
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB

Translated by Brian Thomas Becket Mullady, OP, STD
Edited by The Aquinas Institute

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NOTES ON THE TEXT

Latin Text of St. Thomas

The Latin text used in this edition is based on the 1965 Leonine Edition, transcribed by Fr. Roberto Busa, SJ, and revised by The Aquinas Institute.

English Translation of St. Thomas

The English translation used in this volume was prepared by Brian Thomas Becket Mullady, OP, STD. It has been edited and revised by The Aquinas Institute. This translation is dedicated to the life of Ann C. Arcidi, a devoted mother of seven, who lived a life reflected by her Catholic values and passionately championed the pro-life cause.

Sacred Scripture

The text of Sacred Scripture presented at the beginning of each lecture is given in Latin, English, and Greek. Since St. Thomas appears to be familiar with more than one translation, quotes from memory, and often enough paraphrases, it has proven difficult to reconstruct the version of Scripture St. Thomas was working with. However, the closest available version of Scripture to St. Thomas's text was found to be the Clementine Vulgate of 1598, and this version of the Vulgate is the one found at the beginning of each lecture. The choice of an English version of Scripture to parallel the Vulgate was therefore the Douay-Rheims. Both of these versions have been slightly modified to fit the text of St. Thomas. The Greek text, included for comparison, is from the Septuaginta, edited by Alfred Rahlfs, Second Revised Edition, edited by Robert Hanhart, © 2006 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. Used with permission.

DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO
OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL

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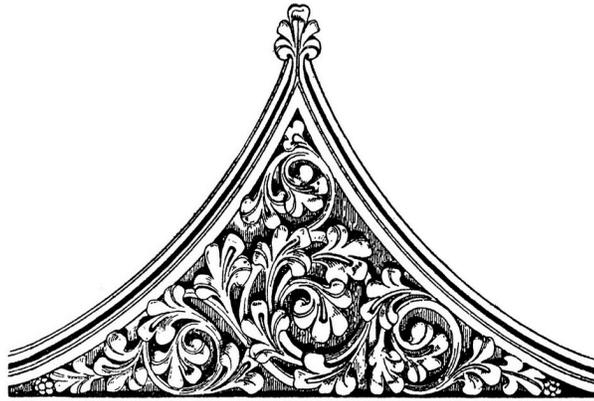
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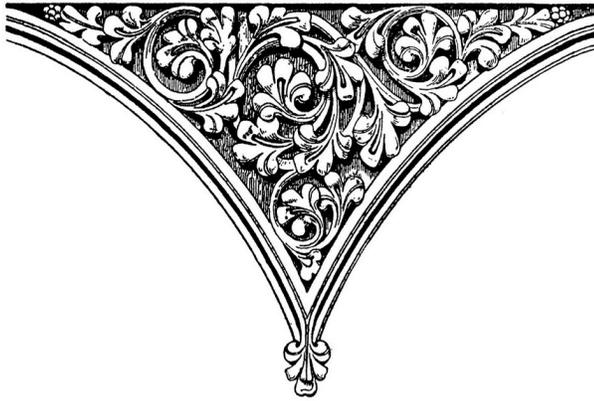
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COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB



COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB

Prologue

Sicut in rebus quae naturaliter generantur paulatim ex imperfecto ad perfectum pervenitur, sic accidit hominibus circa cognitionem veritatis; nam a principio parvum quid de veritate attigerunt, posterius autem quasi pedetentim ad quandam plenioram mensuram veritatis pervenerunt: ex quo contigit multos a principio propter imperfectam cognitionem circa veritatem errasse. Inter quos aliqui extiterunt qui divinam providentiam auferebant omnia fortunae et causi attribuebant: et priorum quidem intantum ad hoc invaluit opinio ut ponerent mundum casu factum esse et ea quae naturaliter ex positionibus antiquorum naturalium ponentium solum causam materialem; posteriorem etiam quidam, ut Democritus et Empedocles, plurima casui attribuebant. Sed posteriorum philosophorum diligentia perspicacius intuens veritatem, evidentibus indiciis et rationibus ostenderunt res naturales providentia agi: non enim tam certus cursus in motu caeli et siderum et in aliis naturae effectibus inveniretur nisi haec omnia a quodam intellectu supereminente ordinata gubernarentur.

