§62.

This which I have spoken may suffice concerning the threats of the holy prophets: only I have thought it necessary to intermingle in this little work of mine, not only these menaces, but also a few words borrowed out of the wisdom of Solomon, to declare unto kings matters of exhortation or instruction, that they may not say I am willing to load the shoulders of men with heavy and insupportable burdens of words, but not so much as once with my own finger (that is, with speech of consolation) to move the same. Let us, therefore, hear what the prophet has spoken to rule us. “Love justice,” said he, “you that judge the earth.” This testimony alone (if it were observed with a full and perfect heart) would abundantly suffice to reform the governors of our country. For if they had loved justice, they would also love God, who is, in a way, the fountain and original of all justice. “Serve our Lord in goodness, and seek him in simplicity of heart.” Alas! Who shall live (as a certain one before us has said) when such things are done by our countrymen, if perchance they may be accomplished anywhere?

“Because he is found by those who do not tempt him, he appears truly to them who have faith in him.” For these men without respect do tempt God, whose commandments, with stubborn despite, they contemn. Neither do they keep to him their faith, unto whose oracles, be they pleasing, or somewhat severe, they turn their backs and not their faces. “For perverse thoughts do separate from God”, and this in the tyrants of our time very plainly appear. But why does our meanness intermeddle in this so manifest a determination? Therefore, let him who alone is true (as we have said) speak for us, I mean the Holy Ghost, of whom it is now pronounced, “The Holy Ghost verily will avoid the counterfeiting of discipline.”

And again, “Because the Spirit of God has filled the globe of the earth”, and afterwards (showing with an evident judgment the end of the evil and righteous) he says, “how is the hope of the wicked like the down that is blown away with the wind, and as the smoke that, with the blast, is dispersed, and as the slender froth that with a storm is scattered, and as the memory of a guest who is a visitor for one day. But the just shall live for ever, and with God their reward remains, and their cogitation is with the Highest. Therefore, they shall receive the kingdom of glory, and the crown of beauty from the hand of our Lord. Because with his right hand he will protect them, and with his holy arm defend them.” For very far unlike in quality are the just and ungodly, as our Lord verily has spoken, saying, “They who honour me I will honour, and whoever despises me shall be of no estimation.”

§63.

But let us pass over to the rest: “Hear me,” said he “all you kings, and understand; learn, you judges of the bounds of the earth, listen with your ears you who keep multitudes in awe, and please yourselves in the troops of nations. Because power has been given to you from God, the highest power, who will examine your actions, and sift your thoughts. For when you were ministers of his kingdom, you have not judged uprightly, nor kept the law of justice, nor

walked according to his will. It shall dreadfully and suddenly appear to you, that a most severe judgment shall be given on them who govern. For to the weaker is mercy granted, but the mighty shall mightily sustain torments, For he who is the ruler of all, shall have no respect of persons nor yet shall he revere the greatness of anyone, because he himself has made both small and great, and cares alike for all; but for the stronger a stronger affliction is at hand. Unto you therefore, O kings, are these my speeches, that you may learn wisdom, and not fall away from her. For whoever observes what things are just shall be justified, and whoever learns what things are holy, shall be sanctified."

§64.

Hitherto, we have discussed no less by the oracles of the prophets, than by their own speeches with the kings of our country, being willing they should know what the prophet has spoken, saying, "As from the face of a serpent, so you fly from sins: if yoou shall approach them they will catch you. Their teeth are the teeth of a lion, such as kill the souls of men." And again, "How mighty is the mercy of our Lord, and his forgiveness to those who turn to him."

And if we do not have in us such apostolical zeal, that we may say, "I did truly desire to be anathematised by Christ for my brethren," notwithstanding that we may, from the bottom of our hearts, speak that prophetic saying, "Alas! that the soul perisheth." And again, "Let us search out our ways, and seek and return unto our Lord: let us lift our hearts together with our hands to God in heaven." And also, that of the apostle, "we desire that every one of you should be in the body of Christ."

§65.

And how willingly, as one tossed on the waves of the sea, and now arrived in a desired haven, would I in this place make an end (shame forbidding me further to proceed), did I not behold such great masses of evil deeds done: against God by bishops or other priests, or clerics. Yes, some of our own order, whom as witness I myself must, of necessity, first of all stone (according unto the law) with the hard blows of words, lest I should be otherwise reproved for partiality towards persons. And then afterwards, the people (if they keep their decrees) must pursue, with their whole powers, the same execution upon them; not to their corporal death, but to the death of their vices and their eternal life with God. Yet, as I before said, I crave pardon of them, whose lives I not only praise, but also prefer before all earthly treasure, and of the which, if it may be, yet before my death I desire and thirst to be a partaker. And so, having both my sides defended with the double shields of saints, and by those means invincibly strengthened to sustain all that arise against me, arming moreover my head in place of a helmet with the help of our Lord, and being most assuredly protected with the sundry aids of the prophets, I will boldly proceed, notwithstanding the stones of worldly rioters flying ever so fast about me.

