Fragments of the Homilies on Job

Origen of Alexandria (c. AD 230–250)

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Contents

Part 1: The catena fragments 1

Fragment 1 2

Fragment 2 3

Fragment 3 6

Fragment 19 8

Fragment 20 10

Fragment 21 13

Fragment 22 15

Fragment 23 19

Fragment 24 20

Fragment 27 21

Fragment 28 22

Fragment 29 23

Fragment 32 25

Fragment 35 27

Fragment 40 28

Fragment 41 31

Fragment 42 33

Part 2: Fragments from the Vatican manuscripts 34

Fragment 1 **35**

Fragment 2 **36**

Fragment 7 **37**

Fragment 10 **38**

Fragment 12 **39**

Fragment 13 **40**

Fragment 14 **41**

Fragment 15 **42**

Fragment 16 **43**

Fragment 19 **44**

Fragment 20 **45**

Fragment 21 **47**

Fragment 22 **48**

Fragment 23 **51**

Fragment 24 **52**

Fragment 27 **53**

Fragment 28 **54**

Fragment 29 **55**

Fragment 30 **57**

Fragment 31 **59**

Fragment 32 **60**

Fragment 33 **61**

Fragment 34 **62**

Fragment 35 **63**

Fragment 38 **64**

Fragment 39 **66**

Fragment 40 **67**

Fragment 41 **69**

Fragment 42 **70**

Part 1: The catena fragments

Fragment 1

Verse 10: “Have you not fenced in what is outside him?” How do you know that he has been fenced in? This is our adversary the devil, who “goes about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” So he came after Job too, wanting to do the same things. Later, when he received permission, he did them. He also understood that everything had been fenced around, because he had been prevented from doing what he wanted to Job. So he said, “You have fenced in what is inside him and what is outside him.” Everything, then, as far as it is not given over to the devil, you have fenced in.

Verse 18: While this man was still speaking, another messenger came, saying to Job: “While your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking, at the house of their oldest brother,

Verse 19: “suddenly a great wind came from the desert and struck the four corners of the house, and the house fell on your children, and they died. I alone have escaped, and I have come to tell you.” So he caused the camels to fall into the hands of the horsemen, and the donkeys and the yokes of oxen into the hands of those taking captives. But the sheep he hated, and for this reason he brought fire down on them. He also plotted against the sons, and he was looking for an opportunity to destroy them. If he had found them reading, he would not have touched the house, and he would have had no ground for killing them. If he had found them praying, he could have done nothing against them. But when he found an opportunity, he had power. What was the opportunity? It was drunkenness; it was a drinking party. Notice that the wind touched the corners of the house: it is in the broad places at the corners that the hypocrites stand and pray. Everyone who has not set foot on the straight way uses the corners. A broad corner is abundant and unrestrained wickedness.

Fragment 2

Verse 2: And the Lord said to the devil, “Where do you come from?” God was watching how Satan, put to shame, was laboring. When he questions someone and sees him behaving without conscience, then he convicts the wrongdoer, as he convicted Cain.

Verse 9: When time had passed, his wife said to him. Notice the villainy. When a long time has gone by, then he attacks, for it is then above all that strength fails. The weakness was double: the one enduring had become weaker through the length of time, and hope had been more fully given up. And a little later: Let us not look at the fact that she is a woman, but at what she advises. This is what I urge on people today as well: do not look at the standing of the persons, but at the manner of the counsel. A wife is there to help, not to trip her husband up. Verse 9: His wife said to him, “How long will you endure?” The devil brings forward last the strongest of all the schemes that came before. If only you had taken her too! If only you had buried her with the children! Some say that these words are not even the wife’s, but that he himself, taking on her likeness, spoke them. For Job’s wife could not have been like this, unless someone says that she was overturned by disaster and became like this. And a little later: It is likely that this was not the first such counsel, but that many times she had said many things harsher than this.

Notice the devil’s deceit. He had Eve in mind. This, he says, brought down the first man; this will be able to overcome this man too. But you wretched, foolish one! When she found that man overcome by his belly, she sowed her own poison. But this man you see practicing philosophy and having risen above nature itself. Neither the loss of his wealth, nor the untimely death of his children, nor the torment of a body without relief, nor so great a length of time bent him. And do you expect to overpower with words the man who was not taken by events? From the same author: Why do you weaken the athlete? Why do you hold back his hands? You ought to say, as the Apostle did, “A little longer, a little longer.” Verse 9: “But say a word to the Lord, and die.” After describing the tragedy in full, then he brings in the shameless counsel. And he did not even say to him openly, “Blaspheme.” Those who give evil advice do not dare to present the counsel uncovered. What are you saying, woman? When he ought to be appeased, when he ought to be reconciled, are you urging him to provoke him all the more? If God did these things, one should entreat him,

not blaspheme. But how is it clear that I will die even as one loved? Still, notice how the woman regarded blasphemy: as though she thought it enough to bring death at once.

(Verse 10) "If we received good things from the Lord's hand, shall we not endure the bad?" This blessed man was struck from every side, yet he stood more firmly, and though he took countless arrows he did not give way. He emptied the devil's quiver, and he himself did not fall or get tripped up. Like an excellent helmsman, he was not sunk when the sea raged and the waves rose, and he did not grow careless when it was calm. In each change of circumstances he kept his skill the same. Wealth did not puff him up, and poverty did not humble him. When affairs flowed along smoothly he was not slack and lying back, and when almost his whole household was overturned and destroyed, he was not thrown into confusion, nor did he show his courage to be false. Let the rich hear this, and let the poor hear it. The story is useful to both, and the account profits all people, those who are prospering and those who are in misfortune. For this champion of godliness, crowned before the whole world, handled both kinds of weapons and set up his trophy in both. When the demon came against him with every kind of warfare, he took his stand against all of it and was proclaimed victor in every part. He was like a noble soldier who knows how to fight by night, to attack walls, to fight on foot and at sea, to shoot the bow, to wield the spear, and to overcome the enemy with slings and javelins and every manner of battle, and so to prevail everywhere. In the same way that noble man bore every trial with great courage: the trial of poverty, of hunger, of disease, of pain, of the loss of his children, of friends, of enemies, of his wife, and of his servants. There was no human misfortune that was not poured out on his body. Yet he rose above all the nets, and became higher than the devil's reeds.

What is more wonderful still is that all of it came on him, all of it in the extreme, and all of it at once. Do not look only at how much he suffered. Add that it did not come little by little, nor with gaps between, but all together and in one stroke. That is no small addition to his trials. For first, no other man would be found who endured everything at the same time. If one wrestles with poverty, he still enjoys health. If he is pierced through with both poverty and disease, he has often had a wife to comfort him in his troubles, a harbor for him. If he did not have such a wife, at least she did not give him such deadly advice. If she did, at least he did not lose all his children together. If he lost them together, at least not by such a kind of death. If by such a death, at least he had friends to console him. If he had no friends to console him, at least they did not trample on him as well. If they did trample on him, at least he did not have servants reproaching him. If they reproached him, at least they did not spit in his face. If they spat in his face, at least he was not pierced through with such a disease; he enjoyed a room and a shelter, and he did not sit on the dung heap. And if he did sit on the dung heap, if he had no one to stretch out a hand to him, at least [the text breaks off here and is corrupt]. (Verse 11) "Each came from his own country to him: Eliphaz the king of the Temanites, Baldad the ruler of the Sauchites, Sophar the king of the Minaeans." Your coming is friendly, and your advice is friendly. Eliphaz: "God has scattered me," or "my God's contempt." Theman: "their failing." Sophar: "watchtower," or "contempt." Baldad: "growing old," and "glorious." Sauchaeans: "their idle talk."

Verse 11. “When his three friends heard all the evils that had come upon him, each one came from his own country to him.” Someone may ask why the friends came after so long a time. Let him consider first that they lived in different countries. After a long while many people may have heard the news, but the strangeness of the disaster made it seem unbelievable, that Job should be sitting on a dung heap with no one to help him. So they waited to confirm the report through several witnesses, or even to send someone to see whether what was being said was true. In these matters time passed. Besides this, when they learned the truth, they were kings who were about to travel abroad. They first had to put their households in good order and set others over their subjects in their place. All this occupied them and caused delay. And unless they had been very devoted and righteous men, they would not have left their own lands and kingdoms to come and visit him, but would have met the need through others. One can also think that the delay of their arrival was part of a divine plan. For the whole contest was resolved together with the friends’ discussion: God gave his verdict, recovered the righteous man and crowned him. So it was a divine arrangement that the friends were delayed, so that the illness would be prolonged, and the righteous man, having contended all the more, would be declared righteous by God with greater justice. Verse 11. “And they came to him together, to comfort him and to visit him.” Symmachus rendered it thus: “For they agreed together to come and sympathize with him and console him.” Notice from this too that further time passed, until they sent messages to one another and made their meeting and arrival together.

Verse 12. “And they sprinkled earth on their heads.”

Verse 13. “They sat with him seven days and seven nights.” The Scripture did not say that they sat with him seven days from morning until evening, nor seven nights from evening until morning. So it is clear that they sat with him for most of the day, but withdrew at times to attend to necessary needs. Then they came back and sat with him far into the night, and going away again, returned to him at dawn. This is the mark of the most genuine and sympathetic friends. But Scripture, using common manner of speech, simply said: “They sat with him seven days and seven nights.” So too when it says that Jacob served fourteen years and was scorched by the heat of the day and the frost of the night, did he never go under a roof? Did he get no rest at all in all that time? To pick at such things is nonsense. For, as I said, Scripture uses common manner of speech. But some people mock Scripture and from this too they ridicule it as false. “How,” they say, “could they have gone on without food and without sleep for so many days?” [The Greek of the last sentence is garbled; its sense seems to be: “We were forced to be dragged along with their ill-timed difficulty.”]

