

Integritas morum MORUM commendat, et ardor
Ingenii, et docto dulcis in ore decor.

Audoeni Epigr.

A
DIALOGUE
OF
COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION,

MADE BY THE RIGHT VIRTUOUS, WISE AND LEARNED MAN,

SIR THOMAS MORE,

SOMETIME LORD CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND, WHICH HE WROTE IN THE
TOWER OF LONDON, A.D. 1534,

AND ENTITLED THUS:

A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION,

MADE BY AN HUNGARIAN IN LATIN, AND TRANSLATED OUT OF LATIN INTO
FRENCH, AND OUT OF FRENCH INTO ENGLISH.

NOW NEWLY SET FORTH,

WITH MANY PLACES RESTORED AND CORRECTED

BY CONFERENCE OF SUNDRY COPIES.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE present volume of the ENGLISH CATHOLIC LIBRARY introduces to modern readers a treatise by Sir Thomas More, "one of the ornaments of the English nation, one of the wisest, best, and most religious of mankind."* We say *introduce*, because, with the exception of his most notable UTOPIA, the works of that eminent martyr are known, save by name, to very few of his countrymen. Whether this has arisen from the cold and depressing influence of a system antagonistic to that faith of which he testified; or whether, from his name being so tragically incorporated with the great historical events of the sixteenth century, all attention to his writings has been absorbed in the contemplation of the man; is a question on which it is needless to speculate. Let us hope that the improving spirit of the present age will repair this disgraceful neglect; and that ere long a complete and satisfactory edition of the works of Sir Thomas More will be as rife and familiar on our shelves as those of Shakspeare and Bacon.

The biography of the virtuous Chancellor requires not to be penned by us anew. The Life by his great-grandson Cresacre, so ably edited by the learned and acute Mr. Hunter, is one of the most charming compositions in that department of literature; and in point of fidelity and interest is only equalled by that of Wolsey, which

* Rev. J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire*, i. 374.

the sagacity of the same editor has restored to the real author, George Cavendish. Those by Roper,* Cayley, and, more recently, by Mr. Walter,—apart from scarcer tractates within the cognizance of the erudite—comprise every particular of importance to their subject.

As the title-page bears, and as Cresacre More narrates, the *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* was composed during its author's imprisonment in the Tower of London in 1534. "Which subject," this his descendant well observes, "he handleth so wittily as none hath come near him either in weight of grave sentences, devout considerations, or fit similitudes; seasoning always the troublesomeness of the matter with some merry jests or pleasant tales, as it were sugar, whereby we drink up the more willingly these wholesome drugs, of themselves unsavory to flesh and blood; which kind of writing he hath used in all his works, so that none can ever be weary to read them, though they be never so long."† And again, when speaking of his various works,—Surely of all the books that ever he made, I doubt whether I may prefer any of them before the said three Books of Comfort, yea or any other man's, either heathen or Christian, that have written (as many have), either in Greek or Latin of the said matter. And as for heathen, I do this worthy man plain injury, and do much abase him, in matching and comparing him with them, especially in this point: seeing that, were they otherwise never so incomparable, they lacked yet, and knew not the very especial and principal ground of comfort and consolation, that is, the true faith of Christ, in whom and for whom, and whose glory we must seek and fetch all our true comfort and consolation: well, let that pass; and let us further say, that as the said Sir Thomas More notably passeth many learned Christians, that have of the same matter written before, so let us add, that it may well be doubted, all matters considered and weighed, if any of the rest may seem much to pass him. There is

* The edition by Mr. Singer is a worthy companion to the labour of his friend, Mr. Hunter.

† P. 110.

in these books so witty, pithy, and substantial matter, for the easing, remedying, and patiently suffering of all manner of griefs and sorrows that may possibly encumber any man, by any manner or kind of tribulation, whether their tribulation proceed from any inward temptation or ghostly enemy, the devil, or any outward temptation of the world, threatening to bereave or spoil us of our goods, lands, honour, liberty, and freedom, by grievous and sharp punishment, and finally of our life withal, by any painful, exquisite, and cruel death; against all which he doth so wonderfully and effectually prepare, defend, and arm the reader, that a man cannot desire or wish any thing of any more efficacy or importance thereunto to be added. In the which book his principal drift and scope was to stir and prepare the minds of Englishmen manfully and courageously to withstand, and not to shrink at the imminent and open persecution which he foresaw, and immediately followed against the unity of the Church, and the Catholic faith of the same; albeit full wittily and warily, that the books might safer go abroad, he doth not expressly meddle with these matters, but covereth the matter under a name of an Hungarian, and of the persecution of the Turks in Hungary, and of the book translated out of the Hungarian tongue into Latin, and then into the English tongue.* And such golden consolations and encouragements, and genuine philosophy, were inscribed "with a coal;" his enemies having enhanced the pains of incarceration by depriving him of all ordinary writing materials!

The first edition of the *Dialogue of Comfort* was printed at London by Richard Tottel, 1553, in quarto. The next, from which our present reprint is obtained, at Antwerp, in 1573, in 16mo.: and again, at the same city, in 1574 and 1578. The portrait in this first Antwerp edition was unknown to Granger and Bromley.

The "Right Honourable and Excellent Ladie," to whom Fowler dedicated the work, was Jane, second daughter of Sir William Dormer (father of the first Lord Dormer of Wenge), by his first wife Mary, daughter to

* P. 340.

Sir William Sidney, ancestor to the Earls of Leicester. She was maid of honour to Queen Mary, and married Don Gomez Suarez de Figueroa y Cordova, Count of Feria, who came to England with King Philip, and was afterwards the first duke of Feria in Spain.* According to Haro, his love for her cost the duke somewhat of rank and fortune. His words are: "*De quien se avia enamorado y aficionado de tal manera, que escrivē, que por esta causa no sucedio en el estado y Marquesad de Priego, por no aver contrahido matrimonio con la Marquesa doña Catalina su sobrina, hija del sobredicho Conde don Pedro su hermano.*" †

With the exception of adapting the orthography to that of our own day, and amending the punctuation, the present reprint is a faithful copy of its original, carefully collated with the text in the collected works of 1557.

Mr. Mitford has recently † rescued from oblivion the following epitaph on More by Henry Harder, from the *Delicia Poetarum Danorum*. This we here preserve; and conclude with the much more elegant tribute of the Jesuit Balde, the most estimable poet of his illustrious order.

Thome Mori Epitaphium.

Mori memento, quisquis hunc tumulum vides;
 Ille ille gentis tanta lux Britannicæ,
 Columenque voxque civium, Regis manus,
 Et purpuratorum alpha *Morus* præsidium,
 Charitum voluptas, dulce Musarum decus,
 Virtutis ara, terminus Constantiæ,
 Virque omnium, dum vixit, integerrimus.
 Hic ille *Morus* ille divisus jacet
 Iræ furentis immolatus principis.
 Pœna quid ista fecerit dignum rogas?
 Age, arrige aures: ipse quamvis mortuus
 Tibi dicet ipse—nempe quid dicit? Nihil.

* Collins' Peerage, by Brydges, vii. 69.

† Nobiliario de España, i. 433.

‡ Gentleman's Mag. for April, 1846, p. 384.

THOMÆ MORI CONSTANTIA.

Hic ille *Morus* quo melius nihil
 Titan Britanno vidit ab æthere,
 Funesta cùm Regem Bolena
 Illicito furiasset æstu:

Amox iniquas spernere nuptias
 Amore veri, propositum minis
 Obvertit Henrici, tyranno
 Fortior, indocilisque flecti.

Non carcer illum, non Aloysia
 Dimovit uxor; nec trepidus gener
 Nec ante Patrem Margarita
 Fœmine lacrymosa questu.

Fertur monentem mitia conjugem,
 Sed non est isto digna viro, procul
 Abs se remotam, cum feroci,
 Ut fatuam, pepulisse risu.

Mox, quâ fluentem se Thamesis rotat
 Ad destinatum funeribus locum,
 Casto coronandus triumpho,
 Per medios properavit Anglos.

Ductum secutâ fiente Britannâ,
 Non flevit unus; marmore dignior,
 Et certa despectante vultu
 Fata tuens, hilarisque torvum.

Atqui sciebat, quid sibi regius
 Tortor parasset, non aliter tamen,
 Quàm laureatos Sulla fasciis,
 Ipse suam petiit securin.

Plenus futuri quo tumulo stetit,
 Postquam paventem carnificis manum,
 Mercede firmasset, cruento
 Colla dedit ferienda ferro.

A DIALOGVE

Of Cumfort

against Tribulation, made by

the right Vertuous, Wise and Learned

man, Sir Thomas More, sometime

L. Chancellor of England, which

he wrote in the Tower of

London, An. 1534,

and entituled

thus :

A Dialogue of Cumfort against Tribu-
lation, made by an Hungarian in Latin, and
translated out of Latin into French, &
out of French into English.

Now newly set foorth, with many places restored
and corrected by conference of sundrie Copies.



Non desis plorantibus in consolatione. Eccli. 7.



ANTVERPIAE,

Apud Iohannem Foulerum, Anglum,

M. D. LXXIII.

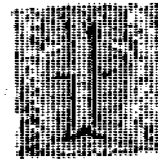
good Lord the Duke's Grace, cannot, I suppose, anywhere find the like ease of your heaviness and comfort for the sole and sad estate of your virtuous widowhood, as here out of this book may be taken, both for that, and for any other worldly woes and afflictions.

These six or seven years have I been desirous to have so good a book come forth again in some smaller volume than it was in before, being indeed not so handsome for the private use and commodity of the reader, as I trust it shall be now. But it hath not been my chance, through one let or other, to accomplish that desire of mine till now. And that is indeed the chief thing that I have done therein, which I may account as mine: I mean, in that I have brought it into this small volume, and withal, by conferring of sundry copies together, have restored and corrected many places, and thereby made it much more plain and easy to be understood of the reader. All which small labour of mine I beseech your Honour to accept in good part, as of him that would be right glad, not only by this or any mean to testify alway my good heart and affection toward the noble Duke, both while he lived and still after his decease, but also to do likewise to your Grace, and to your Noble Son (being his father's own heir both of estate and worthy qualities) any such service, as my poor ability can anywise achieve. And thus commending myself in all humble manner unto your Grace, I shall remain, as before, bound alway to pray for the good health and long life of your Honour, and of your no less dear than noble son, whom in his father's place I take still for my good Lord also. From Antwerp, the last of September. An. 1573.

Your Grace's most humble servitor,

JOHN FOWLER.

TO THE READER.



THE whole life of man be a continual warfare upon earth, as God's own word doth witness,* and as our own experience doth daily prove the same, and that man himself born of a woman, is indeed a wo man, that is, full of wo and misery, even from the first hour of his birth, to the very last moments of his life,† at which time he suffereth the extremest wo and most pinching pain of all, in parting from his own natural body, that he naturally loveth so well: how great need have we to provide and have ready alway some good armour and weapon in this our long warfare, and not to be without some relief and succour against so many miseries as we be subject unto.

To make any particular discourse of all the sundry sorrows and woes that appertain to each state, both of men and women, of young and old, sick and whole, rich and poor, high and low, subject and prince, and king and queen and all; it would be too long a business, and shall not need at this present, referring the knowledge and remembrance thereof to each person in his degree, as he daily and hourly feeleth the same.

For though that some there be, that neither feel nor know their own miseries, and yet live in most misery of all, whereof the common proverb saith, that such as are in hell think there is none other heaven; and as in very

* Job vii.

† Idem xiv.

deed many folk of this world take and ween this to be their heaven, because they know none other yet (and other shall they never know here, but by faith*) yet, he we never so blind in seeing and knowing our own most miseries, we have for all that other miseries besides so many and so great, that there is no creature so happy here on earth, but that one way or other, at some time or other, he seeth and feeleth sorrow and wo enough. And though that perhaps to other folk he seem to live in all worldly wealth and bliss, yet himself knoweth best what him aileth most, and as another proverb also saith, Each man knoweth well where his own shoe wringeth him.

And albeit that commonly the best folk suffer most afflictions in this world, as being most hated of the world, and best beloved of God, who reserveth for them in another world the crowne of eternal bliss,† and for the evils that they endure here, doth reward them with good things there: yet the common sort of folk, yea and the very worst and most wicked too, have likewise their kinds of afflictions and miseries, and do not lack their worldly woes, which vex them otherwhiles even at the very hearts as much, and more, than any other tribulations, either inward or outward, do molest the minds of the virtuous and good.

If these miseries be so common and so general unto all, what ought all folk generally to provide for, but remedy and comfort against the same? And if the infection of this pestilent malady of man be such and so sore, that it letteth none scape long without it, but visiteth each body by some mean or other, wherever they dwell, and what air soever they live and rest in, what great canse have we, that cannot avoid this contagious air, but must needs lead our lives in it, and thereby fall sick now and then, to seek some good preservatives against such an universal plague, or at least some good comfortatives for the heart and brains and principal parts of us, that we be not so stricken upon the sudden, but that we may temper the rage of this disease, and overcome the danger of it, to the recovery of our health and final salvation!

* Hebr. xi.

† Esai. vi. ; 1 Cor. ii.

I would verily believe, these things well pondered, that is, both the general estate of man's misery and pain, and the great necessity of comfort which as generally followeth therewithal, that, whereas many books have and do come forth daily, that tend toward some benefit or other unto man, yet scant any can appear, the profit whereof is so great and extendeth so far, as of this.

The invention indeed of the author seemeth to respect some particular cases, which was of him wonderful wittily devised, applying his whole discourse to the peace of Christendom, to wit, the land of Hungary, which hath been there many years (and yet is) sore persecuted and oppressed by Turks. But under this particular case of Turks' persecutions he generally comprehendeth all kinds of afflictions and persecutions both of body and mind, that may any way be suffered, either by sickness or health, by friend or foe, by wicked and wrongful oppressors, by miscreants and Turks, and the very fiends and devils of hell also. And that was done for this intent (as it may seem) that under this one kind of Turkish persecution, the benefit of the book might be the more common to all Christian folk, as the which could justly of none be rejected nor reproved, but if themselves were very Turks too, or worse. And yet I trow, no Turk is so cruel and fell, that will or can let a poor Christian man in the midst of all his afflictions put upon him by the same Turk, to seek and use some comfort, in his case, such as he may.

Howbeit this book is also such, and so generally profitable, and so charitably written and devised to the behoof of all, that both good and bad, Christian and heathen, Jew and gentile, and the very Turks too, in that they be mortal men and subject to worldly miseries, may if they would read and use it, pick out many good counsels and comforts, whereby to ease themselves also in their most adversities. For sometime the chance is turned, and it fortunes as well the Turks to be taken prisoners by the Christians, as the Christians are taken and persecuted by them.

And surely if Turks understood the language, and per-

ceived well the general commodity of the book, whatsoever the common sort and furious multitude of them would do for their accustomed malice and envy against all benefit of the Christian, yet (no doubt) a man should find some good member of them so tractable and indifferent, that would for their own sakes in considering of their own need, and the general condition of all men, neither gainsay their Christian captives to seek them some ease in their misery, nor yet refuse themselves, to use (from among the rest) such comforts here and there as may serve their own turns. For we see that even in the midst of their own countries they suffer many Christian folk to dwell, paying certain tributes and taxes for their safeguard and sufferance to live there. And in other countries also which they newly subdue and win from the Christians, they do not so dispeople the whole lands and main countries, but that they let many thousands dwell there still, professing openly and freely their faith, with churches and chapels allowed for them: this only provided, that they agnize the Turk to be lord of the land, and themselves to live in quiet and civil subjection under him.

But blessed be God, that the Turks themselves, though they have overrun almost all Hungary, and thereto won Cyprus of late, are far enough off from us yet: and would God all their Turkish fashions and persecutions were as far off from us too, and that Christian charity did reign more truly and plentifully in the hearts of all that bear the name of Christians in Christendom. For then a great part of the comforts that are in this book, should not greatly need, nor we should not greatly need neither to fear lest any Christian folk would shew themselves so unchristian, as to find fault or mislike with the use and free having of the same among all men, whereas the matter and argument thereof toucheth men all so near.

Howbeit very few shall be found here in our quarters (by all likelihood) that have so much degenerated from the nature of true Christianity, as expressly to disannul or disallow the same, lest they might thereby seem, not only to be no Christians at all, but rather right renegades, which are indeed much worse than any natural Turks.