§66.

Britain has priests, but they are unwise; very many that minister, but many of them impudent; clerics she has, but certain of them are deceitful raveners. Pastors, they are called, but are rather wolves prepared for the slaughter of souls (for they provide not for the good of the common people, but covet rather the gluttony of their own bellies). They possess the houses of the church, but obtain them for filthy lucre's sake; instructing the laity, but showing withall the most depraved examples, vices, and evil manners; seldom sacrificing, and seldom with clean hearts, standing at the altars. They correct the common people for their offences, while they commit the same sins themselves; despising the commandments of Christ, and being careful with their whole hearts to fulfil their own lustful desires, some of them usurping with unclean feet the seat of the apostle Peter. But through the demerit of their covetousness, they fall down into the pestilent chair of the traitor Judas; detracting often, and seldom speaking truly; hating truth as an open enemy, and favouring falsehoods, as their most beloved brothers.

They look on the just, the poor, and the impotent, with stern countenances, as if they were detested serpents, and revere the sinful rich men without any respect of shame, as if they were heavenly angels. They preach with their outward lips that alms are to be disbursed upon the needy, but never themselves bestowing one halfpenny; concealing the horrible sins of the people, and amplifying injuries done to themselves, as if they were done against our Saviour Christ. They expel from their houses their religious mother, perhaps, or sisters, and familiarly and indecently entertain strange women, as if it were for some more secret office, or rather, to speak truly, though fondly (and yet not fondly to me, but to such as commit these matters), debasing themselves with such bad creatures. And after all these, they seek ambitiously for ecclesiastical dignities, rather than for the kingdom of heaven; and defending after a tyrannical fashion their achieved preferments, nor even labouring with lawful manners, to adorn the same.

They are negligent, and disinclined, to listen to the precepts of the holy saints (if ever they did so much as once hear that which they ought to hear often), but are diligent and attentive to the plays and foolish fables of secular men, as if they were the very ways to life, which indeed are but the passages to death. They are hoarse, after the fashion of bulls, with the abundance of fatness, and miserably prompt to all unlawful actions; bearing their countenances arrogantly aloft, and having, nevertheless, their inward senses, with tormenting and gnawing consciences, depressed down to the bottom or rather to the bottomless pit.

They are glad at the gaining of a single penny and, at the loss of the like value, sad; They are slothful and dumb in the apostolic decrees (whether it be from ignorance or the burden of their offences), and also stop the mouths of the learned, but singularly experienced in the deceitful shifts of worldly affairs, and many of this sort and wicked conversation. They violently intrude themselves into the preferments of the church, rather buying the same at a high rate, than being any way drawn thereunto.

Moreover, as unworthy wretches, who wallow, after the fashion of swine, in their old and unhappy puddle of intolerable wickedness, after they have attained unto the seat of the priesthood or episcopal dignity (who neither have been installed, or resident on the same), for usurping only the name of priesthood, they have not received the orders or apostolical preeminence. But how can they who are not as yet fully instructed in faith, nor have done penance for their sins, be in any way supposed qualified and ready to ascend to any ecclesiastical degree (that I may not speak of the highest) which none but holy and perfect men, and followers of the apostles, and, to use the words of the teacher of the Gentiles, persons free from reprehension, can lawfully and without the foul offence of sacrilege undertake.

§67.

For what is so wicked and so sinful as after the example of Simon Magus (even if he had not been defiled before with other faults), for any man to purchase the office of a bishop or priest with earthly price, which with holiness and righteous life alone ought lawfully to be obtained; but herein they do more wilfully and desperately err, in that they buy their deceitful and unprofitable ecclesiastical degrees, not of the apostles or their successors, but of tyrannical princes, and their father the devil. Rather they raise this as a certain roof and covering of all offences, over the frame of their former serious life, that being protected under the shadow thereof, no man should lightly hereafter lay to their charge their old or new wickedness. And hereupon, they build their desires of covetousness and gluttony, for now being the rulers of many they may more freely make havoc at their pleasure. For if truly any such offer of purchasing ecclesiastical promotions were made by these impudent sinners (I will not say with St. Peter), but to any holy priest, or godly king, they would no doubt receive the same answer which their father Simon Magus had from the mouth of the apostle Peter, saying: “Your money stays with you until your perdition.”