Fragment 3

With this the second chapter is finished. As we look ahead to the third, we say this: the righteous man does feel pain, and no one could deny it. Virtue does not belong to people who feel nothing. It belongs to those who keep their wisdom in the midst of suffering. On the surface, he cannot help being stung most sharply by the blow in his flesh. In the deeper sense, he is a righteous man who loves God, and he sees some people stumbling over his sufferings, as though God's glory were being slandered through him if the righteous man has to endure such things. For when he says, "Why have you set me as a target for your attack?", he was not speaking against God, God forbid! Against whom would he have made his plea? What he means is this: "Why, Master, is your name blasphemed because of me?" He is troubled all the same and dizzy with fear that he may have suffered a still deeper abandonment by God. A soul that loves God is not punished by anything so much as by the suspicion that God has forsaken it. Ten thousand times over it would choose death rather than be counted among the living with such pain and such a suspicion. At the loss of his possessions and the sudden death of his children, we heard what words of thanks he uttered. We heard how he instructed his wife when she thought something unworthy about the Master, and what he said after the trial, the contempt and the bitter suffering, and how none of the misfortunes of men shook him. But when his friends arrived, righteous and sympathetic men, he thought the time was right. He saw their patience and their love toward him, and so he spoke and made public the pains of his soul. He speaks, however, in a way that carries no danger.

For the devil had one aim: to bring the righteous man to blaspheme God. Job clearly did not do this. Rather, he spoke well of God and sent up words of thanks. He does curse the day of his birth and long for death, for the reasons given above. But in the deeper sense he speaks mysteries. He reflects on things that have already happened, and he assures us of what is to come. Such are always the sayings of the holy prophets. Now that we have come to the words themselves, let us make their meaning clear, with him guiding us to the interpretation, the one who also strengthened holy Job for his struggles.

Verse 1: "After this Job opened his mouth." When a righteous man opens his mouth, we should not listen to what is said in a casual way, but should look for the benefit that comes from his words. For such sayings of the saints are always full of benefit, and a righteous man

who opens his mouth brings hidden treasures into public view. That is why Paul, the chosen vessel, writes: "My mouth is opened to you, Corinthians." And it is written of the Lord that "he opened his mouth and taught." Only the one who has first learned the measures of silence is rightly said to open his mouth. So Job also opens his mouth "after this." That is, after the great victory and after those sufferings, he does not speak without testing his words, as one racked with pain in the body whose tongue runs ahead of the lawful bounds of good sense. He shows his self-control even in his words. The statement that he opened his mouth shows both the calm of his soul and the fitness of his words.

Fragment 19

“How long will you wear out my soul?” Heavy loads laid on animals make the animals that carry them grow weary. In the same way there are heavy words, and a man who hears them grows weary as if crushed under a weight. The other two who came with Baldad spoke words that were not good, harsh, or meant as abuse. Job felt the force of those words like a heavy burden. Worn out in soul by what they said, he says, “How long will you wear out my soul?” And a little later: You see how the tyrant of the Sauchaeans was described earlier. His words are tyrannical, and when Job heard them he said, “How long will you wear out my soul?” Nothing else strikes a person’s soul as a harsh word does. Many a man who has endured tortures inflicted on his body has not endured words. Yet the perfect athlete, though weary, still bears harsh words, for it belongs to a great man to bear insult. So the Apostle, listing his brave deeds, says: “When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we encourage. We have become like the refuse of the world, the scum of all things, to this very day.” And a little later he speaks again, because of the words “How long will you wear out my soul?” Do you see? This is Job, whose book contains nothing else so distinctive as his courage and his endurance. Even so, he feels the weariness he has suffered from the harsh speech of those who came to look in on him.

“Only know that the Lord made me thus.” Do not suppose that what you see happening to me has come from anywhere other than God. So be afraid. The one who brings these things on me is able to bring them on you also. “You speak against me; without shame you press upon me.” Often a person speaks against another while he himself is doing wrong. When he does not blush, he says it to the man’s face. He does not do it to rebuke him or to tell the truth. He does it to reproach and insult him. One must not trample on those whom God is punishing. One should grieve over them and fear.

“Yes indeed, in truth I have gone astray, and error lodges with me, so that I spoke a word I should not have.” Then he says it as a supposition: I grant you, [as if conceding the point], that I suffer because of these sins. Even so, was it right for you to reproach me like this? “Error lodges with me.” Suppose I really had done such things as I should not have done. Suppose I really were such a man. Ought you not, when you see the scourgings, the festering matter, the worms, and the loss of my possessions, to feel shame? But you trample on me further. You neither pity me nor sympathize with me in my plight.

"But enough, for you magnify yourselves over me, and leap upon me with reproach." You do not reproach me in moderation. You leap upon me. You reproach me as men who stand on me and trample me down.

"And he has raised his fortress against me." It is as though I am under the wall of my circumstances, a fortress I cannot flee. I must stay there until God decides to tear it down.

"Behold, I laugh at the reproach, and I will not speak." This is the saying, "Overcome evil with good." From the same author: Behold, I am thought to be laughing at your reproach, not to be speaking.

Fragment 20

“If his gifts go up to heaven, and his sacrifice touches the clouds.” This is about the ungodly man. Suppose his gifts go up to heaven, suppose he is greatly exalted, suppose his sacrifice touches the clouds. When the heretic prays, when his sacrifice rises up with lofty speech, when he seems to be firmly established, then he will perish utterly. His prayer is counted against him as sin, and that very prayer of his is sin.

“For when he seems already to be established, then he will perish utterly.” Compare: “But the enemies of the Lord, as soon as they were glorified and exalted, vanished like smoke.” “Those who saw him will say, ‘Where is he?’” Who are those who saw him? The churchmen, who saw the failings of those men, will say, “Where is he?” “Like a dream that has flown away, he will not be found.” Such people dream. They fashion phantoms and do not set their minds on the truth, and so they stumble. They become like a dream that has flown away, which will not be found.

Verse 10: “May the lesser ones destroy his sons.” These are the sons and disciples of the one who taught these things. Verse 10: “May his hands kindle pains.” His hands, he says, that is, his deeds, will kindle punishment for him. “His hands”: this is said of the impious and mistaken man whose prayer is counted as sin. If his sacrifice goes up to heaven and touches the clouds, then he is destroyed in the end. His hands will kindle pains for him, that is, he will pass his life in the last extremes of pain. And he says this about the sons of the lawless man.

Verse 13: “The gall of an asp is in his belly.” For he has lessons that are not sweet but are the gall of an asp, evil as it were, [this being the teaching] about the wine of their instruction. “For their vine is from the vine of Sodom,” and so on. And a little later: the gall of an asp is in the belly of the man of different doctrine, who is impious in his teachings, which are opposed to the truth.

Verse 15: “Wealth gathered unjustly will be vomited up.” What other wealth is gathered unjustly than the wealth in their words? For it is gathered unjustly. But the Good One will not leave them fallen, always holding in themselves wealth that was unjustly gathered. He will make them vomit it up. Verse 15: “An angel will drag him out of his house.” By the working and kindness of God an angel will drag him out of that badly built house itself,

which is the church of the evildoers. For this is his house. But an angel will drag him out of his house.

Verse 17: “May he not see the milking of the grazing flocks.” The man of different doctrine does not see the milking of the grazing flocks. The grazing flocks are certain souls that feed under the good Shepherd, who said: “I am the door. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved. And he will go in and go out and find pasture.”

Verse 18: “Like a tough herb, unchewed, not to be swallowed.” Their words and teachings are tough and dense; those things that are done against God have nothing sweet in them. The “tough herb” is a certain plant that grows rough on the tongue of the one chewing it. Just as, he says, no matter how hard someone struggles, grinding that plant with his teeth, he cannot swallow it, so also the one who wants to enjoy what belongs to others will carry off no profit from his labors.

Verse 20: “Therefore his good things will not bloom.” The things he seems to do as good will not flourish. When he seems already to be filled full, he will be crushed. Verse 20: “There will be no salvation for him in his possessions.” His possessions cannot secure salvation for him. Otherwise:

Verse 22: “Every necessity will come upon him, and he will send upon him a fury of wrath.” Verse 22: “Every necessity will come upon him.” These words are meant to urge us to keep away from what belongs to others. Verse 22: “Let it snow pains upon him.” Instead of snow, pains come upon such a man.

Verse 24: “And he will not be saved from the hand of iron.” He does not mean this iron that we perceive with the senses, but a most cutting word.

Verse 25: “May an arrow pass through his body.” These fiery arrows wound him. Verse 25: “An unkindled fire will devour him.” Here we learn a mystery about the punishment laid up for sinners, so that we may guard against suffering it. He said that an unkindled fire will devour the impious man. The material fire we know is not an “unkindled” fire, for it is seen. But that fire is invisible, the fire that comes upon sinners and burns them from within. It is perceived by the mind, and it punishes. If you want to take an image of that fire, think of someone burning with an extreme fever, inflamed as if by fire. You will not find the fire in him by sight, yet it lies underneath and sets his inner parts ablaze. In the same way a person, fevered by his sins, is burned up. Verse 25: “May a newcomer mistreat his house.” The one who made war on that people was a newcomer, not a proselyte. He mistreated their house by destroying what was thought to be a holy place, and the city which they said was holy.

Verse 27: “May heaven uncover his lawless deeds.” This means: the terrors will stand against him both from God and from heaven. He said this because Job, who said he had been struck by God, also recalled that he had been wronged by men. So he argues that everything was brought on him because of sin. The very earth rises up against that people.

Verse 29: “And the possession of his goods is from the overseer [bishop].” Here we learn who the overseer is. He is called an overseer because God himself is called Overseer, and the bishops, the good and noble ones, strive in every way to bear his image. A man who copies a royal portrait is honored for copying it well, and he is honored also for having adorned it. In the same way, blessed is the bishop who has understood the true Overseer, and who zealously imitates him and becomes like a god among men. Or blessed is the one who has as his own overseer the one who truly makes him a bishop in Christ Jesus. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Fragment 21

Verse 5: “Look at me and be astonished.” You claim to be wise, and to know why I suffer these things, as though God were asleep to the sins of men. And you have dared to call me a sinner, and to say that I have justly come to this.

Verse 7: “They have grown old even in wealth.” They are not newly rich. They have been wealthy for many years, and they keep increasing their wealth.

Verse 8: “Their seed is according to the soul.” The righteous man’s seed is according to the spirit: “for he sows to the Spirit, and from the Spirit he reaps eternal life.” But since the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit (for they are foolishness to him), the seed of such people is not according to the spirit but according to the soul, the lower thing. “And their children are before their eyes.” Everything they do, they do to be seen by men. For a person’s children are his works. The children of those who hold other teachings are not in the heart, among good thoughts, but in the eyes, to be seen by men.