Opinione igitur plurimorum firmata in hoc quod res naturales non casu sed providentia agerentur propter ordinem qui manifeste apparet in eis, emersit dubitatio apud plurimos de actibus hominum, utrum res humanae casu procederent an aliqua providentia vel ordinatione superiori gubernarentur. Cui quidem dubitationi maxime fomentum ministravit quod in eventibus humanis nullus certus ordo apparet: non enim semper bonis bona eveniunt aut malis mala, neque rursus semper bonis mala aut malis bona, sed indifferenter bonis et malis et bona et mala. Hoc igitur est quod maxime corda hominum commovit ad opinandum res humanas providentia divina non regi, sed quidam eas casualiter procedere dicunt nisi quatenus providentia et consilio humano reguntur, quidam vero caelesti fato eorum eventus attribuunt.

Haec autem opinio maxime humano generi nociva invenitur; divina enim providentia sublata, nulla apud homines Dei reverentia aut timor cum veritate remanebit, ex quo quanta desidia circa virtutes, quanta pronitas

Just as things which are generated naturally reach perfection from imperfection by small degrees, so it is with men in their knowledge of the truth. For in the beginning they attained a very limited understanding of the truth, but later they gradually came to know the truth in fuller measure. Because of this many erred in the beginning about the truth from an imperfect knowledge. Among these, there were some who excluded divine providence and attributed everything to fortune and to chance. Indeed the opinion of these first men was not correct because they held that the world was made by chance. This is evident from the position of the ancient natural philosophers who admitted only the material cause. Even some later men like Democritus and Empedocles attributed things to chance in most things. But by a more profound diligence in their contemplation of the truth, later philosophers showed by evident proofs and reasons that natural things are set in motion by providence. For such a sure course in the motion of the heavens and the stars and other effects of nature would not be found unless all these things were governed and ordered by some intellect transcending the things ordered.

Therefore, after the majority of men asserted the opinion that natural things did not happen by chance but by providence because of the order which clearly appears in them, a doubt emerged among most men about the acts of man, as to whether human affairs evolved by chance or were governed by some kind of providence or a higher ordering. This doubt was fed especially because there is no sure order apparent in human events. For good things do not always befall the good, nor evil things the wicked. On the other hand, evil things do not always befall the good nor good things the wicked, but good and evil indifferently befall both the good and the wicked. This fact then especially moved the hearts of men to hold the opinion that human affairs are not governed by divine providence. Some said that human affairs proceed by chance except to the extent that they are ruled by human providence and counsel; others attributed their outcome to a fatalism ruled by the heavens.

This idea causes a great deal of harm to mankind. For if divine providence is denied, no reverence or true fear of God will remain among men. Each man can weigh well how great will be the propensity for vice and the lack of de-

ad vitia subsequatur satis quilibet perpendere potest: nihil enim est quod tantum revocet homines a malis et ad bona inducat quantum Dei timor et amor. Unde eorum qui divino spiritu sapientiam consecuti sunt ad aliorum eruditionem, primum et praecipuum studium fuit hanc opinionem a cordibus hominum amovere; et ideo post legem datam et prophetas, in numero Hagiographorum, idest librorum per spiritum Dei sapienter ad eruditionem hominum conscriptorum, primus ponitur liber Iob, cuius tota intentio circa hoc versatur ut per probabiles rationes ostendatur res humanas divina providentia regi.

Proceditur autem in hoc libro ad propositum ostendendum ex suppositione quod res naturales divina providentia gubernentur. Id autem quod praecipue providentiam Dei circa res humanas impugnare videtur est afflictio iustorum: nam quod malis interdum bona eveniant, etsi irrationabile primo aspectu videatur et providentiae contrarium, tamen utcumque habere potest aliquam excusationem ex miseratione divina; sed quod iusti sine causa affligantur totaliter videtur subruere providentiae fundamentum. Proponitur igitur ad quaestionem intentam, quasi quoddam thema, multiplex et gravis afflictio cuiusdam viri in omni virtute perfecti qui dicitur Iob.

Fuerunt autem aliqui quibus visum est quod iste Iob non fuerit aliquid in rerum natura, sed quod fuerit quaedam parabola conficta ut esset quoddam thema ad providentiae disputationem, sicut frequenter homines confingunt aliqua facta ad disputandum de eis. Et quamvis ad intentionem libri non multum differat utrum sic vel aliter fuerit, refert tamen quantum ad ipsam veritatem. Videtur enim praedicta opinio auctoritati sacrae Scripturae obviare: dicitur enim Ez. XIV 14 ex persona domini *si fuerint tres viri isti in medio eius, Noe, Daniel et Iob, ipsi iustitia sua liberabunt animas suas*; manifestum est autem Noe et Danielem homines in rerum natura fuisse, unde nec de tertio eis connumerato, scilicet de Iob, in dubium debet venire. Dicitur etiam Iac. V 11 *ecce beatificamus eos qui sustinuerunt; sufferentiam Iob audistis et finem domini vidistis*. Sic igitur credendum est Iob hominem in rerum natura fuisse.