But, alas! They who order and advance these ambitious aspirers — who would rather throw them under foot, and instead of a blessing give them a cursing —do not make penitents of these sinners (which were more consonant to reason), but let them remain sacrilegious and desperate offenders. In a way, they install Judas, that traitor to his Master, in the chair of Peter, and Nicholas, the author of that foul heresy, in the seat of St. Stephen the martyr. Perhaps, it may be that they first obtained their own priesthood by the same means, and therefore do not greatly dislike in their children, but rather respect the course, that they their fathers did before follow.

And also, if finding resistance in obtaining their dioceses at home, and from some who severely renounce this chaffering of church livings, they cannot attain such a precious pearl, then it does not so much loathe as delight them (after they have carefully sent their messengers beforehand) to cross the seas, and travel through most large countries that, in the end, even with the sale of their whole substance, they may win such a pomp and such an incomparable glory; or to speak more truly, such a dirty and base deceit and illusion.

Afterwards with great show and magnificent ostentation, or rather madness, returning back to their own native soil, they grow from stoutness to stateliness, and from being used to level their looks to the tops of the mountains, they now lift up their drowsy eyes into the air, even to the highest clouds. Like Novatus, that foul hog, and persecutor of our Lord's precious jewel, once did at Rome, they again intrude themselves into their own country as creatures of a new mould; or rather as instruments of the devil, being even ready in this state and fashion to violently stretch out their hands (not so worthy of the holy altars as of the avenging flames of hell) upon Christ's most holy sacrifices.

§68.

What do you therefore, you unhappy people, expect from such belly beasts (as the apostle called them)? Shall your manners be amended by those who, not only do not apply their minds to any goodness, but according to the upbraiding of the prophet, also labour to deal wickedly? Shall you be illuminated with such eyes that are only cast with greediness on those things that lead headlong to vice, that is to say, to the gates of hell? No truly, if according to the saying of our Saviour, you do not flee these most raverious wolves like those of Arabia, or avoid them as Lot, who ran most speedily from the fiery shower of Sodom up to the mountains, then, being blind and led by the blind, you will both, together, tumble down into the infernal ditch.

§69.

But perhaps, someone will object saying, that not all bishops or all priests (according to our former exception) are so wickedly given, because they are not defiled with the infamy of schism, pride, or unclean life, which we ourselves will not deny, but although we know them to be chaste and virtuous, we will briefly answer.

What did it profit the high priest Eli, that he alone did not violate the commandments of our Lord, in taking flesh with forks out of the pots, before the fat was offered unto God, while he was punished with the same revenge of death as his sons were? Which one, I beseech you, of them whose manners we have sufficiently declared before, has been martyred like Abel, from malicious jealousy of his more acceptable sacrifice, which with the heavenly fire ascended up into the skies, since they fear the reproach even of an ordinary word?

Which of them has "hated the counsel of the malicious and not sat with the ungodly", so that of him, as a prophet, the same which was said of Enoch might be verified? "Enoch walked with God and was not to be found" in the vanity (forsooth) of the whole world, as then leaving our Lord, and beginning to halt after idolatry.

Which of them, like Noah in the time of the deluge, has not admitted into the ark of salvation (which is the present church) any adversary unto God, when it

may be most apparent that none but innocents or singular penitents, ought to remain in the house of our Lord?

Who is he that offering sacrifice like Melchizedek, has only blessed the conquerors, and the three hundred (which was in the sacrament of the Trinity) with them, who had overthrown the deadly armies of the five kings together with their vanquishing troops, delivering the just man, without coveting the goods of others?

Which of them has like Abraham, at the commandment of God freely offered his own son on the altar to be slain, that he might accomplish a precept of Christ, agreeable to this saying “if your right eye offends you, pull it out”, and another of the prophet that “he is accursed who withholds his sword from shedding blood”?

Who is he that like Joseph, has rooted out of his heart the remembrance of an offered injury? Who is he that like Moses, speaking with our Lord in the mountain, and not being terrified of the sounding trumpets has, in a figurative sense, presented the two tablets to the incredulous people, so that they could not endure to see his horned face which, but trembled to behold? Which of them, praying for the offences of the people, has from the very bottom of his heart cried out, like unto him, saying: “O Lord this people has committed a grievous sin, which if you will forgive them, forgive it; otherwise blot me, guilty, out of your book?”

§70.

Which of them, inflamed with the admirable zeal of God, has courageously risen to punish fornication, curing without delay the affection of filthy lust by the medicine of penance, lest the fire of the wrath of God should otherwise consume the people, as Phineas the priest did, so that by these means justice for ever might be reputed to him?