Verse 9: “Their houses prosper.” When you enter a gathering of heretics and see a crowd assembled there, notice that “their houses prosper.” “And there is no fear anywhere.” They are without fear. They do not fear God; they despise the Godhead. They say such things about God and are not afraid, though they are speaking about God. “And there is no scourge from the Lord upon them.” The same author: If you see a man speaking such things against God, healthy in body, seeing well, with his senses intact, and sometimes even seeming to prosper in worldly matters, observe that in this ungodly man the saying has been fulfilled: “And there is no scourge from the Lord upon them.”

Verse 10: “Their cow did not miscarry.” The same author: The ox is an animal of farming, and works together with the farmer. These people also farm. Sodom and Gomorrah are farmed, and Egypt is farmed. “Their cow did not miscarry,” but it bore and gave birth to a calf, so that their wicked land might be farmed. “She was kept safe in their womb, carrying, and did not fail.” Whatever they conceive, they also bring to term. They do not conceive from the fear of God but from wickedness. “Behold, he travailed with injustice, conceived trouble, and gave birth to lawlessness.”

Verse 11: “They remain like eternal sheep.” What is the meaning of “they will remain like eternal sheep”? Of those sheep Christ says: “My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eter-

nal life," and so on. These are the eternal sheep. Now since those who hold other teachings are mimics, and want to imitate the flock of Christ by ordaining for themselves bishops, presbyters, deacons, teachers, a laity, and catechumens, imitating the eternal sheep, they fulfill the words, "They remain like eternal sheep." But they are not eternal sheep; they only remain like eternal sheep. "And their little ones play."

Verse 12: "Taking up the psaltery and the lyre." Our people take up the psaltery and the lyre, singing hymns to God and giving him glory. But their children, the foolish ones among them, play, taking up the psaltery and the lyre. When they take up the words of the Old Testament, they play, and laugh at the sayings of the law and the prophets. They take up the harmonious instruments, the psaltery of the law and the lyre of the prophets, and make sport of them. "And they rejoice at the sound of a psalm." They too recite the psalms of Valentinus and the odes of Basilides, and utter other such things, rejoicing at the sound of a psalm.

Verse 13: "And they fell asleep in the rest of Hades." They fell asleep in the rest not of heaven but of Hades. But we pray that we may not fall asleep in the rest of Hades, but in the rest of God, in the holy heavens, with Christ who reigns over us. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Fragment 22

Verse 2. “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?” What the Holy Spirit arranges deserves to be written down. It is written down so that the reader may be helped by what he reads. So if the words of the three men who came to Job were not useful, so that the reader could take something from what they said to Job, providence would not have caused the words of the three to be recorded in the book of Job. It is possible, then, to be helped by their words, by looking closely at the teachings in them. But we should see that the fault in their words lies in one thing only: they accuse Job, supposing that he suffers because of sins he has committed. They do not see that there are many other causes of what happens to people. Such things are reckoned good or hard, or whatever else one wishes to call them. And after a little: “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?” The teaching is sound: a human being cannot be the true teacher of virtue. For it is written in the Psalms too that the one who teaches man knowledge is none other than God. And the prophet says, “Teach me your statutes,” knowing that God is the true and perfect teacher. God teaches by shining into the soul of the one who learns from him, and by lighting up the mind with the light, his true Word. So then, righteous men also teach us, having received the grace of teaching.

Verse 4. “And he will enter into judgment with you.” God takes account of the one he looks after, and so he reproves him. “And he will enter into judgment with you.” We have often said, whenever this teaching has come up in other words, that God is so kind to humankind that even when he judges us with goodness, he allows us to speak to him about whatever we wish, as though he were being judged along with us. So I used the words from Isaiah: “Come, and let us reason together, says the Lord.” For “let us reason together” means this: If you have anything to charge me with, and my providence, as though I had neglected you, as though I had not done what I should, say so. And I will say whatever I have, and persuade you, condemning you as one who deserves to be condemned.

Verse 5. “Is not your wickedness great?” Reasonably I say that he has not become unjust without cause, since he suffers such things as none of them has ever fallen into so severe as you have. It is likely that these things have come on you because of your countless faults. From the same author: He did not name sin first and then wickedness. Rather, he saw wickedness as a bad settled condition, and after that the sins committed out of that bad

condition, which he said were countless sins. Verse 5. "And your sins are countless." Eliphaz supposes this about Job. He knew that Job was rich, and he says: "You took pledges from your brothers, as though they owed when they did not owe." For "you took pledges for nothing" means this.

Verse 6. "You took pledges from your brothers for nothing." From the same author: He adds yet another sin of Job's. Is it ever possible to take a garment? Not from a naked man, but from a rich man who has many clothes laid away. [Text uncertain] Those who took clothing there took it from a man who had many; but this is from a naked man, from a rich man. If, however, someone has only one tunic, and I strip him of that tunic on the pretext of demanding what is mine, without having pity on that naked man, I have taken away the clothing of a naked man. Many such things happen among us when we lend, when we go to our debtors. Often our debtor is extremely poor and cannot repay. And we, shutting up our hearts, become merciless and harsh. We do not see that he is feeding a wife and children, and that he barely feeds them from the few coins he manages to get. Sometimes we demand payment bitterly even though we ourselves have more than enough. So Eliphaz says these things, accusing Job of having taken away the clothing of the naked.

Verse 7. "You gave no water to the thirsty, and you kept bread from the hungry." On the same verse: So not only doing wrong, but also failing to do good, makes a person accountable. All these are accusations, and truly blameworthy things. But they were not true of Job, and it was not rightly said of him. From the same author: Such things happen in bitter demands for payment. Sometimes a person has only one morsel of bread. Even if he does not have a whole loaf, we take it from him, saying, "But you owe."

Verse 9: "You sent widows away empty." Let us take care that if a widow comes into our house, we never send her away empty. Let each one, according to his means and out of what he has, fill the widow's lap. Verse 9: "You mistreated orphans." The same author: We must harm no one, but we ought especially to spare orphans. For God has commanded that he will fight on behalf of souls that have no helper. More than other people, the poor, widows and orphans need help.

Verse 10: "Therefore snares have surrounded you." He calls the things that had happened to him "snares." He had fallen into them, and his soul is being trapped by what has happened to him.

Verse 11: "Your light has turned into darkness." You were in the light when you had your possessions, when your children were alive, when your body was healthy. Now you have gone down, as it were, into darkness, into these troubles. On the same verse: That is, into desolation, out in the open air, a wanderer, a fugitive, without a home. Verse 11: "And as you slept, water covered you." The words "as you slept, water covered you" mean this: the opposing power covered you, since you were not awake and did not [sleep rightly]. Scripture knows of a certain sleep of sin. For this reason it commands us, saying: "Give no sleep to

your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, so that you may live, like a gazelle from the nets, and like a bird from the snare."

Verse 12: "Does not the one who dwells on high look on?" But you suppose that God, who dwells on high, does not see what is done. Since he sees everything, he brings down those who are lifted up in mind by a habit of arrogance. Verse 12: "He has humbled those who are carried along by arrogance." If anyone is carried along by arrogance, and is, so to speak, swept away by an arrogant habit and way of acting, he is humbled by God. So it is likely that, because you also treated widows and orphans arrogantly and took pledges from your brothers for no reason, you have suffered these things and have been humbled.

Verse 13: "And you said, 'What does the Mighty One know?' " It is likely that you were saying within yourself, "What does the Mighty One know?" That is, "Can God know everything?" Verse 13: "Or will he judge through the thick darkness?" The same author: But God is able to judge even when he is in the midst of a storm.

Verse 14: "And he walks about the circle of heaven." God's providence goes all the way around. "And a multitude of waters will cover you."

Verse 15: "Will you guard the everlasting path?" Can you keep watch over the everlasting path along which God's providence travels? Verse 15: "Which righteous men have trodden." The same author: Righteous men have trodden the everlasting path, for they walk on an everlasting path. Everything they do is set before them with this aim, that they may attain the age to come. Even if they seem to walk just as everyone else does, the soul itself steps onto everlasting paths.

Verse 16: "Who were seized before their time." Often the righteous die before their time. For the righteous man, brought to perfection in a short time, has fulfilled long years; his soul is virtue in the Lord. Verse 16: "A river flowing over their foundations." The same author: What are the foundations of the righteous like? They are always advancing, always growing in good things.

Verse 18: "But he filled their houses with good things." The same author: He filled the houses of the righteous with good things. I do not understand these as houses of this kind; rather, he filled their houses, those that belong to the governing part of the soul, with good things. What good things? Self-control, righteousness, courage, prudence, the good things that come from works. That is what it means for houses to be filled with good things.

Verse 19: "The blameless man mocked them." Whom? Or the counsel of the ungodly? For example, they want to teach things contrary to the truth, by saying what they say, holding wretched doctrines. The blameless man, seeing these things, mocks them.

Verse 20: "And fire will devour their remnant." The same author: What is left over among the ungodly, once the former ones have died, the fire will devour.

Verse 22: “And he received a declaration from his mouth.” I was asking myself what “declaration” means, and I found in another edition “confession” in its place. So it says rather: Confess your sins; receive instruction from the mouth of God together with confession; and take up his words from your heart. Eliphaz said these things, admonishing Job, as he supposed.

Verse 23: “But if you turn back and humble yourself before the Lord.” He admonishes him to turn back, supposing that Job was suffering these things because he had sinned.

Verse 24: “And like a torrent [Sophir].” For you, as it were, your speech will be varied and beautiful.

Verse 25. “Then the Almighty will be your helper against your enemies.” If you submit yourself, if you confess. Verse 25. “And he will give you back purified, like refined silver.” Sound doctrine is what has been refined by fire; God does the refining.

Verse 26. “Then you will speak boldly before the Lord.” From the same author: If you humble yourself and endure what has happened, you will speak boldly before the Lord. You will have confidence, as one who has laid his sins aside.

Verse 28. “On your ways you will be safe.” From the same author: If you keep the warning I give you, and turn back, and confess. These things were said to Job, but they were not said justly, for he had not sinned. If they are said to us, however, they are said justly. Verse 28. “And he will restore to you a dwelling of righteousness.” To put it simply: he says, “He will restore to you every lasting condition that fits a righteous practice, so that your deeds will be bright and honored.”

Fragment 23

Verse 2. “His hand has become heavy upon my groaning.” Job says: if it were possible for the sentence of punishment to be handed down at once, it would be possible to find him. “If only it were possible,” he says, “to stand trial, to meet him, and to learn what he was going to say to me in answer to the things I was going to say.” Do you see how he obtained what he prayed for? For this came at the very end of the book. “I wanted to learn what he would say to me, and whether he intended to punish me in the same way.” But I said these things not as one condemning him of injustice.