Quo autem tempore fuerit vel ex quibus parentibus originem duxerit, quis etiam huius libri fuerit auctor, utrum scilicet ipse Iob hunc librum conscripserit de se quasi de alio loquens, an alius de eo ista retulerit, non est praesentis intentionis discutere. Intendimus enim compendiose secundum nostram possibilitatem, de divino auxilio fiduciam habentes, librum istum qui intitulatur beati Iob secundum litteralem sensum exponere; eius enim mysteria tam subtiliter et diserte beatus Papa Gregorius nobis aperuit ut his nihil ultra addendum videatur.

sire for virtue which follows from this idea. For nothing so calls men back from evil things and induces them to good as much as the fear and love of God. For this reason the first and foremost aim of those who had pursued wisdom inspired by the spirit of God for the instruction of others was to remove this opinion from the hearts of men. So after the promulgation of the Law and the Prophets, the Book of Job occupies first place in the order of Holy Scripture, the books composed by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit for the instruction of men. The whole intention of this book is directed to this: to show that human affairs are ruled by divine providence using probable arguments.

The methodology used in this book is to demonstrate this proposition from the supposition that natural things are governed by divine providence. The affliction of just men is what seems especially to impugn divine providence in human affairs. For although it seems irrational and contrary to providence at first glance that good things sometimes happen to evil men, nevertheless this can be excused in one way or another by divine compassion. But that the just are afflicted without cause seems to undermine totally the foundation of providence. Thus the varied and grave afflictions of a specific just man called Job, perfect in every virtue, are proposed as a kind of theme for the question intended for discussion.

But there were some who held that Job was not someone who was in the nature of things, but that this was a parable made up to serve as a kind of theme to dispute providence, as men frequently invent cases to serve as a model for debate. Although it does not matter much for the intention of the book whether or not such is the case, still it makes a difference for the truth itself. This aforementioned opinion seems to contradict the authority of Scripture. In Ezekiel, the Lord is represented as saying, *if there were three just men in our midst, Noah, Daniel, and Job, these would free your souls by their justice* (Ezek 14:14). Clearly Noah and Daniel really were men in the nature of things and so there should be no doubt about Job who is the third man numbered with them. Also, James says, *behold, we bless those who persevered. You have heard of the suffering of Job and you have seen the intention of the Lord* (Jas 5:11). Therefore one must believe that the man Job was a man in the nature of things.

However, as to the epoch in which he lived, who his parents were or even who the author of the book was, that is, whether Job wrote about himself as if speaking about another person or whether someone else reported these things about him, is not the present intention of this discussion. With trust in God's aid, I intend to explain this book entitled the Book of Job briefly as far as I am able according to the literal sense. The mystical sense has been explained for us both accurately and eloquently by the blessed Pope Gregory so that nothing further need be added to this sort of commentary.

CHAPTER 1

Lecture 1

^{1:1} Vir erat in terra Hus nomine Iob, et erat vir ille simplex et rectus ac timens Deum ac recedens a malo.

^{1:2} Natique sunt ei septem filii et tres filiae.

^{1:3} Et fuit possessio eius septem milia ovium et tria milia camelorum, quingenta quoque iuga boum et quingentae asinae, ac familia multa nimis. Eratque vir ille magnus inter omnes Orientales.

^{1:4} Et ibant filii eius et faciebant convivia per domos unusquisque in die sua, et mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas ut comederent et biberent cum eis vinum.

^{1:5} Cumque in orbem transissent dies convivii, mittebat ad eos Iob et sanctificabat illos, consurgensque diluculo offerebat holocausta per singulos. Dicebat enim: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. Sic faciebat Iob cunctis diebus.

^{1:1} Ἄνθρωπός τις ἦν ἐν χώρᾳ τῆς Αὐσίτιδι, ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωβ, καὶ ἦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ἀληθινός, ἄμεμπτος, δίκαιος, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος.

