filium ejus: quia non haereditabit filius ancillae hujus cum filio meo, cum Ishac.

11. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.	**11.** Et displicuit res valde in oculis Abraham, propter filium suum.
12. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.	**12.** Et dixit Deus ad Abraham, Ne displiceat in oculis tuis super puero, et super ancilla tua: in omnibus quae dixerit tibi Sarah, audi vocem ejus: quia in Ishac vocabitur tibi semen.
13. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed.	**13.** Et etiam filium ancillae in gentem ponam, quia semen tuum est.
14. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.	**14.** Diluculo igitur surrexit Abraham, et tulit panem, et utrem aquae, et dedit Hagar, et posuit super humerum ejus, et puerum: et dimisit eam, et perrexit, et erravit in deserto Beer-sebah.
15. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.	**15.** Et defecerunt aquae de utre, et projecit puerum subter unam arborum.
16. And she went, and sat her down over against *him* a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lift up her voice, and wept.	**16.** Et abiit, et sedit e regione, elongando se quantum est jactus arcus: quia dixit, Non videbo quando morietur puer: et sedit e regione, et elevavit vocem suma, et flevit.
17. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*	**17.** Et audivit Deus vocem pueri, et clamavit angelus Dei ad Hagar de coelis, et dixit ei, Quid tibi Hagar? ne timeas: quia audivit Deus vocem pueri ex *loco* ubi est.
18. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.	**18.** Surge, tolle puerum, et tene manu tua eum: quia in gentem magnam ponam eum.
19. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.	**19.** Tunc aperuit Deus oculos ejus, et vidit puteum aquae, et perrexit et implevit utrem aqua, et potum dedit puero.

20. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.	**20.** Et fuit Deus cum puero, et crevit, habitavitque in deserto, et fuit jaculator sagittarius.
21. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.	**21.** Et habitavit in deserto Param, et accepit ei mater ejus uxorem de terra Aegypti.
22. And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doest:	**22.** Deinde fuit tempore illo, dixit Abimelech et Phicol princeps exercitus ejus ad Abraham, dicendo, Deus tecum est in omnibus qu ae tu facis:
23. Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: *but* according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.	**23.** Nunc itaque jura mihi per Deum hic, si mentitus fueris mihi,[432] et filio meo, et nepoti meo: secundum misericordiam, quam feci tecum facies mecum, et cum terra, in qua peregrinatus es.
24. And Abraham said, I will swear.	**24.** Et dixit Abraham, Ego jurabo.
25. And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.	**25.** Et increpavit abraham ipsum Abimelech propter puteum aquae, quem rapuerant servi Abimelech.
26. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it*, but to day.	**26.** Et dixit Abimelech, Non novi quis fecerit hoc, neque etiam tu indicasti mihi, neque etiam ego audivi praeterquam hodie.
27. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.	**27.** Et accepit Abraham pecudes et boves, et dedit ipsi Abimelech, et percusserunt ambo foedus.
28. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.	**28.** Et statuit Abraham septem agnas pecorum seorsum.
29. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What *mean* these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?	**29.** Et dixit Abimelech ad Abraham, Quid sunt septem agnae istae, quos statuisti seorsum?

432 Vel, si fefelleris, aut infideliter egeris.

30. And he said, For *these*) seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.	**30.** Et dixit, Quia septem agnas capies e manu mea: ut sit mihi in testimonium, quod foderim puteum hunc.
31. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.	**31.** Idcirco vocatus est locus ipse Beer-sebah: quia ibi juraverant ambo.
32. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.	**32.** Percusserunt ergo foedus in Beer-sebah: et surrexit Abimelech, et Phicol princeps exercitus ejus, et reversi sunt in terram Pelisthim.
33. And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.	**33.** Et plantavit nemus in Beer-sebah, et invocavit ibi nomen Jehovae Dei saeculi.
34. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.	**34.** Et habitavit Abraham in terra Pelisthim dies multos.

1. *And the Lord visited Sarah*. In this chapters not only is the nativity of Isaac related, but because, in his very birth, God has set before us a lively picture of his Church, Moses also gives a particular account of this matter. And first, he says that God visited Sarah, as he had promised. Because all offspring, flows from the kindness of God, as it is in the psalm,

'The fruit of the womb is the gift of God;' (Psalm 127:3;)

therefore the Lord is said, not without reason, to visit those, to whom he gives children. For although the foetus seems to be produced naturally, each from its own kind; there is yet no fecundity in animals, except so far as the Lord puts forth his own power, to fulfill what he has said, Increase and multiply. But in the propagation of the human race, his special benediction is conspicuous; and, therefore, the birth of every child is rightly deemed the effect of divine visitation. But Moses, in this place, looks higher, forasmuch as Isaac was born out of the accustomed course of nature.[433] Therefore Moses here commends that secret and unwonted power of God, which is superior to the law of nature; and not improperly, since it is of great consequence for us to know that the gratuitous kindness of God reigned, as well in the origin, as in the progress of the Church; and that the sons of God were not otherwise born, than from his mere mercy. And this is the reason why he did not make Abraham a father, till his body was nearly withered. It is also to be noticed, that Moses

433 Calvin here adds, "Nam communis gignendi ratio, et vis illa quam Dominus hominibus indidit, in Abraham et ejus uxore cessaverat."

declares the visitation which he mentions, to be founded upon promise; 'Jehovah visited Sarah, as he had promised.' In these words he annexes the effect to its cause, in order that the special grace of God, of which an example is given in the birth of Isaac, might be the more perceptible. If he had barely said, that the Lord had respect unto Sarah, when she brought forth a son; some other cause might have been sought for. None, however, can doubt, that the promise, by which Isaac had been granted to his father Abraham, was gratuitous; since the child was the fruit of that adoption, which can be ascribed to nothing but the mere grace of God. Therefore, whoever wishes rightly and prudently to reflect upon the work of God, in the birth of Isaac, must necessarily begin with the promise. There is also great emphasis in the repetition, "The Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken." For he thus retains his readers, as by laying his hand upon them, that they may pause in the consideration of so great a miracle. Meanwhile, Moses commends the faithfulness of God; as if he had said he never feeds men with empty promises, nor is he less true in granting what he has promised, than he is liberal, and willing, in making the promise.

2. *She bare Abraham a son*. This is said according to the accustomed manner of speaking; because the woman is neither the head of a family, nor brings forth properly for herself, but for her husband. What follows, however, is more worthy of notice, In his old age, at the set time, which God had predicted: for the old age of Abraham does, not a little, illustrate the glory of the miracle. And now Moses, for the third time, recalls us to the word of God, that the constancy of his truth may always be present to our minds. And though the time had been predicted, alike to Abraham and to his wife, yet this honor is expressly attributed to the holy man; because the promise had been especially given on his account. Both, however, are distinctly mentioned in the context.

3. *And Abraham called the name*. Moses does not mean that Abraham was the inventor of the name; but that he adhered to the name which before had been given by the angel. This act of obedience, however, was worthy of commendation, since he not only ratified the word of God, but also executed his office as God's minister. For, as a herald, he proclaimed to all, that which the angel had committed to his trust.

4. *And Abraham circumcised his son*. Abraham pursued his uniform tenor of obedience, in not sparing his own son. For, although it would be painful for him to wound the tender body of the infant; yet, setting aside all human affection, he obeys the word of God. And Moses records that he did as the Lord had commanded him; because there is nothing of greater importance, than to take the pure word of God for our rule, and not to be wise above what is lawful. This submissive spirit is especially required, in reference to sacraments; lest men should either invent any thing for themselves, or should transfer those things which are commanded by the Lord, to any use they please. We see, indeed, how inordinately the humours of men here prevail; inasmuch as they have dared to devise innumerable sacraments. And to go no further for an example, whereas God has delivered only two sacraments to

the Christian Church, the Papists boast that they have seven. As if truly it were in their power to forge promises of salvation, which they might sanction with signs imagined by themselves. But it were superfluous to relate with how many figments the sacraments have been polluted by them. This certainly is manifest, that there is nothing about which they are less careful, than to observe what the Lord has commanded.

5. *And Abraham was an hundred years old*. Moses again records the age of Abraham the better to excite the minds of his readers to a consideration of the miracle. And although mention is made only of Abraham, let us yet remember that he is, in this place, set before us, not as a man of lust, but as the husband of Sarah, who has obtained, through her, a lawful seed, in extreme old age, when the strength of both had failed. For the power of God was chiefly conspicuous in this, that when their marriage had been fruitless more than sixty years, suddenly they obtain offspring[434] . Sarah, truly, in order to make amends for the doubt to which she had given way, now exultingly proclaims the kindness of God, with becoming praises. And first, she says, that God had given her occasion of joy; not of common joy, but of such as should cause all men to congratulate her. Secondly, for the purpose of amplification, she assumes the character of an astonished inquirer, 'Who would have told this to Abraham?' Some explain the clause in question, 'will laugh at me,' as if Sarah had said, with shame, that she should be a proverb to the common people. But the former sense is more suitable; namely, 'Whosoever shall hear it, will laugh with me;' that is, for the sake of congratulating me.

7. *Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck* ? I understand the future tense to be here put for the subjunctive mood. And the meaning is, that such a thing would never have entered into the mind of any one. Whence she concludes, that God alone was the Author of it; and she now condemns herself for ingratitude because she had been so slow in giving credit to the angel who had told her of it. Now, since she speaks of children in the plural number, the Jews, according to their custom, invent the fable, that whereas a rumor was spread, that the child was supposititious, a great number of infants were brought by the neighbors, in order that Sarah, by suckling them, might prove herself a mother. As if, truly, this might not easily be known, when they saw Isaac hanging on her breast,[435] and as if this was not a more clear and distinct proof, that the milk, pressed out by the fingers, flowed before their eyes. But the Jews are doubly foolish and infatuated, as not perceiving, that this form of expression is of exactly the same import, as if Sarah had called herself a nurse. Meanwhile, it is to be observed, that Sarah joins the office of nurse

434 "Quod quum ultra sexaginta annos sterile illis fuisset conjugium, effoetis jam et semimortuis, subito nata est prolis."

435 It is here added, "Ac non clarior, et in promptu fuerit demonstratio, si lac digitis expressum ante oculos fluxisset."

with that of mother; for the Lord does not in vain prepare nutriment for children in their mothers' bosoms, before they are born. But those on whom he confers the honor of mothers, he, in this way, constitutes nurses; and they who deem it a hardship to nourish their own offspring, break, as far as they are able, the sacred bond of nature. If disease, or anything of that kind, is the hindrance, they have a just excuse; but for mothers voluntarily, and for their own pleasure, to avoid the trouble of nursing, and thus to make themselves only half-mothers, is a shameful corruption.