Which of them has, in moral understanding, imitated Joshua, the son of Nun, either for the utter rooting forth, even to the slaughter of the last and least of all, the seven nations out of the land of promise, or for the establishing of spiritual Israel in their places?

Which of them has shown the people of God their final bounds beyond Jordan, that it might be known what was suited to every tribe, in such a way as the aforenamed Phineas and Jesus have wisely divided the land?

Who is the one that, to overthrow the innumerable thousands of Gentiles, adversaries to the chosen people of God, has, as another Jephtha, slain his own daughter (by which is to be understood his own proper will) for a votive and propitiatory sacrifice, therein also imitating the apostle, saying “not seeking what is profitable to me, but to many, so that they may be saved”. Which of his daughters met the conquerors with drums and dances, by which are to be understood the lustful desires of the flesh?

Which of them, that he might disorder, overthrew the camps of the proud Gentiles and put them to flight, by the number of three hundred (being, as we before said, the mystery of the blessed Trinity). And who, with his men holding in their hands those noble sounding trumpets (which are prophetical and apostolical senses, according to what our Lord said to the prophet, “Exalt your voice as a trumpet”, and the psalmist of the apostles, “their sound has passed throughout the whole world”), and bearing all those famous flagons shining in the night with that most glittering fiery light (which are to be interpreted the bodies of saints joined to good works, and burning with the flame of the Holy Ghost, having, as the apostle wrote, “this treasure in earthen vessels”) has, after hewing down the idolatrous grave (by which is morally meant dark and foul desire) marched on like Gideon, with an assured faith in the evident sign of the fleece, which to the Jews was void of the heavenly moisture, but to the Gentiles made wet with the dew of the Holy Ghost?

§71.

Who is he among them that has (earnestly wishing to die to this world, and live with Christ), like another Samson, utterly cut off such innumerable luxurious banqueters of the Gentiles, while they praised their gods (by which is meant, while the senses of men extolled these earthly riches, according to the apostle speaking thus: “and covetousness, which is idolatry”), shaking with the power of both his arms the two pillars (by which are to be understood the wicked pleasures of the soul and body), by which the house of all worldly wickedness is in a way compacted and underpinned?

Which of them, like Samuel with prayers and the burnt sacrifice of a sucking lamb, has driven away the fear of the Philistines, raised unexpected thunderclaps, and showering clouds, established without flattery a king, deposed him when he displeased God, and anointed another his better in his place and kingdom. And who, when he shall say to the people his last farewell, shall appear like Samuel in this way, saying, “Behold, I am ready. Speak before our Lord and his anointed, whether I ever took away the ox or ass of any man, if I have falsely accused any one, if I have oppressed anybody, if I have received a bribe from the hands of any?” To whom it was answered by the people, “you have not wrongfully charged us, nor oppressed us, nor taken anything from the hands of any.”

Which of them, like the famous prophet Elias, who consumed the hundred proud men with heavenly fire, and preserved the fifty that humbled themselves; who afterwards denounced without flattery or dissimulation, the impending death of the unjust king (that sought not the counsel of God by his prophets, but of the idol Accaron), and has utterly overthrown all the prophets of Baal (by which are meant the worldly senses ever bent, as we have already said, to envy and avarice), with the lightning sword (which is the word of God)? And who, like the same Elias, moved with the zeal of God, after taking away the showers of rain from the land of the wicked, who were now shut up with famine in a strong prison, as it were of penury, for three years and six months, being himself ready

to die for thirst in the desert, has, complaining, said, “Lord, they have murdered, your prophets, and undermined your altars. I alone am left, and they seek my life?”

§72.

Which of them, like Elisha, has punished his dearly beloved disciple, if not with an everlasting leprosy, yet at least by abandoning him, if burdened too much with the weight of worldly covetousness for those very gifts which his master before (although very earnestly entreated thereto) had despised to receive?

And which of these among us has, like him, through the fervency of his prayers poured out to God revealed those spiritual visions, to his servant (who despaired of life, and suddenly trembled at the warlike army of enemies that besieged the city where he was), so that he might behold a mountain replenished with a heavenly army, of warlike chariots and horsemen, shining with fiery countenances, and that he might also believe that he was stronger to save, than the foe to hurt?

And which of them, like the above-named Elisha, being dead to the world but living unto God, shall with the touch of his body, raise up another, whose fate had been different from his (namely, dead to God but alive to his vices) so that being instantly revived, he may yield humble thanks to Christ for his unexpected recovery from the hellish torments of his mortal crimes?