^{1:2} ἐγένοντο δὲ αὐτῷ υἱοὶ ἑπτὰ καὶ θυγατέρες τρεῖς.

^{1:3} καὶ ἦν τὰ κτήνη αὐτοῦ πρόβατα ἑπτακισχίλια, κάμηλοι τρισχίλια, ζεύγη βοῶν πεντακόσια, ὄνοι θήλειαι νομάδες πεντακόσιαι, καὶ ὑπηρεσία πολλὴ σφόδρα καὶ ἔργα μεγάλα ἦν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ ἦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος εὐγενὴς τῶν ἀφ' ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν.

^{1:4} συμπορευόμενοι δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἐποιούσαν πότον καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν συμπαραλαμβάνοντες ἅμα καὶ τὰς τρεῖς ἀδελφὰς αὐτῶν ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν μετ' αὐτῶν.

^{1:5} καὶ ὡς ἂν συνετελέσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ πότου, ἀπέστελλεν Ἰωβ καὶ ἐκαθάριζεν αὐτοὺς ἀνιστάμενος τὸ πρωὶ καὶ προσέφερεν περὶ αὐτῶν θυσίας κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ μόσχον ἓνα περὶ ἁμαρτίας περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν· ἔλεγεν γὰρ Ἰωβ Μήποτε οἱ υἱοὶ μου ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ αὐτῶν κακὰ ἐνενόησαν πρὸς θεόν. οὕτως οὖν ἐποίει Ἰωβ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας.

^{1:1} There was a man in the Land of Hus whose name was Job. He was a man without guile and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.

^{1:2} There were born to him seven sons and three daughters.

^{1:3} His property was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels; five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses and a great number of servants. So this man was accounted great among all the peoples of the East.

^{1:4} His sons used to go and hold banquets in each other's houses, each one on his appointed day. And they would send and invite their sisters to eat and drink wine with them.

^{1:5} When the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send for them and purify them; and rising at dawn, he offered burnt holocausts for each one. For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and blessed God in their hearts. Job did this every day.

Vir erat in terra Hus, etc. Quia, sicut dictum est, intentio huius libri tota ordinatur ad ostendendum qualiter res humanae providentia divina regantur, praemititur quasi totius disputationis fundamentum quaedam historia in qua cuiusdam viri iusti multiplex afflictio recitatur: hoc enim est quod maxime videtur divinam providentiam a rebus humanis excludere.

Huius igitur viri primo persona describitur, et quantum ad sexum dum dicitur *vir erat*: hic enim sexus ad perferendas molestias invenitur robustior; describitur etiam quantum ad patriam cum dicitur *in terra Hus*, quae est in partibus orientis, et quantum ad nomen cum dicitur *nomine Iob*: et videntur haec duo posita esse ad

There was a man in the land of Hus, etc. As was said above, because the whole intention of this book is ordered to showing how human affairs are ruled by divine providence, a kind of history is put first in which the numerous sufferings of a certain just man are related as the foundation of the whole debate. For it is affliction like this which seems most of all to exclude divine providence from human affairs.

First, therefore, the person of this man is described as to his sex when the text says, *there was a man*. This sex is found stronger in suffering troubles. He is also described as to his land of origin when the text continues, *in the land of Hus*, which is situated in the East. His name is given next, *whose name was Job*. These two things seem to have been

insinuandum hoc quod dicitur non esse parabolam sed rem gestam.

Et ne aliquis adversitates quae postmodum inducuntur pro peccatis huius viri ei accidisse crederet, consequenter describitur eius virtus, per quam a peccatis demonstratur immunis. Sciendum siquidem est hominem tripliciter peccare: sunt enim quaedam peccata quibus peccatur in proximum, sicut homicidia, adulteria, furta et alia huiusmodi; quaedam quibus peccatur in Deum, sicut periurium, sacrilegium, blasphemia et huiusmodi; quaedam quibus unusquisque in se ipsum peccat, secundum illud apostoli Cor. VI 18 *qui fornicatur, in corpus suum peccat*. In proximum autem quis peccat dupliciter, occulte per dolum et manifeste per vim; hic autem vir per dolum proximum non circumvenit, unde dicitur **et erat vir ille simplex**: simplicitas enim proprie dolositati opponitur; nulli violentiam intulit, sequitur enim **et rectus**: rectitudo enim ad iustitiam proprie pertinet, quae in aequalitate consistit, secundum illud Is. XXVI 7 *semita iusti recta est, rectus callis iusti ad inambulandum*. Quod autem in Deum non peccaverit aperte ostenditur per hoc quod subditur **ac timens Deum**, in quo reverentia ad Deum designatur. Quod etiam in se ipsum non peccaverit ostenditur in hoc quod subditur **ac recedens a malo**, quia malum odio habuit propter se ipsum, non solum propter nocumentum proximi vel offensam Dei.