8. *And the child grew, and was weaned*. Moses now begins to relate the manner in which Ishmael was rejected from the family of Abraham, in order that Isaac alone might hold the place of the lawful son and heir. It seems, indeed, at first sight, something frivolous, that Sarah, being angry about a mere nothing, should have stirred up strife in the family. But Paul teaches, that a sublime mystery is here proposed to us, concerning the perpetual state of the Church. (Galatians 4:21.) And, truly, if we attentively consider the persons mentioned, we shall regard it as no trivial affair, that the father of all the faithful is divinely commanded to eject his firstborn son; that Ishmael, although a partaker of the same circumcision, becomes so transformed into a strange nations as to be no more reckoned among the blessed seed; that, in appearance, the body of the Church is so rent asunder, that only one-half of it remains; that Sarah, in expelling the son of her handmaid from the house, claims the entire inheritance for Isaac alone. Wherefore, if due attention be applied in the reading of this history, the very mystery of which Paul treats, spontaneously presents itself.

And Abraham made a great feast. It is asked, why he did not rather make it on the day of Isaac's birth, or circumcision? The subtile reasoning of Augustine, that the day of Isaac's weaning was celebrated, in order that we may learn, from his example, no more to be children in understandings is too constrained. What others say, has no greater consistency; namely, that Abraham took a day which was not then in common use, in order that he might not imitate the manners of the Gentiles. Indeed, it is very possible, that he may also have celebrated the birthday of his son, with honor and joy. But special mention is made of this feast, for another reason; namely, that then, the mocking of Ishmael was discovered. For I do not assent to the conjecture of those who think that a new history is here begun; and that Sarah daily contended with this annoyance, until, at length, she purged the house by the ejection of the impious mocker. It is indeed probable, that, on other days also, Ishmael had been elated by similar petulance; yet I do not doubt but Moses expressly declares that his contempt was manifested towards Sarah, at that solemn assembly, and that from that time, it was publicly proclaimed. Now Moses does not speak disparagingly of the pleasures of that feast, but rather takes their lawfulness for granted. For it is not his design to prohibit holy men from inviting their friends, to a common participation of enjoyment, so that they, jointly giving thanks to God, may feast with greater hilarity than usual. Temperance and sobriety are indeed always to be observed; and care must be taken, both that the provision itself be

frugal, and the guests moderate. I would only say, that God does not deal so austerely with us, as not to allow us, sometimes, to entertain our friends liberally; as when nuptials are to be celebrated, or when children are born to us. Abraham, therefore, made a great feast, that is, an extraordinary one; because he was not accustomed thus sumptuously to furnish his table every day; yet this was an abundance which by no means degenerated into luxury. Besides, while he was thus liberal in entertaining his friends according to his power, he also had sufficient for unknown guests, as we have seen before.

9. *And Sarah saw the son of Hagar*. As the verb to laugh has a twofold signification among the Latins, so also the Hebrews use, both in a good and evil sense, the verb from which the participle ⌧⌧⌧ (*metsachaik*) is derived. That it was not a childish and innoxious laughter, appears from the indignation of Sarah. It was, therefore a malignant expression of scorn, by which the forward youth manifested his contempt for his infant brother. And it is to be observed, that the *epithet* which is here applied to Ishmael, and the name *Isaac*, are both derived from the same root. Isaac was, to his father and others, the occasion of holy and lawful laughter; whence also, the name was divinely imposed upon him. Ishmael turns the blessing of God, from which such joy flowed, into ridicule. Therefore, as an impious mocker, he stands opposed to his brother Isaac. Both (so to speak) are the sons of laughter: but in a very different sense. Isaac brought laughter with him from his mother's womb, since he bore, — engraven upon him, — the certain token of God's grace. He therefore so exhilarates his father's house, that joy breaks forth in thanksgiving; but Ishmael, with canine and profane laughter, attempts to destroy that holy joy of faith. And there is no doubt that his manifest impiety against God, betrayed itself under this ridicule. He had reached an age at which he could not, by any means be ignorant of the promised favor, on account of which his father Abraham was transported with so great joy: and yet — proudly confident in himself — he insults, in the person of his brother, both God and his word, as well as the faith of Abraham. Wherefore it was not without cause that Sarah was so vehemently angry with him, that she commanded him to be driven into exile. For nothing is more grievous to a holy mind, than to see the grace of God exposed to ridicule. And this is the reason why Paul calls his laughter persecution; saying,

'He who was after the flesh persecuted the spiritual seed.' (Galatians 4:29.)

Was it with sword or violence? Nay, but with the scorn of the virulent tongue, which does not injure the body, but pierces into the very soul. Moses might indeed have aggravated his crime by a multiplicity of words; but I think that he designedly spoke thus concisely, in order to render the petulance with which Ishmael ridicules the word of God the more detestable.

10. *Cast out this bondwoman*. Not only is Sarah exasperated against the transgressor, but she seems to act more imperiously towards her husband than was becoming in a modest wife. Peter shows, that when, on a previous occasion, she called Abraham lord, she did not

do so feignedly; since he proposes her, as an example of voluntary subjection, to pious and chaste matrons. (1 Peter 3:6.) But now, she not only usurps the government of the house, by calling her husband to order, but commands him whom she ought to reverence, to be obedient to her will. Here, although I do not deny that Sarah, being moved by womanly feelings, exceeded the bounds of moderation, I yet do not doubt, both that her tongue and mind were governed by a secret impulse of the Spirit, and that this whole affair was directed by the providence of God. Without controversy, she was the minister of great and tremendous judgment. And Paul adduces this expression, not as a futile reproach, which an enraged woman had poured forth, but as a celestial oracle. But although she sustains a higher character than that of a private woman, yet she does not take from her husband his power; but makes him the lawful director of the ejection.

11. *And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight.* Although Abraham had been already assured, by many oracles, that the blessed seed should proceed from Isaac only; yet, under the influence of paternal affection, he could not bear that Ishmael should be cut off, for the purpose of causing the inheritance to remain entire to him, to whom it had been divinely granted; and thus, by mingling two races, he endeavored, as far as he was able, to confound the distinction which God had made. It may truly seem absurd, that the servant of God should thus be carried away by a blind impulse: but God thus deprives him of judgment, not only to humble him, but also to testify to all ages, that the dispensing of his grace depends upon his own will alone. Moreover, in order that the holy man may bear, with greater equanimity, the departure of his son, a double consolation is promised him. For, first, God recalls to his memory the promise made concerning Isaac; as if he would say, it is enough and more than enough, that Isaac, in whom the spiritual benediction remains entire, is left. He then promises that he will take care of Ishmael, though exiled from his paternal home; and that a posterity shall arise from him which shall constitute a whole nation. But I have explained above, on the seventeenth chapter (Genesis 17:1,) what is the meaning of the expression, 'The seed shall be called in Isaac.' And Paul, (Romans 9:8,) by way of interpretation, uses the word reckoned, or imputed.[436] And it is certain that, by this method, the other son was cut off from the family of Abraham; so that he should no more have a name among his posterity. For God, having severed Ishmael, shows that the whole progeny of Abraham should flow from one head. He promises also to Ishmael, that he shall be a nations but estranged from the Church; so that the condition of the brothers shall, in this respect, be different; that one is constituted the father of a spiritual people, to the other is given a carnal seed. Whence Paul justly infers, that not all who are the seed of Abraham are true and genuine sons; but they only who are born of the Spirit. For as Isaac himself became the legitimate son by a gratuitous promise, so the same grace of God makes a difference

436 "Ponit verbum λογίζεσθαι, hoc est, censeri vel reputari."

among his descendants. But because we have sufficiently treated of the various sons of Abraham on the seventeenth chapter, the subject is now more sparingly alluded to.

12. *In all that Sarah hath said unto thee.* I have just said that although God used the ministry of Sarah in so great a matter, it was yet possible that she might fail in her method of acting. He now commands Abraham to hearken unto his wife, not because he approves her disposition, but because he will have the work, of which he is Himself the Author, accomplished. And he thus shows that his designs are not to be subjected to any common rule, especially when the salvation of the Church is concerned. For he purposely inverts the accustomed order of nature, in order that he may prove himself to be the Author and the Perfecter of Isaac's vocation. But because I have before declared, that this history is more profoundly considered by Paul, the sum of it is here briefly to be collected. In the first place, he says, that what is here read, was written allegorically: not that he wishes all histories, indiscriminately to be tortured to an allegorical sense, as Origin does; who by hunting everywhere for allegories, corrupts the whole Scripture; and others, too eagerly emulating his example, have extracted smoke out of light. And not only has the simplicity of Scripture been vitiated, but the faith has been almost subverted, and the door opened to many foolish dotings. The design of Paul was, to raise the minds of the pious to consider the secret work of God, in this history; as if he had said, What Moses relates concerning the house of Abraham, belongs to the spiritual kingdom of Christ; since, certainly, that house was a lively image of the Church. This, however, is the allegorical similitude which Paul commends. Whereas two sons were born to Abraham, the one by a handmaid, the other by a free woman; he infers, that there are two kinds of persons born in the Church; the faithful, whom God endues with the Spirit of adoption, that they may enjoy the inheritance; and hypocritical disciples, who feign themselves to be what they are not, and usurp, for a time, a name and place among the sons of God. He therefore teaches, that there are certain who are conceived and born in a servile manner; but others, as from a freeborn mother. He then proceeds to say, that the sons of Hagar are they who are generated by the servile doctrine of the Law; but that they who, having embraced, by faith, gratuitous adoption, are born through the doctrine of the Gospel, are the sons of the free woman. At length he descends to another similitudes in which he compares Hagar with mount Sinai, but Sarah with the heavenly Jerusalem. And although I here allude in few words to those things which my readers will find copiously expounded by me, in the fourth chapter to the Galatians Galatians 4:1; yet, in this short explanation, it is made perfectly clear what Paul designs to teach. We know that the true sons of God are born of the incorruptible seed of the word: but when the Spirit, which gives life to the doctrine of the Law and the Prophets, is taken away, and the dead letter alone remains, then that seed is so corrupted, that only adulterous sons are born in a state of slavery; yet because they are apparently born of the word of God, though corrupted, they are, in a sense, the sons of God. Meanwhile, none are lawful heirs, except those

whom the Church brings forth into liberty, being conceived by the incorruptible seed of the gospel. I have said, however, that in these two persons is represented the perpetual condition of the Church. For hypocrites not only mingle with the sons of God in the Church, but despise them, and proudly appropriate to themselves all the rights and honors of the Church. And as Ishmael, inflated with the vain title of primogeniture, harassed his brother Isaac with his taunts; so these men, relying on their own splendor, reproachfully assail and ridicule the true faith of the simple: because, by arrogating all things to themselves, they leave nothing to the grace of God. Hence we are admonished, that none have a well-grounded confidence of salvation, but they who, being called freely, regard the mercy of God as their whole dignity. Again, the Spirit furnishes the consciences of the pious with strong and effective weapons against the ferociousness of those who, under a false pretext, boast that they are the Church. We see that it is no new thing, for persons who are nothing but hypocrites to occupy the chief place in the Church at God. Wherefore, while at this day, the Papists proudly exult, there is no reason why we should be disturbed by their empty and inflated boasts. As to their glorying in their long succession, it just means as much as if Ishmael were proclaiming himself the firstborn. It is, therefore necessary to discriminate between the true and the hypocritical Church. Paul describes a mark, which they are never able, with their cavils, to obliterate. For as large bottles are broken with a slight blast; so by this single word, all their glory is extinguished, 'the sons of the handmaid shall not be eternal inheritors.' In the meantime their insolence is to be patiently borne, so long as God shall loosen the rein to their tyranny. For the Apostles, formerly, were oppressed by the Jewish hypocrites of their age, with the same reproaches which these men now cast upon us. In the same way, Ishmael triumphed over Isaac, as if he had obtained the victory. Wherefore, we must not wonder, if our own age also has its Ishmaelites. But lest such indignity should break our spirits, let this consolation perpetually occur to us, that they who hold the preeminence in the Church, will not always remain within it.