For as for all such as profess the Gospel and favour the truth of God's word, they must needs of fine force both think well hereof, and also allow and command the reading and perusing of the same among all good Christian people, whereas there is in manner nothing therein, but that is taken out of the very Scripture, out of God's own written word, and altogether treateth of faith, and of the principal points thereof. Wherefore (to conclude) there is no more to say, but only to wish unto all men generally, that as their own need and adversity shall move them to seek for some ease and comfort in their case, if it be their chance to light upon this book, they may so look thereon, and find such benefit and relief thereby, as may be most God's pleasure and quiet of their minds.

A DIALOGUE

OF

COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION.

A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation, made by the right virtuous, wise, and learned man, Sir Thomas More, sometime Lord Chancellor of England.

ANTONY AND VINCENT.



VINCENT.—WHO would have weened, oh! my good uncle, afore a few years passed, that such as in this country would visit their friends lying in disease and sickness, should come, as I do now, to seek and fetch comfort of them; or, in giving comfort to them, use the way that I may well use to you? For albeit that the priests and friars be wont to call upon sick men to remember death; yet we worldly friends, for fear of discomforting them, have ever had a guise in Hungary, to lift up their hearts and put them in good hope of life. But now, my good uncle, the world

A notable saying, and as true now as ever. is here waxen such, and so great perils appear here to fall at hand; that methinketh the greatest comfort that a man can have is, when he may see that he shall soon be gone. And we that are likely long to live here in wretchedness, have need of some comfortable counsel against tribulation, to be given us by such as you be, good uncle, that have so long lived virtuously, and are so learned in the law of God, as very few be better in this country here, and have had of such things as we do now fear, good experience and assay in yourself; as he that hath been taken prisoner in Turkey two times in your days, and now likely to depart hence ere long. But that may be your great comfort, good uncle, sith yon depart to God; but us here shall you leave of your kindred, a sort of sorry, comfortless orphans, to all whom your good help, comfort and counsel hath long been a great stay; not as an uncle unto some, and to some farther of kin, but as though that unto us all you had been a natural father.

ANTONY.—Mine own good cousin,* I cannot much say nay, but that there is indeed, not here in Hungary only, but almost also in all places of Christendom, a customable manner of unchristian comforting, which albeit that in any sick man it doth more harm than good, withdrawing him in time of sickness, with looking and longing for life, from the meditation of death, judgment, heaven and hell, whereof he should beset much part of his time, even all his whole life in his best health; yet is that manner in my mind more than mad, where such kind of comfort is used to a man of mine age. For, as we well wot, that a young man may die soon; so we be very sure that an old man cannot live long. And yet sith there is, as Tully † saith, no man for all that so old, but that he hopeth yet that he may live one year more, and of a frail folly delighteth thereon to think, and comforteth himself therewith; other men's words of like manner comfort, adding more sticks to that fire, shall in a manner burn up quite the pleasant moisture that most should refresh him; the wholesome dew

* This word was anciently applied to a kinsman generally.

† Cicero de Senectute.

(I mean) of God's grace, by which he should wish with God's will to be hence, and long to be with him in heaven.

Now where you take my departing from you so heavily, as of him of whom you recognize of your goodness to have had herebefore help and comfort; would God I had to you and other more half so much done, as myself reckoneth had been my duty to do. But whensoever God take me hence, to reckon yourselves then comfortless, as though your chief comfort stood in me, therein make you (methinketh) a reckoning very much like as though you would cast away a strong staff and lean upon a rotten reed. For God is, and must be your comfort, and not I. And he is a sure comforter, that (as he said unto his disciples) * never leaveth his servants in case of comfortless orphans, not even when he departeth from his disciples by death; but both, as he promised, † sent them a comforter, the Holy Spirit of his Father and himself, and them also made sure, that to the world's end, he would ever dwell with them himself. And, therefore, if you be part of his flock, and believe his promise, how can you be comfortless in any tribulation, when Christ and his Holy Spirit, and with them their inseparable Father (if you put full trust and confidence in them) be never neither one finger breadth of space, nor one minute of time from you?

VINCENT.—Oh! my good uncle, even these same self words, wherewith you well prove that because of God's own gracious presence we cannot be left comfortless, make me now feel and perceive what a miss of much comfort we shall have when you be gone. For albeit, good uncle, that while you do tell me this, I cannot but grant it for true; yet if I now had not heard it of you, I had not remembered it, nor it had not fallen in my mind. And over that, like as our tribulations shall in weight and number increase, so shall we need, not only such a good word or twain, but a great heap thereof, to stable and strength the walls of our hearts against the great scourges of this tempestuous sea.

* John xiv.

† Matth. ult.

ANTONY.—Good consin, trust well in God, and he shall provide you teachers abroad convenient in every time, or else shall himself sufficiently teach you within.

VINCENT.—Very well, good uncle; but yet if we would leave the seeking of onward learning, where we may have it, and look to be inwardly taught only by God, then should we thereby tempt God, and displease him. And sith that I now see likelihood, that when you be gone, we shall be sore destitute of any such other like; therefore thinketh me that God of duty bindeth me to sue to you now, good uncle, in this short time that we have you, that it may like you, against these great storms of tribulation, with which both I and all mine are sore beaten already, and now, upon the coming of this cruel Turk, fear to fall in far more; I may learn of you such plenty of good counsel and comfort, that I may with the same laid up in remembrance, govern and stay the ship of our kindred, and keep it afloat from peril of spiritual drowning. You be not ignorant, good uncle, what heaps of heaviness hath of late fallen among us already, with which some of our poor family be fallen into such dumps, that scantily can any such comfort, as my poor wit can give them, any thing assuage their sorrow. And now sith these tidings have come hither so brim of the great Turk's enterprise into these parts here, we can almost neither talk, nor think of any other thing else, than of his might and our mischief; there falleth so continually before the

To this persecution of the Turks may well be resembled the whole practice of heretics in any place where they can prevail.

eyen of our heart a fearful imagination of this terrible thing, his mighty strength and power, his high malice and hatred, and his incomparable cruelty, with robbing, spoiling, burning, and laying waste all the way that his army cometh. Then killing or carrying away the people far thence, far from home, and there sever the couples and the kindred asunder, every one far from other; some kept in thralldom, and some kept in prison, and some for a triumph tormented and killed in his presence. Then send his people hither and his false faith therewith, so that such as here are and remain still shall either both lose all and be lost too, or forced to forsake the faith of

our Saviour Christ, and fall to the sect of Mahomet. And yet (which we more fear than all the remanent) no small part of our folk that dwell even here about us are (as we fear) falling to him, or already confedered with him; which, if it so be, shall haply keep this quarter from the Turk's incursion. But then shall they that turn to his law leave all their neighbours nothing, but shall have our good given them and our bodies both; but if we turn as they do, and forsake our Saviour too; and then (for there is no born Turk so cruel to Christian folk as is the false Christian that falleth from the faith) we shall stand in peril if we persevere in the truth, to be more hardly handled and die more cruel death by our own countrymen at home, than if we were taken hence and carried into Turkey. These fearful heaps of perils lie so heavy at our hearts, while we wot not into which we shall fortune to fall, and therefore fear all the worst, that (as our Saviour prophesied of the people of Jerusalem)* many wish among us already before the peril come, that the mountains would overwhelm them, or the valleys open and swallow them up and cover them. Therefore, good uncle, against these horrible fears of these terrible tribulations, of which some, ye wot well, our house already hath, and the remanent stand in dread of, give us, while God lendeth you us, such plenty of your comfortable counsel as I may write and keep with us, to stay us when God shall call you hence.

The false Christian most cruel enemy to Christian folk.

ANTONY.—Ah! my good cousin, this is an heavy hearing, and likewise as we that dwell here in this part fear that thing sore now, which few years past feared it not at all; so doubt I, that ere it long be, they shall fear it as much that think themselves now very sure, because they dwell farther off. Greece feared not the Turk when that I was born, and within a while after, the whole empire was his. The great Soudan of Syria thought himself more than his match, and long since you were born, hath he that empire too. Then hath he taken Bel-

How true is this proved by the breaking out of heresy from out of Germany into other countries &c.

* Luke xxiii.

grade, the fortress of this realm, and since bath he destroyed our noble young goodly king. And now strive there twain for us: our Lord send the grace that the third dog carry not away the bone from them both! What should I speak of the noble strong city of the Rhodes, the winning whereof he counted as a victory against the whole corps of Christendom, sith all Christendom was not able to defend that strong town against him? Howbeit, if the princes of Christendom everywhere about would, where as need was, have set to their hands in time, the Turk had never taken any one of all those places. But partly dissensions fallen among ourself, partly that no man careth what harm other folk feel, but each part suffereth other to shift for itself, the Turk is in few years wonderfully increased, and Christendom on the other side very sore decayed: and all this worketh our wickedness, with which God is not content.

But now, whereas you desire of me some plenty of comfortable things which ye may put in remembrance, and comfort therewith your company; verily in the rehearsing and heaping of your manifold fears, myself began to feel, that there should much need against so many troubles many comfortable counsels. For surely a little before your coming, as I devised with myself upon the Turk's coming, it happened my mind to fall suddenly from that into the devising upon my own departing: wherein, albeit that I fully put my trust and hope to be a saved soul by the great mercy of God, yet sith no man is here so sure that without revelation may clean stand out of dread, I bethought me also upon the pain of hell. And after, I bethought me then upon the Turk again. And first methought his terror nothing, when I compared it with the joyful hope of heaven. Then compared I it on the other side with the fearful dread of hell. And therein casting in my mind those terrible devilish tormentors, with the deep consideration of that furious endless fire; methought, that if the Turk with his whole host, and all his trumpets and timbrels too, were to kill me in my bed coming to my chamber door, in respect of the

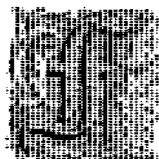
All that is said
of the Turk is
in a parable
meant of here-
tics and schis-
matics.

other reckoning I regard him not a rush. And yet when I now heard your lamentable words, laying forth as it were present before my face the heap of heavy sorrowful tribulation, that beside those that are already fallen, are in short space like to follow, I waxed therewith myself suddenly somewhat aflight.

And therefore I well allow your request in this behalf that you would have store of comfort aforehand ready by you to resort to, and to lay up in your heart as a triacle against the poison of all desperate dread that might rise of occasion of sore tribulation. And herein shall I be glad, as my poor wit will serve me, to call to mind with you such things, as I before have read, heard, or thought upon, that may conveniently serve us to this purpose.

CHAPTER I.

That the Comforts devised by the old Paynim Philosophers were insufficient, and the cause wherefore.



FIRST shall you, good cousin, understand this, that the natural wise men of this world, the old moral philosophers, laboured much in this matter, and many natural reasons have they written, whereby they might encourage men to set little by such goods, or such trusts either, the going or the coming whereof are the matter and the cause of tribulation: as are the goods of fortune, riches, favour, friends, fame, worldly worship, and such other things; or of the body, as beauty, strength, agility, quickness, and health. These things (ye wot well) coming to us, are matter of worldly wealth; and taken from us by fortune, or by force, or by fear of losing them, be matter of adversity and tribulation.

The cause of tribulation.

That tribulation is generally.

For tribulation seemeth generally to signify nothing else but some kind of grief, either pain of the body or heaviness of the mind. Now the body not to feel that it feeleth, all the wit in the world cannot bring about. But that the mind should not be grieved, neither with the pain that the body feeleth nor with occasions of heaviness offered and given unto the soul itself, this thing laboured the philosophers very much about, and many goodly sayings have they toward the strength and comfort against tribulation, exciting men to the full contempt of all worldly loss, and despising of sickness, and all bodily grief, painful death and all. Howbeit in very deed, for any thing that ever I read in them, I never could yet find that ever those natural reasons

were able to give sufficient comfort of themselves. For they never stretch so far, but that they leave untouched, for lack of necessary knowledge, that special point which is not only the chief comfort of all, but, without which also, all other comforts are nothing: that is, to wit, the referring of the final end of their comfort unto ^{The chief and special comfort.} God, and to repute and take for the special cause of comfort, that by the patient sufferance of their tribulation they shall attain his favour, and for their pain receive reward at his hand in heaven. And for lack of knowledge of this end, they did (as they needs must) leave untouched also the very special mean, without which we can never attain to this comfort; that is, to wit, the gracious aid and help of God to move, stir, and guide us forward, in the referring ^{The special mean of all comfort.} all our ghostly comfort, yea, and our worldly comfort too, all unto that heavenly end. And therefore, as I say, for the lack of these things, all their comfortable counsels are very far insufficient. Howbeit, though they be far unable to cure our disease of themselves, and therefore are not sufficient to be taken for our physicians, some good drugs have they yet in their shops, for which they may be suffered to dwell among our apothecaries, if their medicines be not made of their own brains, but after the bills made by the great physician God, prescribing the medicines himself, and correcting the faults of their erroneous receipts. For without this way taken with them, they shall not fail to do, as many bold blind apothecaries do, which either for lucre, or of a foolish pride, give sick folk medicines of their own devising, and therewith kill up in corners many such simple folk, as they find so foolish to put their lives in such lewd and unlearned blind bayards' hands.

We shall, therefore, neither fully receive these philosophers' reasons in this matter, nor yet utterly refuse them; but using them in such order as shall beseem them, the principal and the effectual medicines against these diseases of tribulation shall we fetch from that high, great and excellent physician, without whom we could never be healed of our very deadly disease of damnation. For

our necessity wherein, the Spirit of God spiritually speaketh of himself to us, and biddeth us of all our health give him the honour; and therein thus saith to us, *Honora medicum; propter necessitatem etenim ordinavit eum Altissimus*,*—Honour thou the physician, for him hath the high God ordained for thy necessity. Therefore, let us require the high physician, our blessed Saviour Christ, whose holy manhood God ordained for our necessity, to cure our deadly wounds with the medicine made of the most wholesome blood of his own blessed body: that likewise as he cured by that incomparable medicine our mortal malady, it may like him to send us and put in our minds such medicines at this time, as against the sickness and sorrows of tribulations may so comfort and strength us in his grace, as our deadly enemy the devil may never have the power by his poisoned dart of murmur, grudge, and impatience, to turn our short sickness of worldly tribulation into the endless everlasting death of infernal damnation.

* Eccl. xxxviii.

CHAPTER II.

That for a foundation men must needs begin with Faith.



WITH all our principal comfort must come of God, we must first presuppose in him to whom we shall with any ghostly counsel give any effectual comfort, one ground to begin withal, whereupon all that we shall build must be supported and stand: that is, to wit, the ground and foundation of faith, without which had ready before, all the spiritual comfort that any man may speak of can never avail a fly. For likewise as it were utterly vain to lay natural reasons of comfort to him that hath no wit, so were it undoubtedly frustrate to lay spiritual causes of comfort to him that hath no faith. For except a man first believe that Holy Scripture is the word of God, and that the word of God is true, how can a man take any comfort of that that the Scriptures telleth him therein? Needs must the man take little fruit of the Scripture, if he either believe not that it were the word of God, or else ween that, though it were, it might yet be for all that untrue. This faith, as it is more faint, or more strong, so shall the comfortable words of Holy Scripture stand the man in more stead, or less.

This virtue of faith can neither any man give himself, nor yet any one man another: but though men may with preaching be ministers unto God therein, and the man with his own free-will obeying freely the inward inspiration of God be a weak worker with Almighty God therein; yet is the faith indeed the gracious gift of God himself. For, as St. James saith, *Omne datum optimum,*

The faith is the foundation of all comfort.

The word of God is most true.

*et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum**—Every good gift and every perfect gift is given from above, descending from the Father of lights. Therefore, feeling our faith by many tokens very faint, let us pray to him that giveth it, that it may please him to help and increase it. And let us first say with the man in the Gospel, *Credo Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam*—I believe, good Lord, but help thou the lack of my belief. And after, let us pray with the Apostles, *Domine, adauge nobis fidem*—Lord increase our faith. And, finally, let us consider by Christ's saying unto them, that if we would not suffer the strength and fervour of our faith to wax lukewarm, or rather key-cold, and in manner lose his vigour by scattering our minds abroad about so many trifling things, that of the matters of our faith we very seldom think, but that we would withdraw our thought from the respect and regard of all worldly fantasies, and so gather our faith together into a little narrow room, and like the little grain of a mustard seed, † which is of nature hot, set it in the garden of our soul, all weeds pulled out for the better feeding of our faith; then shall it grow, and so spread up in height, that the birds, that is, to wit, the holy angels of heaven, shall breed in our soul and bring forth virtues in the branches of our faith. And thou with the faithful trust, that through the true belief of God's word we shall put in his promise, we shall be well able to command a great mountain ‡ of tribulation to void from the place where it stood in our heart; whereas, with a very feeble faith and a faint, we shall be scant able to remove a little hillock. And, therefore, for the first conclusion, as we must of necessity before any spiritual comfort presuppose the foundation

Prayer in tribulation must never cease.

of faith; so sith no man can give us faith, but only God, let us never cease to call upon God therefore.