Descripta igitur huius viri et persona et virtute, eius prosperitas consequenter ostenditur, ut ex praecedenti prosperitate gravior sequens iudicetur adversitas, simul etiam ad ostendendum quod ex prima Dei intentione iustis semper bona tribuuntur non solum spiritualia sed etiam temporalia; sed quod aliquando iusti adversitatibus premantur accidit propter aliquam specialem causam: unde et a principio homo sic institutus fuit ut nullis subiaceret perturbationibus si in innocentia permansisset. Principium autem prosperitatis temporalis, post bonam consistentiam personae propriae, consistit in personis coniunctis et praecipue in natis qui sunt quodammodo aliquid parentum. Describitur igitur primo eius prosperitas quantum ad fecunditatem prolis, cum dicitur **natique sunt ei septem filii et tres filiae**. Convenienter numerosior multitudo marium quam feminarum ponitur quia parentes magis affectare solent filios quam filias, tum quia id quod perfectius est desiderabilius est, mares autem comparantur ad feminas sicut perfectum ad imperfectum, tum quia in auxilium rerum gerendarum solent esse parentes magis nati quam natae.

Deinde ostenditur prosperitas eius quantum ad multitudinem divitiarum et praecipue in animalibus: nam circa principium humani generis, propter hominum paucitatem, agrorum possessio non ita pretiosa erat sicut

put in the text to suggest that this is not a parable but recounts a real deed.

His virtue is then described and in this he is shown to be free from sin, lest anyone think that the adversities which are set down in the account afterwards happened to him because of his sins. One should note that a man sins in three ways. There are certain sins in which he sins against neighbor, like murder, adultery, theft and the like. There are certain sins in which he sins against God, like perjury, sacrilege, blasphemy and the like. There are sins in which he sins against himself, as St. Paul says in Corinthians, *he who fornicates, sins against his own body* (1 Cor 6:18). One sins against his neighbor in two ways, either secretly by fraud or openly by violence. But this man did not deceive his neighbor by fraud, for the text says, **he was without guile**. Being without guile is properly opposed to fraud. Nor did he render violence against anyone, for the text continues, **and upright**. For uprightness properly belongs to justice, which consists in the mean between good and evil, as Isaiah says, *the way of the just is upright; you make straight the path the righteous walk* (Isa 26:7). The text clearly indicates that he did not sin against God openly when it continues, **and he feared God**, which designates his reverence for God. The fact that he also did not sin against himself is shown when the text puts, **and turned away from evil**, because he regarded evil with hatred for his own sake, not only for the sake of the harm of his neighbor or the offense of God.

When both the person and the virtue of this man have been described, then his prosperity is shown so that the adversity which follows may be judged to be more grave because of the prosperity which precedes it. At the same time, this also demonstrates that not only spiritual goods but also temporal goods are given to the just from God's first intention. But the fact that the just are sometimes afflicted with adversities happens for some special reason. Hence from the beginning, man was so established that he would not have been subject to any disturbances if he had remained in innocence. Now after the good firmly held in one's own person, an element of temporal prosperity consists in the persons who are kin to a man and especially in the children born to him, who are in a certain sense a part of their parents. Therefore, Job's prosperity is first described in terms of the fertility of his children when the text says, **there were born to him seven sons and three daughters**. The number of the men is fittingly greater than the number of women because parents usually have more affection for sons than for daughters. This is both because what is more perfect is more desirable (men are compared to women as perfect to imperfect) and because those born males are usually of more help in managing business than those born females.