14. *And Abraham rose up early*. How painful was the wound, which the ejection of his firstborn son inflicted upon the mind of the holy man, we may gather from the double consolation with which God mitigated his grief: He sends his son into banishments just as if he were tearing out his own bowels. But being accustomed to obey God, he brings into subjection the paternal love, which he is not able wholly to cast aside. This is the true test of faith and piety, when the faithful are so far compelled to deny themselves, that they even resign the very affections of their original nature, which are neither evil nor vicious in themselves, to the will of God. There is no doubt that, during the whole night, he had been tossed with various cares; that he had a variety of internal conflicts, and endured severe torments; yet he arose early in the morning, to hasten his separation from his child; since he knew that it was the will of God.

And took bread, and a bottle of water. Moses intimates not only that Abraham committed his son to the care of his mother, but that he relinquished his own paternal right over him; for it was necessary for this son to be alienated, that he might not afterwards be accounted the seed of Abraham. But with what a slender provision does he endow his wife and her son? He places a flagon of water and bread upon her shoulder. Why does he not, at least, load an ass with a moderate supply of food? Why does he not add one of his servants, of which his house contained plenty, as a companion? Truly either God shut his eyes, that, what he would gladly have done, might not come into his mind; or Abraham limited her provision, in order that she might not go far from his house. For doubtless he would prefer to have them near himself, for the purpose of rendering them such assistance as they would need. Meanwhile, God designed that the banishment of Ishmael should be thus severe and sorrowful; in order that, by his example, he might strike terror into the proud, who, being intoxicated with present gifts, trample under foot, in their haughtiness, the very grace to which they are indebted for all things. Therefore he brought the mother and child to a distressing issue. For after they have wandered into the desert, the water fails; and the mother departs from her son; which was a token of despair. Such was the reward of the pride, by which they had been vainly inflated. It had been their duty humbly to embrace the grace of God offered to all people, in the person of Isaac: but they impiously spurned him whom God had exalted to the highest honor. The knowledge of God's gifts ought to have formed their minds to modesty. And because nothing was more desirable for them, than to retain some corner in Abraham's house, they ought not to have shrunk from any kind of subjection, for the sake of so great a benefit: God now exacts from them the punishment, which they had deserved, by their ingratitude.

17. *God heard the voice of the lad*. Moses had said before that Hagar wept: how is it then, that, disregarding her tears, God only hears the voice of the *lad* ? If we should say, that the mother did not deserve to receive a favorable answer to her prayers; her son, certainly, was in no degree more worthy. For, as to the supposition of some, that they both were brought to repentance by this chastisement, it is but an uncertain conjecture. I leave their repentance, of which I can see no sign, to the judgment of God. The cry of the boy was heard, as I understand it, not because he had prayed in faith; but because God, mindful of his own promise, was inclined to have compassion upon them. For Moses does not say, that their vows and sighs were directed towards heaven; it is rather to be believed, that, in bewailing their miseries, they did not resort to divine help. But God, in assisting them, had respect, not to what *they desired* of him, but to what *he had promised* to Abraham concerning Ishmael. In this sense Moses seems to say that the voice of the boy was heard; namely, because he was the son of Abraham.

What aileth thee, Hagar?[437] The angel reproves the ingratitude of Hagar; because, when reduced to the greatest straits, she does not reflect on God's former kindness towards her, in similar danger; so that, as one who has found him to be a deliverer, she might again cast herself upon his faithfulness. Nevertheless, the angel assures her that a remedy is prepared for her sorrows if only she will seek it. Therefore in the clause, What aileth thee?[438] is a reproof for having tormented herself in vain, by confused lamentation. When he afterwards says, Fear not, he invites and exhorts her to hope for mercy. But what, we may ask, is the meaning of the expression, which he adds, where he is?[439] It may seem that there is a suppressed antithesis between the place where he now was, and the house of Abraham; so that Hagar might conclude, that although she was wandering in the desert as an exile from the sanctuary of God, yet she was not entirely forsaken by God; since she had him for a Leader in her exile. Or else, the phrase is emphatical; implying, that, though the boy is cast into solitude, and counted as one forsaken, he nevertheless has God nigh unto him. And thus the angel, to relieve the despair of the anxious mother, commands her to return to the place where she had laid down her son. For (as is usual in desperate circumstances) she had become stupefied through grief; and would have lain as one lifeless, unless she had been roused by the voice of the angel. We perceive, moreover, in this example, how truly it is said, that when father and mother forsake us, the Lord will take us up.

18. *Arise lift up the lad*. In order that she might have more courage to bring up her son, God confirms to her what he had before often promised to Abraham. Indeed, nature itself prescribes to mothers what they owe to their children; but, as I have lately hinted, all the natural feelings of Hagar would have been destroyed, unless God had revived her, by inspiring new confidence, to address herself with fresh vigor to the fulfillment of her maternal office. With respect to the fountain or "well,"[440] some think it suddenly sprung up. But since Moses says, that the *eyes* of Hagar were opened, and not that the *earth* was opened or dug up; I rather incline to the opinion, that, having been previously astonished with grief, she did not discern what was plainly before her eyes; but now, at length, after God has restored her vision, she begins to see it. And it is worthy of especial notice, that when God leaves us destitute of his superintendence, and takes away his grace from us, we are as much deprived of all the aids which are close at hand, as if they were removed to the greatest distance. Therefore we must ask, not only that he would bestow upon us such things as will be useful to us, but that

437 "Quid tibi est Agar?"

438 "Ergo in particula, 'Quid agis?' objurgatio est." The expression, "Quid agis," does not occur in the text, but is only another form in which Calvin puts "Quid tibi est?" — *Ed*

439 " God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." English version. Calvin has it, "ex loco ubi est."

440 Ver. 19. "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." "Quod ad fontem pertinet," are Calvin's words; but in his version it stands, "puteum aquae," a well of water. — *Ed*

he will also impart prudence to enable us to use them; otherwise, it will be our lot to faint, with closed eyes, in the midst of fountains.

20. *And God was with the lad*. There are many ways in which God is said to be present with men. He is present with his elect, whom he governs by the special grace of his Spirit; he is present also, sometimes, as it respects external life, not only with his elect, but also with strangers, in granting them some signal benediction: as Moses, in this place, commends the extraordinary grace by which the Lord declares that his promise is not void, since he pursues Ishmael with favor, because he was the son of Abraham. Hence, however, this general doctrine is inferred; that it is to be entirely ascribed to God that men grow up, that they enjoy the light and common breath of heaven, and that the earth supplies them with food. Only it must be remembered, the prosperity of Ishmael flowed from this cause, that an earthly blessing was promised him for the sake of his father Abraham. In saying, that Hagar took a wife for Ishmael, Moses has respect to civil order; for since marriage forms a principal part of human life, it is right that, in contracting it, children should be subject to their parents, and should obey their counsel. This order, which nature prescribes and dictates, was, as we see, observed by Ishmael, a wild man in the barbarism of the desert; for he was subject to his mother in marrying a wife. Whence we perceive, what a prodigious monster was the Pope, when he dared to overthrow this sacred right of nature. To this is also added the impudent boast of authorizing a wicked contempt of parents, in honor of holy wedlock. Moreover the Egyptian wife was a kind of prelude to the future dissension between the Israelites and the Ishmaelites.

22. *And it came to pass at that time*. Moses relates, that this covenant was entered into between Abraham and Abimelech, for the purpose of showing, that after various agitations, some repose was, at length, granted to the holy man. He had been constrained, as a wanderer, and without a fixed abode, to move his tent from place to place, during sixty years. But although God would have him to be a sojourner even unto death, yet, under king Abimelech, he granted him a quiet habitation. And it is the design of Moses to show, how it happened, that he occupied one place longer than he was wont. The circumstance of time is to be noted; namely, soon after he had dismissed his son. For it seems that his great trouble was immediately followed by this consolation, not only that he might have some relaxation from continued inconveniences, but that he might be the more cheerful, and might the more quietly occupy himself in the education of his little son Isaac. It is however certain, that the covenant was not, in every respect, an occasion of joy to him; for he perceived that he was tried by indirect methods, and that there were many persons in that region, to whom he was disagreeable and hateful. The king, indeed openly avowed his own suspicions of him: it was, however, the highest honor, that the king of the place should go, of his own accord, to a stranger, to enter into a covenant with him. Yet it may be asked, whether this covenant was made on just and equal conditions, as is the custom among allies? I certainly do not

doubt, that Abraham freely paid due honor to the king; nor is it probable that the king intended to detract anything from his own dignity, in order to confer it upon Abraham. What, then, did he do? Truly, while he allowed Abraham a free dwelling-place, he would yet hold him bound to himself by an oath.

God is with thee in all that thou doest. He commences in friendly and bland terms; he does not accuse Abraham nor complain that he had neglected any duty towards himself, but declares that he earnestly desires his friendship; still the conclusion is, that he wishes to be on his guard against him. It may then be asked, Whence had he this suspicion, or fear, first of a stranger, and, secondly, of an honest and moderate man? In the first place, we know that the heathen are often anxious without cause, and are alarmed even in seasons of quiet. Next, Abraham was a man deserving of reverence; the number of servants in his house seemed like a little nation; and there is no doubt, that his virtues would acquire for him great dignity; hence it was, that Abimelech suspected his power. But whereas Abimelech had a private consideration for himself in this matter; the Lord, who best knows how to direct events, provided, in this way, for the repose of his servant. We may, however, learn, from the example of Abraham, if, at any time, the gifts of God excite the enmity of the men of this world against us, to conduct ourselves with such moderation, that they may find nothing amiss in us.

23. *That thou wilt not deal falsely with me*[441] Literally it is, 'If thou shalt lie;' for, among the Hebrews, a defective form of speech is common in taking oaths, which is to be thus explained: 'If thou shouldst break the promise given to me, we call upon God to sit as Judge between us, and to show himself the avenger of perjury.' But 'to lie,' some here take for dealing unjustly and fraudulently; others for failing in the conditions of the covenant. I simply understand it as if it were said, 'Thou shalt do nothing perfidiously with me or with my descendants.' Abimelech also enumerates his own acts of kindness, the lore effectually to exhort Abraham to exercise good faith; for, seeing he had been humanely treated, Abimelech declares it would be an act of base ingratitude if he did not, in return, endeavor to repay the benefits he had received. The Hebrew word חסד(*chesed*) signifies to deal gently or kindly with any one.[442] For Abimelech did not come to implore compassion of Abraham, but rather to assert his own royal authority, as will appear from the context.