Which of them has his lips purified and cleansed with the fiery coals carried by the tongues of the cherubim, from off the altar (that his sins may be wiped away with the humility of confession), as it is written of Isaiah, by whose effectual prayers, together with the aid of the godly king Hezekiah, a hundred fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrian army, were overthrown and slain, through the stroke of one angel without the least sign of any visible wound?

Which of them, like blessed Jeremiah — for accomplishing the commandments of God, for denouncing the threats thundered out from heaven, and for preaching the truth even to such as would not hear the same — has suffered loathsome stinking prisons as momentary deaths?

And to be brief, which one of them (as the teacher of the Gentiles said) has endured, like the holy prophets to wander in mountains, in dens, and caves of the earth, to be stoned, to be torn apart, and assailed with all kinds of death, for the name of our Lord?

§73.

But why do we dwell in examples of the Old Testament as if there were none in the New? Let, therefore, those who suppose they can, without any labour at all, under the naked pretence of the name of priesthood, enter this straight and narrow passage of Christian religion, listen to, me while I recite and gather into

one a few of the chiefest flowers out of the large and pleasant meadow of the saintly soldiers of the New Testament.

Which of you (who would rather sleep than lawfully sit in the chair of the priesthood), after being cast out of the council of the wicked, and after the beatings of sundry rods, has like the holy apostles, from the bottom of his heart, given thanks to the blessed Trinity that he was found worthy to suffer disgrace for Christ's true deity?

Which one, for the undoubted testimony of God, has like James the first, a bishop of the New Testament, suffered corporal death, having his brains dashed out with the fuller's club? Which of you, like James the brother of John, has been beheaded by the unjust prince?

Who, like the first deacon and martyr of the gospel (having only this accusation: that he saw God, whom the wicked could not behold), has been stoned to death by ungodly hands? Which one of you, like the worthy keeper of the keys of the heavenly kingdom, has been nailed to the cross with his feet upward, in reverence for Christ, whom, no less in his death than in his life, he endeavoured to honour, and has so breathed his last?

Which of you, for the confession of the true word of Christ, has, like the vessel of election, and chosen teacher of the Gentiles, sufferered imprisonment and shipwreck, the terrible scourges of whips, the continual dangers of seas, of thieves, of Gentiles, of Jews, and of false apostles? And, after the labours of famine, fasting, and watching, after incessant care over all the churches, after his trouble for such as scandalised, after his infirmity for the weak, after his wonderful travels over almost the whole world in preaching the gospel of Christ, lost his head at last by the stroke of the descending sword?"

§74.

Which of you, is like the holy martyr Ignatius, bishop of the city of Antioch, has after his miraculous actions in Christ, for testimony of him been torn by the jaws of lions, as he was once at Rome? When you hear his words, as he was led to his passion, you will not only, in comparison of him, esteem yourselves no priests, but not even the meanest Christians (if your countenances are not overcome with blushes). For, in the epistle which he sent to the church of Rome, he wrote thus:

"From Syria even to Rome, I fight with beasts, by land and sea, being bound and chained to ten leopards, I see the soldiers appointed for my custody, who for our benefit bestowed upon them become more cruel; but I am the better instructed by their wickedness, but in this I am not yet justified. Oh, when shall those beasts, which are prepared for me, become the workers of my salvation? When shall they be let loose at me? When shall it be lawful for them to enjoy my carcass? Whom I do most earnestly wish to be eagerly enraged against me, and I will truly incite them to devour me. Moreover, I will humbly pray lest, perchance, they should dread to touch my body (as in some others they have

before done). Yes also, if they hesitate, I will offer violence, I will force myself upon them. Pardon me, I beseech you, I know what is best for me, even now I begin to be the disciple of Christ. Let all envy, whether of human affection or spiritual wickedness cease, that I may endeavour to obtain Jesus Christ. Let fires, let crosses, let cruelty of beasts, let the breaking of bones, and rending of limbs, with all the pains of the whole body, and all the torments devised by the art of the devil, be together poured out onto me alone, so that I may merit to attain Jesus Christ."

Why do you behold these things with the sleepy eyes of your souls? Why do you hear them with the deaf ears of your senses? Shake off, I beseech you, the dark and black mist of slothfulness from your hearts, that so you may see the glorious light of truth and humility. A Christian, and he not the lowest, but a perfect one, and a priest, not base but one of the highest, a martyr of no ordinary sort, but one of the greatest, said: "Now I begin to be the disciple of Christ." And you, like the same Lucifer, who was thrown down out of heaven, are puffed up with words, and not with power and, in a way, chew under the tooth, and make pretence in your actions, as the author of this, your wickedness, thus expressed: "I will mount up into the heavens, and be like unto the Highest."