Next, Job's prosperity is shown as to the great number of his riches, especially his animals. For near the beginning of the human race, the possession of land was not as valuable as the possession of animals because of the small number

animalium, et maxime in partibus orientis in quibus usque hodie sunt pauci habitatores prae latitudine regionis. Inter animalia autem primo ponuntur ea quae maxime deserviunt ad victum et vestitum personae, scilicet oves, unde dicitur *et fuit possessio eius septem millia ovium*; secundo ponuntur ea quae maxime deserviunt ad onera deferenda, scilicet cameli, et hoc est quod subditur *et tria millia camelorum*; tertio ponuntur ea quae deserviunt ad culturam agrorum, et hoc est quod subditur *quingenta quoque iuga bouum*; quarto ponuntur animalia quibus homines ad vecturam utuntur, unde sequitur *et quingentae asinae*, ex quibus muli generantur, quibus antiqui maxime insidebant. Sub istis autem quatuor generibus animalium comprehenduntur omnia alia quae ad eosdem usus deserviunt, puta sub ovibus omnia victui et vestitui necessaria, et sic de reliquis. Et quia homines multas divitias possidentes ad eas gubernandas multitudo indigent famulorum, convenienter subditur *ac familia multa nimis*. Consequenter ponitur prosperitas eius quantum ad honorem et famam quae longe lateque diffundebatur, et hoc est quod dicitur *eratque vir ille magnus inter omnes Orientales*, idest honoratus et famosus.

Ad maiorem autem ipsius Iob commendationem consequenter disciplina domus eius describitur, quae immunis erat ab illis vitiis quae opulentia gignere solet. Plerumque namque divitiarum abundantia discordiam parit, unde legitur in Genesi quod Abraham et Loth nequiverunt simul habitare, ad vitandum iurgium quod ex rerum abundantia proveniebat. Frequenter etiam homines multa possidentes, dum ea quae possident immoderate amant, eis tenacius utuntur, unde dicitur Eccl. VI 1 *est et aliud malum quod vidi sub sole, et quidem frequens apud homines: vir cui dedit Deus divitias et substantiam et honorem, et nihil deest animae eius ex omnibus quae desiderat, nec tribuit ei Deus potestatem ut comedat ex eo*. Ab his igitur malis immunis erat domus beati Iob: erat enim ibi concordia et iocunda et aequa frugalitas, quod significatur cum dicitur *et ibant filii eius et faciebant convivia per domos unusquisque in die sua*. Haec autem caritas et concordia non solum inter fratres erat sed usque ad sorores extendebatur, quae frequenter despiciuntur a fratribus propter superbiam quam opulentia plurimum gignit, unde subditur *et mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas ut comederent et biberent cum eis vinum*. Simul etiam designatur in hoc securitas quae de castitate filiarum habebatur; alias enim non circumducendae erant sed includendae, secundum illud sapientis Eccli. XXVI 13 *in filia non avertente se firma custodiam, ne inventa occasione abutatur se*.

Sicut autem in domo Iob frugalitas et concordia vigeat, sic in ipso Job vigeat sancta sollicitudo puritatis

of men. This was especially true in the East where even up to the present there are few inhabitants in comparison with the extent of the region. Among the animals, those are placed first which are especially useful for providing food and clothing for the human person, namely sheep, and so the text continues, *his property was seven thousand sheep*. Next, those animals are placed which are most useful as beasts of burden, camels. So the text adds, *and three thousand camels*. Third, those which serve for the cultivation of the fields are placed, and the text expresses this saying, *five hundred yolk of oxen*. Fourth, those animals which men use for transportation are placed, and so the text says, *and five hundred she-asses*, from which mules are bred, which the ancients used especially as mounts. All other species which serve the same purposes are classed under these four types of animals; for example, all those animals necessary for food and clothing are classed under sheep, and so on for the rest. Since men who have great wealth need a large number of servants to administer it, the text fittingly adds, *and a great number of servants*. Consequently his prosperity is established in terms of his honor and reputation which was known far and wide, and this is what the text means by saying, *so this man was accounted great among all the peoples of the East*, that is, he was honored and respected.

To praise Job even more, the discipline of his house is described next, which was free from those vices which wealth usually produces. For very often great wealth in fact produces discord and so Genesis says that Abraham and Lot could not live together to avoid the quarrelling which arises from an abundance of possessions (cf. Gen 13). Also, men who have a lot of possessions, while they love what they possess in an inordinate way, frequently use them more sparingly. As Ecclesiastes says, *there is another evil which I see under the sun, and which happens frequently among men: a man to whom God gave wealth, possessions and honor so that his soul lacks nothing he desires. Yet God does not give him power to consume it* (Eccl 6:12). The house of blessed Job was free from these evils, for concord, laughter and just frugality were there, which the text expresses, saying, *his sons used to go and hold banquets in each other's houses, each one on his appointed day*. This charity and concord existed not only among the brothers, but extended even to the sisters who often are despised by their brothers because of the pride which wealth generally produces, so the text adds, *and they would send and invite their sisters to eat and drink with them*. At the same time, the text also shows in this the confidence which Job had about the chastity of his daughters, for otherwise they would not have been allowed to go about in public, but would have been kept at home; as Sirach wisely says, *do not forget to keep a firm watch on your daughter lest she [abuse] herself when she found the opportunity* (Sir 26:13).