24. *And Abraham said, I will swear*. Although he had the stronger claim of right, he yet refuses nothing which belonged to the duty of a good and moderate man. And truly, since

441 "Si mentitus fueris mihi." — "If thou shalt have lied unto me." In the margin Calvin gives, "Si fefelleris, aut infideliter egeris." — "If thou shalt have deceived, or have acted unfaithfully." See margin of English version. — *Ed*

442 "Secundum misericordiam quam feci tecum facies mecum," is Calvin's version; and the comment is, "Misericordiam facere cum aliquo Hebraeis significat clementer et benigne eum tractare." — *Ed*

it is becoming in the sons of God to be freely ready for every duty; nothing is more absurd, than for them to appear reluctant and morose, when what is just is required of them. He did not refuse to swear, because he knew it to be lawful, that covenants should be ratified between men, in the sacred name of God. In short, we see Abraham willingly submitting himself to the laws of his vocation.

25. *And Abraham reproved Abimelech*. This complaint seems to be unjust; for, if he had been injured, why did he not resort to the ordinary remedy? He knew the king to be humane, to have some seed of piety, and to have treated himself courteously and honorably; why then does he doubt that he will prove the equitable defender of his right? If, indeed, he had chosen rather to smother the injury received, than to be troublesome to the king, why does he now impute the fault to him, as if he had been guilty? Possibly, however, Abraham might know that the injury had been done, through the excessive forbearance of the king. We may assuredly infer, both from his manners and his disposition, that he did not expostulate without cause; and hence the moderation of the holy man is evident; because, when deprived of the use of water, found by his own industry and labor, he does not contend, as the greatness of the injury would have justified him in doing; for this was just as if the inhabitants of the place had made an attempt upon his life. But though he patiently bore so severe an injury, yet when beyond expectation, the occasion of taking security is offered, he guards himself from fixture aggression. We also see how severely the Lord exercised Abraham, as soon as he appeared to be somewhat more at ease, and had obtained a little alleviation. Certainly, it was not a light trial, to be compelled to contend for water; and not for water which was public property but for that of a well, which he himself had digged.

27. *And Abraham took sheep*. Hence it appears that the covenant made, was not such as is usually entered into between equals: for Abraham considers his own position, and in token of subjection, offers a gift, from his flocks, to king Gerar; for, what the Latins call paying tax or tribute, and what we call doing homage, the Hebrews call offering gifts.[443] And truly Abraham does not wait till something is forcibly, and with authority, extorted from him by the king; but, by a voluntary giving of honor, anticipates him, whom he knows to have dominion over the place. It is too well known, how great a desire of exercising authority prevails among men. Hence, the greater praise is due to the modesty of Abraham, who not only abstains from what belongs to another man; but even offers, uncommanded, what, in his own mind, he regards as due to another, in virtue of his office. A further question however arises; since Abraham knew that the dominion over the land had been divinely committed to him, whether it was lawful for him to profess a subjection by which he acknowledged another as lord? But the solution is easy, because the time of entering into possession

443 "Num pro eo quod dicunt Latini, Pendere vectigal vel tributum, et Gallice dicimus, Faire hommage, Hebraei dicunt Munera offerre."

had not yet arrived; for he was lord, only in expectation, while, in fact, he was a pilgrim. Wherefore, he acted rightly in purchasing a habitation, till the time should come, when what had been promised to him, should be given to his posterity. Thus, soon afterwards, as we shall see, he paid a price for his wife's sepulcher. In short, until he should be placed, by the hand of God, in legitimate authority over the land he did not scruple to treat with the inhabitants of the place, that he might dwell among them by permission, or by the payment of a price.

28. *And Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves*. Moses recites another chief point of the covenant; namely, that Abraham made express provision for himself respecting the well, that he should have free use of its water. And he placed in the midst seven lambs, that the king being presented with the honorary gift, might approve and ratify the digging of the well. For the inhabitants might provoke a controversy, on the ground that it was not lawful for a private man, and a stranger, to dig a well; but now, when the public authority of the king intervened, Abraham's peace was consulted, that no one might disturb him. Many understand lambs here to mean pieces of money coined in the form of lambs, but since mention has previously been made of sheep and oxen, and Moses now immediately subjoins that seven lambs are placed apart, it is absurd, in this connection, to speak of money.

31. *Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba*. Moses has once already called the place by this name, but proleptically. Now, however, he declares when, and for what reason, the name was given; namely, because there both he and Abimelech had sworn; therefore I translate the term 'the well of swearing.' Others translate it 'the well of seven.' But Moses plainly derives the word from swearing; nor is it of any consequence that the pronunciation slightly varies from grammatical correctness, which in proper names is not very nicely observed. In fact, Moses does not restrict the etymology to the *well*, but comprises the whole covenant. I do not, however, deny that Moses might allude to the number *seven*[444]

33. *And Abraham planted a grove*. It hence appears that more rest was granted to Abraham, after the covenant was entered into, than he had hitherto enjoyed; for now he begins to plant trees, which is a sign of a tranquil and fixed habitation; for we never before read that he planted a single shrub. Wherefore, we see how far his condition was improved because he was permitted to lead (as I may say) a settled life. The assertion, that he called on the name of the Lord, I thus interpret; he instituted anew the solemn worship of God, in order to testify his gratitude. Therefore God, after he had led his servant through continually winding paths, gave to him some relaxation in his extreme old age. And he sometimes so

444 As the word ⊠⊠ means both an oath and the number seven, room is left for this difference of interpretation. Calvin seems, however, to allude to a notion not uncommon among learned men, that as oaths were often made before seven witnesses, which perhaps the seven lambs represented, Abraham might have this number as well as the oath in his mind, when he called the well Beer-sheba. — *Ed*

deals with his faithful people, that when they have been tossed by various storms, he at length permits them to breathe freely. As it respects calling upon God, we know that Abraham, wherever he went, never neglected this religious duty. Nor was he deterred by dangers from professing himself a worshipper of the true God; although, on this account, he was hateful to his neighbors. But as his conveniences for dwelling in the land increased, he became the more courageous in professing the worship of God. And because he now lived more securely under the protection of the king, he perhaps wished to bear open testimony, that he received even this as from God. For the same reason, the title of the everlasting God seems to be given, as if Abraham would say, that he had not placed his confidence in an earthly kings and was not engaging in any new covenant, by which he would be departing from the everlasting God. The reason why Moses, by the figure *synecdoche*, gives to the worship of God the name of *invocation*, I have elsewhere explained. Lastly, Abraham is here said to have sojourned in that land in which he, nevertheless, had a settled abode; whence we learn, that his mind was not so fixed upon this state of repose, as to prevent him frown considering what he had before heard from the mouth of God, that he with his posterity should be strangers till the expiration of four hundred years.

CHAPTER 22.

Genesis 22:1-24	
1. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here* I *am*	**1.** Et fuit, posthaec Deus tentavit Abraham, et dixit ad eum, Abraham: qui dixit, Ecce ego.
2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.	**2.** Et dixit, Tolle nunc filium tuum, unicum tuum, quem dilexisti Ishac, et vade ad terram Moriah, et offer eum ibi in holocaustum super unum e montibus, quem dixero tibi.
3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.	**3.** Et surrexit Abraham mane, et stravit asinum suum, et cepit duos pueros suos secum, et Ishac filium suum: et scidit ligna holocausti: et surrexit, perrexitque ad locum, quem dixerat ei Deus.
4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.	**4.** Die tertia levavit Abraham oculos suos, et vidit locum procul.
5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.	**5.** Et dixit Abraham ad pueros suos, Manete hic cum asino: et ego et puer pergemus usque illuc, et adorabimus, revertemurque ad vos.
6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.	**6.** Et accepit Abraham ligna holocausti, et posuit super Ishac filium suum, et accepit in manu sua ignem et gladium, et perrexerunt ambo pariter
7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?	**7.** Dixit autem Ishac ad Abraham patrem suum, dixit, inquam, Pater mi. Et dixit, Ecce ego fili mi. Et dixit, Ecce ignis et ligna, et ubi pecus in holocaustum?
8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.	**8.** Et dixit Abraham, Deus prospiciet sibi pecudem in holocaustum, fili mi. Itaque perrexerunt ambo pariter.

9. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.	**9.** Et venerunt ad locum, quem dixerat ei Deus: et aedificavit ibi Abraham altare, et ordinavit ligna, et ligavit Ishac filium suum, et posuit eum super altare super ligna.
10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.	**10.** Et misit Abraham manum suam, et accepit gladium ut jugularet filium suum.
11. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.	**11.** Et clamavit ad eum angelus Jehovae de coelo, et dixit, Abraham, Abraham. Et dixit, Ecce ego.
12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.	**12.** Et dixit, Ne extendas manum tuam in puerum, et ne facias ei quicquam: quia nunc cognovi quod times Deum, nec prohibuisti filium tuum unicum a me.
13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.	**13.** Tunc levavit Abraham oculos suos, et vidit, et ecce aries post eum detentus in perplexitate spinarum cornibus suis: et perrexit Abraham, et accepitarietem, obtulitque eum in holocaustum pro filio suo.
14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.	**14.** Et vocavit Abraham nomen loci ipsius, Jehova videbit: idcirco dicitur hodie, In monte Jehova videbit.
15. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,	**15.** Et clamavit angelus Jehovae ad Abraham secundo e coelo,
16. And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* :	**16.** Et dixit, Per me juravi, dixit Jehova, certe pro eo quod fecistirem hanc, et non prohibuisti filium tuum unicum tuum:
17. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;	**17.** Quod benedicendo benedicam tibi, et multplicando multplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas coeli, et sicut arenam, quae est juxta litus maris: et haereditabit semen tuum portam inimicorum suorum.

18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.	**18.** Et benedicentur in semine tuo omnes gentes terrae, eo quod obedivisti voci meae.
19. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.	**19.** Postea reversus est Abraham ad pueros suos, et surrexerunt, perrexeruntque pariter in Beer-sebah, et habitavit Abraham in Beer-sebah.
20. And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;	**20.** Et fuit, posthaec nuntiatum fuit ipsi Abraham, dicendo, Ecce, peperit Milchah etiam ipsa filios nachor fratri tuo.
21. Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,	**21.** Hus primogenitum suum, et Buz fratrem ejus, et Cemuel patrem Aram,
22. And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.	**22.** Et Chesed, et Hazo, et Pildas, et Idlaph, et Bethuel:
23. And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.	**23.** Et Bethuel genuit Ribcah: octo istos peperit Milchah ipsi nachor fratri Abraham.
24. And his concubine, whose name *was* Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.	**24.** Et concubina ejus, cujus nomen Reumah, peperit etiam ipsa Tebah, et Gaham, et Thahas, et Mahachah.