And again: "I have dug and drunk water, and dried up with the steps of my feet all the rivers of the banks." You would more rightly have imitated him and listened to the words, of he who is without doubt the most true example of all goodness and humility, saying by his prophet, "I am verily a worm and not a man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people." Oh, unspeakable matter! That he called himself "the reproach of men" when he washed away the reproaches of the whole world. And again, in the gospel; "I am not able to do anything for myself," when at the same time he was coeternal with the Father, coequal with the Holy Ghost, and consubstantial with both, and created, not by the help of another, but by his own almighty power, the heaven and earth, with all their inestimable ornaments; and you nevertheless have arrogantly lifted up your voices, notwithstanding what the prophet said, "Why do earth and ashes swell with pride?"

§75.

But let us return unto our subject. Which of you, I ask, is like Polycarp, the famous bishop of the church of Smyrna, that witness of Christ, who courteously entertained, as guests at his table, those who violently drew him out to be burned? And when, for the charity which he bore to Christ, he was brought to the stake, said "He who gave me grace to endure the torment of the fire, will likewise grant me, without fastening of nails, to bear the flames with patience."

And now passing over in my discourse the mighty armies of saints, I will yet touch on only one, for example's sake. Basil the bishop of Caesaria, who when he was threatened by the unrighteous prince that, unless he would on the next day be defiled in the dirty dunghill of the Arian heresy like the rest, he would be put to death, reportedly answered "Tomorrow, I will be the same as today,

and as for you, I do not wish you to change your determination." And again, "Would that I had some worthy reward to bestow on him that would discharge Basil from the bands of these breathing bellows."

Which one of you endeavours to daunt the menaces of tyrants, by inviolably keeping the rule of the apostolical speech, which in all times and ages has been observed by all holy priests, to suppress the suggestion of men when they sought to draw them into wickedness, saying in this manner; "It behoves us to obey God rather than men."

§76.

After our accustomed manner, we take refuge in the mercy of our Lord, and in the sentences of his holy prophets, that they on our behalf may now level the darts of their oracles at imperfect pastors (as before at tyrants), so that they may thereby receive compunction and be amended. Let us see what manner of threats our Lord utters, through his prophets, against slothful and dishonest priests and such, who do not, both by examples and words, rightly instruct the people.

For even Eli, the priest in Shiloh, because he did not proceed with a zeal worthy of God, in severely punishing his sons when they contemned our Lord, but, as a man overswayed with a fatherly affection, too mildly and remissly admonished them, was sentenced with this judgment by the prophet speaking unto him: "Thus said our Lord, 'I have manifestly shown myself to the house of your father, when they were the servants of Pharaoh in Egypt, and have chosen the house of your father out of all the tribes of Israel, for my priesthood'."

And a little after, "Why have you looked upon my incense and on my sacrifice, with a dishonest eye? And why have you honoured your children more than me, that you might bless them from the beginning in all sacrifices in my presence?" And now, so said our Lord: "Because whoever honours me, I will honour him again; and whoever takes no account of me shall be brought to nothing. Behold the days shall come, and I will destroy your name, and the seed of your father's house. And let this be to a sign to you, which shall fall on your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, that they shall both die on the same day by the sword of men." If therefore, suffer those, who correct with words only, and not with condign punishment, the ones under their charge, what shall become of those who, by offending, exhort you and draw others into wickedness?

§77.

It is apparent also what befell the true prophet, who was sent from Judah to prophesy in Bethel and, after the sign which he foretold was fulfilled, was forbidden to eat any food in that place. After he had restored to the wicked king his withered hand again, being deceived by another prophet, as he was termed, and so made to take a little bread and water, his host spoke to him in this way: "Thus, said our Lord God, 'Because you have been disobedient to the mouth of our Lord, and have not observed the precept which the Lord your God has

commanded, and have returned, and eaten bread, and drunk water in this place, in which I have charged you that you should neither eat bread nor drink water, your body shall not be buried in the sepulchre of your forefathers'." And so (says the scripture) it came to pass, that after he had eaten bread and drunk water, he made ready his ass, and departed, and a lion found him on the way and slew him."

§78.

Hear also the holy prophet Isaiah, how he speaks of priests on this wise. "Woe be to the ungodly, may evil befall him; for the reward of his hands shall light upon him. Her own exactors have spoiled my people, and women have borne sway over her. O my people, they who call you blessed, deceive you themselves and destroy the way of your footsteps. Our Lord stands to judge, and stands to judge the people. Our Lord will come unto judgment of the elders of the people and her princes. 'You have consumed my wine. The spoil of the poor is in your house. Why do you break in pieces my people, and grind the faces of the poor?' said our Lord of hosts."