VINCENT.—Forsooth, my good uncle, methinketh that this foundation of faith, which (as you say) must be laid first, is so necessarily requisite, that without it all

spiritual comfort were utterly given in vain. And, therefore, now shall we pray God for a full and a fast faith. And I pray you, good uncle, proceed you farther in the process of your matter of spiritual comfort against tribulation.

ANTONY.—That shall I, cousin, with good will.

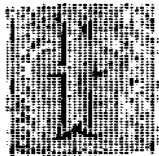
* Jacob. i.

† Matth. xvii.

‡ Mar. xi.

CHAPTER III.

The first Comfort in Tribulation may a man take in this, when he feeleth in himself a desire and longing to be comforted by God.



WILL in my poor mind assign for the first comfort the desire and longing to be by God comforted. And not without some reason call I this the first cause of comfort. For like as the cure of that person is in a manner desperate, that hath no will to be cured; so is the discomfort of that person desperate, that desireth not his own comfort.

And here shall I note you two kinds of folk that are in tribulation and heaviness. One sort, that will seek for no comfort; another sort, that will. And yet of those that will not are there also two sorts. For first, one sort there are that are so drowned in sorrow, that they fall into a careless deadly dulness, regarding nothing, thinking almost of nothing, no more than if they lay in a lethargy, with which it may so fall that wit and remembrance will wear away, and fall even fair from them. And this comfortless kind of heaviness in tribulation is the highest kind of the deadly sin of sloth. Another sort are there that will seek for no comfort, nor yet none receive, but are in their tribulation (be it loss or sickness) so testy, so fuming, and so far out of all patience, that it booteth no man to speak to them: and these are in a manner with impatience as furious, as though they were in half a phrenzy, and may, with a custom of such fashioned behaviour, fall in thereto full and whole. Aud

this kind of heaviness in tribulation is even a mischievous high branch of the mortal sin of Ire.

Then is there, as I told you, another kind of folk, which fain would be comforted. And yet are they of two sorts too. One sort are those that in their sorrow seek for worldly comfort; and of them shall we now speak the less, for the divers occasions that we shall after have to touch them in more places than one. But this will I here say, that I learned of St. Bernard: He that in tribulation turneth himself unto worldly vanities, to get help and comfort by them, fareth like a man that in peril of drowning catcheth whatsoever cometh next to hand, and that holdeth he fast, be it never so simple a stick; but then that helpeth him not, for that stick he draweth down under the water with him, and there lie they drowned both together. So surely if we custom ourself to put our trust of comfort in the delight of these peevish worldly things, God shall for that foul fault suffer our tribulation to grow so great, that all the pleasures of this world shall never bear us up, but all our peevish pleasure shall in the depth of tribulation drown with us.

The very end of all vain worldly comfort.

The other sort is, I say, of those that long and desire to be comforted of God. And, as I told you before, they have an undoubted great cause of comfort, even in that point alone, that they consider themselves to desire and long to be by Almighty God comforted. This mind of theirs may well be cause of great comfort unto them for two great considerations. The one is, that they see themselves seek for their comfort where they cannot fail to find it. For God both can give them comfort, and will. He can, for he is almighty: he will, for he is all good, and hath himself promised, *Petite, et accipietis*—Ask, and ye shall have.* He that hath faith (as he must needs have that shall take comfort) cannot doubt, but that God will surely keep his promise. And therefore hath he a great cause to be of good comfort, as I say, in that he considereth, that he longeth to be comforted by him, which his faith maketh him sure will not fail to comfort him.

* Matth. vii.

But here consider this, that I speak here of him that in tribulation longeth to be comforted by God; and it is he that referreth the manner of his comforting to God, holding himself content, whether it be by the taking away or the minishment of the tribulation itself, or by the giving him patience and spiritual consolation therein. For of him that only longeth to have God take his trouble from him, we cannot so well warrant that mind for a cause of so great comfort. For both may he desire that, that never mindeth to be the better; and may miss also the effect of his desire, because his request is haply not good for himself. And of this kind of longing and requiring we shall have occasion farther to speak hereafter. But he which referring the manner of his comfort unto God, desireth of God to be comforted, asketh a thing so lawful and so pleasant unto God, that he cannot fail to speed: and therefore hath he (as I say) great cause to take comfort in the very desire itself.

Another cause hath he to take of that desire a very great occasion of comfort. For sith his desire is good, and declareth unto himself that he hath in God a good faith, it is a good token unto him that he is not an object cast out of God's gracious favour, while he perceiveth that God hath put such a virtuous well ordered appetite in his mind. For as every evil mind cometh of the world, and ourself, and the devil; so is every such good mind either immediately, or by the mean of our good angel, or other gracious occasion, inspired into man's heart by the goodness of God himself. And what a comfort then may this be unto us, when we by that desire perceive a sure undoubted token, that toward our final salvation our Saviour is himself so graciously busy about us.

*Wherof pro-
ceedeth each
good or evil
mind.*

CHAPTER IV.

That Tribulation is a mean to draw men to that good mind, to desire and long for the Comfort of God.



INCENT.—FORSOOTH, good uncle, this good mind of longing for God's comfort is a good cause of great comfort indeed: our Lord in tribulation send it us! But by this I see well, that wo may they be which in tribulation lack that mind, and

that desire not to be comforted by God, but are either of sloth or impatience discomfortless, or of folly seek for their chief ease and comfort anywhere else.

ANTONY.—That is, good cousin, very true, as long as they stand in that state. But then must you consider, that tribulation is yet a mean to drive him from that state. And that is one of the causes for which God sendeth it unto man. For albeit that pain was ordained of God for the punishment of sins (for which **Pain.** they that can never now but sin, can never be but ever punished in hell), yet in this world, in which his high mercy giveth men space to be better, the punishment by tribulation that he sendeth, serveth ordinarily for a mean of amendment.

St. Paul * was himself sore against Christ, till Christ gave him a great fall and threw him to the ground, and strake him stark blind: and with that tribulation he turned to him at the first word, and God was his physician, and healed him soon after both in body and soul by his minister Ananias, and made him his blessed apostle.

* Act. ix.

Some are in the beginning of tribulation very stubborn and stiff against God, and yet at length tribulation bringeth them home. The proud king Pharaoh* did abide and endure two or three of the first plagues, and would not once stoop at them. But then God laid on a sorer lash that made him cry to him for help, and then sent he for Moses and Aaron,† and confessed himself a sinner, and God for good and righteous, and prayed them to pray for him, and to withdraw that plague, and he would let them go. But when his tribulation was withdrawn, then was he naught again. So was his tribulation occasion of his profit, and his help again cause of his harm. For his tribulation made him call to God, and his help made hard his heart again. Many a man that in an easy tribulation falleth to seek his ease in the pastime of worldly fantasies, findeth in a greater pain all those comforts so feeble, that he is fain to fall to the seeking of God's help. And therefore is, I say, the very tribulation itself many times a mean to bring the man to the taking of the afore-remembered comfort therein: that is, to wit, to the desire of comfort given by God, which desire of God's comfort is, as I have proved you, great cause of comfort itself.

* Exod. vii.

† Exod. viii.

CHAPTER V.

The special mean to get this first Comfort in Tribulation.



HOWBEIT, though the tribulation itself be a mean oftentimes to get man this first comfort in it, yet itself sometime alone bringeth not a man to it. And therefore sith without this comfort first had, there can in tribulation none other good comfort come forth, we must labour the means that this first comfort may come. And thereunto seemeth me, that if the man of sloth, or impatience, or hope of worldly comfort, have no mind to desire and seek for comfort of God; those that are his friends that come to visit and comfort him must afore all things put that point in his mind, and not spend the time (as they commonly do) in trifling and turning him to the fantasies of the world. They must also move him to pray God put this desire in his mind, which when he getteth once he then hath the first comfort, and without doubt (if it be well considered), a comfort marvellous great. His friends also, that thus counsel him, must unto the attaining thereof help to pray for him themselves, and cause him to desire good folk to help him to pray therefor. And then, if these ways be taken for the getting, I nothing doubt but the goodness of God shall give it.

CHAPTER VI.

It sufficeth not that a man have a desire to be comforted by God only by the taking away of the Tribulation.



INCENT.—**V**ERILY methinketh, good uncle, that this counsel is very good. For except the person have first a desire to be comforted by God, else can I not see what it can avail to give him any further counsel of any spiritual comfort. Howbeit, what

if the man have this desire of God's comfort, that is to wit, that it may please God to comfort him in his tribulation by taking that tribulation from him; is not this a good desire of God's comfort, and a desire sufficient for him that is in tribulation?

ANTONY.—No, cousin, that is it not. I touched before a word of this point, and passed it over, because I thought it would fall in our way again, and so wot I well it will offer than once. And now am I glad that you move it me here yourself. A man may many times well and without sin desire of God the tribulation to be taken from him; but neither may we desire that in every case, nor yet very well in no case (except very few), but under a certain condition, either expressed or implied. For tribulations are (ye wot well) of many sundry kinds: some by loss of goods or possessions; some by the sickness of ourself, and some by the loss of friends, or by some other pain put unto our bodies; some by the dread of losing those things that we fain would save, under which fear fall all the same things that we have spoken before. For we may fear loss of goods or possessions, or the loss of our friends, their grief and

The bitter
kinds of tribu-
lations.

trouble, or our own; by sickness, imprisonment, or other bodily pain we may be troubled with the dread of death, and many a good man is troubled most of all with the fear of that thing, which he that most need hath fearest least of all, that is to wit, the fear of losing through deadly sin the life of his silly soul. And this last kind of tribulation, as the sorest tribulation of all, though we touched here and there some pieces thereof before, yet the chief part and the principal point will I reserve, to treat apart effectually that matter in the last end.

But now, as I said, where the kinds of tribulation are so divers, some of these tribulations a man may pray God take from him, and take some comfort in the trust that God will so do. And therefore against hunger, sickness, and bodily hurt, and against the loss of either body or soul, men may lawfully many times pray to the goodness of God, either for themselves or their friend. And toward this purpose are expressly prayed many devout orisons in the common service of our Mother Holy Church. And toward our help in some of these things serve some of the petitions in the *Pater-noster*,* wherein we pray daily for our daily food, and to be preserved from the fall in temptation, and to be delivered from evil. But yet may we not alway pray for the taking away from us of every kind of temptation. For if a man should in every sickness pray for his health again, when should he shew himself content to die and to depart unto God? And that mind must a man have, ye wot well, or else it will not be well.

One tribulation is it to good men, to feel in themselves the conflict of the flesh against the soul, the rebellion of sensuality against the rule and governance of reason, the relics that remain in mankind of old original sin, of which St. Paul so sore complaineth in his Epistle to the Romans.† And yet may we not pray, while we stand in this life, to have this kind of tribulation utterly taken from us. For it is left us by God's ordinance to strive against it, and fight withal, and by reason and grace to master it, and use it for the matter of our merit. For the salvation of our soul may we boldly pray; for grace may we boldly

* Matth. vi.

† Rom. vii.

pray; for faith, for hope, and for charity, and for every such virtue as shall serve us to heaven-ward. But as for all other things before remembered, in which is conceived the matter of every kind of tribulation, we may never well make prayers so precisely but that we must express or imply a condition therein; that is to wit, that if God see the contrary better for us, we refer it whole to his will, and instead of our grief taking away, pray that God may send us of his goodness either spiritual comfort to take it gladly, or strength at leastwise to bear it patiently. For if we determine with ourself that we will take no comfort in nothing, but in the taking of our tribulation from us; then either prescribe we to God, that we will he shall no better turn do us, though he would, than we will ourself appoint him; or else do we declare that what thing is best for us, ourself can better tell than he.

And therefore, I say, let us in tribulation desire his comfort and help, and let us remit the manner of that comfort unto his own high pleasure; which, when we do, let us nothing doubt, but that like as his high wisdom better seeth what is best for us than we can see ourself, so shall his high sovereign goodness give us that thing that shall indeed be best. For else if we will presume to stand to our own choice, except it so be that God offer us the choice himself (as he did to David in the choice of his own punishment, after his high pride conceived in the numbering of his people*), we may foolishly choose the worst; and by the prescribing unto God ourself so precisely what we will that he shall do for us (except that of his gracious favour he reject our folly), he shall for indignation grant us our own request, and after shall we well find that it shall turn us to harm.

How many men attain health of body, that were better for their souls' health their bodies were sick still! How many get out of prison, that hap on such harm abroad as the prison should have kept them from! How many that have been loth to lose their worldly goods, have in keeping of their goods soon after lost their lives! So blind is our mortality, and so unaware what will fall, so unsure also

* 2 Reg. xxiv.

what manner of mind we will have to-morrow, that God could not lightly do man a more vengeance than in this world to grant him his own foolish wishes. What wit have we (poor fools) to wit what will serve us, when the blessed Apostle himself in his sore tribulation,* praying thrice unto God to take it away from him, was answered again by God in a manner that he was but a fool in asking that request, but that the help of God's grace in that tribulation to strengthen him was far better for him, than to take the tribulation from him? And therefore, by experience perceiving well the truth of that lesson, he giveth us good warning not to be bold of our own minds when we require aught of God, nor to be precise in our askings, but refer the choice to God at his own pleasure. For his own Holy Spirit so sore desireth our weal, that, as men say, he groaneth for us in such wise as no tongue can tell. *Nos autem* (saith St. Paul)† *quid oremus ut oportet, nescimus; sed ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus*, —We, what we may pray for that were behoveable for us, cannot ourself tell: but the Spirit himself desireth for us with unspeakable groanings.

And therefore, I say, for conclusion of this point, let us never ask of God precisely our own ease by delivering us from our tribulation, but pray for his aid and comfort, by which ways himself shall best like; and then may we take comfort, even of our such request. For both be we sure that this mind cometh of God, and also be we very sure that as he beginneth to work with us, so (but if ourself flit from him) he will not fail to tarry with us; and then, he dwelling with us, what trouble can do us harm? *Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?*—If God be with us (saith St. Paul), who can stand against us?‡

* 2 Cor. xii.

† Rom. viii.

‡ Rom. viii.

CHAPTER VII.

A great Comfort it may be in Tribulation, that every Tribulation is, if we ourself will, a thing either medicinable or else more than medicinable.



VINCENT.—You have, good uncle, well opened and declared the question that I demanded you, that is to wit, what manner of comfort a man might pray for in tribulation. And now proceed forth, good uncle, and shew us yet farther some other spiritual comfort in tribulation.

ANTONY.—This may be, thinketh me, good cousin, great comfort in tribulation, that every tribulation which any time falleth unto us is either sent to be medicinable, if men will so take it; or may become medicinable, if men will make of it; or is better than medicinable, but if we will forsake it.

VINCENT.—Surely, this is very comfortable, if we may well perceive it.

ANTONY.—These three things that I tell you, we shall consider thus. Every tribulation that we fall in, cometh either by our own known deserving deed bringing us thereunto, as the sickness that followeth our intemperate surfeit, or the prisonment or other punishment put upon a man for his heinous crime; or else is it sent us by God without any certain deserving cause open and known unto ourself, either for punishment of some sins past (certainly we know not for which), or for preserving us from some sins, in which we were else like to fall, or, finally, for no respect of the man's sin at all, but for the proof of his patience and increase of his merit. In all the former cases tribulation is (if he will) medicinable: in this last case of all it is better than medicinable.

CHAPTER VIII.

The declaration larger concerning them that fall in Tribulation by their own known fault, and that yet such Tribulation is medicinable.



VINCENT.—This seemeth me very good, good uncle, saving that it seemeth somewhat brief and short, and thereby methinketh somewhat obscure and dark.