1. *And it came to pass*. This chapter contains a most memorable narrative. For although Abraham, through the whole course of his life, gave astonishing proofs of faith and obedience, yet none more excellent can be imagined than the immolation of his son. For other temptations with which the Lord had exercised him, tended, indeed, to his mortification; but this inflicted a wound far more grievous than death itself. Here, however, we must consider something greater and higher than the paternal grief and anguish, which, being produced by the death of an only son, pierced through the breast of the holy man. It was sad for him to be deprived of his only son, sadder still that this one should be torn away by a violent death, but by far the most grievous that he himself should be appointed as the executioner to slay him with his own hand. Other circumstances, which will be noted in their proper place, I now omit. But all these things, if we compare them with the spiritual conflict of conscience which he endured, will appear like the mere play, or shadows of conflicts. For the great source of grief to him was not his own bereavement, not that he was commanded

to slay his only heir, the hope of future memorial and of name, the glory and support of his family; but that, in the person of this son, the whole salvation of the world seemed to be extinguished and to perish. His contest, too, was not with his carnal passions, but, seeing that he wished to devote himself wholly to God, his very piety and religion filled him with distracting thoughts. For God, as if engaging in personal contest with him, requires the death of the boy, to whose person He himself had annexed the hope of eternal salvation. So that this latter command was, in a certain sense, the destruction of faith. This foretaste of the story before us, it was deemed useful to give to the readers, that they may reflect how deserving it is of diligent and constant meditation.

After these things God did tempt Abraham. The expression, after these things, is not to be restricted to his last vision; Moses rather intended to comprise in one word the various events by which Abraham had been tossed up and down; and again, the somewhat more quiet state of life which, in his old age, he had lately begun to obtain. He had passed an unsettled life in continued exile up to his eightieth year; having been harassed with many contumelies and injuries, he had endured with difficulty a miserable and anxious existence, in continual trepidation; famine had driven him out of the land whither he had gone, by the command and under the auspices of God, into Egypt. Twice his wife had been torn from his bosom; he had been separated from his nephew; he had delivered this nephew, when captured in war, at the peril of his own life. He had lived childless with his wife, when yet all his hopes were suspended upon his having offspring. Having at length obtained a son, he was compelled to disinherit him, and to drive him far from home. Isaac alone remained, his special but only consolation; he was enjoying peace at home, but now God suddenly thundered out of heaven, denouncing the sentence of death upon this son. The meaning, therefore, of the passage is, that by this temptation, as if by the last act, the faith of Abraham was far more severely tried than before.

God did tempt Abraham. James, in denying that any one is tempted by God, (James 1:13,) refutes the profane calumnies of those who, to exonerate themselves from the blame of their sins, attempt to fix the charge of them upon God. Wherefore, James truly contends, that those sins, of which we have the root in our own concupiscence, ought not to be charged upon another. For though Satan instils his poison, and fans the flame of our corrupt desires within us, we are yet not carried by any external force to the commission of sin; but our own flesh entices us, and we willingly yield to its allurements. This, however is no reason why God may not be said to tempt us in his own way, just as he tempted Abraham, — that is, brought him to a severe test, — that he might make full trial of the faith of his servant.

And said unto him. Moses points out the kind of temptation; namely, that God would shake the faith which the holy man had placed in His *word*, by a counter assault of the word itself. He therefore addresses him by name, that there may be no doubt respecting the Author of the command. For unless Abraham had been fully persuaded that it was the voice of God

which commanded him to slay his son Isaac, he would have been easily released from anxiety; for, relying on the certain promise of God, he would have rejected the suggestion as the fallacy of Satan; and thus, without any difficulty, the temptation would have been shaken off. But now all occasion of doubt is removed; so that, without controversy, he acknowledges the oracle, which he hears, to be from God. Meanwhile, God, in a certain sense, assumes a double character, that, by the appearance of disagreement and repugnance in which He presents Himself in his word, he may distract and wound the breast of the holy man. For the only method of cherishing constancy of faith, is to apply all our senses to the word of God. But so great was then the discrepancy of the word, that it would wound and lacerate the faith of Abraham. Wherefore, there is great emphasis in the word, "said,"[445] because God indeed made trial of Abraham's faith, not in the usual manner, but by drawing him into a contest with his own word.[446] Whatever temptations assail us, let us know that the victory is in our own hands, so long as we are endued with a firm faith; otherwise, we shall be, by no means, able to resist. If, when we are deprived of the sword of the Spirit, we are overcome, what would be our condition were God himself to attack us with the very sword, with which he had been wont to arm us? This, however, happened to Abraham. The manner in which Abraham, by faith, wrestled with this temptation, we shall afterwards see, in the proper place.

And he said, Behold, here I am. It hence appears that the holy man was, in no degree, afraid of the wiles of Satan. For the faithful are not in such haste to obey God, as to allow a foolish credulity to carry them away, in whatever direction the breath of a doubtful vision may blow. But when it was once clear to Abraham, that he was called by God, he testified, by this answer, his prompt desire to yield obedience. For the expression before us is as much as if he said, Whatever God may have been pleased to command, I am perfectly ready to carry into effect. And, truly, he does not wait till God should expressly enjoin this or the other thing, but promises that he will be simply, and without exception, obedient in all things. This, certainly, is true subjection, when we are prepared to act, before the will of God is known to us. We find, indeed, all men ready to boast that they will do as Abraham did; but when it comes to the trial, they shrink from the yoke of God. But the holy man,

445 "Quare magna subest emphasis verbo loquendi."

446 God's usual manner of trying the faith of his people is, by causing the dispensations of his providence apparently to contradict his word, and requiring them still to rely upon that word, notwithstanding the apparent inconsistency. But in Abraham's trial, He proposed a test far more severe. For His own command, or word, was in direct contradiction to what he had before spoken; His injunction respecting the slaying of Isaac could, by no human method of reasoning, be reconciled to his promises respecting the future destinies of Abraham's family, of the Church, and of the world. — *Ed*.

soon afterwards, proves, by his very act, how truly and seriously he had professed, that he, without delay, and without disputation, would subject himself to the hand of God.

2. *Take now thy son*. Abraham is commanded to immolate his son. If God had said nothing more than that his son should die, even this message would have most grievously wounded his mind; because, whatever favor he could hope for from God, was included in this single promise, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Whence he necessarily inferred, that his own salvation, and that of the whole human race, would perish, unless Isaac remained in safety. For he was taught, by that word, that God would not be propitious to man without a Mediator. For although the declaration of Paul, that 'all the promises of God in Christ are yea and Amen,' was not yet written, (2 Corinthians 1:20,) it was nevertheless engraven on the heart of Abraham. Whence, however, could he have had this hope, but from Isaac? The matter had come to this; that God would appear to have done nothing but mock him. Yet not only is the death of his son announced to him, but he is commanded with his own hand to slay him, as if he were required, not only to throw aside, but to cut in pieces, or cast into the fire, the charter of his salvation, and to have nothing left for himself, but death and hell. But it may be asked, how, under the guidance of faith, he could be brought to sacrifice his son, seeing that what was proposed to him, was in opposition to that word of God, on which it is necessary for faith to rely? To this question the Apostle answers, that his confidence in the word of God remained unshaken; because he hoped that God would be able to cause the promised benediction to spring up, even out of the dead ashes of his son. (Hebrews 11:19.) His mind, however, must of necessity have been severely crushed, and violently agitated, when the *command* and the *promise* of God were conflicting within him. But when he had come to the conclusion, that the God with whom he knew he had to do, could not be his adversary; although he did not immediately discover how the contradiction might be removed, he nevertheless, by hope, reconciled the command with the promise; because, being indubitably persuaded that God was faithful, he left the unknown issue to Divine Providence. Meanwhile, as with closed eyes, he goes whither he is directed. The truth of God deserves this honor; not only that it should far transcend all human means, or that it alone, even without means, should suffice us, but also that it should surmount all obstacles. Here, then, we perceive, more clearly, the nature of the temptation which Moses has pointed out. It was difficult and painful to Abraham to forget that he was a father and a husband; to cast off all human affections; and to endure, before the world, the disgrace of shameful cruelty, by becoming the executioner of his son. But the other was a far more severe and horrible thing; namely, that he conceives God to contradict Himself and His own word; and then, that he supposes the hope of the promised blessing to be cut off from him, when Isaac is torn away from his embrace. For what more could he have to do with God, when the only pledge of grace is taken away? But as before, when he expected seed from his own dead body, he, by hope, rose above what it seemed possible to hope for; so now, when, in the

death of his son, he apprehends the quickening power of God, in such a manner, as to promise himself a blessing out of the ashes of his son, he emerges from the labyrinth of temptation; for, in order that he might obey God, it was necessary that he should tenaciously hold the promise, which, had it failed, faith must have perished. But with him the promise always flourished; because he both firmly retained the love with which God had once embraced him, and subjected to the power of God everything which Satan raised up to disturb his mind. But he was unwilling to measure, by his own understanding, the method of fulfilling the promise, which he knew depended on the incomprehensible power of God. It remains for every one of us to apply this example to himself. The Lord, indeed, is so indulgent to our infirmity, that he does not thus severely and sharply try our faith: yet he intended, in the father of all the faithful, to propose an example by which he might call us to a general trial of faith. For the faith, which is more precious than gold and silver, ought not to lie idle, without trial; and experience teaches, that each will be tried by God, according to the measure of his faith. At the same time, also, we may observe, that God tempts his servants, not only when he subdues the affections of the flesh, but when he reduces all their senses to nothing, that he may lead them to a complete renunciation of themselves.

Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest. As if it were not enough to command in one word the sacrifice of his son, he pierces, as with fresh strokes, the mind of the holy man. By calling him his *only* son, he again irritates the wound recently indicted, by the banishment of the other son; he then looks forward into futurity, because no hope of offspring would remain. If the death of a firstborn son is wont to be grievous, what must the mourning of Abraham be? Each word which follows is emphatical, and serves to aggravate his grief. 'Slay' (he says) 'him whom alone thou lowest.' And he does not here refer merely to his paternal love, but to that which sprung from faith. Abraham loved his son, not only as nature dictates, and as parents commonly do, who take delight in their children, but as beholding the paternal love of God in him: lastly, Isaac was the mirror of eternal life, and the pledge of all good things. Wherefore God seems not so much to assail the paternal love of Abraham, as to trample upon His own benevolence. There is equal emphasis in the name *Isaac* by which Abraham was taught, that nowhere besides did any joy remain for him. Certainly, when he who had been given as the occasion of joy, was taken away, it was just as if God should condemn Abraham to eternal torment. We must always remember that Isaac was not a son of the common order, but one in whose person the Mediator was promised.