And also, "Woe be to them who compose ungodly laws, and in their writing have written injustice, that they may oppress the poor in judgment, and work violence to the cause of the lowly of my people, that widows may be their prey, and they make spoil of the orphans; what will you do in the day of visitation and calamity approaching from far off?" And afterwards: "But these also in regard of wine have been ignorant, and in respect of drunkenness have wandered astray. The priests have not understood, because of drunkenness, and have been swallowed up in wine. They have erred in drunkenness, they have not known him who sees, they have been ignorant of judgment. For all the tables are filled with the vomit of their uncleanliness, and there is not any free place to be found."

§79.

"Hear therefore the word of our Lord, you deceivers, who bear authority over my people who are in Jerusalem. For you have said 'We have entered into a truce with death, and with hell we have made a covenant. The overflowing scourge when it shall pass forth shall not fall upon us, because we have placed falsehood for our hope, and by lying we have been defended'."

And, somewhat after "And hail shall overthrow the hope of lying, together with the defence. Waters shall overflow, and your truce with death shall be destroyed, and your covenant with hell shall not continue, when the overflowing scourge shall pass forth. You shall also be trodden under foot, whensoever it shall pass along through you, it shall sweep you away withall."

And again: "And our Lord has said: 'Because this people approaches with their mouth, and with their lips glorify me, but their heart is far from me; behold, therefore, I will cause this people to wonder by a great and stupendous miracle. For wisdom shall decay and fall away from her wise men, and the

understanding of her sages shall be concealed.' Woe be to you that are profound in heart, to conceal counsel from our Lord, whose works are in darkness, and they say, who sees us? And who has known us? For this thought of yours is perverse."

And afterwards: "Thus said our Lord, 'Heaven is my seat, and the earth my footstool. What is this house that you will erect for me, and what place shall be found for my resting place? All these things my hand has made and these, universally, have been all created.' said our Lord. On whom truly shall I cast my eye, but on the humble poor man, and the contrite in spirit, and him that dreads my speeches? He that sacrifices an ox, is like one that kills a man; he that slaughters a beast for sacrifice, is like him who beats out the brains of a dog; he that offeres an oblation, is as he that offers the blood of a hog; he that is mindful of frankincense, is as he that honours an idol. With all these things, they have made a choice of their ways, and their soul has been delighted in their abominations."

§80.

Hear also what Jeremiah, that virgin prophet, said to the unwise pastors in this way: "Thus said our Lord, 'What iniquity have your fathers found in me, because they have taken themselves far off from me, walked after vanity, and have become vain?'." And again: "and in entering it, you have defiled my land, and made my inheritance an abomination. The priests have not said, 'Where is our Lord?'. The rulers of the law have not known me, and the pastors have dealt treacherously against me. Why should I contend in judgment with you and debate the matter with your children."

And a little afterwards: "Astonishment and wonders have been wrought in the land. Prophets preached lying, and priests applauded with their hands, and my people have loved such matters. What, therefore, shall be done in her last and final ends? To whom shall I speak and protest that they may hear me? Behold, their ears are covered, and they cannot hear. Behold, the word of our Lord is uttered to them in reproach, and they do not receive it. 'Because I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the earth', said our Lord.

But, from the lowest to the greatest, they all study avarice, and from the prophet to the priest, they all work deceit. They cured the contrition of the daughter of my people, with ignominy, saying, 'Peace, peace,', but there will be no peace. Those who have wrought abomination are confounded: but they are not confounded with confusion, and they have not understood how to be ashamed. 'They shall fall along with those who are falling, and in the time of their visitation, they shall rush headlong down together.' said our Lord."

And again: "All these declining princes, fraudulently walking, being brass and iron, are universally corrupted. The bellows have failed in the fire, and the finer of metals have melted in vain. Their malicious acts are not consumed. Call them slag and reprobate silver, because our Lord has thrown them away." And after a few words: "I am, I am, I have seen", said our Lord. "Go your ways to my place

in Shiloh, where my name has lived from the beginning, and behold what I have done to it, against the evil of my people of Israel. And now, because you have wrought all these works" said our Lord, "and I have spoken to you, rising in the morning, and speaking, but you have not heard me. I have called you, but you have not answered. I will deal with this house, which I have given to you, and to your fathers, wherein my name is now called upon, and wherein you have confidence, as I have done will Shilo. I will cast you away from my sight."

§81.