ANTONY.—We shall therefore, to give it light withal, touch every member somewhat more at large. One member is, you wot well, of them that fall in tribulation through their own certain well-deserving deed open and known unto themselves, as where we fall in a sickness following upon our own gluttonous feasting, or a man that is punished for his own open fault. These tribulations, lo! and such other like, albeit that they may seem discomfortable, in that a man may be sorry to think himself the cause of his own harm; yet hath he good cause of comfort in them, if he consider that he may make them medicinable for himself, if he himself will. For whereas there was due to that sin (except it were purged here) a far greater punishment after this world in another place; this worldly tribulation of pain and punishment, by God's good provision for him put upon him here in this world before, shall by the mean of Christ's passion (if the man will in true faith and good hope, by meek and patient sufferance of his tribulation, so make it), serve him for a sure medicine, to cure him and clearly discharge him of all the sickness and disease of those pains, that else he should suffer after.

For such is the great goodness of Almighty God, that he punisheth not one thing twice. And albeit so, that this punishment is put unto the man, not of his own

election and free choice, but so by force as he would fain avoid it, and falleth in it against his will, and therefore seemeth worthy no thank; yet so far passeth the great goodness of God the poor imperfect goodness of man, that though men make their reckoning one here with another such, God yet of his high bounty in man's account toward him alloweth it far otherwise. For though that otherwise a man fall in his pain by his own fault, and also first against his will, yet as soon as he confesseth his fault, and applieth his will to be content to suffer that pain and punishment for the same, and waxeth sorry, not for that only that he shall sustain such punishment, but for that also that he hath offended God, and thereby deserved much more: our Lord from that time counteth it not for pain taken against his will, but it shall be a marvellous good medicine and work (as a willingly taken pain) the purgation and cleansing of his soul, with gracious remission of his sin, and of the far greater pain that else had been prepared therefor peradventure in hell for ever. For many there are undoubtedly, that would else drive forth and die in their deadly sin, which yet in such tribulation, feeling their own frailty so effectually, and the false flattering world failing them so fully, turn goodly to God and call for mercy, and by grace make virtue of necessity, and make a medicine of their malady, taking their trouble meekly, and make a right godly end.

Consider well the story of Achan, that committed sacrilege at the great city of Hierico, whereupon God took a great vengeance upon the children of Israel, and after told them the cause, and bade them go seek the fault and try it out by lots; when the lot fell upon the very man that did it, being tried by the falling first upon his tribe, and then upon his house, and finally upon his person, he might well see that he was deprehended and taken against his will, but yet, at the good exhortation of Josue,* saying unto him, *Fili mi, da gloriam Domino Deo Israel, et confitere, ac indica mihi quid feceris, ne abscondas*,—Mine own son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and con-

* Josue vii.

fess, and shew me what thou hast done, hide it not;—he confessed humbly the theft and meekly took his death therefor, and had, I doubt not, both strength and comfort in his pain, and died a very good man: which, if he had never come in tribulation, had been in peril never haply to have had just remorse thereof in all his whole life, but might have died wretchedly, and gone to the devil eternally. And thus made this thief a good medicine of his well-deserved pain and tribulation. Consider the well-converted thief that hung on Christ's right hand.* Did not he (by his meek sufferance and humble knowledge of his fault, asking forgiveness of God, and yet content to suffer for his sin) make of his just punishment and well-deserved tribulation a very good special medicine to cure him of all pain in the other world, and win him eternal salvation? And thus, I say, that this kind of tribulation, though it seem the most base and the least comfortable, is yet (if the man will so make it) a very marvellous wholesome medicine; and may therefore be to the man that will so consider it, a great cause of comfort and spiritual consolation.

* Lucæ xxiü.

CHAPTER IX.

The second point, that is to wit, of that Tribulation that is sent us by God, without any open certain deserving cause known to ourself, and that this kind of Tribulation is medicinable, if men will so take it, and therefore great occasion of Comfort.



INCENT.—VERILY, mine uncle, this first kind of tribulation have you to my mind opened sufficiently, and therefore I pray you resort now to the second.

ANTONY.—The second kind was, you wot well, of such tribulation as is so sent us by God, that we know no certain cause deserving the present trouble, as we certainly know that upon such a pursuit we fall in such a sickness; or as the thief knoweth that for such a certain theft he is fallen into such a certain punishment. But yet sith we seldom lack faults against God, worthy and well deserving great punishment: indeed we may well think, and wisdom it is so to do, that with sin we have deserved it, and that God for some sin sendeth it, though we certainly know not ourself for which. And, therefore, as yet thus far forth is this kind of tribulation somewhat in effect in comfort to be taken like unto the other: for this, as you see, if we thus will take it, well reckoning it to be sent for sin, and suffering it meekly therefor, is medicinable against the pain in the other world to come for our sins in this world past, which is, as I shewed you, a cause of right great comfort. But yet may then this kind of tribulation be to some men of more sober living, and thereby of the more clear conscience, somewhat a little more comfortable. For though they may none otherwise reckon themselves than sinners (for as St. Paul saith,* *Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed non*

* 1 Cor. iv.

in hoc justificatus sum,—My conscience grudgeth me not of any thing, but yet am I not thereby justified; and as St. John saith,* *Si dixerimus, quin peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus et veritas in nobis non est*.—If we say that we have no sin in us, we beguile ourself, and truth is there not in us), yet forasmuch as the cause is to them not so certain, as it is to the other afore remembered in the first kind, and that it is also certain, that God sometime sendeth tribulation for keeping and preserving a man from such sin as he should else fall in, and sometime also for exercise of patience and increase of merit, great cause of increase in comfort have those folk of the clearer conscience in the fervour of their tribulation, in that they may take the comfort of double medicine, and of that is the kind which we shall finally speak of that I call better than medicinable. But as I have before spoken of this kind of tribulation, how it is medicinable in that it cureth the sin past, and purchaseth remission of the pain due therefor; so let us somewhat consider, how this tribulation sent us by God is medicinable, in that it preserve thus from the sins into which we were else like to fall.

If that thing be a good medicine that restoreth us our health when we lose it; as good a medicine must this needs be that preserveth our health while we have it, and suffereth us not to fall into the painful sickness that must after drive us to a painful plaster. Now seeth God sometime that worldly wealth is with one (that is yet good) coming upon him so fast, that foreseeing how much weight of worldly wealth the man may bear, and how much will overcharge him, and enhance his heart up so high that grace shall fall from him low; God of his goodness, I say, preventeth his fall, and sendeth him tribulation by time while he is yet good, to gar him ken his Maker, and by less liking the false flattering world, set a cross upon the ship of his heart, and bear a low sail thereon, that the boisterous blast of pride blow him not under the water.

Some young lovely lady, lo! that is yet good enough,

* 1 Joan. i.

Another exam-
ple no less
merit than
truly brought
in.

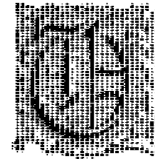
God seeth a storm come toward her, that would (if her health and her fat feeding should a little longer last) strike her into some lecherous love, and, instead of her old acquainted knight, lay her abed with a new acquainted knave. But God loving her more tenderly than to suffer her fall into such shameful beastly sin, sendeth her in season a goodly fair fervent fever, that maketh her bones to rattle, and wasteth away her wanton flesh, and beautifieth her fair fell with the colour of a kite's claw, and maketh her look so lovely, that her lover would have little lust to look upon her, and make her also so lusty, that if her lover lay in her lap, she should so sore long to break unto him the very bottom of her stomach, that she should not be able to refrain it from him, but suddenly lay it all in his neck.

Did not (as I before shewed you) the blessed Apostle himself confess,* that the high revelation that God had given him, might have enhanced him into such high pride that he might have caught a foul fall, had not the provident goodness of God provided for his remedy? And what was his remedy, but a painful tribulation, so sore that he was fain thrice to call to God to take the tribulation from him: and yet would not God grant his request, but let him lie so long therein, till himself, that saw more in St. Paul than St. Paul saw in himself, wist well the time was come in which he might well without his harm take it from him. And thus you see, good cousin, that tribulation is double medicine, both a cure of the sin past and a preservative from the sin that is to come. And therefore in this kind of tribulation is there good occasion of a double comfort; but that is (I say) diversly to sundry divers folks, as their own conscience is with sin cumbered or clear. Howbeit I will advise no man to be so bold as to think that their tribulation is sent them to keep them from the pride of their holiness. Let men leave that kind of comfort hardly to St. Paul till their living be like; but of the remnant may men well take great comfort and good beside.

* 2 Cor. xii.

CHAPTER X.

Of the third kind of Tribulation, which is not sent a man for his sin, but for exercise of his patience and increase of his merit, which is better than medicinable.



TRICENENT.—THE third kind, uncle, that remaineth now behind, that is to wit, which is sent a man by God, and not for his sin neither committed nor which would else come, and therefore is not medicinable but sent for exercise of our patience and increase of our merit, and therefore better than medicinable: though it be as you say, and as indeed it is, better for the man than any of the other two kinds in another world, where the reward shall be received: yet can I not see by what reason a man may in this world, where the tribulation is suffered, take any more comfort therein than in any of the other twain that are sent a man for his sin; sith he cannot here know whether it be sent him for sin before committed, or sin that else should fall, or for increase of merit and reward after to come; namely, sith every man hath cause enough to fear and think that his sin already past hath deserved it, and that it is not without peril a man to think otherwise.

ANTONY.—This that you say, cousin, hath place of truth in far the most part of men, and therefore must they not envy nor disdain (sith they may take in their tribulation consolation for their part sufficient) that some other that more be worthy, take yet a great deal more. For, as I told you, cousin, though the best man must confess himself a sinner, yet be there many men (though to the

multitude few) that for the kind of their living, and thereby the clearness of their conscience, may well and without sin have a good hope that God sendeth them some great grief for exercise of their patience, and for increase of their merit; as it appeareth, not only by St. Paul* in the place before remembered, but also by the holy man Job,† which in sundry places of his dispicions with his burdenous comforters letted not to say, that the clearness of his own conscience declared and shewed to himself that he deserved not that sore tribulation that he then had. Howbeit, as I told you before, I will not advise every man at a venture to be bold upon this manner of comfort. But yet some men know I such, as I durst (for their more ease and comfort in their great and grievous pains) put them in right good hope, that God sendeth it unto them not so much for their punishment, as for exercise of their patience. And some tribulations are there also that grow upon such causes, that in these cases I would never let, but always would without any doubt give that counsel and comfort to any man.

VINCENT.—What causes, good uncle, be those?

The causes of tribulation sent only for exercise of patience. ANTONY.—Marry, cousin, wheresoever a man falleth in tribulation for the maintenance of justice, or for the defence of God's cause. For if I should hap to find a man that had long lived a very virtuous life, and had at last happed to fall into the Turks' hands, and there did abide by the truth of his faith, and with the suffering of all kind of torments taken upon his body, still did teach and testify the truth, if I should in his passion give him spiritual comfort, might I be bold to tell him no farther, but that he should take patience in his pain, and that God sendeth it him for his sin, and that he is well worthy to have it although it were yet much more? He might then well answer me and such other comforters, as Job‡ answered bis, *Consolutores onerosi omnes vos estis*, —Burdenous and heavy comforters be you. Nay, I would not fail to bid him boldly, while I should see him in his passion, cast sin, and hell, and purgatory, and all upon the devil's pate, and doubt not, but like as if he gave over

* 2 Cor. xii.

† Job vi. xxiii. xxxi.

‡ Job xvi.

his hold, all his merit were lost, and he turned to misery; so if he stand and persevere still in the confession of his faith, all his whole pain shall turn all into glory.

Yea, more shall I yet say than this: that if there were a Christian man that had among those infidels committed a very deadly crime, such as were worthy death, not by their laws only, but by Christ's too, as manslaughter or adultery, or such other thing like, if when he were taken he were offered pardon of his life, upon condition that he should forsake the faith of Christ; if this man would now rather suffer death than so do, should I comfort him in his pain but as I would a malefactor? Nay, this man, though he should have died for his sin, dieth now for Christ's sake, while he might live still, if he would forsake him. The bare patient taking of his death should have served for satisfaction of his sin through the merit of Christ's passion, I mean, without help of which no pain of our own could be satisfactory. But now shall Christ for his forsaking of his own life in the honour of his faith, forgive the pain of all his sins of his mere liberality, and accept all the pain of his death for merit of reward in heaven, and shall assign no part thereof to the payment of his debt in purgatory, but shall take it all as an offering, and requite it all with glory; and this man among Christian men, all had he been before a devil, nothing after would, I doubt, to take him for a martyr.

VINCENT.—Verily, good uncle, methinketh this is said marvellously well, and it specially delighteth and comforteth me to hear it, because of our principal fear that I first spake of, the Turks' cruel incursion into this country of ours.

ANTONY.—Cousin, as for the matter of that fear, I purpose to touch last of all, nor I meant not here to speak thereof, had it not been for that the vehemency of your objection brought it in my way. But rather would I else have put some example for this place, of such as suffer tribulation for maintenance of right and justice, and that rather choose to take harm than do wrong in

Without the merit of Christ's passion, no pain of man can be satisfactory.

any manner of matter. For surely if a man may (as indeed he may) have great comfort in the clearness of his conscience, that hath a false crime put upon him, and by false witness proved upon him, and he falsely punished, and put to worldly shame and pain therefor; and put to worldly shame and pain therefor; and right is called wrong, abideth by the truth, and is persecuted for justice.

VINCENT.—Then if a man sue me wrongfully for my own land, in which myself have good right, it is a comfort yet to defend it well, sith God shall give me thank therefor.

ANTONY.—Nay, nay, cousin, nay: there walk you somewhat wide; for there you defend your own right for your temporal avail. And sith St. Paul counselleth,* *Non vosmetipos defendentes charissimi*.—Defend not yourself, my most dear friend: and our Saviour counselleth,† *Si quis vult tecum iudicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium*.—If a man will strive with thee at the law, and take away thy coat, leave him thy gown too: the defence, therefore, of our own right asketh no reward. Say, you speed well, if you get leave; look hardly for no thank. But, on the other side, if you do as St. Paul biddeth,‡ *Non quæ sua sunt singuli considerantes, sed ea quæ aliorum*.—Seek not for your own profit, but for other folks'; and defend, therefore, of pity, a poor widow, or a poor fatherless child, and rather suffer sorrow by some strong extortioner, than suffer them take wrong: or, if you be a judge, and will have such zeal to justice that you will rather abide tribulation by the malice of some mighty man, than judge wrong for his favour; such tribulations, lo! be those that are better than only medicinal, and every man upon whom they fall may be bold so to reckon them, and in his deep trouble may well say to himself the words that Christ hath taught him for his comfort,§ *Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur*.—Blessed be the merciful men, for they shall have mercy given them; *Beati qui persecutio-*

* Rom. xii.

† Matth. v.

‡ Phil. ii.

§ Matth. v.

nem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cælorum.—Blessed be they that suffer persecution for justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Here is an high comfort, lo! for them that are in that case. And in this case their own conscience can shew it them, and so may fulfil their hearts with spiritual joy, that the pleasure may far surmount the heaviness and the grief of all their temporal trouble. But God's nearer cause of faith against the Turks hath yet a far passing comfort, that by many degrees far excelleth this, which (as I have said) I purpose to treat last. And for this time this sufficeth, concerning the special comfort that men may take in this third kind of tribulation.

CHAPTER XI.

Another kind of Comfort yet in the base kind of Tribulation sent for our sin.



INCENT.—OF truth, good uncle, albeit that every of these kinds of tribulations have cause of comfort in them as you have well declared, if men will so consider them: yet hath this third kind above all a special prerogative therein.