Fragment 24

Verse 6. “Their bread was made sweet for the young.” He says it is sweet to the ungodly to feed young men, so that through them they can carry out their acts of spite.

Fragment 27

Verse 2. “As the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way.” The devil received authority over Job and tested him night and day: first through outward things, then through his own body, and after that through his friends. When he had tried Job through his wife and Job was not defeated, the devil brought three friends. They were not enemies, and they did not hold hostile teachings. They spoke words of truth, but not rightly and not at the right time. The devil was planning to use these friends to make Job say something against Providence, to act impiously because of his troubles, and to lose heart because of his pains. But look at what the truly brave and enduring man says after the words of the three. Eliphaz finished three speeches and Zophar two. When these were finished and they fell silent, look at how Job answers, after the introduction he has made, which Scripture names in this way. What does he answer? Let us pay attention to the wording.

Verse 1. And Job went on and added to his introduction, saying:

Verse 2. “As the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul,” and so on. I know what has stirred you up to provoke me. I swear to you, and I swear by his living Lord, who judged that I should suffer these things, who himself handed me over to these circumstances, who gave authority for me to be examined and tormented by such trials. I swear by the Lord, and I say: the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul.

Verse 5. “May it never be that I declare you righteous, until I die.” If we agree with what you say, that you have understood why I have suffered these things, then I would have declared you righteous until I die. Verse 5. “For I will not put away my innocence.” I will not give up paying attention to righteousness. I will always remember to hold fast to it.

Verse 6. “For I am not conscious of having done anything out of place.” His confidence is great, both about his earlier life and about his conduct during the time of his trial, so that he can say: “I am not conscious of having done anything out of place.”

Fragment 28

Verse 12. “And what is the place of knowledge?” Knowledge is the grasp, by contemplation, of things that stay always the same. Understanding is discernment.

Verse 15. “And silver will not be weighed out as its price.” Nothing is worth as much as wisdom. If you take the silver and the gold in a rather simple sense, Job will say at once that nothing is worth as much as wisdom.

Verse 16. “With precious onyx and sapphire.” Wisdom will not be compared even with precious onyx, nor will it be made equal to sapphire.

Verse 18: “Things on high and gabeis will not be remembered.” Neither things on high nor “gadis” are worth as much as wisdom. It seems to refer to things that can be set in order, something like “gigartic” things. Some say that “gabis” is the part that rises above the rim of the grain measure, which is called a “heaped measure” (kommoulaton). Verse 18: “And draw wisdom out from beyond the innermost parts.” The innermost parts are around India, or the region beyond it, where the precious stones are. That country brings forth for people these things which the rich consider marvelous. So draw wisdom to yourself from beyond those innermost parts. Or else, “beyond the innermost parts” means the holy, inward mysteries of God, which are utterly unspeakable. Though they are many, draw wisdom to yourself beyond them all.

Verse 21: “It is hidden from every man.” It is hidden from every man, even if he is a prophet, even if he is an apostle.

Fragment 29

Verse 6: “When my ways were flowing with butter.” We have said before about Job’s ways, the ones he travelled, that they were virtues. So his ways were flowing with butter: he walked in self-control, and self-control, so to speak, flowed out, so that many, even infants, were fed from Job’s self-control, from Job’s righteousness, from his courage. This is what it means: “When my ways were flowing with butter.” Verse 6: “And my mountains were flowing with milk.” All the lofty and great thoughts were Job’s mountains, which he used to climb.

Verse 7: “When I went out upright in the city.” He devoted himself to teaching and to doing good. He spoke not as a lover of himself but as one who had love, which seeks the common good.

Verse 9: “Putting a finger on their mouth.” The phrase “putting a finger on their mouth” may seem to be a sign of silence. But perhaps it shows something else. Since the hand is taken for works, as we have often shown, they put their work upon their mouth. They perceived, from a small work, that they were not worthy to speak in Job’s presence, since he had done greater works.

Verse 10: “And those who heard me called me blessed.” Such was he before he was yet tested, that those who heard him called him blessed. They marveled at how he understood and grasped so many things, and was able to help those who listened. Verse 10: “For their tongue stuck to their throat.” Of those who heard me and called me blessed for what I said, the tongue stuck to the throat.

Verse 11: “For an ear heard, and called me blessed.” (The same author.) It is written of Moses that he was afraid to look in the face of God because of the excess of God’s brightness. In the same way you could understand that Job’s advance in wisdom was so great that those who heard him could not look at the dazzling brightness of his thoughts. Unable to follow the great depth of his mind, they therefore turned their eyes away. This is why he says: Verse 11: “An eye that saw me turned away.” Aquila and Symmachus give it as “It bore witness about me.” Others have “An eye that saw turned away,” meaning “I am not strong enough to speak against him.”

Verse 12: “For I rescued the poor man from the hand of the powerful.” Let us look at his brave deeds and take them in fully. This verse makes sense according to the letter, and it has much more to give by a higher interpretation. According to the letter, as far as we are able, we ought to help the poor who are oppressed by the powerful.

Verse 15: “A foot to the lame.” He gave freely, even to those whose steps were lame, that is, the feet of the soul. By his word he himself became their foot.

Verse 16: “A case that I did not know, I searched out.” He teaches us how we must judge, if we are ever called to the arbitration of brothers, so as to settle their affairs.

Fragment 32

Verse 1: “And Job ceased with words.” His three friends also fell silent and stopped answering Job any further, for Job was righteous in their sight. He did not cease simply. His heart, which understood divine things, did not cease. For there is already a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be silent and a time to speak. So when it was time to answer the three, he spoke. When the time came, after he had stopped their mouths, he fell silent. And I think the words “Job ceased” are said in praise.

Verse 7. “So I kept quiet, afraid to tell you my knowledge.” He has knowledge of how people suffer. He knows why people end up in certain troubles in this life alone, and why so many who are unjust prosper. “I saw those who do wrong and break the law, and my feet almost slipped.” If I look only at this life, my steps were almost poured out.

Verse 10. “The long-lived are not the wise.” He says it is not necessary that only the old be wise. One can also hear something noble from the young. For if time makes people wise, much more does God.

Verse 18. “For the spirit of my belly was distressing me.” A woman becomes pregnant, and when the child has been formed within her, she comes to labor pains, until she gives birth to what she conceived earlier. Understand that something like this happens in the soul of the one who loves learning. For it conceives the word, and as the word is spoken, it shapes it and gives it form in order. But when, after shaping and forming it, the word has become ready, the soul does not hand it over like an untimely miscarriage, unready and incomplete, but as something brought to fruition and perfected. [So I would say.]

Verse 19. “My belly is like a skin of new wine, boiling, tied shut.” It seems to me that what is in the Gospel was said with this in view: No one puts new wine into old wineskins [the text breaks off here].

Verse 20. “I will speak, so that I may find relief, opening my lips.” A person who finds an understanding listener, and who is full of words, finds relief in speaking, and says, “I will speak, so that I may find relief.”

Verse 22. “For I do not know how to admire a face.” I do not have this knowledge, of how to admire a face. Instead I despise human beings, and the shame mortals feel among them-

selves, and the respect they show one another. Verse 22 continues: “Otherwise, moths will eat me too.” The moths devour those who accept the faces of men.

Fragment 35

Verse 6. “If you have sinned, what will you do?” If you look up to heaven and consider the clouds, you will understand what you have sinned. What must you do? Go to the high priest and ask him to offer a sacrifice for you. For if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he himself is the propitiation for our sins. Verse 6 continues: “And if you have done many lawless things, what can you do?” You will do something so great: you will undo your many lawless deeds. For this reason, for the incurable cases, which we cannot heal ourselves, Jesus Christ came from heaven to heal the incurable. So it comes about that “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are uncovered.”

Verse 7. “Since then you are righteous, what will you give him?” But if you are righteous before God, what do you have to give on account of your righteousness? And even if you are righteous, as you say, what will you add to him?

Verse 10. “He who appoints the night watches.” He goes through the praises of God, and his songs of praise and hymns. The one who appoints the night watches is God himself. I want to see how God appoints night watches. This whole age is night; it is darkness. The light is being kept for you. The light you see now, you see through a mirror. And “in your light we shall see light.” We are going to see it at some point. So the whole age is night, and since it is night there are many wars, and many wild beasts prowl about.

Verse 11. “He who separates me from the four-footed beasts of the earth.” If you are a sinner, you have not been separated from the four-footed beasts of the earth. For “man, being in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts and became like them.” If you are a sinner, you have not been separated from the four-footed beasts of the earth. Instead it is said to you, “Do not be like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding.” And a little later: If you are a sinner, if you are a fornicator, if you are given to sensual indulgence, you will not be separated from the four-footed beasts. Horses were born mad for the female. Therefore he says with confidence that he has been separated: “He who separates me from the four-footed beasts of the earth.”

Fragment 40

Verse 3. “No; gird up your loins like a man. I give you freedom to speak. I will question you, and you answer me.” God is already giving him the prize. He questions a human being, because he asks him and gives him the right to answer. If Job had not won the victory, he would not have received this; if he had not endured, he would not have heard, “Gird up your loins like a man. I will question you, and you answer me.” By the same author: Let no one answer God until he has become a man and girded his loins like a man. As long as his loins are not girded but loose, not tied up or drawn tight, he cannot reasonably answer the Lord. Verse 3. “I will question you, and you answer me.” The full rewards of the struggle are kept for those who have contended well, after this life. Even so, God’s grace already gives the contenders a down payment. So when Job had struggled to the utmost, when he lost his possessions and glorified the one who had given them, when he lost his children and thanked the one who had taken them, when he understood that worms were being brought up out of his body and was still not overcome by his sufferings, God gave him a foretaste and a down payment of the contenders’ reward, speaking to him out of the storm and the clouds. Yet when Job had heard the earlier words, and ought to have answered God, he is silent, as one who has no boldness to answer him. For he did not yet know what Moses wrote later, that Moses spoke and God answered him with a voice. Not knowing this, he is unwilling to answer God.