Just as frugality and concord flourished in Job's house, so a holy solicitude for the purity which riches frequently

quam frequenter divitiae obruunt vel etiam minuunt, secundum illud Deut. *Incrassatus est dilectus et recalcitavit*, et postea sequitur *dereliquit Deum factorem* etc. Et quidem de sua puritate intantum sollicitus erat quod ab his quae inquinare poterant totaliter procul erat: dictum est enim supra quod *erat timens Deum et recedens a malo*. Sed etiam circa filiorum puritatem maxime sollicitus erat; permittebat siquidem eos convivia agere eorum indulgens aetati: quaedam enim in iuvenibus tolerantur quae in personis gravibus reprehensibilia sunt. Et quia in conviviis vix aut numquam homines vitare possunt quin vel per ineptam laetitiam vel per inordinatam loquacitatem aut etiam immoderatum cibi usum offendant, filiis quos a conviviis non arcebat purificationis exhibebat remedium, unde dicitur *cumque in orbem transissent dies convivii, mittebat ad eos Iob et sanctificabat illos*.

Dicuntur autem in orbem dies transire convivii quia cum septem filii essent et unusquisque in die sua convivium faceret, per omnes dies septimanae seriatim huiusmodi consummabant convivia; postmodum quasi circulariter sive orbiculariter, sicut in diebus septimanae ita in conviviis ad principium rediebatur. Notandum autem quod licet Iob filiis indulgeret ut convivia agerent, tamen ipse suam gravitatem conservans eorum conviviis se non immiscebat: unde dicitur quod *mittebat ad eos*, non quod ipse ad eos iret. Modus autem sanctificationis quo per internuntium sanctificabat potest intelligi dupliciter: vel quia salubribus monitis eos instrui faciebat ut si quid in conviviis deliquerant emendarent, vel etiam expiationis aliquem ritum habebant quo huiusmodi delicta expiabantur, sicut et sacrificia etiam ante legem data fuerunt, et primitiarum et decimarum oblatio.

In conviviis autem homines interdum non solum impuritatem incurrunt modis praedictis, sed etiam gravioribus peccatis immerguntur usque ad Dei contemptum, propter lasciviam ratione absorpta et a reverentia divina abstracta, sicut in Exodo dicitur *sedit populus manducare et bibere et surrexerunt ludere*, id est fornicari vel idolis immolare. Iob igitur non solum contra levia delicta filiis sanctificando subveniebat, sed etiam contra graviora remedium studebat apponere quo eis Deus placaretur, unde sequitur *consurgensque diluculo offerebat holocausta per singulos*. In quibus verbis ostenditur perfectio devotionis ipsius, et quantum ad tempus quia diluculo consurgebat, secundum illud Psalmi *mane astabo tibi* etc.; et quantum ad modum oblationis quia holocausta offerebat quae totaliter comburebantur ad honorem Dei, nulla parte relicta in usum offerentis vel eius pro quo offerebatur sicut erat in hostiis pacificis et pro peccato: dicitur enim holocaustum *quasi totum incensum*; et quantum ad numerum quia per singulos filios holocausta

destroy or diminish flourished in Job himself. As Deuteronomy says, *he waxed fat, and kicked*, and further on, *and he forsook the God who made him* (Deut 32:18). He was so solicitous for his purity that he removed himself completely from those things which could defile it. This is shown in the text already quoted that *he feared God and turned away from evil* (Job 1:1). But he was also solicitous for the purity of his sons, even though he permitted them to have banquets as an indulgence to their age. For some things can be tolerated in young people which would be reprehensible in mature people. Because at banquets men with difficulty either can never avoid unseemly humor and inordinate speech, or they offend in their immoderate use of food, he showed a remedy of purification to his sons whom he did not keep away from these banquets, and so the text says, *and when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send for them and purify them*.