ANTONY.—That is undoubtedly true; but yet is there not, good cousin, the most base kind of them all, but that it hath more causes of comfort than I have spoken of yet. For I have, you wot well, in that kind that is sent us for our sins, spoken of none other comfort yet but twain: that is to wit, one, that it refraineth us from sin that else we would fall in, and in that serveth us through the merit of Christ's passion as a mean by which God keepeth us from hell; and serveth for the satisfaction of such pain, as else we should endure in purgatory. Howbeit there is therein another great cause of joy besides this. For surely those pains here sent us for our sins, in whatsoever wise they happen unto us, be our sin never so sore, nor never so open and evident unto ourself and all the world too; yet if we pray for grace to take it meekly and patiently, and confessing to God that it is far over too little for our fault, beseech him yet, nevertheless, that sith we shall come hence so void of all good works whereof we should have any reward in heaven, to be not only so merciful to us, as to take that our present tribulation in relief of our pains in purgatory, but also so gracious unto us, as to take our patience therein for a matter of merit

and reward in heaven: I verily trust, and nothing doubt it, but that God shall of his high bounty grant us our boon. For likewise as in hell pain serveth only for punishment without any manner of purging, because all possibility of purging is past; and in purgatory punishment serveth for only purging, because the place of deserving is past; so while we be yet in this world, in which is our place and our time of merit and well deserving, the tribulation that is sent us for our sin here shall (if we faithfully so desire), beside the cleansing and purging of our pain, serve us also for increase of reward. And so shall, I suppose and trust in God's goodness, all such penance and good works, as a man willingly performeth enjoined by his ghostly father in confession, or which he willingly farther doth of his own devotion beside.

For though man's penance, with all the good works that he can do, be not able to satisfy of himself for the least sin that we do; yet the liberal goodness of God through the merit of Christ's bitter passion, without which all our works could neither satisfy nor deserve, nor yet do not in deed neither merit nor satisfy so much as a spoonful to a great vesselful, in comparison of the merit and satisfaction that Christ hath merited and satisfied for us himself: this liberal goodness of God, I say, shall yet at our faithful instance and request cause our penance and tribulation, patiently taken in this world, to serve us in the other world, both for release and reward, tempered after such rate as his high goodness and wisdom shall see convenient for us, whereof our blind mortality cannot here imagine nor devise the stint. And thus hath yet even the first kind of tribulation and the most base, though not fully so great as the second, and very far less than the third, far greater cause of comfort yet, than I spake of before.

CHAPTER XII.

A certain objection against the things aforesaid.



INCENT.—**VERILY**, good uncle, this liketh me very well; but yet is there (ye wot well) some of these things now brought in question. For as for any pain due for our sin to be minished in purgatory by the patient sufferance of our tribulation here; there are, ye wot well, many that utterly deny that, and affirm for a sure truth, that there is no purgatory at all. And then is (if they say true) the cause of that comfort gone, if the comfort that we should take be in vain and need not. They say, ye wot well also, that men merit nothing at all, but God giveth all for faith alone, and that it were sin and sacrilege to look for reward in heaven, either for our patience and glad suffering for God's sake, or for any other good deed; and then is there gone (if this be thus) the other cause of our farther comfort too.

ANTONY.—Cousin, if some things were as they be not, then should some things be as they shall not. I cannot indeed say nay, but that some men have of late brought up some such opinions, and many more than these besides, and have spread them abroad. And, albeit that it is a right heavy thing to see such variances in our belief rise and grow among ourself, to the great encouraging of the common enemies of us all, whereby they have our faith in derision, and catch hope to overwhelm us all: yet do these three things not a little comfort my mind.

The first is, That in some communications had of late

together, hath appeared good likelihood of some good agreement to grow together in one accord of our faith.

The second, That in the meanwhile till this may come to pass, contentious dispicions with uncharitable behaviour are prohibited and forbidden in effect upon all parts: all such parts, I mean, as fell before to fight for it.

The third is, That all Germany, for all their divers opinions, yet as they agree together in profession of Christ's name, so agree they now together in preparation of a common power in defence of Christendom against our common enemy the Turk. And I trust to God that this shall not only help us here to strength us in this war, but also that as God hath caused them to agree together in the defence of the contrary mind, shall in reason have no cause to be discontented.

For first, as for purgatory, though they think there be none, yet since they deny not that all the corps of Christendom by so many hundred years have believed the contrary; and among them all the old interpreters of Scripture, from the Apostles' days down to our own time, of whom they deny not many for holy saints; that I dare not believe these men against all those, these men must of their courtesy hold my poor fear excused. And I beseech our Lord heartily for them, that when they depart out of this wretched world, they find no purgatory at all: so God keep them from hell.

And as for the merit of man in his good works, neither are they that deny it full agreed among themselves, nor any man is there almost of them all that, sith they began to write, hath not somewhat changed and varied from himself; and for the more part are thus far agreed with us, that like as we grant them that no good work is aught worth to heavenward without faith, and that no good work of man is rewardable in heaven of his own nature, but through the mere goodness of God that list to set so high a price upon so poor a thing; and that this price God setteth through Christ's passion, and for that also that they be his own

Purgatory.

The surest ground and stay in all matters of controversy.

How wisely and how charitably said.

Merit of man.

works with us (for good works to God-ward worketh no man without God work with him), and as we grant them also that no man may be proud of his works for his own imperfect working, and for that in all that man may do, he can do God no good, but is a servant unprofitable,* and doth but his bare duty; as we, I say, grant unto them these things, so this one thing or twain do they grant us again, that men are bound to work good works if they have time and power; and that whoso worketh in true faith most, shall be most rewarded. But then set they thereto, that all his reward shall be given him for his faith alone, and nothing for his works at all, because his faith is the thing (they say) that forceth him to work well.

Strive will I not with them for this matter now, but yet this I trust to the great goodness of God, that if the question hang on that narrow point, while Christ saith in the Scripture† in so many places, that men shall in heaven be rewarded for their works, he shall never suffer our souls that are but mean-witted men, and can understand his words but as himself hath set them, and as old holy saints have construed them before, and as all Christian people this thousand year have believed, to be damned for lack of perceiving such a sharp subtle thing; specially sith some men that have right good wits, and are beside that right well learned too, can in no wise perceive, for what cause or why these folk that from good works take away the reward, and give the reward all whole to faith alone, give the reward to faith, rather than to charity. For this grant they themselves, that faith serveth of nothing but if she be companied with her sister charity. And then saith the Scripture too: ‡ *Fides, Spes, Caritas: tria hæc, major autem horum est Caritas*.—Of these three virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, of all these three the greatest is Charity,—and therefore as worthy to have the thank as Faith. Howbeit, as I said, I will not strive therefor, nor indeed, as our matter standeth, I shall not greatly need. For if they say, that he which suffereth tribulation or martyr-

Charity is
greater than
Faith.

* Lucæ xvii.

† Matth. v.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii.

dom for the faith, shall have high reward, not for his work but for his well-working faith; yet sith that they grant that have it he shall, the cause of high comfort in the third degree standeth, and that is, you wot well, the effect of all my purpose.

VINCENT.—Verily, good uncle, this is truly driven and tried unto the uttermost, as it seemeth me. And therefore, I pray you, proceed at your pleasure.

CHAPTER XIII.

That a man ought to be comfortable to himself, and have good hope, and be joyful also in Tribulation, appeareth well by this, that a man hath great cause of fear and heaviness that continueth alway still in wealth, discontinued with no Tribulation.



Tribulation
full of com-
modity.

ANTONY.—COUSIN, it were a long work to peruse every comfort that a man may well take of tribulation. For as many comforts (you wot well) may a man take thereof as there be good commodities therein; and that be there surely so many, that it would be very long to rehearse and treat of them. But me seemeth we cannot lightly better perceive what profit and commodity, and thereby what comfort they may take of it that have it, than if we well consider what harm the lack is, and thereby what discomfort the lack thereof should be to them that never have it.

So is it now, that all holy men agree, and all the Scripture is full, and our own experience proveth at our eye, that we be not come into this wretched world to dwell here, nor have not (as St. Paul saith)* our dwelling city here, but we be seeking for the city that is to come; and therefore St. Paul sheweth us that we do seek for it, as they that are good folk, and fain would come thither, do. For surely whoso setteth so little thereby that he listeth not to seek therefor, it will, I fear me, be long ere he come thereat, and marvellous great grace if he ever come thither. *Sic currite*, saith St. Paul, † *ut comprehen-*

* Heb. xiii.

† 1 Cor. ix.

datis,—Run so, that you may get it. If it must then be gotten with running, when shall he come at it that list not once step toward it? Now because that this world is, as I tell you, not our eternal dwelling, but our little while wandering, God would that we should in such wise use it, as folk that were weary of it; and that we should in this vale of labour, toil, tears, and misery, not look for rest and ease, game, pleasure, wealth, and felicity. For they that so do fare like a foul fellow, that going towards his own house where he should be wealthy, would for a tapster's pleasure become an hostler by the way and die in a stable, and never come at home. And would God that those that drown themselves in the desire of this world's wretched wealth, were not yet more fools than so!

But, alas! their folly as far passeth the foolishness of that other fond fellow, as there is distance between the height of heaven and the very depth of hell. For our Saviour saith, *Væ vobis qui ridetis nunc, quia lugebitis et flebitis*,—Wo may you be that laugh now, for you shall wail and weep.* *Est tempus flendi* (saith the Scripture) *et est tempus ridendi*,—There is time of weeping and there is time of laughing.† But, as you see, he setteth the weeping time before; for that is the time of this wretched world, and the laughing time shall come after in heaven. There is also a time of sowing, and a time of reaping too. Now must we in this world sow, that we may in the other world reap; and in this short sowing time of this weeping world, must we water our seed with the showers of our tears; and then shall we have in heaven a merry laughing harvest for ever. *Euntes ibant et flebant* (saith the prophet) *mittentes semina sua*,—They went forth and sowed their seeds weeping.‡ But what, saith he, shall follow thereof? *Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos*,—They shall come again more than laughing, with great joy and exultation, with their handfuls of corn in their hands. Lo, they that in their going home towards heaven sow their seed with weeping,

* Luc. vi.

† Eccl. iii.

‡ Psalm cxxv.

shall at the day of judgment come to their bodies again, with everlasting plenty, laughing.

And for to prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather the time of weeping; we find that our Saviour himself wept twice or thrice, but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear that he never did, but at the least wise he left us no ensample of it. But, on the other side, he left us ensample of weeping.*

Of weeping have we matter enough, both for our own sins, and for other folks' too; for surely so should we do, bewail their wretched sins, and not be glad to detract

them, nor envy them neither. Alas! silly souls, what cause is there to envy them that are ever wealthy in this world, and ever out of

tribulation? which (as Job saith) *ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt*,—lead all their days in wealth, and in a moment of an hour descend into their graves, and be painfully buried in hell.† St. Paul saith unto the Hebrews, that God those that he loveth, he chastiseth. *Et flagellat omnem filium quem recipit*,—

And he scourgeth every son of his that he receiveth.‡ St. Paul saith also, *Per multas tribulationes oportet nos introire in regnum Dei*,—By many tribulations must we go into the kingdom of God.§ And no marvel, for our Saviour Christ said so himself unto his two disciples that were going unto the castle of Emmaus, *An nesciebatis, quia oportebat Christum pati, et sic introire in regnum suum?*—Knew you not, that Christ must suffer, and so go into his kingdom?|| And would we, that are servants, look for more privilege in our Master's house than our Master himself? Would we get into his kingdom with ease, when he himself got not into his own but by pain? His kingdom hath he ordained for his disciples, and he saith unto us all, *Qui vult esse meus discipulus, tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me*,—If any man will be my disciple, let him learn of me to do as I have

done,* take his cross of tribulation upon his back and follow me. He saith not here, lo! let him laugh, and make merry.

Now, if heaven serve hut for Christ's disciples, and they be those that take their cross of tribulation; when shall these folk come there, that never have tribulation? And if it be true that St. Paul saith, that God chastiseth all them that he loveth, and scourgeth every child whom he receiveth,† and to heaven shall none come but such as he loveth and receiveth, when shall they then come thither whom he never chastiseth, nor never doth vouchsafe to file his hands upon them, nor give them so much as one lash? And if we cannot (as St. Paul saith we cannot) come to heaven but by many tribulations,‡ how shall they come thither then, that never have none at all? Thus see we well by the very Scripture itself, how true the words are of old holy saints, that with one voice in a manner say all one thing, that is to wit, that we shall not have both continual wealth in this world and in the other too. And therefore, sith they that in this world without any tribulation enjoy their long continual course of never interrupted prosperity, have a great cause of fear and discomfort lest they be far fallen out of God's favour, and stand deep in his indignation and displeasure, while he never sendeth them tribulation, which he is ever wont to send them whom he loveth; they therefore, I say, that are in tribulation, have on the other side a great cause to take in their grief great inward comfort and spiritual consolation.

* Matth. xvi. [Luke.]

† Heb. xii.

‡ Act. xiv.

* [Our Saviour wept upon the city of Jerusalem, Luc. xix. Upon Lazarus, John ii. And in his passion, Heb. v.]

† Job xxi.

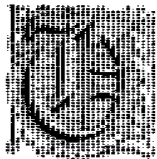
‡ Hebræ. xii.

§ Act. xiv.

|| Lucæ xxiv.

CHAPTER XIV.

A certain objection, and the answer thereto.



INCENT.—**VERILY**, good uncle, this seemeth so, indeed. Howbeit, yet, methink you say very sore in some things concerning such persons as are in continual prosperity; and they be, you wot well, not a few, and those are they also that have the rule and authority of this world in their hand. And I wot well, that when they talk with such great cunning men, as can (I trow) tell the truth; and when they ask them whether (while they make merry here in earth all their life) they may not yet for all that have heaven after too; they do tell them, yes, yes, well enough: for I have heard them tell them so myself.

ANTONY.—I suppose, good cousin, that no very wise man, and specially none that very good is therewith, will tell any man fully of that fashion. But surely such as so say to them, I fear me that they flatter them, either for lucre or fear. Some of them *flatter* think peradventure thus:—This man maketh much of me now, and giveth me money also to fast, and watch, and pray for him; but so I fear me would he do no more, if I should go tell him now, that all that I do for him will not serve him, but if he go fast, and watch, and pray for himself too. For if I should see thereto and say farther, that my diligent intercession for him should (I trust) be the mean that God should the sooner give him grace to amend, and fast, and watch, and pray, and take affliction in his own body for the bettering of his sinful soul, he would be wondrous wroth with that. For he would be

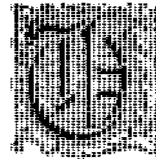
loth to have any such grace at all as should make him go leave off any of his mirth, and so sit and mourn for his sin. Such mind as this, lo! have there some of those that are not unlearned, and have ^{Yea, and a great some.} worldly wit at will, which tell great men such tales as perilously beguile them, rather than the flatterer that so telleth them would with a true tale jeopard to leese his lucre.

Some are there also that such tales tell them for consideration of another fear. For seeing the man so sore set on his pleasure that they despair any amendment of him whatsoever they should shew him, and then seeing also beside that the man doth no great harm, but of a gentle nature doth some good men some good; they pray God himself to send him grace, and so they let him lie lame still in his fleshly lusts *ad probaticam piscinam, expectantes aquæ motum*,* at the pool that the Gospel speaketh of beside the Temple, wherein they washed the sheep for the sacrifice, and they tarry to see the water stirred. And when his good angel coming from God shall once begin to stir the water of his heart, and move him to the lowly meekness of a simple sheep, then if he call them to him they will tell him another tale, and help to bear him and plunge him into the pool of penance over the hard ears. But in the meanwhile, for fear lest when he would wax never the better he would wax much the worse, and from gentle, forsooth, sweet, and courteous, wax angry, rough, froward, and sour, and thereupon be troublous and tedious to the world; to make fair weather withal, they give him fair words for the while, and put him in good comfort, and let him for the remanent stand at his own adventure. And in such wise deal they with him as the mother doth sometime with her child, which, when the little boy will not rise in time for her, but lie still a-bed and slug, and when he is up weepeth because he hath lain so long, fearing to be beaten at school for his late coming thither; she telleth him then that it is but early days, and he shall come time enough, and biddeth him go, good son, I warrant thee, I have sent to thy master

* Joan. v.

myself, take thy bread and butter with thee, thou shalt not be beaten at all. And thus (so she may send him merry forth at the door, that he weep not in her sight at home) she studieth not much upon the matter, though he be taken tardy, and beaten when he cometh to school. Surely thus, I fear me, fare there many friars and States' chaplains too, in comfort giving to great men when they be loth to displeas them. I cannot commend their thus doing, but surely I fear me thus they do.

CHAPTER XV.

Other objections.

INCENT.—But yet, good uncle, though some do thus, this answereth not full the matter. For we see that the whole Church in the Common Service useth divers collects, in which all men pray specially for the princes and the prelates, and generally every man for other, and for himself too, that God would vouchsafe to send them all perpetual health and prosperity. And I can see no good man pray God send another sorrow, nor no such prayers are put in the priest's portasse, as far as I can hear.