But God gives him freedom to speak. And after other remarks: God’s kindness is so great that he takes on the role of one who is not judging but is himself being judged along with the man. Many passages of Scripture have taught this. “Come, let us reason together,” says the Lord. And, “My people” (or rather, God will reason with the people), “my people, what have I done to you, or how have I troubled you? Answer me,” and so on. Verse 3. “Do not set aside my judgment.” Do not set aside this judgment of mine. Let us remember this saying as a useful one. Whenever God decides that we should suffer something, such as losing a child, losing a ruler, falling ill in body, or enduring anything of that kind, none of it could happen to us unless God judged it so. Not even a sparrow falls into a snare without the will of the Father in heaven. Since none of these things happens apart from God’s judgment, it is said to the sufferer, “Do not set aside my judgment; do not deny that I have judged concerning you.” Verse 3. “Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might be shown to be righteous?” I defend myself to you. You were righteous, but you were not

plainly seen to be. You had patience; I had to give an occasion for your patience to shine. You had courage, but it was hidden in you; the hardships that came upon you showed your courage. And after a little: Let us remember this in times of trial, and let us imagine we hear God present with us, saying, "Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might be shown to be righteous?" Let us not be shown to be unrighteous or ungodly.

Verse 5. "Take up height and power." Be crowned; put on glory; put on honor.

Verse 6. "Send out angels in wrath, and humble every arrogant person."

Verse 7. "Put out the proud." The arrogant one took the field against you. He once said to me, "Send out your hand." He said to me, "Touch everything he has." He said to me about you that he would surely bless me to my face. But you have won the victory. So I tell you: Take courage. "Humble every arrogant person," and humble his angels too. He has become proud against you, but you, put out the proud. He is ungodly toward you, but you, strike the ungodly down at once.

Verse 8. "Fill their faces with dishonor." Expose sinners by showing them to be sinners. Fill their faces with dishonor through the rebuke that is in you.

Verse 10. "But look, there are beasts beside you; he eats grass like oxen." The beasts are the opposing powers. The Prophet prayed about them when he said, "Do not hand over to the beasts the soul that confesses you." The beasts are the opposing powers, and you, O man, have received authority over them. If you serve God, you will tread upon the asp and the basilisk. Verse 10. "But look, there are beasts beside you." By the same author: Beside you, Job; beside everyone who [is mindful]; beside everyone who has conquered. Verse 10. "He eats grass like oxen." He means the worms, which eat him from out of himself. "For [the completion]," he says, "my hand is [under] you; and look, he devours like grass."

Verse 11. "But his strength is on the navel of the belly." This is the first power he uses against the man. From here he begins to make a man a fornicator. By the same author: He says this to point to the female, to show that he makes war not only on those who have the seed. He very fittingly named the loin in the case of a male, and the navel of the belly in the case of a woman: "Look, his strength is in his loins, and his power is on the navel of the belly."

Verse 25. "The nations of the Phoenicians will divide him up among themselves." The Canaanites, who are also the Phoenicians, are accused of great wickedness. That is why he says, "The nations of the Phoenicians will divide him up among themselves." Each one takes some share from the dragon, if his people are Canaanite and Phoenician.

Verse 26. "All the ships together will not be able to carry one hide of his tail." The last parts and extremities of the dragon: all the vessels together cannot put them to death. People, who use their bodies as ships, cannot carry one hide of his tail. By themselves they cannot. But when divine power watches over us, we can carry away not only one hide of his tail but

the whole of him, and put the whole of him to death. Each of us, as far as it depends on himself, puts the devil to death, according to what was said by the Apostle: “And may God crush Satan under your feet quickly.”

Fragment 41

Verse 4. “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” Why did he not say, “Who will uncover his face?” What is the clothing doing here? “For who,” he says, “will uncover the face of his clothing?” To make clear what is said, let us use the example of masks that people put on. They do not appear as what they are, but as what they want to seem. Take, for example, those actors on the stage who put on masks, now of leaders, now of other kings, now of women. Their own face is hidden, and what they are is not seen; what they seem to be is what is seen. The dragon is like this. He never shows his own face. He takes a face to deceive people, and he uses that. This enemy has many masks, and for each vice he puts on the face of a virtue. And a little later, going on: The rest of the verse written above. The face he has put on—who is able to expose it? Who is able to uncover and [discover] what the dragon is inside? There are also others like this, his disciples, “who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inside are ravenous wolves.” Verse 4. “And who could enter into the folds of his breastplate?” Do you see? It is called a breastplate—the chest and breastplate, where the ruling part is. His breastplate is not simple. He has nothing simple. He is crafty; he is folded. So who could enter into the folds of his breastplate? Only a holy person can expose him and show that his breastplate is folded, whereas that of the holy person is not folded.

Verse 5. “Who will open the doors of his face?” He hides what is stored up inside. So who will open the doors of his face? Who is such a one as to expose and show how much deceit, how much poison, how many evils he has stored away? Verse 5. “Around his teeth is fear.” Of these teeth it is said, “You broke the teeth of sinners,” and, “[The Lord] will break the molars of the lions” [the text reads “Cyrus”]. This is not the fear of God; it is the fear that is around his teeth. But if you have Christ in yourself, do not worry about this fear. For “you shall fear the Lord your God,” and besides him you shall fear no other.

Verse 6. “His inner parts are bronze asps [or shields].” These are his doctrines, his hidden thoughts. Everything inside him is the venom of asps. And they are asps [or shields] that are not soft at all, but hard. For asps [or shields] are hard.

Verse 10: “From his mouth.” These are the blasphemies and words of impious and godless teachers. Verse 10: “From his mouth burning torches go out, and hearths of fire are scattered.” I think that all the impious who bring in godless doctrines are properly members of the dragon. And if you want to hear the names of the dragon’s members, who are they? The

dragon's mouth may also be understood in a figurative sense, and beyond that it is the place from which the destroying words come. For from his mouth torches of fire are [destroyed; or perhaps "let loose"]. From his mouth hearths of fire are [destroyed; or "let loose"]. Suppose I hear a speech that accuses the Creator under the pretext of Christianity. Say it upholds the teachings of Marcion, of Valentinus, or of Basilides. They speak evil of the Maker of heaven and earth. They say he does not exist, or that he is not of spiritual substance, as these men claim. Then you will see that from the mouth of such people burning torches go out, and hearths of fire are scattered. Therefore let us, knowing this, guard ourselves. Let the torches not burn us, and let the hearths of fire not touch us.

Verse 13: "In his neck power makes its lodging." There is a certain evil power. But the weakness that my Savior and Lord took on for my sake, which is called the weakness of God, defeated that power. For the Apostle says that the weak thing of God is stronger than men. I would say it is stronger than the power of the dragon.

Verse 14: "The flesh of his body is glued together." He could have said, "The flesh of the body is united." But he did not say that, for they are not united; that is not the case. What is one in him is in fact many. Or, if things seem to be one, the word "glued together" shows that they are not united.

Verse 15: "His heart is set hard like stone, and it stands like an anvil that cannot be beaten out." It is not hammered out and does not follow reason. It is [properly] hard, unbeaten, and unyielding. If anyone has drawn power from the devil, from this dragon, he himself has a heart that cannot be beaten out and will not be worked. But if someone is gold, he follows the word of the goldsmith. He yields in this way until he becomes a thin leaf of gold and receives the impressions of God's letters, in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Fragment 42

Verse 10: “The Lord gave double what Job had before, to make it twice as much.” The noble athlete, the most courageous Job, endured every trial and receives the prizes for his endurance. As Scripture says, he received everything double what he had before. But the Lord Jesus Christ gives prizes that are not double but a hundredfold. For he says, as it is written in Mark: “Whoever leaves father or mother, house, brothers, or sisters for my sake, or for the sake of the Gospel, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.” Job would not have received double what he had before, unless he had shown double the virtue.

Part 2: Fragments from the Vatican manuscripts

Fragment 1

Chapters 1 and 2. “And that man was true, blameless, righteous, God-fearing, abstaining from every evil thing.” For worthless people are false, like those who have a picture painted of God. Fear God and keep the commandments, for this is the whole of man. He is blameless because he is righteous. He is God-fearing, for a good life leads a person to know God, and the knowledge of God becomes the guard of that life.

Verses 16 and 17: “Fire fell from heaven and burned up the sheep...” “And they surrounded the camels and took them captive...” He caused the camels to come under the horsemen. The donkeys and the oxen, which plowed and worked the earth, he caused to come under those who took them captive. But he hated the sheep, and for that reason he brought fire down from heaven upon the sheep...

Fragment 2

Chapter 2, verse 9: “And when much time had passed, his wife said to him...” Look at the wickedness: when much time had gone by, then he attacks. For then above all the things of hope are put to the test, and then above all the things of strength grow weak. For Job the weakness was double. He himself had become weaker through the length of the time, and his hope was more nearly given up.

Fragment 7

Chapter 7, verse 1. “Is not the life of man upon the earth a time of testing, and his life like that of a hired man who works by the day?” Like hired workers, everyone toils for their own living. The farmer gathers his food in one way, the man who practices a manual trade in another, and those in positions of honor in yet another way. There is simply no one who does not worry about the necessities of life.

Fragment 10

Chapter 10, verse 8. “Your hands shaped me and made me.” The body has been shaped out of a material that already lay at hand, the earth, that is, the woman. The soul, however, has been made with nothing existing beforehand, since it is without body and without parts. I beg you, remember also how cheap and short-lived our nature is.

Fragment 12

Chapter 12, verse 5. “For he was made ready to fall, at an appointed time, at the hands of others.” Here those who believe in fate say, “Look, the Scripture says that it was fated for him to suffer.” But that is not what the Scripture says. God forbid! Our affairs are not under compulsion. Rather, God governs everything that concerns us in due measure, by the principles of his own providence. He knows how far it is good for us to suffer, and he brings on the trials in proportion. Job said this in order to leave the judgment to God. It is almost as if he were saying: “Do not let the righteous be laughed at when they suffer. They suffer only as far as God wishes.”

Fragment 13

Chapter 13, verse 1. “Look, my eye has seen these things, and my ear has heard them, and I know as much as you know, and I am no less understanding than you.” Even if I seem to be younger than you, I am in no way lacking in understanding, least of all in the knowledge of divine things, and I am not at all inferior to you.

Verse 28. “He wears out like a wineskin, or like a garment eaten by moths.” Job does not say this according to his own conviction. He says it with regard to the assumption that everyone who is afflicted is enduring this because he has sinned.

Fragment 14

Chapter 14, verse 1. “Or like a flower that has bloomed and fallen off; he has fled away like a shadow, and he will not stand.” Like a shadow, a person passes through life and leaves behind no memorial for the living. Here Job makes clear the providence that governs human beings. They do not remain in life by chance or at random, but by the word of God, who does not go beyond the life he has himself appointed. But this should not be said as though fate were in control. Rather, it is the will of God that has arranged each thing by limits and measures.