Get thee into the land of Moriah. The bitterness of grief is not a little increased by this circumstance. For God does not require him to put his son immediately to death, but compels him to revolve this execution in his mind during three whole days, that in preparing himself to sacrifice his son, he may still more severely torture all his own senses. Besides, he does not even name the place where he requires that dire sacrifice to be offered, Upon one of the mountains, (he says,) that I will tell thee of. So before, when he, commanded him to leave

his country he held his mind in suspense. But in this affair, the delay which most cruelly tormented the holy man, as if he had been stretched upon the rack, was still less tolerable. There was, however, a twofold use of this suspense. For there is nothing to which we are more prone than to be wise beyond our measure. Therefore, in order that we may become docile and obedient to God, it is profitable for us that we should be deprived of our own wisdom, and that nothing should be left us, but to resign ourselves to be led according to his will. Secondly, this tended also to make him persevere, so that he should not obey God by a merely sudden impulse. For, as he does not turn back in his journey, nor revolve conflicting counsels; it hence appears, that his love to God was confirmed by such constancy, that it could not be affected by any change of circumstances. Jerome explains the land of Moriah to be 'the land of vision,' as if the name had been derived from□□□ (*rahah*.) But all who are skilled in the Hebrew language condemn this opinion. Nor am I better satisfied with those who interpret it the *myrrh* of God. [447] It is certainly acknowledged by the consent of the greater part, that it is derived from the word □□□ (*yarah*,) which signifies to teach or from □□□ (*yarai*,) which signifies to *fear*. There is, however, even at this time, a difference among interpreters, some thinking that the doctrine of God is here specially inculcated. Let us follow the most probable opinion; namely, that it is called the land of divine worship, either because God had appointed it for the offering of the sacrifice, in order that Abraham might not dispute whether some other place should not rather be chosen; or because the place for the temple was already fixed there; and I rather adopt this second explanation; that God there required a present worship from his servant Abraham, because already in his secret counsel, he had determined in that place to fix his ordinary worship. And sacrifices properly receive their name from the word which signifies *fear*, because they give proof of reverence to God. Moreover, it is by no means doubtful that this is the place where the temple was. afterwards built.[448]

3. *And Abraham rose up early in the morning.* This promptitude shows the greatness of Abraham's faith. Innumerable thoughts might come into the mind of the holy man; each of which would have overwhelmed his spirit, unless he had fortified it by faith. And there

447 This extraordinary interpretation is supposed to be sanctioned by Canticles 4:6, "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." — Vide Poli Syn. in loc. — *Ed.*

448 It may be doubted whether the interpretation of *Jerome*, which Calvin rejects, is not preferable to that which he adopts. From the subsequent explanation in verse 14, it seems highly probable, that 'the land of vision' is the true explanation of the term in question. But even this admits of a double construction. The *Septuagint* calls it 'the high land,' as if it were merely conspicuous on account of its elevation — the land that might be seen afar off. But a more suitable interpretation seems to be, that it was the land favored by the vision of divine glory, the spot on which the angel of Jehovah appeared to David, and on which the temple was built by Solomon. — *Ed.*

is no doubt that Satan, during the darkness of the night, would heap upon him a vast mass of cares. Gradually to overcome them, by contending with them, was the part of heroical courage. But when they were overcome, then immediately to gird himself to the fulfillment of the command of God, and even to rise early in the morning to do it, was a remarkable effort. Other men, prostrated by a message so dire and terrible, would have fainted, and have lain torpid, as if deprived of life; but the first dawn of morning was scarcely early enough for Abraham's haste. Therefore, in a few words, Moses highly extols his faith, when he declares that it surmounted, in so short a space of time, the very temptation which was attended with many labyrinths.

4. *And saw the place.* He saw, indeed, with his eyes, the place which before had been shown him in secret vision. But when it is said, that he lifted up his eyes, Moses doubtless signifies, that he had been very anxious during the whole of the three days. In commanding his servants to remain behind, he does it that they may not lay their hands upon him, as upon a delirious and insane old man. And herein his magnanimity appears, that he ties his thoughts so well composed and tranquil, as to do nothing in an agitated manner. When, however, he says, that he will return with the boy, he seems not to be free from dissimulation and falsehood. Some think that he uttered this declaration prophetically; but since it is certain that he never lost sight of what had been promised concerning the raising up of seed in Isaac, it may be, that he, trusting in the providence of God, figured to himself his son as surviving even in death itself. And seeing that he went, as with closed eyes, to the slaughter of his son, there is nothing improbable in the supposition, that he spoke confusedly, in a matter so obscure.

7. *My father.* God produces here a new instrument of torture, by which he may, more and more, torment the breast of Abraham, already pierced with so many wounds. And it is not to be doubted, that God designedly both framed the tongue of Isaac to this tender appellation, and directed it to this question, in order that nothing might be wanting to the extreme severity of Abraham's grief. Yet the holy man sustains even this attack with invincible courage; and is so far from being disturbed in his proposed course, that he shows himself to be entirely devoted to God, hearkening to nothing which should either shake his confidence, or hinder his obedience. But it is important to notice the manner in which he unties this inextricable knot; namely, by taking refuge in Divine Providence, God will provide himself a lamb. This example is proposed for our imitation. Whenever the Lord gives a command, many things are perpetually occurring to enfeeble our purpose: means fail, we are destitute of counsel, all avenues seem closed. In such straits, the only remedy against despondency is, to leave the event to God, in order that he may open a way for us where there is none. For as we act unjustly towards God when we hope for nothing from him but what our senses can perceive, so we pay Him the highest honor, when, in affairs of perplexity, we nevertheless entirely acquiesce in his providence.

8. *So they went both of them together*. Here we perceive both the constancy of Abraham, and the modesty of his son. For Abraham is not rendered more remiss by this obstacle and the son does not persist in replying to his father's answer. For he might easily have objected, Wherefore have we brought wood and the knife without a lamb, if God has commanded sacrifices to be made to him? But because he supposes that the victim has been omitted, for some valid reason, and not through his father's forgetfulness, he acquiesces, and is silent.

9. *And they came to the place*. Moses purposely passes over many things, which, nevertheless, the reader ought to consider. When he has mentioned the building of the altar, he immediately afterwards adds, that Isaac was bound. But we know that he was then of middle age, so that he might either be more powerful than his father, or, at least, equal to resist him, if they had to contend by force; wherefore, I do not think that force was employed against the youth, as against one struggling and unwilling to die: but rather, that he voluntarily surrendered himself. It was, however, scarcely possible that he would offer himself to death, unless he had been already made acquainted with the divine oracle: but Moses, passing by this, only recites that he was bound. Should any one object, that there was no necessity to bind one who willingly offered himself to death; I answer, that the holy man anticipated, in this way, a possible danger; lest any thing might happen in the midst of the act to interrupt it. The simplicity of the narrative of Moses is wonderful; but it has greater force than the most exaggerated tragical description. The sum of the whole turns on this point; that Abraham, when he had to slay his son, remained always like himself; and that the fortitude of his mind was such as to render his aged hand equal to the task of offering a sacrifice, the very sight of which was enough to dissolve and to destroy his whole body.

11. *And the angel of the Lord called unto him*. The inward temptation had been already overcome, when Abraham intrepidly raised his hand to slay his son; and it was by the special grace of God that he obtained so signal a victory. But now Moses subjoins, that suddenly beyond all hope, his sorrow was changed into joy. Poets, in their fables, when affairs are desperate, introduce some god who, unexpectedly, appears at the critical juncture. It is possible that Satan, by figments of this kind, has endeavored to obscure the wonderful and stupendous interpositions of God, when he has unexpectedly appeared for the purpose of bringing assistance to his servants. This history ought certainly to be known and celebrated among all people; yet, by the subtlety of Satan, not only has the truth of God been adulterated and turned into a lie, but also distorted into materials for fable, in order to render it the more ridiculous. But it is our business, with earnest minds to consider how wonderfully God, in the very article of death, both recalled Isaac from death to life, and restored to Abraham his son, as one who had risen from the tomb. Moses also describes the voice of the angel, as having sounded out of heaven, to give assurance to Abraham that he had come from God, in order that he might withdraw his hand, under the direction of the same faith by which he had stretched it out. For, in a cause of such magnitude, it was not lawful for

him either to undertake or to relinquish anything, except under the authority of God. Let us, therefore, learn from his example, by no means, to pursue what our carnal sense may declare to be, probably, our right course; but let God, by his sole will, prescribe to us our manner of acting and of ceasing to act. And truly Abraham does not charge God with inconstancy, because he considers that there had been just cause for the exercising of his faith.

12. *Now I know that thou fearest God*. The exposition of Augustine, 'I have caused thee to know,' is forced. But how can any thing become known to God, to whom all things have always been present? Truly, by condescending to the manner of men, God here says that what he has proved by experiment, is now made known to himself. And he speaks thus with us, not according to his own infinite wisdom, but according to our infirmity. Moses, however, simply means that Abraham, by this very act, testified how reverently he feared God. It is however asked, whether he had not already, on former occasions, given many proofs of his piety? I answer that when God had willed him to proceed thus far, he had, at length, completed his true trial; in other persons a much lighter trial might have been sufficient.[449] And as Abraham showed that he feared God, by not sparing his own, and only begotten son; so a common testimony of the same fear is required from all the pious, in acts of self-denial. Now since God enjoins upon us a continual warfare, we must take care that none desires his release before the time.

13. *And, behold, behind him a ram*. What the Jews feign respecting this ram, as having been created on the sixth day of the world, is like the rest of their fictions. We need not doubt that it was presented there by miracle, whether it was then first created, or whether it was brought from some other place; for God intended to give that to his servant which would enable him, with joy and cheerfulness, to offer up a pleasant sacrifice: and at the same time he admonishes him to return thanks. Moreover, since a ram is substituted in the place of Isaac, God shows us, as in a glass, what is the design of our mortification; namely, that by the Spirit of God dwelling within us, we, though dead, may yet be living sacrifices. I am not ignorant that more subtle allegories may be elicited; but I do not see on what foundation they rest.

14. *And Abraham called the name of that place*. He not only, by the act of thanksgiving, acknowledges, at the time, that God has, in a remarkable manner, provided for him; but also leaves a monument of his gratitude to posterity. In most extreme anxiety, he had fled for refuge to the providence of God; and he testifies that he had not done so in vain. He also acknowledges that not even the ram had wandered thither accidentally, but had been placed

449 "Respondeo, quando hucusque eum progredi volebat Deus, tune vera demum probatione, quae in aliis multo levior sufficeret, defunctum esse." — "Je respond que Dieu vouloit qu'il poursuyvist jusques la; et que lors finalement, il s'est acquitte de son espreuve, laquelle eust este beaucoup legere en d'auctres, et eust bien suffi." — *French Tr*

there by God. Whereas, in process of time, the name of the place was changed, this was done purposely, and not by mistake. For they who have translated the active verb, 'He will see,' passively, have wished, in this manner, to teach that God not only looks upon those who are his, but also makes his help manifest to them; so that, in turn, he may be seen by them. The former has precedence in order; namely, that God, by his secret providence, determines and ordains what is best for us; but on this, the latter is suspended; namely, that he stretches out his hand to us, and renders himself visible by true experimental tokens.