And yet if it were as you say, good uncle, that perpetual prosperity were to the soul so perilous, and tribulation thereto so fruitful; then were (as me seemeth) every man bounden of charity, not only to pray God send their neighbour sorrow, but also to help thereto himself. And when folk are sick, not pray God send them health, but when they come to comfort them they should say, I am glad, good gossip, that you be so sick, I pray God keep you long therein. And neither should any man give any medicine to another, nor take any medicine himself neither; for by the minishing of the tribulation, he taketh away part of the profit from his soul, which can with no bodily profit be sufficiently recompensed.

And also this wot you well, good uncle, that we read in holy Scripture of men that were wealthy and rich, and yet were good withal.* Solomon was, you wot well, the

* 2 Reg. x.

richest and the most wealthy king that any man could in his time tell of, and yet was he well-beloved with God. Job was also no beggar *perdie*, nor no wretch otherwise, nor lost his riches and his wealth, for that God would not that his friend should have wealth, but for the show of his patience, to the increase of his merit, and confusion of the devil. And for proof that prosperity may stand with God's favour, *Reddidit Deus Job omnia duplicia*;— God restored him double of all that ever he lost, and gave him after long life to take his pleasure long.*

Abraham was eke, you wot well, a man of great substance, and so continued all his life in honour and in wealth; † yea, and when he died, too, he went into such wealth that Lazarus, which died in tribulation and poverty, the best place that he came to, was that rich man's bosom. ‡ Finally, good uncle, this we find at our age, and every day we prove it by plain experience, that many a man is right wealthy, and yet therewith right good, and many a miserable wretch as evil as he is wretched. And therefore it seemeth hard, good uncle, that between prosperity and tribulation the matter should go thus, that tribulation should be given alway by God to those that he loveth for a sign of salvation, and prosperity sent for displeasure as a token of eternal damnation.

* Job xlii.

† Gen. xiii.

‡ Luc. xvi.

CHAPTER XVI.

The answer to the objections.



ANTONY.—EITHER I said not, cousin, or else meant I not to say, that for an undoubted rule worldly prosperity were alway displeasent to God, or tribulation evermore wholesome to every man. For well wot I, that our Lord giveth in this world unto either sort of folk, either sort of fortune. *Et facit solem suum oriri super bonos et malos, et pluit super justos et injustos*;—He maketh his sun to shine both upon the good and the bad, and his rain to rain both on the just and the unjust.* And on the other side, *Flagellat omnem filium quem recipit*;—He scourgeth every son that he receiveth. † And yet he beateth not only good folk that he loveth, but *Multa flagella peccatoris too*,—There are many scourges for sinners also. ‡ He giveth evil folk good fortune in this world, both to call them by kindness, and if they thereby come not, the more is their unkindness; and yet where wealth will not bring them, he giveth them sometime sorrow. And some that in prosperity cannot to God creep forward, in tribulation toward him they run apace. *Multiplicatae sunt infirmitates eorum, postea acceleraverunt*;—Their infirmities were multiplied (saith the prophet) and after that they made haste.§

To some that are good men God sendeth wealth here also, and they give him great thank for his gift, and he rewardeth them for the thank too. To some good folk

* Matth. v.

† Hebræ. xii.

‡ Psal. xxxiii.

§ Psal. xv.

he sendeth sorrow, and they thank him thereof too. If God should give the goods of this world only to evil folk, then would men ween that God were not the Lord thereof. If God would give the goods only to good men, then would folk take occasion to serve him but for them. Some will in wealth fall into folly. *Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit: comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis*;—When man was in honour his understanding failed him; then was he compared with beasts, and made like unto them.* Some man with tribulation will fall into sin, and therefore, saith the prophet: *Non relinquet Dominus virgam peccatorum super sortem justorum, ut non extendant justi ad iniquitatem manus suas*;—God will not leave the rod of wicked men upon the lot of righteous men, lest the righteous peradventure hap to extend and stretch out their hands to iniquity.† So say I not nay, but that in either state, wealth or tribulation may be matter of virtue and matter of vice also: but this is the point, lo! that standeth here in question between you and me; not whether every prosperity be a perilous token, but whether continual wealth in this world without any tribulation be a fearful sign of God's indignation. And therefore this mark that we must shoot at, set up well in our sight, we shall now mete for the shot, and consider how near toward, or how far off, your arrows are from the prick.

VINCENT.—Some of my bolts, uncle, will I now take up myself, and prettily put them under my belt again. For some of them, I see well, be not worth the meting; and no great marvel, though I shoot wide, while I somewhat mistake the mark.

ANTONY.—Those that make toward the mark and light far too short, when the shot is mete shall I take up for you.

1. To prove that perpetual wealth should be no evil token, you lay first, that for princes and prelates, and every man for other, we pray all for perpetual prosperity, and that in the common prayers of the Church too.

* Psal. xlvi.

† Psal. cxxiv.

2. Then say you, secondly, that if prosperity were so perilous, and tribulation so profitable, every man ought then to pray God to send other sorrow.

3. Thirdly, you furnish your objections with ensamples of Solomon, Job, and Abraham.

4. And, fourthly, in the end of all, you prove by experience of our own time daily before our face, that some wealthy folk are good, and some needy very naught. That last bolt I think, lo! that sith I say the same myself, you be content to take up, it lieth so far wide.

VINCENT.—That will I with a good will, uncle.

ANTONY.—Well, do so then, good cousin, and we shall mete for the remnant. First must you, cousin, be sure that you look well to the mark, and that can you not do, but if you know what thing tribulation is. For sith that it is one of the chief things that we principally speak of, but if you consider well what that is, you may miss the mark again. I suppose now, that you will ^{agree} ~~say~~ that tribulation is every such thing as ^{tribulation is} ~~that tribulation is~~.

troubleth and grieveth a man, either in body or mind, and is, as it were, the prick of a thorn, a bramble, or a brier thrust into his flesh, or into his mind. And surely, cousin, the prick that very sore pricketh the mind, as far almost passeth in pain the grief that paineth the body, as doth a thorn that is sticking in the heart pass and exceed in pain the thorn that is thrust in the heel. Now, cousin, if tribulation be this that I call it, then shall you soon consider this, that there be more kinds of tribulation than you peradventure thought on before. And thereupon it followeth also, that sith every kind of tribulation is an interruption of wealth, and prosperity (which is but of wealth another name) may be discontinued by more ways than you would afore have weened; then say I thus unto you, cousin, that sith tribulation is not only such pangs as pain the body, but every trouble also that grieveth the mind, many good men have many tribulations that every man marketh not, and consequently their wealth interrupted therewith, when other men are not ware. For trow you, cousin, that the temptations of the devil, the world and the flesh, solliciting the mind of a

good man unto sin, is not a great inward trouble and secret grief to his heart?

To such wretches as care not for their conscience, but like unreasonable beasts, follow their foul affections, many of these temptations be no trouble at all, but matter of their bodily pleasure. But unto him, cousin, that standeth in dread of God, the tribulation of temptation is so painful, that to be rid thereof, or sure of the victory therein (be his substance never so great) he would gladly give more than half. Now, if he that careth not for God think this trouble but a trifle, and with such tribulation, prosperity not interrupted; let him cast in his mind, if himself hap upon a fervent longing for the thing which get he cannot (and as a good man will not), as per case his pleasure of some certain good woman that will not be naught, and then let him tell me whether the ruffle of his desire shall so torment his mind, as all the pleasures that he can take beside shall, for lack of that one, not please him of a pin. And I dare be bold to warrant him that the pain in resisting, and the great fear of falling, that many a good man hath in his temptation, is an anguish and a grief every deal as great as his.

Now say I farther, cousin, that if this be true, as in very deed true it is, that such trouble is tribulation, and thereby consequently an interruption of prosperous wealth; no man precisely meaneth to pray for other to keep him in continual prosperity without any manner of discontinuance or change in this world. For that prayer, without other condition added or implied, were inordinate, and were very childish. For it were to pray, that either they should never have temptation; or else, that if they had, they might follow it and fulfil their affection. Who dare, good cousin, for shame, or for sin, for himself, or for any man else, make this manner kind of prayer? Besides this, cousin, the Church, you wot well, adviseth every man to fast, and watch, and pray, both for taming of his fleshly lusts, and also to mourn and lament for his sin before committed, and to bewail his offences done against God, and (as they did at the city of Nineveh,* and

* Jonæ iii.

as the prophet David did,* for their sin) put affliction to their flesh. And when a man so doth, cousin, is this no tribulation to him because he doth it himself? For I wot well you would agree that it were, if another man did it against his will. Then is tribulation, you wot well, tribulation still, though it be taken well in worth; yea, and though it be taken to with very right good will, yet is pain, you wot well, pain, and therefore so is it though a man do it himself. Then, sith the Church adviseth every man to take tribulation for his sin; whatsoever words you find in any prayer, they never mean (you may be fast and sure) to pray God to keep every good man, nor every bad man neither, from every manner kind of tribulation.

Now he that is not in some kind of tribulation, as peradventure in sickness or in loss of goods, is not yet out of tribulation, if he have his ease of body or of mind unquieted, and thereby his wealth interrupted with another kind of tribulation, as is either temptation to a good man, or voluntary affliction, either of body by penance, or of mind by contrition and heaviness for his sin and offence against God. And thus, I say, that for precise perpetual wealth and prosperity in this world, that is to say, for the perpetual lack of all trouble and all tribulation, there is no wise man that either prayeth for himself or for any man else. And thus answer I your first objection.

Now, before I meddle with your second, your third will I join to this. For upon this answer will the solution of your ensamples conveniently depend. As for Solomon was,† as you say, all his days a marvellous wealthy king, and much was he beloved with God, I wot well, in the beginning of his reign; but that the favour of God persevered with him, as his prosperity did, that cannot I tell. And therefore will I not warrant it; but surely we see that his continual wealth made him fall, first into such wanton folly in multiplying wives to an horrible number,‡ contrary to the commandment of God given in the law of Moses; and secondly, taking to wife among other such

* 2 Reg. xii. et xxiv.

† 2 Reg. x.

‡ Reg. xi.

as were infidels, contrary to another commandment of God's written law also; that finally, by the mean of his miscreant wife, he fell into maintenance of idolatry himself; and of this find we no amendment or repentance, as we find of his father. And therefore, though he were buried where his father was, yet whether he went to the rest that his father did, through some secret sorrow for his sin at last, that is to say, by some kind of tribulation, I cannot tell, and am content therefore to trust well, and pray God he did so, but surely we be not sure. And therefore the ensample of Solomon can very little serve you; for you might as well lay it for a proof that God favoureth idolatry, as that he favoureth prosperity; for Solomon was, you wot well, in both.

As for Job, sith our question hangeth upon prosperity perpetual,* the wealth of Job that was with so great adversity so sore interrupted, can (as yourself seeth) serve you for no ensample. And that God gave him here in this world all thing double that he lost, little toucheth my matter, which deny not prosperity to be God's gift, and given to some good men too, namely, such as have tribulation too. But in Abraham, cousin, I suppose is all your chief hold, because that you not only shew riches and prosperity perpetual in him through the course of all his whole life in this world, but that after his death also, Lazar,† the poor man that lived in tribulation, and died from pure hunger and thirst, had after his death his place of comfort and rest in Abraham, the wealthy, rich man's bosom. But here must you consider, that Abraham had not such continual prosperity, but that it was discontinued with divers tribulations.

1. Was it nothing to him, trow you, to leave his own country, and at God's sending,‡ to go into a strange land, which God promised him and his seed for ever, but in all his whole life he gave himself never a foot?

2. Was it no trouble that his cousin Loth and himself were fain to part company,§ because their servants could not agree together?

3. Though he recovered Loth again from the three

* Job xlii.

† [Luc. xvi.]

‡ Gen. xii.

§ Gen. xliii.

kings,* was his taking no trouble to him, trow you, in the meanwhile?

4. Was the destruction of the five cities† no heaviness to his heart? A man would ween yes, that readeth in the story what labour he made to save them.

5. His heart was, I dare say, in no little sorrow, when he was fain to let Abimelech, the king, have his wife,‡ whom (though God provided to keep undefiled and turned all to wealth), yet was it no little woe to him in the meantime.

6. What continual grief was it to his heart many a long day, that he had no child of his own body begotten:§ he that doubteth thereof shall find it in Genesis of his own moan made to God.

7. No man doubteth but Ismael was great comfort unto him at his birth:¶ and was it no grief then, when he must cast out the mother and the child both?

8. Isaac, that was the child of promise, although God kept his life that was unlooked for; yet, while the loving father bound him, and went about to behead him, and offer him up in sacrifice:¶ who but himself can conceive what heaviness his heart had then? I would ween in my mind (because you speak of Lazar) that Lazar's own death panged him not so sore. Then, as Lazarus's pain was patiently borne, so was Abraham's taken not only patiently, but (which is a thing much more meritorious) of obedience, willingly. And therefore, though Abraham had not (as he did, indeed) far excelled Lazar in merit of reward for many other things beside, and specially for that he was a special patriarch of the faith, yet had he far passed him even by the merit of tribulation, well taken here for God's sake too. And so serveth for your purpose no man less than Abraham.

But now, good cousin, let us look a little longer here upon the rich Abraham and Lazar the poor, and as we shall see Lazar set in wealth somewhat under the rich Abraham, so shall we see another rich man lie full low beneath Lazar, crying and calling out of his fiery couch

* Gen. xiv.
§ Gen. xv.

† Gen. xv.
‡ Gen. xvi. and xxi.

‡ Gen. xx.
¶ Gen. xxii.

that Lazar might with a drop of water falling from his finger's end, a little cool and refresh the tip of his burning tongue. Consider well now what Abraham answered to the rich wretch:* *Fili, recordare quia recepisti bona in vita tua, et Lazarus similiter mala: nunc autem hic consolatur, tu vero cruciaris*;—Son, remember that thou hast in thy life received wealth, and Lazar likewise pain; but now receiveth he comfort, and thou sorrow, pain, and torment. Christ describeth his wealth and his prosperity, gay and soft apparel, with royal delicate fare, continually day by day. *Epulabatur* (saith our Saviour) *quotidie splendide*;—He did fare royally every day.† His wealth was continual, lo! no time of tribulation between. And Abraham telleth him the same tale, that he had taken his wealth in this world, and Lazarus likewise his pain: and that they had now changed each to the clean contrary: poor Lazar from tribulation into wealth, and the rich man from his continual prosperity into perpetual pain. Here was laid expressly to Lazar no very great virtue by name, nor to this rich glutton no great heinous crime, but the taking of his continual ease and pleasure without any tribulation or grief, whereof grew sloth and negligence to think upon the poor man's pain. For that ever himself saw Lazarus, and wist him die for hunger at his door, that laid neither Christ nor Abraham to his charge. And therefore, cousin, this story, lo! of which by occasion of Abraham and Lazar you put me in remembrance, well declareth what peril is in continual worldly wealth, and contrariwise what comfort cometh of tribulation. And thus as your other ensamples of Solomon and Job nothing for the matter further you; so your ensample of rich Abraham and poor Lazarus hath not a little hindered you.

* Luc. xvi.

† Ibidem.

CHAPTER XVII.

An answer to the second objection.



INCENT.—SURELY, uncle, you have shaken mine ensamples sore, and have in your meting of your shot moved me these arrows, methinketh, farther off from the prick than methought they stack when I shot them. And I shall therefore now be content to take them up again. But yet me seemeth surely, that my second shot may stand. For of truth, if every kind of tribulation be so profitable, that it be good to have it, as you say it is: I cannot see wherefore any man should either wish or pray, or any manner of thing do, to have any kind of tribulation withdrawn, either from himself or any friend of his.

ANTONY.—I think in very deed tribulation so good and profitable, that I should haply doubt as you do wherefore a man might labour or pray to be delivered of it, saving that God which teacheth us the one, teacheth us also the other. And as he biddeth us take our pain patiently, and exhort our neighbours to do also the same: so biddeth he us also not let to do our devoir, to remove the pain from us both. And then when it is God that teacheth both, I shall not need to break my brain in devising wherefore he would bid us do both, the one seeming to resist the other. If he send the scourge of scarcity and of great famine, he will we shall bear it patiently; but yet will he that we shall eat our meat when we can hap to get it. If he send us the plague of pestilence, he will that we shall patiently take it; but

yet will he that we let us bleed, and lay plasters to draw it, and ripe it, and lance it, and get it away. Both these points teacheth God in Scripture in more than many places. Fasting is better than eating, and more thank hath of God; and yet will God that we shall eat. Praying is better than drinking, and much more pleasant to God; and yet will God that we shall drink. Waking in good business is much more acceptable to God than sleeping; and yet will God that we shall sleep.