And again: "My children have left me, and have no abiding, and there is no longer anyone who pitches my tent and advances my pavilion. For the pastors have lived pleasantly and not sought out our Lord. They have not understood, and their flock has been dispersed." And a little after: "What is the reason that my beloved has committed many offences in my houses? Shall the holy flesh take away your maliciousness, in which you have have gloried, from you? Our Lord shall call your name a plentiful, fair, fruitful, goodly olive; at the sound of the speech a mighty fire has been inflamed in her, and her orchards have been quite consumed by it."

And again: "Come to me, and be gathered together, all you beasts of the earth, make haste to devour. Many pastors have thrown down my vine, they have trampled my part under foot, they have given over my portion which was well worthy to be desired, into a desert of solitariness." And again, he speaks: "Thus said our Lord to this people, who loved to wander, and never rested, but they never pleased our Lord. Now he shall remember their iniquities and visit their offences. Prophets say unto them, 'You shall not see the sword, and there shall be no famine among you, but our Lord shall give you true peace in this place.' And our Lord has said to me, 'The prophets falsely foretell in my name. I have not sent them, nor laid my commandment on them; they prophesise a lying vision and divination, together with deceitfulness, and the seduction of their own hearts.' And therefore, our Lord said 'Those prophets will be consumed by the sword and famine; and the people to whom they have prophesied shall | be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem by means of the famine and sword, and there shall be none to bury them."

§82.

And moreover: "our Lord said, 'Woe be to the pastors who destroy and rend in pieces the flock of my pasture', Thus, therefore, our Lord God of Israel, said to the pastors who guide my people, 'You have dispersed my flock, and cast them out, and not visited them. Behold, I will visit upon you the malice of your endeavours'. So said our Lord. 'For the prophet and the priest are both defiled, and I have found their evil in my house,' said our Lord, 'and therefore, shall their way shall be like a slippery place in the dark'. They shall be thrust forward, and fall down together, for I will bring evils upon them, in the year of their visitation.' So said our Lord."

And “in the prophets of Samaria, I have seen foolishness. In Baal they prophesised and deceived my people of Israel. In the prophets of Jerusalem, I have seen the same: adultery, dishonesty, and comforting the hands of the vilest offenders, so that no man can be converted from his malice. They have been all made to me as Sodom, and their inhabitants like those of Gomorrha. Therefore, our Lord said of these prophets: ‘Behold, I will give them wormwood to eat and gall to drink. For, pollution has passed from the prophet of Jerusalem over the whole earth’. Thus said our Lord of hosts. ‘Do no listen not to the words of prophets, who prophesise to you, and deceive you, because they only speak of the vision of their own hearts, and not from the mouth of our Lord. They say to those who blaspheme me, that our Lord has spoken, and you shall be at peace. And to all that walk in the wickedness of their own hearts, they have said, that evil shall not fall upon them.’ But who was present in the counsel of our Lord, and has seen and heard his speech? Who has considered his words, and listened to them? Behold, the whirlwind of the indignation of our Lord passes out, and a tempest, breaking forth, shall fall upon the heads of the wicked. The fury of our Lord shall not return, until the time that he works, and until he fulfills the cogitation of his heart. In the last days of all, you shall understand his counsel.”

§88.

And little also do you understand and put in execution, that which the holy prophet Joel has, likewise, spoken in admonishment of slothful priests and lamentation of the people’s suffering for their iniquities, saying: “Wake up, you who are drunk from your wine. Weep and wail, all of you, who have drunk wine even to drunkenness, because joy and delight have been taken away from your mouths. Mourn, you priests who serve the altar, because the fields have been made miserable. Let the earth mourn, because corn has become withered, wine dried up, oil diminished, and husbandmen withered away. Lament your possessions, in regard of wheat and barley, because the harvest has perished out of the field, the vines withered, the figs diminished. The pomegranates, palms, apples, and all the trees of the field have withered away, because the children of men have confounded their joy.” All of which things are to be spiritually understood by you, that your souls may not wither away with so pestilent a famine, for want of the word of God. And again, “Weep you priests, who serve our Lord, saying, ‘Spare, O Lord, your people, and do not give over your inheritance to reproach, and do not let nations hold dominion over them, so that the Gentiles do not ask where is their God.’ And yet, you do not open your ears to these sayings, but instead admit all matters by which the indignation of God’s fury is more vehemently inflamed.”

§84.

With diligence, also listen to what holy Hosea the prophet has spoken to priests about your behaviour. “Hear these words, you priests, and let the house of Israel, together with the king’s house, mark them. Fasten them in your ears. This judgment pertains to you, because you have been an entangling snare to the watchers, and like a net which the hunters have stretched over the people.”