15. *And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham.* What God had promised to Abraham before Isaac was born, he now again confirms and ratifies, after Isaac was restored to life, and arose from the altar, — as if it had been from the sepulcher, — to achieve a more complete triumph. The angel speaks in the person of God; in order that, as we have before said, the embassy of those who bear his name, may have the greater authority, by their being clothed with his majesty. These two things, however, are thought to be hardly consistent with each other; that what before was gratuitously promised, should here be deemed a reward. For we know that grace and reward are incompatible. Now, however, since the benediction which is promised in the seed, contains the hope of salvation, it may seem to follow that eternal life is given in return for good works. And the Papists boldly seize upon this, and similar passages, in order to prove that works are deserving of all the good things which God confers upon us. But I most readily retort this subtle argument upon those who bring it. For if that promise was before gratuitous, which is now ascribed to a reward; it appears that whatever God grants to good works, ought to be received as from grace. Certainly, before Isaac was born, this same promise had been already given; and now it receives nothing more than confirmation. If Abraham deserved a compensation so great, on account of his own virtue, the grace of God, which anticipated him, will be of none effect. Therefore, in order that the truth of God, founded upon his gratuitous kindness, may stand firm, we must of necessity conclude, that what is freely given, is yet called the reward of works. Not that God would obscure the glory of his goodness, or in any way diminish it; but only that he may excite his own people to the love of well-doing, when they perceive that their acts of duty are so far pleasing to him, as to obtain a reward; while yet he pays nothing as a debt, but gives to his own benefits the title of a reward. And in this there is no inconsistency. For the Lord here shows himself doubly liberal; in that he, wishing to stimulate us to holy living, transfers to our works what properly belongs to his pure beneficence. The Papists, therefore, wrongfully distort those benignant invitations of God, by which he would correct our torpor, to a different purpose, in order that man may arrogate to his own merits, what is the mere gift of divine liberality.

17. *Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.* He means that the offspring of Abraham should be victorious over their enemies; for in the gates were their bulwarks, and in them they administered judgment. Now, although God often suffered the enemies of the Jews

tyrannically to rule over them; yet he so moderated their revenge, that this promise always prevailed in the end. Moreover, we must remember what has before been stated from Paul, concerning the unity of the seed; for we hence infer, that the victory is promised, not to the sons of Abraham promiscuously, but to Christ, and to his members, so far as they adhere together under one Head. For unless we retain some mark which may distinguish between the legitimate and the degenerate sons of Abraham, this promise will indiscriminately comprehend, as well the Ishmaelites and Idumeans, as the people of Israel: but the unity of a people depends on its head. Therefore the prophets, whenever they wish to confirm this promise of God, assume the principle, that they who have hitherto been divided, shall be united, under David, in one body. What further pertains to this subject may be found in the twelfth chapter Genesis 12:1

19. *And they rose up, and went together to Beer-sheba*. Moses repeats, that Abraham, after having passed through this severe and incredible temptation, had a quiet abode in Beersheba. This narration is inserted, together with what follows concerning the increase of Abraham's kindred, for the purpose of showing that the holy man, when he had been brought up again from the abyss of death, was made happy, in more ways than one. For God would so revive him, that he should be like a new man. Moses also records the progeny of Nahor, but for another reason; namely, because Isaac was to take his wife from it. For the mention of women in Scripture is rare; and it is credible that many daughters were born to Nahor, of whom one only, Rebekah, is here introduced. He distinguishes the sons of the concubine from the others; because they occupied a less honorable place. Not that the concubine was regarded as a harlot; but because she was an inferior wife, and not the mistress of the house, who had community of goods with her husband. The fact, however, that it entered into Nahor's mind to take a second wife, does not render polygamy lawful; it only shows, that from the custom of other men, he supposed that to be lawful for him, which had really sprung from the worst corruption.

CHAPTER 23.

Genesis 23:1-20

1. And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.	**1.** Fuit autem vita Sarah centum anni et viginti anni et septem anni: anni vitae Sarah.
2. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.	**2.** Et mortua Sarah in Cirjath — arbah: ipsa est Hebron in terra Chenaan. Et venit Abraham ad plangendum super Sarah, et ad lugendam eam.
3. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,	**3.** Deinde surrexit Abraham a facie mortui sui, et loquutus est ad filios Heth, dicendo,
4. I *am* a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.	**4.** Peregrinus et advena sum vobiscum: date mihi haereditatem sepulchri vobiscum: et sepeliam mortuum meum a facie mea.
5. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,	**5.** Et responderunt filii Heth ad Abraham, dicendo ei,
6. Hear us, my lord: thou *art* a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.	**6.** Audi nos, domine mi, Princeps Dei es in medio nostri: in electis sepulchris nostris sepeli mortuum tuum: nemo e nobis sepulchrum suum prohibebit a to, ne sepelias mortuum tuum.
7. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.	**7.** Tunc surrexit Abraham, et incurvavit se populo terrae, filiis Heth.
8. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,	**8.** Et loquutus est cum eis, dicendo, Si est in animis vestris, ut sepeliam mortuum meum a facie mae, audite me, et intercedite pro me apud Ephron filium Sohar:
9. That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.	**9.** Ut det mihi speluncam duplicem quae est ei in fine agri sui: argento pleno det eam mihi in medio vestri in haereditatem sepulchri.

10. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,	**10.** Et Ephron habitabat in medio filiorum Heth: et respondit Ephron Hitthaeus ad Abraham in auribus Heth, in auribus omnium ingredientum portam civitatis suae, dicendo,
11. Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.	**11.** Non, domine mi, audi me, Agrum dedi tibi, et speluncam, quae est in eo, tibi dedi eam in oculis filiorum populi mei, dedi tibi: sepeli mortuum tuum.
12. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.	**12.** Et incurvavit se Abraham coram populi terrae:
13. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.	**13.** Et loquutus est ad Ephron in auribus populi terrae, dicendo, Veruntamen si tu: utinam audias me: dabo argentum agri, cape a me, et sepliam mortuum meum ibi.
14. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,	**14.** Et respondit Ephron and Abraham, dicendo ei,
15. My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.	**15.** Domine mi, audi me, terra quadringentorum siclorum argenteorum est inter me et to, quid est? et mortuum tuum sepeli.
16. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.	**16.** Et obedivit Abraham ipsi Ephron, et appendit Abraham ipsi Ephron argentum quod loquutus fuerat in auribus filiorum Heth, quadringentos siclos argenteos transeuntes per mercatores.
17. And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field, and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure	**17.** Et confirmatus est ager Ephron, qui erat in spelunca duplici, qui erat coram Mamre: ager et spelunca, quae erat in eo, et omnis arbor, quae erat in agro, quae erat in omni termino ejus per circuitum:

18. Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.	**18.** Ipsi Abraham in possessionem, in oculis filiorum Heth, omnium ingredientum portam civitatis ejus.
19. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan.	**19.** Et postea sepelivit Abraham Sarah uxorem suam in spelunca agri duplici coram Mamre: haec est Hebron in terra Chenaan.
20. And the field, and the cave that *is* therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.	**20.** Et confirmatus est ager, et spelunca que erat in eo, ipsi Abraham in haereditatem sepulchri a filiis Heth.

1. *And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old*[450] It is remarkable that Moses, who relates the death of Sarah in a single word, uses so many in describing her burial: but we shall soon see that the latter record is not superfluous. Why he so briefly alludes to her death, I know not, except that he leaves more to be reflected upon by his readers than he expresses. The holy fathers saw that they in common with reprobates, were subject to death. Nevertheless, they were not deterred, While painfully leading a life full of suffering, from advancing with intrepidity towards the goal. Whence it follows, that they, being animated by the hope of a better life, did not give way to fatigue. Moses says that Sarah lived a hundred and twenty-seven years, and since he repeats the word *years* after each of the numbers, the Jews feign that this was done because she had been as beautiful in her hundredth, as in her twentieth year, and as modest in the flower of her age, as when she was seven years old. This is their custom; while they wish to prove themselves skillful in doing honor to their nations they invent frivolous trifles, which betray a shameful ignorance: as, for instance, in this place, who would not say that they were entirely ignorant of their own languages in which this kind of repetition is most usual? The discussion of others also, on the word ⊠⊠⊠, (*lives*,) is without solidity. The reason why the Hebrews use the word *lives* in the plural number, for *life*, cannot be better explained, as it appears to me, than the reason why the Latins express some things which are singular in plural forms.[451] I know that the life of men is manifold, because, beyond merely vegetative life, and beyond the sense which they have in common with brute animals, they are also endued with mind and intelligence. This reasoning, therefore, is plausible without being solid. There is more color of truth in the opinion of those who think that the various events of human life are signified; which life, since it has nothing stable, but is agitated by perpetual vicissitudes, is rightly divided

450 Literally, "The lives of Sarah were a hundred years, and twenty years, and seven years."

451 "Quam quod Latini quadrigas dicant non quadrigam."

into many lives. I am, however, contented to refer simply to the idiom of the language; the reason of which is not always to be curiously investigated.

2. *And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba*. It appears from Joshua 15:54, that this was the more ancient name of the city, which afterwards began to be called Hebron. But there is a difference of opinion respecting the etymology. Some think the name is derived from the fact, that the city consisted of four parts; as the Greeks call the city divided into three orders, *Tripoli*, and a given region, *Decapolis*, from the ten cities it contained. Others suppose that Arba is the name of a giant, whom they believe to have been the king or the founder of the city. Others again prefer the notion, that the name was given to the place from *four*[452] of the Fathers, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were buried there with their wives. I willingly suspend my judgment on a matter of uncertainty, and not very necessary to be known. It more concerns the present history to inquire, how it happened that Sarah died in a different place from that in which Abraham dwelt. If any one should reply, that they had both changed their abode, the words of Moses are opposed to that, for he says that Abraham came to bury his dead. It is hence easily inferred, that he was not present at her death; nor is it probable that they were separated, merely by being in different tents; so that he might walk ten or twenty paces for the sake of mourning, while a more important duty had been neglected. For this reason, some suspect that he was on a journey at the time. But to me it seems more likely that their abode was then at Heron, or at least in the vale of Mamre, which adjoins the city. For, after a little breathing time had been granted him he was soon compelled to return to his accustomed wanderings. And although Moses does not say, that Abraham had paid to his wife while yet alive, the due attentions of a husband; I think that he omits it, as a thing indubitably certain, and that he speaks particularly of the mourning, as a matter connected with the care of sepulture. That they dwelt separately we shall afterwards see: not as being in different regions, but because each inhabited separate, though contiguous, tents. And this was no sign of dissension or of strife, but is rather to be ascribed to the size of the family. For as Abraham had much trouble in governing so large a herd of servants; so his wife would have equal difficulty to retain her maids under chaste and honest custody. Therefore the great number of domestics which it was not safe to mingle together, compelled them to divide the family.

But it may be asked, what end could it answer to approach the body for the sake of mourning over it? Was not the death of his wife sufficiently sad and bitter to call forth his grief, without this additional means of excitement? It would have been better to seek the alleviation of his sorrow, than to cherish and even augment it, by indulgence. I answer; if Abraham came to his dead wife, in order to produce excessive weeping, and to pierce his heart afresh with new wounds, his example is not to be approved. But if he both privately

452 The word ⊠⊠⊠⊠ (*arba*) signifies four.

wept over the death of his wife, so far as humanity prescribed, exercising self-government in doing it; and also voluntarily mourned over the common curse of mankind; there is no fault in either of these. For to feel no sadness at the contemplation of death, is rather barbarism and stupor than fortitude of mind. Nevertheless, as Abraham was a man, it might be, that his grief was excessive. And yet, what Moses soon after subjoins, that he rose up from his dead, is spoken in praise of his moderation; whence Ambrose prudently infers, that we are taught by this example, how perversely they act, who occupy themselves too much in mourning for the dead. Now, if Abraham at that time, assigned a limit to his grief; and put a restraint on his feelings, when the doctrine of the resurrection was yet obscure; they are without excuse, who, at this day, give the reins to impatience, since the most abundant consolation is supplied to us in the resurrection cf Christ.