Fragment 15

Chapter 15, verses 7–8. “What then? Were you the first of mankind to be born? Or were you fixed firm before the sandhills? Have you heard the counsel of the Lord?” That is: Did you come into being before all other human beings, and have you stretched your life out until now, so that you have had experience of more things than others of the same nature? — Theodotion: “where there is a high place, hard to climb, or sandy.” — The Hebrew: “You were conceived.” — Here he calls the hills “sandhills,” as if to say: “Do you know what existed before creation?”

Fragment 16

Chapter 16, verses 18–19. “Earth, do not cover over the blood of my flesh, and let there be no place for my cry. And now, look, my witness is in heaven, and the one who knows my case is in the highest places.” In his helplessness he speaks to the earth, and to draw out its sympathy he speaks words that are put as a wish. He says: “Do not keep silent about my affairs, O earth, and do not hide the blood that is being poured out unjustly from my flesh through the running sores. Let it not stop in one place and be hidden, and let the story of my sufferings not pass into oblivion. Let many, he says, be built up through my trials.” Or it means: “Let the earth not hide my blood, but call out to God for vengeance, having the very discharges of my body as witnesses. And let the air not hold back my cry, but let the strength of my voice reach heaven, so that God, taking up the cause of the evils done to me and punishing those responsible, may in this way show everyone the blamelessness of the life I have lived.” The words “Look, my witness is in heaven” come from a perfectly clean conscience.

Fragment 19

Chapter 19, verse 3. “Only know that the Lord has made me so.” He strikes fear into them, as if to say: “Do not trample on me like this while I am suffering, or you yourselves may fall into the same things, since you have the same nature.”

“Yes indeed, in truth I have erred. Error lodges with me, so that I speak words I should not, and my words wander, and not at the right time.” “Leave off, because you exalt yourselves over me and leap on me with reproach.” Let it be granted, he says, for the sake of argument, that I have erred. “Error lodges with me”: the error is the devil. What harm comes to you from this, he says, and what need is there to judge me as ungodly and trample on a man who is suffering? You ought to forgive someone who speaks out of pain. Even if I had done things I should not have done, was it right for you to reproach me like this? And I, who have long cared for godliness, ought now to have confidence from my works. But it has not turned out so, and I am judged as a deceiver. He adds here also:

“Know then that the Lord is the one who has troubled me; he has raised his fortress against me. Look, I laugh at the reproach, I will not speak. I will cry out, and there is no justice anywhere.” Think about it, he says: it is not without reason that I am in pain, hemmed in by terrors as if by a wall. I speak, he says, with truth, as things stand with me, and you do not accept my words. “In reproach” means: to tell the facts. “I will not speak” means: because you contradict me, I seem to have said nothing. And if I also cry out to God, to bring my case into the open before everyone, I do not obtain my plea. No one hears, no one [judges], I see no one, I have nowhere to go. Should these things not move you to pity? So stop accusing me so rashly, lest God bring you to judgment and exact from you the penalty for senseless boldness. For God does not leave such things unanswered, he says. It will come about, if it is stirred up against you, that your conceit about knowing the good, and the security you feel in what you have, will appear to you useless. A. S.: Why do you say that I suffer these things because I am in wickedness, and that you ought to fear the same? “Hurry, then,” he says, “although the facts bear witness in words. So take hold of [me] in words, so that not even by the truth could one vote [me] free of liability.” [The sense is uncertain.] The Hebrew, at any rate, also has “a sin of speech.”

Fragment 20

“May lesser men destroy his sons, and may his hands kindle [torments].” Even those who were formerly inferior, he says, will take possession of the children of the lawbreaker.

“Wealth gathered unjustly will be vomited up; an angel will drag him out of his house.” The ungodly man does everything to get hold of other people’s goods, and all that he does aims at this. But when he seems to be master of everything, then he will see it all transferred to others.

“Like gristle, not to be chewed, not to be swallowed.” The words and teachings of the [ungodly man] are tough and [like carrion], for the things done against God have nothing sweet in them.

“When he seems to be already full, he will be hard pressed, and every distress will come upon him.” He means this: because of the cause, what has been acquired is lost, and it is not handed down to his forebears.

“May he send upon him the fury of wrath; may he [pour] pains upon him.” That is: from God and from heaven he will endure terrible things. He said this because Job, after saying that he had been struck by God, also mentioned that he had been wronged by men. So Zophar argues that everything was brought on Job because of sin.

“May stars walk about in his dwellings.” ... For they are in ignorance. They threw the light away from themselves, those to whom he said, “I am the light of the world.”

“A fire not kindled will consume him.” As to the hidden meaning, it is a fire that is not kindled. It is either the fire that works through conscience, or the fire laid up in the places of judgment to come. And he says he will be consumed “as by fire” in order to say: he is not counted worthy even of burial.

“This is the portion of an ungodly person from the Lord, and the possession of his goods from the overseer.” By this portion God’s judgment is stirred against him. It may be the man of the circumcision who, through Christ, acted impiously toward God; or the man of the unexpected kind; or whoever else is ungodly in whatever way. The portion described belongs to him. — Learn who is called “overseer” (bishop) here. God is called overseer, and the bishops, the good and noble ones, strive in every way to bear his image. A man who

copies a royal image is honored for copying it well, and honored also for having adorned it. In the same way a bishop is blessed who has understood the true Overseer, who imitates him and becomes, among men, like God. He has as his Overseer the one who truly makes him a bishop in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

Fragment 21

"Their children play, taking up the psaltery and the harp, and they rejoice at the sound of a psalm." See, even their foolish children play among themselves. For these people recite the psalms of Valentinus and the odes of Basilides, and they utter other things of that sort, rejoicing at the sound of a psalm.

Fragment 22

"Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?" Let us see what Eliphaz says to the righteous man: "Is it not..." and so on. After Job has said this, Eliphaz agrees with the statement and says: "I also know that God, who alone is wise, knows the reasons by which one man, being ungodly, is set right and another is punished. I also know this: that God, as you yourself said, is the giver of good things, while wickedness brings punishments." — The doctrine is sound. Knowledge is the contemplation that embraces things that stay always the same; understanding is discernment.

"Is not your wickedness great, and your sins without number?" So I rightly say that you have not simply become unrighteous, since you suffer things such as none of the wicked suffer. Rather, it was in these matters that you were born; clearly you have had more wickedness than the others [than the wicked]. Wickedness is a bad condition in the soul, such as grief, anger, and unseemly desire; sin is the activity. That is why he named wickedness first, then sin, saying that the one is great and the others countless. I see very many sinners, and none of them has fallen into such misfortunes as you. It is likely that these things have come upon you because of the countless number of your sins and the multitude of your failings.

"You took pledges from your brothers for nothing, and you stripped the clothing from the naked." Let us take heed, we who lend at interest, lest we ever take pledges for nothing. These words are useful, since they speak rightly of sins that really are committed, and are blameworthy among men. Eliphaz assumes this about Job because he knew he was rich and suspected he had grown rich from sources like these. So he says, "You took pledges for nothing," that is, when nothing was owed you. — But suppose I lent, and not trusting the borrower, took a pledge worth the loan: then I took a pledge, but not for nothing. If, however, I slander him, say he owes me and cannot pay, and demand and take, then I take a pledge for nothing. He then presses further, thinking Job has committed another sin. One may take garments not from a naked person but from a rich man who has many other garments laid up. In that case [I take] three; of those many I took clothing, and some belonged to a naked person, others to a rich man. But if someone has one tunic, and on the pretext of collecting what is mine I strip him of that tunic, without pity for that naked man, then I have taken away the clothing of the naked. Many such things happen among us when we lend, when we go to our debtors. Often our debtor is extremely poor and cannot repay. We

shut up our compassion and become merciless and cruel, not seeing that he feeds a wife and children and barely lives on the few small coins he gets. We demand harshly, sometimes even when we have more than enough ourselves. This is what happens in bitter collections: sometimes a person has one morsel, and even if he has no whole loaf, we take it from him, saying, "But you owe." So Eliphaz says this, accusing Job of having taken away the clothing of the naked.

Verses 7–9: "You did not give water to the thirsty, but you withheld a morsel from the hungry. You showed admiration for the face of certain people, and you [settled] those on the earth. You sent widows away empty, and you mistreated orphans." So not only doing wrong, but also failing to do good, makes a person accountable. He points out how far we ought to extend kindness, since it is blameworthy not to give drink to the thirsty. We receive a reward for a cup of cold water. So he condemns Job for great harshness, as one who would not give even water, a favor that costs nothing, and to a thirsty man, which makes it worse. "But you withheld a morsel from the hungry." Why do I say, he asks, that you gave nothing to the one in need? You even took away the small comfort of bread from the hungry man. By "morsel" he means a piece of bread, as it is also used in Ruth: "Dip your morsel in the vinegar." "You showed admiration for the face of certain people." That is, you did not give your judgments justly or without partiality, but to please men. You became a respecter of persons. When you sat in judgment, you lifted up some and humbled others, forcing the lowly and admiring and honoring those in positions of power. "You [settled] those on the earth." Some copies have "you made them lie down" in place of "you settled." The sense is: you took away even the poor man's bedding, so that they were forced to sleep on the ground with nothing spread under them... "You sent widows away." Either you stripped them of what they had, or, worse, when they came to you and asked for charity you gave them nothing, and sent them away having received nothing from you... "You mistreated orphans." To mistreat orphans, who have no one to help them, is the mark of the utmost wickedness. No one ought to be mistreated, but orphans above all must be spared, for God commanded that he would fight on behalf of those souls who have no helper. The poor, widows and orphans need help more than other people do.

Verse 18: "But the counsel of the ungodly is far from him. The righteous saw it and laughed." What the ungodly plan is far from God. When [the righteous] saw the counsel of the ungodly, they laughed at them.

Verse 22: "Take instruction from his mouth, and take up his words into your heart." I asked myself what the word "exegoria" means. In another edition I found, in Symmachus, "confession" in its place, and in Aquila, "law." According to the one reading it says: Confess your sins, and learn from God the manner of confession. According to the other: Receive law from God, and make his words a matter of the heart. If you are righteous and worthy, let God dictate to you, and receive divine words in your heart, as Jeremiah later heard: "Behold, I have put my words into your mouth." Or by "exegoria" he means confession, urging the righteous man to repentance. Or he means this: change your way of life, and take up the

divine laws. That is, confess what you have done wrong, and from now on keep the words of God. I got the occasion for this twofold sense from the word “exegoria.”