Days of banqueting are said to run their course because since there were seven sons and each one held a banquet on his own appointed day, the feasts would use up each of the seven days of the week in turn. Afterwards like in a circle or in cycles the day returned to the beginning in the banquets just as in the days of the week. One should note, however, that although Job indulged his sons in allowing them to have feasts, yet he did not participate himself in their banquets because he preserved his maturity. So the text says, *he would send for them*, but not that he would go himself. The manner of this purification by which he sanctified them through an intermediary can be understood in two ways: he either had them instructed with beneficial warning so that if they had done anything wrong at the banquets, they would correct it, or else that they would perform some rite of expiation in which they could satisfy for these kinds of faults, as there were sacrifices and the oblation of first fruits and tithes even before the Law was given.

Now, at banquets, men not only incur impurity sometimes in the ways already mentioned, but also immerse themselves in more serious sins even to holding God in contempt; when because of moral depravity their reason is dulled and they are separated from reverence for God; as Exodus says, *the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play* (Exod 32:6), that is, to fornicate and to sacrifice to idols. So Job not only assisted his sons by sanctifying them against their light faults, but he was also eager to add a remedy by which they might be pleasing to God even against their graver sins. *And rising at dawn he offered holocausts for each one*. In these words, the text shows the perfection of his devotion both as to time, because he rose at dawn as the Psalm says, *in the morning, I will stand before you* (Ps 5:5), and so on; and as to the manner of offering because he offered holocausts which were completely burned to the honor of God. No part of this offering remained for the use of the offerer or of the one for whom it was offered as was the case in peace offerings or sin offerings, for the burnt

sta offerebat: singula enim peccata convenientibus satisfactionibus sunt expianda.

Causam autem oblationis holocaustorum subiungit dicens *dicebat enim*, scilicet Iob in corde suo, non quidem de peccatis filiorum certus sed dubitans, *ne forte peccaverint filii mei*, scilicet opere vel verbo, *et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis*.

Quod quidem dupliciter intelligi potest.

Uno modo ut totum intelligatur coniunctim: quamvis enim benedicere Deum sit bonum, tamen benedicere Deum de hoc quod homo peccavit significat voluntatem in peccatis quiescentem, et quantum ad hoc vituperatur, sicut in Zacharia dicitur contra quosdam: *pasce pecora occisionis, quae qui possederant occidebant et non dolabant et vendebant ea dicentes: benedictus Dominus! Divites facti sumus*.

Alio modo ut intelligatur divisim, et sic per hoc quod dicitur *benedixerint*, intelligitur *maledixerint*: crimen enim blasphemiae tam horribile est ut pia ora ipsum nominare proprio nomine reformident, sed ipsum per contrarium significant. Et convenienter pro peccato blasphemiae holocausta offeruntur, quia ea quae in Deum committuntur honoratione divina sunt expurganda.

Solet autem contingere quod divinus cultus a quibusdam devote perficiatur si rarus sit, cum autem frequens fuerit in fastidium venit, quod est peccatum accidia, cum aliquis scilicet tristatur de spirituali labore. Cui quidem vitio Iob subiectus non erat, nam subditur *sic faciebat Iob cunctis diebus*, quasi perseverantem in divino cultu devotionem conservans.

offering is like *something completely consumed* (Lev 1:9). As to the number of the burnt offerings, he offered holocausts for each one of his sons, for each sin must be expiated by suitable satisfactions.

Now, the text adds the reason for the offering of the holocausts, saying, *for he said*, namely Job in his heart, not certain but doubtful about the sins of his sons, *it may be that my sons have sinned*, in word or deed, *and blessed God in their hearts*.

This can be understood in two ways.

In the first way, the text may be understood as a unified whole. For although to bless God is good, yet to bless God about the fact that a man has sinned means that one's will agrees with the sin. He is blameworthy for this, as we read in Zechariah against some men, *feed the flocks doomed to slaughter, which they killed who took possession, they did not grieve and sold them, saying: Blessed be the Lord, we have become rich* (Zech 11:45).

In another way, it may be understood divided. In this way *they blessed* means *they cursed*. For the crime of blasphemy is so horrible that pious lips dread to call it by its own proper name, and so they call it by its opposite. Holocausts are fittingly offered for the sin of blasphemy, because sins committed against God must be expiated by a mark of divine respect.

Now when divine worship is rare, men usually celebrate it more devoutly; but when it is frequent, it annoys them. This is the sin of acedia, namely when someone is saddened about spiritual work. Job was not indeed subject to this sin, for the text adds, *Job did this every day*, maintaining an almost steadfast devotion in divine worship.