The reason why bodily afflictions and tribulations are to be tempered.

God hath given us our bodies here to keep, and will that we maintain them to do him service with, till he send for us hence. Now can we not tell surely how much tribulation may mar it, or peradventure hurt the soul also?

Wherefore the apostle, after that he had commanded the Corinthians to deliver to the devil the abominable fornicator that forbore not the bed of his own father's wife: * yet after that he had been awhile accursed and punished for his sin, the apostle commanded them charitably to receive him again and give him consolation. *Ne forte abundantiori tristitia absorbeat*;—Lest peradventure the greatness of his sorrow should swallow him up. † And therefore when God sendeth the tempest, he will that the shipmen shall get them to their tackling, and do the best they can for themselves, that the seas eat them not up. For help ourselves as well as we can, he can make his plague as sore, and as long lasting, as himself list. And as he will that we do for ourself, so will he that we do for our neighbours too: and that we shall be in this world each to other piteous, and not *sine affectione*, for which the apostle rebuketh them that lack their tender affections here: so that of charity sorry should we be for their pain too, upon whom (for cause necessary) we be driven ourself to put it. And whoso saith, that for pity of his neighbour's soul he will have none of his body, let him be sure that (as St. John saith) he that loveth not his neighbour whom he seeth, loveth God but a little whom he seeth not. ‡ So that he that hath no pity of the pain that he seeth his neighbour feel afore him,

* 1 Cor. v.

† [2 Cor. ii.]

‡ 1 Joan. iv.

pitieth little (whatsoever he say) the pain of his soul that he seeth not.

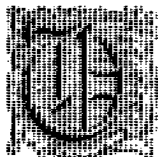
God sendeth us also such tribulation sometime, because his pleasure is to have us pray unto him for help. And therefore, when St. Peter was in prison, the Scripture sheweth that the whole Church without intermission prayed incessantly for him; and that at their fervent prayer God by miracle delivered him.* When the disciples in the tempest stood in fear of drowning, they prayed unto Christ and said, *Salva nos, Domine, perimus*;—Save us, Lord, we perish. † And then at their prayer he shortly ceased the tempest. And now see we proved often, that in sore weather or sickness, by general processions God giveth gracious help. And many a man in his great pain and sicknes by calling upon God is marvellously made whole. This is God's goodness, that because ^{God's goodness} in wealth we remember him not, but forget to ^{ness.} pray to him, sendeth us sorrow and sickness to force us to draw toward him, and compelleth us to call upon him and pray for release of our pain. Whereby when we learn to know him, and seek to him, we take a good occasion to fall after into farther grace.

* Act. xii.

† Matth. viii.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of them that in Tribulation seek not unto God, but some to the flesh, and some to the world, and some to the devil himself.



INCENT.—VERILY, good uncle, with this good answer I am well content.

ANTONY.—Yea, cousin, but many men are there with whom God is not content, which abuse this great goodness of his, whom neither fair treating, nor hard hand-

Oh, how true is this! ling, can cause to remember their Maker; but in wealth they be wanton and forget God, and follow their lust, and when God with tribulation draweth them toward him, then wax they wode, and draw back all that ever they may, and rather run and seek help at any other hand, than to go fet it at his. Some for comfort seek to the flesh, some to the world, and some to the devil himself. Some man that in worldly prosperity is very dull, and hath deep stepped into many a sore sin, which sins, when he did them, he counted for part of his pleasure: God willing of his goodness to call the man to grace, casteth a remorse into his mind among after his first sleep, and maketh him lie a little awhile and bethink him. Then beginneth he to remember

A notable description of God's calling, and how it worketh diversly with divers men.

his life, and from that he falleth to think upon his death, and how he must leave all this worldly wealth within a while behind here in this world, and walk hence alone, he wotteth not whither, nor how soon he shall take his journey thither, nor can tell what company he shall meet

there. And then beginneth he to think that it were good to make sure, and to be merry, so that he be wise therewith, lest there hap to be such black bugs indeed as folks call devils, whose torments he was wont to take for poets' tales. Those thoughts, if they sink deep, are a sore tribulation. And surely if he take hold of the grace that God therein offereth him, his tribulation is whole-Tribulation wholesome. some and shall be full comfortable, to remember that God by this tribulation calleth him, and biddeth him come home out of the country of sin that he was bred and brought up so long in, and come into the land of behest that floweth with milk and honey. And then if he follow this calling (as many one full well doth) joyful shall his sorrow be, and glad shall he be to change his life, leave his wanton lusts, and do penance for his sins, bestowing his time upon better business.

But some men now, when this calling of God causeth them to be sad, they be loth to leave their sinful lusts that hang in their hearts, and specially if they have any such kind of living as they must needs leave off, or fall deeper in sin: or if they have done so many great wrongs that they have many mends to make, that must (if they follow God) minish much of their money, then are these folk (alas!) wofully bewrapped. For God pricketh upon them of his great goodness still, and the grief of this great pang pincheth them at the heart, and of wickedness they wry away, and for this tribulation they turn to their flesh for help, and labour to shake off this thought, and then they mend their pillow, and lay their head softer, and Mark this well. essay to sleep; and when that will not be, then they find a talk awhile with them that lie by them. If that cannot be neither, then they lie and long for day, and then get them forth about their worldly wretchedness the matter of their prosperity, the selfsame sinful things with which they displease God most, and at length with many times using this manner God utterly casteth them off. And then they set nought neither by God nor devil. *Peccator cum in profundum venerit, contemnit;*—When the

sinner cometh even into the depth,* then he contemneth and setteth nought by nothing, saving worldly fear that may fall by chance, or that needs must (they wot well) fall once by death. But alas! when death cometh, then cometh again his sorrow; then will no soft bed serve, nor no company make him merry. Then he must leave his outward worship and comfort of his glory, and lie panting in his bed as it were on a pin-bank; then cometh his fear of his evil life and of his dreadful death. Then cometh the torment of his cumbered conscience, and fear of his heavy judgment. Then the devil draweth him to despair with imagination of hell, and suffereth him not then to take it for a fable. And yet if he do; then findeth it the wretch no fable. Ah! wo worth the while that folk think not of this in time.

God sendeth to some man great trouble in his mind, and great tribulation about his worldly goods, because he would of his goodness take his delight and his confidence from them. And yet the man withdraweth no part of his fond phantasies, but falleth more fervently to them than before, and setteth his whole heart like a fool more upon them: and then he taketh him all to the devices of his worldly councillors, and without any counsel of God, The wise men of this world. or any trust put in him, maketh many wise ways as he weeneth, and all turn at length into folly, and one subtle drift driveth another to naught.

[And do they not so?] Some have I seen even in their last sickness sit up in their death-bed underpropped with pillows, take their playfellows to them, and comfort themselves with cards, and this (they said) did ease them well to put phantasies out of their heads: and what phantasies trow you? Such as I told you right now, of their own lewd life and peril of their soul, of heaven and of hell that irked them to think of, and therefore cast it out with card play as long as ever they might, till the pure pangs of death pulled their heart from their play, and put them in a case they could not reckon their game. And then left they their gamners,

* Prover. xviii.

and slyly slunk away; and long was it not ere they gasped up the ghost. And what game they then came to, that God knoweth, and not I. I pray God it were good, but I fear it very sore.

Some men are there also, that do (as did king Saul) in tribulation go seek unto the devil.* This king had commanded all such to be destroyed, as used the false abominable superstition of this ungracious witchcraft and necromancy, and yet fell he to such folly afterward himself, that ere he went Against conjurers and witches. to battle he sought unto a witch, and besought her to raise up a dead man to tell him how he should speed.† Now had God shewed him before by Samnel, that he should come to nought, and he went about none amendment, but waxed worse and worse, so that God list not to look to him. And when he sought by the prophets to have answer of God, there came none answer to him, which thing he thought strange. And because he was not with God heard at his pleasure, he made suit to the devil, desiring a woman by witchcraft to raise up dead Samnel; but speed had he such thereof, as commonly they have all, that in their business meddle with such matters. For an evil answer had he, and an evil speed thereafter, his army discomfited and himself slain. And as it is rehearsed in Paralipomenon,‡ one cause of his fall was, for lack of trust in God, for which he left to take counsel of God, and fell to seek counsel of the witch§ against God's prohibition in the law, and against his own good deed, by which he punished and put out all witches so late afore.

Such speed let them look for, that play the same part, as I see many do, that in a great loss send to such a conjurer to get their gear again: and [Conjuration.] marvellous things there they see sometime, but never groot of their good again. And many a fond fool there is, that when he lieth sick, will meddle with no phisic in no manner wise, nor send his water to no cunning

* 1 Reg. xxvii.
† Lib. i. cap. 10.

‡ 1 Reg. xv.
§ [1 Reg. xxviii. Levi. xix. xx.]

man, but send his cap or his hose to a wise woman, otherwise called a witch. Then sendeth she word again, that she hath spied in his hose where, when he took no heed, he was taken with a sprite between two doors as he went in the twilight, but the sprite would not let him feel it in five days after; and it hath all the while festered in his body, and that is the grief that paineth him so sore. But let him go to no leechcraft, nor any manner of physick, other than good meat and strong drink, for syrups should souse him up. But

he shall have five leaves of valerian that she [charm.] enchanted with a charm, and gathered with her left hand: let him lay those five leaves to his right thumb, not bind it fast to, but let it bang loose thereat by a green thread: he shall never need to change it, look it fall not away, but let it hang till he be whole, and he shall need no more.

In such wise witches, and in such mad medicines have many fools more faith a great deal, than in God. And thus, cousin, as I tell you, all these kind of folk that in their tribulation call not upon God, but seek for their help and for their ease elsewhere, to the flesh and the world, and some to the flinging fiend himself; the tribulation that God's goodness sendeth them for good, themselves by their folly turn unto their harm. And they that on the other side seek unto God therein, both comfort and profit they greatly take thereby.

CHAPTER XIX.

Another Objection, with the Answers thereunto.



INCENT.—I LIKE well, good uncle, all your answers herein; but one doubt yet remaineth there in mind, which riseth upon this answer that you make, and that doubt soiled, I will as for this time, mine own good uncle, encumber you no farther.

For methink I do you very much wrong, to give you occasion to labour yourself so much in matter of some study, with long talking at once. I will therefore at this time move you but one thing, and seek other time at your more ease for the remnant. My doubt, good uncle, is this. I perceive well by your answers gathered and considered together, that you will [four notable things.] well agree, that a man may both have worldly wealth, and yet well go to God. And that on the other side, a man may be miserable and live in tribulation, and yet go to the devil. And as a man may please God by patience in adversity, so may he please God by thanksgiving in prosperity.

Now sith you grant these things to be such, that either of them both may be matter of virtue, or else matter of sin, matter of damnation, or matter of salvation; they seem neither good nor bad of their own nature, but things of themselves equal and indifferent, turning to good or the contrary, after as they be taken. And then if this be thus, I can perceive no cause why you should give the pre-eminence unto tribulation, or wherefore you should

reckon more cause of comfort therein than you should reckon to stand in prosperity, but rather a great deal less, by in manner half, sith in prosperity the man is well at ease, and may also by giving thank to God get good unto his soul, whereas in tribulation, though he may merit by patience, as in abundance of worldly wealth the other may by thank; yet lacketh he much comfort that the wealthy man hath, in that he sore is grieved with heaviness and pain: besides this also, that a wealthy man well at ease may pray to God quietly and merrily, with alacrity and great quietness of mind, whereas he that lieth groaning in his grief cannot endure to pray nor think almost upon nothing, but upon his pain.

ANTONY.—To begin, cousin, where you leave; the prayers of him that is in wealth, and him that is in woe, if the men be both nought, their prayers be both like. For neither hath the one list to pray, nor the other neither. And as the one is let with his pain, so is the other with his pleasure, saying that the pain stirreth him some time to call upon God in his grief, though the man be right bad, where the pleasure pulleth his mind another way, though the man be merely good. And this point I think there are very few that can (if they say true) say

that they find it otherwise. For in tribulation, which cometh, you wot well, in many sundry kinds, any man that is not a dull beast, or a desperate wretch, calleth upon God, not hourly,

but right heartily, and setteth his heart full whole upon his request, so sore he longeth for ease and help of his heaviness. But when men are wealthy and well at their ease, while our tongue pattereth upon our prayers apace; good God, how many mad ways our mind wandereth the while! Yet wot I well, that in some tribulation such sore sickness there is, or other grievous bodily pain, that hard it were for a long prayer of matins: and yet some that be a-dying say full devoutly the seven Psalms, and other prayers, with the priest at their anealing; but those that for the grief of their pain cannot endure to do it, or that be more tender, and lack that strong heart and

Tribulation
generally moveth
the mind
most.

stomach that some other have, God requireth no such long prayers of them. But the lifting up of the heart alone, without any word at all, is more acceptable to him of one in such case, than long service so said, as folk use to say it in health. The martyrs in their agony made no long prayers aloud, but one inch of such a prayer so prayed in that pain, was worth a whole eil and more, even of their own prayers prayed at some other time.

Great learned men say, that Christ, albeit he was very God, and as God, was in eternal equal bliss with his Father, yet as man merited not for us only, but for himself too; for proof whereof they lay in these words the authority of St. Paul:—*Christus humiliavit semetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis: propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen quod est super omne nomen: ut in nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum, et omnis lingua confiteatur, quia Dominus Jesus Christus in gloria est Dei patris.*—Christ hath humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, and that unto the death of the cross, for which thing God hath also exalted him, and given him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee be bowed, both of the celestial creatures, and the terrestrial, and the infernal too: and that every tongue shall confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God his father.*

God requireth
no more than
man's weak-
ness can do.

[Christ
merited.]

Now if it so be, as these great learned men upon such authorities of Holy Scripture say, that our Saviour so merited as man, and as man deserved reward, not for us only, but for himself also: then were there in his deeds, as it seemeth, sundry degrees and differences of deserving, and not his maundy-like merit, as his Passion, nor his sleep-like merit, as his watch and his prayer, no nor his prayers peradventure all of like merit neither. But though there none was, nor none could be in his most blessed person but excellent, and incomparably passing the prayer of any pure creature: yet were his own not all alike,

* Philip. ii.

but some one far above some other. And then if it thus be, of all his holy prayers, the chief seemeth me those that he made in his great agony and pain of his bitter passion. The first, when he fell thrice prostrate in his agony, when the heaviness of his heart with fear of death at hand, so painful and so cruel as he well beheld it, made such a fervent commotion in his blessed body, that the bloody sweat of his holy flesh dropped down on the ground.* The other were the painful prayers that he made upon the cross, where for all the torment that he hanged in of beating, nailing, and stretching out all his limbs, with the wresting of his sinews, and breaking of his tender veins, and the sharp crown of thorn so pricking him into the head, that his blessed blood streamed down all his face: in all these bideous pains, in all their cruel despites, yet two very devout and fervent prayers he made.† The one for their pardon that so despitously put him to his pain, and the other about his own deliverance, commending his own soul unto his holy Father in heaven. These prayers of his (among all that ever he made) made in his most pain, reckon I for the chief. And these prayers of our Saviour at his bitter passion, and of his holy martyrs in the fervour of their torment, shall serve us to see that there is no prayer made at pleasure so strong and effectual as in tribulation.

Now come I to the touching of the reason that you make, where you tell me that I grant you, that both in wealth and in woe some men may be nought, and offend God, the one by impatience, the other by fleshly lust; and on the other side, both in tribulation and prosperity too, some man may also do very well, and deserve thank of God by thanks given to God, as well of his gift of riches, worship, and wealth, as of need and penury, prisonment, sickness, and pain: and that therefore you cannot see for what cause I should give any pre-eminence in comfort unto tribulation, but rather allow prosperity for the thing more comfortable: and that not a little, but in manner by double, sith therein hath the soul comfort, and the

* Luc. xxii.