Verse 24: “You will set it on a mound, on a rock, and like the rock of a torrent, Sophir.” You will throw him to the ground, and as it were do him harm.

Fragment 23

Chapter 23, verse 2: “And indeed I know that the reproof is from my hand, and his hand has become heavy upon my groaning.” That is: I carry my accuser around with me; I have the proof of my troubles from my own house. — I know, he says, that you think you bring your reproofs from what is in my hands, that is, from the blow, and not from what I have done. For God has laid himself on me so heavily that I groan. — I know, he says, that people’s judgments come from their deeds. But what was laid on me was beyond my strength, that is, the reproof lies outside anything I did.

Verse 6: “And will he come upon me with great strength? Then he will not use threats against me.” For even if he uses great strength and threats against me, still I know that truth is with him.

Verse 7: “For truth and reproof are from him, and may he bring my judgment out to the end.” This is what he prayed for, and this is what he means: that an end be put to my sufferings. Then he says that he wanted these things to happen so that he might die, not as though he were now about to judge. — Among the Hebrews, “end” and “victory” are signified by one word.

10. “For he already knows my way.” He knows my way, he says, and that I have always been eager to obey him. But when he comes to judge, who will speak against him?

15. “Because of this I am troubled before his face; I will consider, and I will be terrified of him.” I have not sinned, he says, but what of that? God is not permitted to punish only on the strength of sins committed. I say this even apart from any sins.

17. “For I did not know that darkness would come upon me, and a thick gloom has covered me before my face.” This evil, he says, did not come in any way that human reasoning could follow; it was completely unexpected. I suspect the blow is from the hand of God. And he says well, “before my face,” for the darkness is not a common one, but belongs to my own despondency.

Fragment 24

Chapter 24, 13. “But why has he not made an inspection of these men, while they are on the earth? And they did not recognize it.” That is, they despised everything and mocked everything. No one wrongs them or does them harm. But he has not yet made an inspection of them. So he will make it after this, and he will examine what they have done wrong, and will not overlook it. “They greedily devoured orphans.”

14. “But when he knew their works, he handed them over to darkness.” That is, having learned their works, or having examined and tested them, that is, having known them.

Fragment 27

Chapter 27, 4. “Nor will my soul practice unrighteous things.” That is, I will stand by the same verdict. No one will be able to turn me aside, no one to strike me down, no one to lead me away from what I have set before me.

5. “May it not be for me to declare you righteous until I die, for I will not put away my blamelessness.” That is, I will not accuse myself, nor will I change my position, even if you say ten thousand things. I will not give up my verdict, even if you think you have put an end to the charge against me. Even if I were to agree with what you say, once you have understood why I have suffered these things, I would be declaring you righteous. I will not cast off my blamelessness by thinking one thing about you and saying another.

10. “When necessity has come upon him, does he have any boldness before him?” What he means is this: the one who does wrong has no boldness, and cannot speak out or say what I am saying now, but is deprived of it and has been silenced. I have not suffered this, but I speak and argue back. The unrighteous are not like this.

Fragment 28

Chapter 28, 1. “For there is a place for silver,” and so on. He means this: the one who has fixed an order among ordinary things has done so much more among human affairs.

2, 3. “For iron comes from the earth, and bronze is quarried like stone. He set an order for darkness, and he himself searches out every limit.” This means that he takes thought for affairs and cares about them, and nothing simply or randomly passes him by. Or rather, he means that other matters are plain, but God’s ordering of things is beyond tracing and unknowable. And a little later: He said well, “He set an order for darkness,” showing that he knows how to yield and to withdraw. Who drives away that gloom? Where does such good order come from in such a matter? Then he recounts God’s power, then his wisdom, persuading Job not to want to demand an account from him.

Fragment 29

Chapter 29, 3. “As when his lamp shone over my head, when by his light I walked in darkness.” That he sought his former prosperity for this reason, so that God’s providence might be shown, is clear from his saying, “when God was guarding me.”

4. “When God was making an inspection of my house.” Symmachus has: “When God fenced around my tent.” You see that this is what he longed for: to show God’s oversight and providence. Since I was young, he says, being righteous, I made virtue the material useful to me, for I dealt well with everyone.

7. “When I went out early in the morning in the city, and in the squares my seat was set.” Like a ruler and teacher of virtue, he did not devote himself to sleep and drunkenness, but out of love sat in the squares at dawn, becoming a law and a pattern for those in the city.

13. “May the blessing of one who is perishing come upon me.” From Severus, in his letter to the deaconess Julian. In the Gospels the Lord speaks of those who put themselves to death to the world. Some give up their bodies for the contest of martyrdom, and some give them up to the labors of ascetic discipline. In this way they seem to destroy themselves and kill themselves by being deprived of the enjoyment of this life. Of them he says: “Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” So for one who is “perishing” in this way, according to the Savior’s word, and who finds his life, the prayer and the blessing are something great. Any sensible person might pray that this blessing come upon him, and would wisely say: “May the blessing, etc.”

15. “I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame.” Vat. 794, 2. As for the meaning: he opened blind minds, and he owed it to those whose souls were maimed to become their eye himself. To those lame in the steps of the soul he gave feet; by his word he became their foot, and he led each group by the hand. The eye is taken to stand for guidance in understanding, and the foot for guidance in conduct.

16. “I was a father to the powerless.” Same source. In these words we are shown the voice of one who helps the powerless, the weak.

16. “And a case that I did not know, I searched out.” You see his care as a protector. It went beyond money, beyond food and clothing: he even stood in danger for the sake of another man’s fight.

17. “And I broke the molars of the unjust.” Note how hard the task was. He says, in effect: from where could it come that I set right a matter that had already been seized? Truly, when Christ came, he crushed the molars of the opposing powers. The Lord broke the molars of the lions, and it is written in the prophet: “From the midst of their teeth I snatched the plunder.”

18. “And I said: My age will grow old like the trunk of a palm tree.” Notice how much time has passed when he says this. He does not boast or think highly of himself. He is compelled to speak of God’s providence, of the things in which he enjoyed it, and of the things in which he now finds himself.

Fragment 30

Chapter 30, 1. “But now the least of men laugh at me; now they admonish me in turn, men whose fathers I used to despise.” Vat. 794, 2. He does not say this out of contempt. He knew them clearly, just as the prophet said: “Every evildoer is despised in his sight.” Such people he counted as nothing.

2, 3. “Even the strength of their hands, what was it to me? Completion perished upon them. In want and hunger they were barren, those who fled the waterless land, yesterday’s distress and misery.” Olympiodorus, Origen. He says: But I never asked for any help from them, so that they might therefore speak such words to me. They were long since in debt to justice, being wicked, and somehow the punishment flew away from them. Or perhaps they longed for death because of extreme poverty and did not obtain it, and not even want taught them sense, so as to become begetters of what is good. They remained barren, those who only yesterday, or a little while ago, had escaped the desert and its calamities. He seems to slander them as base-born, as coming from ignoble stock and from poor fathers. “Completion perished upon them” means: they never accomplished anything good.

4. “Those who go around gathering salt-herb on the echoing ground, whose food was salt-herb.” The salt-herb, they say, is a certain plant that quickly fills the one who eats it. “On the echoing ground” means in ravines and rocky places, for such places resound well and echo back to those who speak. Or he may mean by “echoing” a wooded place in which the blowing of the winds, stirring the trees, makes a sound. So he says that, because of their extreme need, these men wandered through the woods, the ravines, and the places beside which running waters sound and murmur. They searched for plants and scraped the roots of trees for food, as a comfort [for hunger].

4. “Dishonored and despised, lacking every good thing.” Vat. 795, 1. It is another wickedness, to be such men even in poverty.

24. “If only I could get control of myself.” Vat. 795, 2. You see that when he says “if I could,” he does not say it from weakness, but because he is prevented.

28. “I stand in the assembly crying out.” Same source. Because of the extremity of his sufferings, he is not even ashamed before a crowded gathering.

29. “I have become a brother of sirens, and a companion of ostriches.” Same source. He says: I have fallen into the wildness of birds. I have lost sight of my own nature, and I am in no better condition than they.

Fragment 31

“For I stand in a just balance, and the Lord knows my innocence, if my foot turned aside from the way...” Wonderful precision! No one could say, “I used my wealth and my former good things for carelessness and dissipation, so I am paying this kind of penalty, and I have been changed, since God has applied a fitting remedy.” For a man who loves laughter and tripping others up [and has given himself to luxury], it would be reasonable for God to set the opposite condition against him. He would hand him over to a life of groaning and many tears. But take the man who even before these things avoided revelry and drove away people who play and make jokes. What reason would there be for him to fall into a gloomy, downcast life? Since I was withered and stern, I did not fall into the vices that tear that kind of life apart.

“And if my maidservants often said, ‘Who will grant us to be filled with his flesh?’ since I was very kind.” That is, to enjoy his life, because I was sweet to them.

“A stranger did not lodge outside, and my door was open to everyone who came.” For he did not serve them merely by receiving them. He also gave them provisions for the poverty that would follow.

Fragment 32

“And Job stopped speaking.” Job fell silent, giving them room to speak. But he saw what was happening, called God as witness, and laid a curse on himself, because the friends had been silenced.

“For I will speak while you listen, until you have examined my words, and I will understand as far as you are concerned.” Either he means this: that not even when you were refuting me did you refute me as you should have; or that afterward you fell silent. So it stands in relation to the words, “For I will speak while you listen.”

Fragment 33

“For how can you say, ‘I am righteous, and he has not listened to me’?” What then happened? Job did not think this. Elihu supposed it, but Job did not speak with the intention of saying that he was more righteous than God. He meant that these things had been done by him, yet he was not charging God with injustice. Elihu, however, took it that way. But he rightly accused those others, who had [taken up] God’s side and then denied it.

“I will speak, so that I may find relief, opening my lips.” A man who has an understanding listener and is full of words finds relief by speaking. He empties himself, as it were, of the excess and throws it off, and says, “I will speak so that I may find relief.”

Fragment 34

“He who is not ashamed before the face of an honored man, nor knows how to give honor to the great.” For even if you do not know, you ought to yield much to him and to his glory, so as not to seek to learn everything.

“For he will no longer lay anything upon a man.” He seems to mean this: that now good and evil lie in our hands, but in the age to come it will no longer be so.