3. *And spake unto the sons of Heth*. Moses is silent respecting the rite used by Abraham in the burial of the body of his wife: but he proceeds, at great length, to recite the purchasing of the sepulcher. For what reason he did this, we shall see presently, when I shall briefly allude to the custom of burial. How religiously this has been observed in all ages, and among all people, is well known. Ceremonies have indeed been different, and men have endeavored to outdo each other in various superstitions; meanwhile, to bury the dead has been common to all. And this practice has not arisen either from foolish curiosity, or from the desire of fruitless consolation, or from superstition, but from the natural sense with which God has imbued the minds of men; a sense he has never suffered to perish, in order that men might be witnesses to themselves of a future life. It is also incredible that they, who have disseminated certain outrageous expressions in contempt of sepulture, could have spoken from the heart. Truly it behaves us, with magnanimity, so far to disregard the rites of sepulture, — as we would riches and honors, and the other conveniences of life, — that we should bear with equanimity to be deprived of them; yet it cannot be denied that religion carries along with it the care of burial. And certainly (as I have said) it has been divinely engraven on the minds of all people, from the beginning, that they should bury the dead; whence also they have ever regarded sepulchres as sacred. It has not, I confess, always entered into the minds of heathens that *souls* survived death, and that the hope of a resurrection remained even for their *bodies* ; nor have they been accustomed to exercise themselves in a pious meditation of this kind, whenever they had laid their dead in the grave; but this inconsideration of theirs does not disprove the fact; that they had such a representation of a future life placed before their eyes, as left them inexcusable. Abraham however, seeing he has the hope of a resurrection deeply fixed in his heart, sedulously cherished, as was meet, its visible symbol. The importance he attached to it appears hence, that he thought he should be guilty of pollution, if he mingled the body of his wife with strangers after death. For he bought a cave, in order that he might possess for himself and his family, a holy and pure sepulcher. He did not desire to have a foot of earth whereon to fix his tent; he only took care about his grave: and he es-

pecially wished to have his own domestic tomb in that land, which had been promised him for an inheritance, for the purpose of bearing testimony to posterity, that the promise of God was not extinguished either by his own death, or by that of his family; but that it then rather began to flourish; and that they who were deprived of the light of the sun, and of the vital air, yet always remained joint-partakers of the promised inheritance. For while they themselves were silent and speechless, the sepulcher cried aloud, that death formed no obstacle to their entering on the possession of it. A thought like this could have had no place, unless Abraham by faith had looked up to heaven. And when he calls the corpse of his wife *his dead* ; he intimates that death is a divorce of that kind, which still leaves some remaining conjunction. Moreover, nothing but a future restoration cherishes and preserves the law of mutant connection between the living and the dead. But it is better briefly to examine each particular, in its order.

4. *I am a stranger and a sojourner with you*. This introductory sentence tends to one or other of these points; either that he may more easily gain what he desires by suppliantly asking for it; or that he may remove all suspicion of cupidity on his part. He therefore confesses, that, since he had only a precarious abode among them, he could possess no sepulcher, unless by their permission. And because, during life, they have permitted him to dwell within their territory, it was the part of humanity, not to deny him a sepulcher for his dead. If this sense be approved, then Abraham both conciliates their favor to himself, by his humility, and in declaring that the children of Heth had dealt kindly with him, he stimulates them, by this praise, to proceed in the exercise of the same liberality with which they had begun. The other sense, however, is not incongruous; namely, that Abraham, to avert the odium which might attach to him as a purchaser, declares that he desires the possession, not for the advantage of the present life, not from ambition or avarice, but only in order that his dead may not lie unburied; as if he had said, I do not refuse to continue to live a stranger among you, as I have hitherto done; I do not desire your possessions, in order that I may have something of my own, which may enable me hereafter to contend for equality with you; it is enough for me to have a place where we may be buried.

6. *Thou art a mighty prince among us*[453] The Hittites gratuitously offer a burying-place to Abraham wherever he might please to choose one. They testify that they do this, as a tribute to his virtues. We have before seen, that the Hebrews give a divine title to anything which excels. Therefore we are to understand by the expression, 'a prince of God,' a person of great and singular excellency. And they properly signalize him whom they reverence for his virtues, with this eulogium; thereby testifying, that they ascribe to God alone, whatever virtues in men are deserving of praise and reverence. Now some seed of piety manifests itself in the Hittites, by thus doing honor to Abraham, whom they acknowledge to be adorned

453 "Princeps es Dei." See margin of English version. Heb., a prince of God. — *Ed*

with rare gifts of the Spirit of God. For profane and brutal men tread under foot, with barbarous contempt, every excellent gift of God, as swine do pearls. And yet we know with how many vices those nations were defiled; how much greater then, and more disgraceful is our ingratitude, if we give no honor to the image of God, when it shines before our eyes? Abraham's sanctity of manners procures him such favor with the Hittites, that they do not envy his preeminence among them; what excuse then is there for us, if we hold in less esteem those virtues in which the majesty of God is conspicuous? Truly their madness is diabolical, who not only despise the favors of God, but even ferociously oppose them.

7. *And Abraham stood up*. He declines the favor offered by the Hittites, as, some suppose, with this design, that he might not lay himself under obligation to them in so small a matter. But he rather wished to show, in this way, that he would receive no gratuitous possession from those inhabitants who were to be ejected by the hand of Gods in order that he might succeed in their place: for he always kept all his thoughts fixed on God, so that he far preferred His bare promise, to present dominion over the land. Moses also commends the modesty of the holy man, when he says that he 'rose up to do reverence to the people of the land.'[454] As to the use of the word signifying 'to adore,' it is simply taken for the reverence, which any one declares, either by bowing the knee, or any other gesture of the body. This may be paid to men, as well as to God, but for a different end; men mutually either bend the knee, or bow the head, before each other, for the sake of civil honor; but if the same thing be done to them, for the sake of religion, it is profanation. For religion allows of no other worship them that of the true God. And they childishly trifle who make a pretext for their idolatry, in the words *dulia* and *latria*,[455] since the Scripture, in general terms, forbids adoration to be transferred to men. But lest any one should be surprised that Abraham acted so suppliantly, and so submissively, we must be aware that it was done from common custom and use. For it is well known that the Orientals were immoderate in their use of ceremonies. If we compare the Greeks or Italians with ourselves, we are more sparing in the use of them than they. But Aristotle, in speaking of the Asiatics and other barbarians notes this fault, that they abound too much in adorations. Wherefore we must not measure the honor which Abraham paid to the princes of the land by our customs.

8. *If it be in your mind*. Abraham constitutes them his advocates with Ephron, to persuade him to sell the double cave.[456] Some suppose the cave to have been so formed that one part

454 "Ut adoraret populum terrae." This is not a correct quotation from his own version of the chapter, which is, "Incurvavit se populo terrae," as in our version, "bowed himself to the people of the land." — *Ed*

455 "Ac pueriliter nugantur qui in vocibus duliae et latriae fucum faciunt." — "Qui pensent farder leur idolatrie par ces mots de Dulie et Latrie." — *French Tr*

456 Hebrews ⊠⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠, (*mearath hummakpelah*,) 'the double cave.' See *Septuagint* Our translators have preferred rendering the word *Machpelah* as a proper name. — *Ed*

was above, and the other below. Let every one be at liberty to adopt what opinion he pleases; I, however, rather suppose, that there was one entrance, but that within, the cave was divided by a middle partition. It is more pertinent to remarks that Abraham, by offering a full price, cultivated and maintained equity. Where is there one to be found, who, in buying, and in other business, does not eagerly pursue his own advantage at another's cost? For while the seller sets the price at twice the worth of a thing, that he may extort as much as possible from the buyer, and the buyers in return, by shuffling, attempts to reduce it to a low price, there is no end of bargaining. And although avarice has specious pretexts, it yet causes those who make contracts with each other, to forget the claims of equity and justice. This also, finally deserves to be noticed; that Abraham often declares that he was buying the field for a place of sepulture. And Moses is the more minute in this matter, that we may learn, with our father Abraham, to raise our minds to the hope of the resurrection. He saw the half of himself taken away; but because he was certain that his wife was not exiled from the kingdom of God, he hides her dead body in the tomb, until he and she should be gathered together.

11. *Hear me.* Although Ephron earnestly insisted upon giving the field freely to Abraham, the holy man adheres to his purpose, and at length compels him, by his entreaties, to sell the field. Ephron, in excusing himself, says that the price was too small for Abraham to insist upon giving; yet he estimates it at four hundred shekels. Now, since Josephus says that the shekel of the sanctuary was worth four Attic drachms, if he is speaking of these, we gather from the computation of Budaeus that the price of the field was about two hundred and fifty pounds of French money; if we understand the common shekel, it will be half that amount. Abraham was not so scrupulous but that he would have received a greater gift, if there had not been a sufficient reason to prevent him. He had been presented with considerable gifts both by the king of Egypt and the king of Gerar, but he observed this rule; that he would neither receive all *things*, nor in all *places*, nor from all *persons.* And I have lately explained, that he bought the field, in order that he might not possess a foot of land, by the gift of any man.

16. *And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver*. I know not what had come into Jerome's mind, when he says, that one letter was abstracted from Ephron's name, after he had been persuaded, by Abraham's entreaties, to receive money for the field; because, by the sale of the sepulcher, his virtue was maimed or diminished: for, in fact, the name of Ephron is found written in the very same manner, after that event, as before. Nor ought it to be imputed to Ephron as a fault, that, being pressed, he took the lawful price for his estate; when he had been prepared liberally to give it. If there was any sin in the case, Abraham must bear the whole blame. But who shall dare to condemn a just sale, in which, on both sides, religion, good faith, and equity, are maintained? Abraham, it is argued, bought the field for the sake of having a sepulcher. But ought Ephron on that account to give it freely, and under the pretext of a sepulcher, to be defrauded of his right? We see here, then, nothing but mere

trifling. The Canonists, however, — preposterous and infatuated as they are, — rashly laying hold of the expressions of Jerome, have determined that it is a prodigious sacrilege to sell sepulchres. Yet, in the meantime, all the Papal sacrificers securely exercise this traffic: and while they acknowledge the cemetery to be a common sepulcher, they suffer no grave to be dug, unless the price be paid.

Current money with the merchant. Moses speaks thus, because money is a medium of mutual communication between men. It is principally employed in buying and selling merchandise. Whereas Moses says, in the close of the chapter, that the field was confirmed by the Hittites to Abraham for a possession; the sense is, that the purchase was publicly attested; for although a private person sold it, yet the people were present, and ratified the contract between the two parties.

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Il ne faut pas douter que Dieu ne l'ait constitue chef unique de toute l'Egilise: 290
Il ne s'est point servi en cest endroit du soleil ni de la lune: 44
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