† Luc. xxiii.

body both: the soul by thank (for his gift) given unto God; and then the body, by being well at ease, where the person pained in tribulation, taketh no comfort but in his soul alone. First, as for your double comfort, cousin, you may cut off the one. For a man in prosperity, though he be bounden to thank God of his gift, wherein he feelth ease, and may be glad also that he giveth thank to God; yet for that he taketh his ease here hath he little cause of comfort, except that the sensual feeling of bodily pleasure you list to call by the name of comfort. Nor I say not nay, but that sometime men use so to take it, when they say, this good drink comforteth well my heart. But comfort, cousin, is properly taken ^{what is} by them that take it right, rather for the con-^{comfort.} solation of good hope that men take it in their heart of some good growing toward them, than for a present pleasure, with which the body is delighted and tickled for the while.

Now though a man without patience can have no reward for his pain, yet when his pain is patiently taken for God's sake, and his will conformed to God's pleasure therein, God rewarded the sufferer after the rate of his pain, and this thing appeareth by many a place in Scripture, of which some have I shewed you, and yet shall I shew you more. Bnt never found I any place in Scripture that I remember, in which, though the wealthy man thanked God for his gift, our Lord promised any reward in heaven, because the man took his ease and pleasure here. And therefore, sith I speak but of such comfort as is very comfort indeed, by which a man hath hope of God's favour and remission of his sins, with diminishing of his pains in purgatory, or reward else in heaven: and such comfort cometh of tribulation, and for tribulation well taken, but not for pleasure, though it be well taken; therefore of your comfort that you double by prosperity, you may, as I told you, cut very well away the half. Now why I give prerogative in comfort unto tribulation far above prosperity, though a man may do well in both: of this thing will I shew you causes two or three.

First, as I before have at length shewed you, out of all question continual wealth interrupted with no tribulation is a very discomfortable token of everlasting damnation. Whereupon it followeth, that tribulation is one cause of comfort unto a man's heart, in that it dischargeth him of the discomfort that he might of reason take of overlong lasting wealth. Another is, that the Scripture much commendeth tribulation, as occasion of more profit, than wealth and prosperity, not to them only that are therein, but to them too that resort unto them. And therefore, saith Ecclesiastes: *Melius est ire ad domum luctus, quam ad domum convivii. In illa enim finis cunctorum admonetur hominum, et vivens cogitat quid futurum sit*;—Better it is to go to the house of weeping and wailing for some man's death, than to the house of a feast. For in the house of heaviness is a man put in remembrance of the end of every man, and while he yet liveth, he thinketh what shall come after.* And after yet he farther saith: *Cor sapientum, ubi tristitia est: et cor stultorum, ubi letitia*;—The heart of wise men is there as heaviness is, and the heart of fools is there as in mirth and gladness.† And verily, there as you shall hear worldly mirth seem to be commanded in Scripture, it is either commonly spoken, as in the person of some worldly disposed people, or understanden of rejoicing spiritual, or meant of some small moderate refreshing of the mind, against an heavy discomfortable dulness. Now whereas prosperity was to the children of Israel promised in the old law as a special gift of God: that was for their imperfection at that time, to draw them to God with gay things and pleasant, as men to make children learn give them cake-bread and butter. For, as the Scripture maketh mention, that people were much after the manner of children in lack of wit, and in waywardness. And therefore was their master Moses called *Pædagogus*,‡ that is, a teacher of children; or (as they call such a one in the grammar-schools), an usher or a master of the petits. For, as St.

* Eccles. vii.

† Ibidem.

‡ [Moses.]

Paul saith: *Nihil ad perfectum duxit lex*;—The old law brought nothing to perfection.* And God also threateneth folk with tribulation in this world for sin, not for that worldly tribulation is evil, but for that we should be well ware of the sickness of sin, for fear of the thing to follow: which though it be indeed a very good wholesome thing, if we will take it, is yet because it is painful the thing that we be lothe to have.

But this I say yet again and again, that as for far the better thing in this world toward the getting of the very good that God giveth in the world to come: [Scripture discommendeth worldly wealth.] the Scripture undoubtedly so commendeth tribulation, that in respect and comparison thereof it discommendeth this worldly wretched wealth and discomfortable comfort utterly. For to what other thing soundeth the words of Ecclesiastes that I rehearsed you now: that it is better to be in the house of heaviness, than to be at a feast?† Whereunto soundeth this comparison of his, that the wise man's heart draweth thither as folk are in sadness; and the heart of a fool is there as he may find mirth? Whereunto draweth this threat of the wise man, that he that delighted in wealth shall fall into woe? *Risus (saith he) dolore miscbitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat*;—Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and the end of mirth is taken up with heaviness.‡ And our Saviour saith himself: *Væ vobis qui ridetis, quia lugebitis et flebitis*;—Woe be to you that laugh; for you shall weep and wail.§ But he saith on the other side: *Beati qui lugent, quoniam illi consolabuntur*;—Blessed are they that weep and wail, for they shall be comforted.|| And he saith unto his disciples: *Mundus gaudebit, vos autem dolebitis: sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium*;—The world shall joy, and you shall be sorry: but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.¶ And so is it, you wot well, now. And the mirth of many that then were in joy, is now turned all to sorrow. And thus you see by the Scripture plain, that in matter of very comfort, tribu-

* Heb. vii.

† [Eccles. vii.]

‡ Proverb. xiv.

§ Luc. vi.

|| [Luc. vi.]

¶ Joan. xvi.

lation is as far above prosperity, as the day is above the night.

Another pre-eminence of tribulation over wealth in occasion of merit and reward, shall well appear upon certain considerations well marked in them both. Tribulation meriteth in patience, and in the obedient conforming of the man's will unto God, and in thanks given to God for his visitation.

[How a wealthy man may merit.] If you reckon me now against these, many other good deeds that a wealthy man may do; as by riches, give alms; by authority, labour in doing many men justice, or if you find farther any such other thing like: first, I say, that the patient person in tribulation hath in all these virtues of the wealthy man an occasion of merit too, which the wealthy man bath not againward, in the fore-rehearsed virtues of his.

[When power lacketh, good will is accepted.] For it is easy for the person that is in tribulation to be well willing to do the self-same, if he could; and then shall his good will, where the power lacketh, go very near to the merit of the deed.

[The good will goeth near to the merit.] But now is not the wealthy man in a like case with the will of patience, and conformity, and thanks given to God for tribulation: sith it is not so ready for the wealthy man to be content to be in the tribulation that is the occasion of the patient's desert, as for the troubled person to be content to be in prosperity to do the good deeds that the wealthy man doth.

Besides this, all that the wealthy man doth, though he could not do them without those things that are accounted for wealth, and called by that name, as not do great alms without great riches, nor do these many men right by his labour, without great authority: yet may he do these things, being not in wealth indeed, as where

[The good man taketh wealth for no wealth indeed.] he taketh his wealth for no wealth, nor his riches for no riches, nor in heart setteth by neither notber, but secretly liveth in a contrite heart and a life penitential, as many times did the prophet David being a great king, so that worldly wealth was no wealth to him. And therefore is not of

necessity worldly wealth the cause of those [worldly wealth.] good deeds, sith he may do them, and doth them best indeed, to whom the thing that worldly folk call wealth, is yet for his godly-set mind (drawn from the delight thereof) no pleasure in manner nor no wealth at all.

Finally, whensoever the wealthy man doth those good virtuous deeds, if we consider the nature of them right, we shall perceive, that in doing of them, he doth ever for the rate and portion of those deeds minish the matter of his worldly wealth, as in giving [Worldly wealth is minished in some respect, by doing good deeds.] great alms he departeth with so much of his worldly goods, which are in that part the matter of his wealth. In labouring about the doing of many good deeds, his labour minisheth his quiet and his rest. And for the rate of so much, it minisheth his wealth, if pain and wealth be each to other contrary, as I ween you will agree they be.

Now whosoever then will well consider the thing, he shall, I doubt not, perceive and see therein that in these good deeds that the wealthy man doth, though he do them by that, that his wealth maketh him able, yet in the doing of them he departeth (for the portion) from the nature of wealth, toward the nature of some part of tribulation: and therefore, even in those good deeds themselves that prosperity doth, doth in goodness the prerogative of tribulation above wealth appear.

Now if it hap, that some man cannot perceive this point, because the wealthy man for all his alms abideth rich still, and for all his good labour abideth still in his authority; let him consider, that I speak but after the portion. And because the portion of all that he giveth of his goods is very little in respect of that he leaveth; therefore is the reason happily with some folk little perceived. But if it so were that he went forth with giving, till he had given out all and left himself nothing, then would a very blind man see it. For as he were from riches come to poverty, so were he from wealth willingly fallen into tribulation. And between labour and rest

the reason goeth all alike: which who so can consider shall see, that for the portion in every good deed done by the wealthy man, the matter is all one. Then sith we

have somewhat weighed the virtues of prosperity, let us consider on the other side the Three things be matter of merit in tribulation. aforementioned things that are the matter of merit and reward in tribulation, that is, to wit, patience, conformity, and thanks.

Patience.

Patience the wealthy man hath not, in that he is wealthy. For if he be pinched in any point wherein he taketh patience, in that part he suffereth some tribulation, and so not by his prosperity, but by his tribulation, hath the man that merit. Like is it if we would say, that the wealthy man hath another virtue in the stead of patience, that is to wit, the keeping of himself from pride and from such other sins as wealth would bring him to. For the resisting of such motions is, as I before told you, without any doubt a minishing of fleshly [Merit groweth to the wealthy man by the minishing of his wealth.] wealth, and is a very true kind, and one of the most profitable kinds of tribulation. So that all that good merit groweth to the wealthy man, not by his wealth, but by the minishing

of his wealth with wholesome tribulation. The next colour of comparison is in the other twain; that is to wit, in the conformity of man's will unto God, and in thanks given unto God. For like as the good man in tribulation

[Of conformity and thanksgiving.] sent him by God, conformeth his will to God's will in that behalf, and giveth God thank therefor; so doth the wealthy man in his wealth which God giveth him conform his will to God's will in that point: sith he is well content to take it of his gift, and giveth God again also right hearty thank therefor. And thus, as I said, in these two things may you catch most colour to compare the wealthy man's merit with the merit of tribulation.

But yet that they be not matches, you may soon see by this. For in tribulation can there none conform his will unto God's, and give him thank therefor, but such a man as hath in that point a very special good mind. But he that is very nought, or hath in his heart but very little

good, may well be content to take wealth at God's hand, and say, Marry, I thank you, Sir, for this Of such there are enough. with all my heart, and will not fail to love you well, while you let me fare no worse. *Confitebitur tibi, cum benefeceris ei.** Now if the wealthy man be very good, yet in conformity of his will and thanks given to God for his wealth, his virtue is not like yet to his that doth the same in tribulation. For as the Philosophers said in that thing very well of old,† Virtus versatur circa difficulta. Virtue standeth in things of hardness and difficulty. And then, as I told you, much less hardness and much less difficulty there is by a great deal to be content and conform our will to God's will, and to give him thank too for our ease, than for our pain; for our wealth than for our woe. And therefore is the conforming of our will unto God's, and the thanks that we give him for our tribulation, more worthy thank again, and more reward meriteth in the very fast wealth and felicity of heaven, than our conformity with our thanks given for and in our worldly wealth here.

And this thing saw the devil, when he said to our Lord of Job, that it was no marvel though Job had a reverent fear unto God,‡ God had done so much for him, and kept him in prosperity. But the devil wist well it was an hard thing for Job to be so loving, and so to give thanks to God in tribulation and adversity, and therefore was he glad to get leave of God to put him in tribulation, and thereby trusted to cause him murmur and grudge against God with impatience. But the devil had there a fall in his own turn. For the patience of Job in the short time of his adversity gat him much more favour and thank of God, and more is he renowned in Scripture, and commended there for that than for all the goodness of his long prosperous life. Our Saviour saith himself also, that if we say well by them, or yield them thank that do us good, we do no great thing therein, and therefore can we with reason look for no great thank again.§ And thus

* Psal. xxviii.

† Job. i.

‡ Ethic. ii.

§ [Luc. vi. Matth. v.]

have I shewed you, lo! no little pre-eminence that tribulation hath in merit, and therefore no little pre-eminence of comfort in hope of heavenly reward, above the virtues (the merit and cause of good hope and comfort) that cometh of wealth and prosperity.

CHAPTER XX.

A summary Commendation of Tribulation.

AND therefore, good cousin, to finish our talking for this time, lest I should be too long a let unto your other business, if we lay first for a sure ground a The foundation of faith. very fast faith, whereby we believe to be true all that the Scripture saith understanden truly, as the holy doctors declare it, and as the Spirit of God instructeth his Catholic church; then shall we consider tribulation as a gracious gift of God, a gift that he gave specially his special The peculiar good properties of tribulation. friends, the thing that in Scripture is highly commended and praised, a thing whereof the contrary long continued is perilous, a thing which but if God send it, men have need by penance to put upon themselves and seek it, a thing that helpeth to purge our sins passed, a thing that preserveth us from sins that else would come, a thing that causeth us to set less by the world, a thing that excitemeth us to draw more toward God, a thing that much minisheth our pains in purgatory, a thing that much increaseth our final reward in heaven, the thing by which our Saviour entered his own kingdom, the thing with which all his apostles followed him thither, the thing which our Saviour exhorteth all men to, the thing without which (he saith) we be not his disciples, the thing without which no man can get to heaven.

Whoso these things thinketh on and remembereth well, shall in his tribulation neither How profitable tribulation is. murmur nor grudge; but first by patience take his pain in worth, and then shall he grow in goodness and think

himself well worthy. Then shall he consider that God sendeth it for his weal, and thereby shall he be moved to give God thank therefor. Therewith shall his grace increase, and God shall give him such comfort, by considering that God is in his trouble evermore near unto him, —(*Quia Deus juxta est iis qui tribulato sunt corde*;—God is near, saith the prophet, to those that have their heart in trouble):* that his joy thereof shall minish much of his pain, and he shall not seek for vain comfort elsewhere, but specially trust in God, and seek for help of him, submitting his own will wholly to God's pleasure, and pray to God in his heart, and pray his friends pray for him, and specially the priests, as St. James biddeth,† and begin first with confession, and make us clean to God and ready to depart, and be glad to go to God, putting purgatory to his pleasure.

If we thus do, this dare I boldly say, we shall never live here the less of half an hour, but shall with this comfort find our hearts lighted, and thereby the grief of our tribulation lessed, and the more likelihood to recover and to live the longer. Now if God will we shall hence, then doth he much more for us. For he that this way taketh, cannot go but well. For of him that is loth to leave this wretched world, my heart is much in fear lest he die not well. Hard it is for him to be welcome that cometh against his will, that saith to God when he cometh to him, Welcome my maker, maugre my teeth. But he that so loveth him that he longeth to go to him, my heart cannot give me but he shall be welcome, all were it so, that he should come ere he were well purged. For charity covereth a multitude of sins, and he that trusteth in God cannot be confounded. And Christ saith, He that cometh to me, I will not cast him out.‡ And therefore let us never make our reckoning of long life; keep it while we may, because God hath so commanded. But if

That he that is in tribulation should be.

It is an ill sign to be loth to die.

[Of loathness to die and gladness to die.]

* Psal. xxxiv.

† Jacobi x.

‡ Proverb. x. [And Proverb. iv.] Johan. vi.

God give the occasion that with his good will we may go, let us be glad thereof, and long to go to him. And then shall hope of heaven comfort our heaviness, and out of our transitory tribulation shall we go to everlasting glory, to which, my good cousin, I pray God bring us both.

VINCENT.—Mine own good uncle, I pray God reward you, and at this time will I no longer trouble you. I trow I have this day done you much tribulation with my importune objections of very little substance. And you have even shewed me an ensample of sufferance, in bearing my folly so long and so patiently. And yet shall I be so bold upon you farther, as to seek some time to talk forth of the remnant, that most profitable point of tribulation, which you said you reserved to treat of last of all.

ANTONY.—Let that be hardily very shortly, cousin, while this is fresh in mind.

VINCENT.—I trust, good uncle, so to put this in remembrance, that it shall never be forgotten with me. Our Lord send you such comfort as he knoweth to be best.

ANTONY.—That is well said, good cousin, and I pray the same for you and for all our other friends that have need of comfort, for whom, I think, more than for yourself, you needed of some counsel.

VINCENT.—I shall with this good counsel, that I have heard of you, do them some comfort, I trust in God: to whose keeping I commit you.

ANTONY.—And I you also. Farewell, mine own good cousin.