“For to the mighty one he says: ‘I have taken, I will not take a pledge; without myself I will see; you show me.’” Some interpreted it this way: no one dares to say to someone stronger, “You have taken my things unjustly. You did not take them as a pledge, as though they were owed, but against my will. Show that you did this with good reason.” But if no one dares to say this to the powerful man, how, he says, can you be so bold against God? Symmachus rendered it this way: “I have taken up a speech before God; I will not [hold back], without hindrance; you make it clear to me.” And he understood it thus: since I have taken up speech on behalf of God, says Elihu, I do not hold back, but go on with my argument without hindrance. And if I am not speaking well, you make it clear, that is, refute the argument. I think, rather, that the text is to be understood like this: it is not because I chose to speak on behalf of God that you must therefore simply agree with me, as if I were demanding a debt. “Without myself I will see; you show me” means: apart from my own argument I want to know whether you have anything to say in reply. So say that I am keeping silent, and take hold of the argument, if you can.

Fragment 35

“Look up to heaven.” No lover of the world looks up to heaven. Let us not love the world, nor the things in the world. If we love the things down here, we do not look up to heaven.

“If you sinned, what will you do?” That is, you will not wrong him, and you will not benefit him either, if you are righteous. For since he was saying, “If I sinned, what can I do?”, he asks, “What shall I do?” He says this to make the point: “Why? Is he wronged, so that he worries about you when you sin? Is he suffering some harm?”

“He who appoints night watches.” Do you want to see how God appoints night watches? This whole age is night; it is darkness. The light is being kept for you. The light you see now, you see through a mirror. And it says, “In your light we shall see light”; so we are someday going to see it. Is the whole age, then, night? Since it is night, many enemies and many wild beasts go about. Since the affairs of this life, lived in darkness, are night, there is need of watchmen appointed for this night. These watchmen, who serve through the nights, guard those who are in the night. They come and protect us from robbers. Who, then, are the watchmen appointed by God for the night watches? “The angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him, and will deliver them.” These are the angels who guard us in the night.

Fragment 38

“Who set its measures, if you know? Or who stretched a line over it?” The Greeks wanted to say something about the measure of the earth. They say the diameter of the earth is 250,000 stadia. But the saying seems to show that the measure of the earth cannot be grasped by anyone. Only the Savior knows it, who is also the Creator. He said “measures,” not “measure,” to point out the differences within the earth. What is the measure of a land like the East, for example, which produces spices? What is the measure of the land that produces pepper, or of the one that produces animals? For not everything grows everywhere. These measures, then, are with the Word of God. Surely the earth has not become this size by chance or at random. It seems to me that if even the smallest thing were added, it would be out of place, and if anything were taken away, by the same reasoning it would ruin the whole. This is what the measures and the line hint at.

“And who is he who laid a cornerstone upon it?” Who laid a cornerstone upon it, so that it stands so firmly, as though he had built it on a secure and settled foundation? It is the will of God, for in his hand are all the ends of the earth. “Cornerstone” can also be understood of the only-begotten [Son] of God, who became flesh for us, in keeping with the saying in the Psalms: “The stone which they rejected has become the head of the corner.” For he came to earth by the good pleasure of the Father and joined the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, together in himself, just as a cornerstone binds together the two walls.

“And I said to it, ‘You will come as far as this and you will not go beyond.’” Symmachus has: “Let the swelling of your waves be set as far as here.” In the one version he holds the sea securely, as if with bars; in the other he holds it easily, as if by an order. “For I spoke,” he says, “and there is no answering back,” when this happens with no necessity forcing it, even while great violence and strength lash the sea. For this is why he did not allow it to be calm or gentle: so that it might proclaim the power of God, with its nature fighting against the command and the command winning everywhere. If the water were gentle, many would credit its good order to the nature of water. But now, stirred up, lashed, driven from within, and unable to cross its boundaries, it proclaims the power of God through its turmoil.

“And who has prepared food for the raven?” It is said that ravens do not feed their young. The ravens themselves, being large, naturally find food for themselves. But who feeds the

young? Is it not the word of God? As the Gospel also says: “The birds of heaven do not sow or reap, and your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Fragment 39

“Is it at your command that the eagle is lifted up? And does the vulture sit on its nest and lodge on a projecting rock and a hidden place?” .... If among flesh-eating creatures there is [some reasoning wisdom], present in each from natural knowledge, and directed toward knowledge, in some of war, in others of the dead, you also see the vulture, alone, borne along in the air. [The text is uncertain here.]

“Why am I still being judged, I who am corrected and who reprove the Lord, when I hear such things and am nothing?” Ibid. “Why,” he says, “am I still being judged?” This is by way of an introduction; from the start he yielded the first place. “I have been defeated,” he says, “the right is yours. Why do you carry the case further? What can I answer? How can anyone face such a Master eye to eye?” “I kept on,” he says, “looking for the reason for the blow that fell on me. But I brought no charge against the creation, and I have nothing to say to what has been said.” — [The text is incomplete here:] the poor man is not reproving the Lord, but is being corrected.

Fragment 40

“But gird up your loins like a man. I will question you, and you answer me.” Vat. 805, 2. Those who are confident in the abundance of their rights do not even let their opponents run away, so that the victory may be won out of that abundance. Then he also defends himself to Job, saying, “I care about human beings.” From this it is clear why I brought this trial on you. “I give you freedom of speech. I will question you, and you answer me.”

“Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might appear righteous?” Vat. 805, 2. He means the present dealing. “I am not saying this in order to condemn you,” he says, “but to show that you are righteous.” Or he is speaking about the trial, using “dealing” for the permission given, that is, that I had arranged beforehand for this to happen for some other purpose. He did not say, “so that you might become righteous” (for you had practiced righteousness strictly), but “so that you might appear so.” Let us not turn out to be unrighteous or ungodly. Let us remember these things in times of trouble, and let us think we hear God present and saying to us, “Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that your righteousness might become plain to those who do not know it?”

“Take up height and power, and clothe yourself with glory and honor.” Ibid. “Be crowned, put on glory, put on honor, put on splendor. The insolent man marched out against you, but you humbled the arrogant one and turned his armies back far away in shame. Reprove sinners, showing them to be sinners. Fill their faces with dishonor through the rebuke that is in you.” — So it was not for display [text corrupt: or for all the other things, or also for the knowledge of God]. See how much the lowliness of his own nature convicts him. God does not say, “You are lowly,” but “I am great, and you cannot do what I do.”

“But look, there are wild beasts beside you.” Like an athlete, learn about the dragon, your opponent. — “Beside you, then,” he says, “and beside everyone who is patient, these beasts are tamed and made subject. There is, however, etc.”

“Will you draw the dragon out with a hook, and put a muzzle around his nose?” “Can you, then, Job,” he says, “do what the Only-begotten did later? For he put out his own flesh as a kind of bait, and through his own nails, as through hooks, he caught the fish Leviathan. For this is how the Hebrew has it, and it means the dragon.”

"Will you lay a hand on him, remembering the war that takes place in his body [and let it happen no more]?" Vat. 806, 2. By "war" he means here the turmoil, the savagery, the attacking of him. "How does it happen?" he says. Such is this wild, powerful, and frenzied beast. "Can you bind him by your own power," he says, "or even remember and take thought of the war that is going to take place in his body?" By his "body" he means the demons, since the dragon is their head. The Lord won this war by the trophy of the cross. [Then the text adds:] "Let it happen no more," since the cross happened once for all. For "the one who died to sin," he says, "died once for all."

Fragment 41

Chapter 41, verse 4. “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” Who is able to expose the face of what he has put on? Who is able to uncover and show what the dragon is on the inside? And a little later: I recalled the sacred writings contained in this divinely inspired book of Job. In them, as in a bodily form, the devil is described, the originator of evil among demons and wicked beings. His great ugliness and the variety of his schemes lie hidden, and so does the stripping away of the outer masks. For it says: “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” And since the text had been speaking of this variety that appears on the outside, as though it rises from some depth of unseen wickedness, these words are added to what was said: “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” That is, who is able to enter into the thoughts of his heart, since they are folded up and hidden?

Verses 24–25 (14–15 in the Greek numbering). “It will not be shaken. His heart is set like a stone, and he stands like an anvil that cannot be beaten.” His heart, it says, has turned to stone, and it cannot be beaten out. He is altogether hardened and reckless. He is not driven, he does not follow reason, he does not yield. He is hard, unbeatable, unyielding. And if anyone has drawn power from the devil, he too has the heart of this dragon, unbeatable and not to be driven. But if someone is gold and follows the word, he yields to the goldsmith until he becomes a sheet of gold and receives the impressions of God’s letters, in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Fragment 42

Chapter 42, verse 10. “And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, doubling it.”

Verse 12. “And the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the former. His livestock were fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen.”

Verse 13. “And seven sons and three daughters were born to him.” If the Lord gave Job double of everything he had before, after the blow, as the sacred writing says, then the children also ought to have been doubled. Look at the livestock. It says he had fourteen thousand sheep, for at the beginning he had seven thousand. He had six thousand camels, for at the beginning he had three thousand. He had a thousand yoke of oxen, for at first there were five hundred. The same holds for the wild donkeys. But it says seven sons and three daughters were born to him, as many as there were before. Yet there ought to have been fourteen sons and six daughters, so that they would be double the children who were lost. So we say this: the sheep and the livestock were lost, but the sons and daughters died; they were not lost. God therefore gave him the same number of other children, so that in the resurrection he would have them doubled. In this way God made him father of twice as many children as he had been father of before. But if the soul were extinguished after death, and the things of the resurrection were not true, fourteen sons and six daughters would have had to be given. So the Scripture has held faithfully to the fact that he received seven sons. If he had been given fourteen sons and six daughters, while the teaching about the resurrection still stood, the children would not have been given to him double, but triple, compared with what he had at first.

16. “After the plague Job lived one hundred and seventy years, and in all he lived two hundred and forty [eight] years.” How are we to understand that Job lived a hundred and seventy years after the plague, when all the years of his life total two hundred and forty-eight? Examining the matter closely, we say this. He received back all his good things doubled. If the years of his earlier prosperity were also received back doubled, then this is how the count should go. He lived seventy-eight years in his earlier prosperity, and from the time he received the plague he remained in suffering for fourteen years. So “after the plague” must be understood not as from the time the plague stopped, but from the time it began. After those fourteen years, the time of his sickness, he lived another one hundred and fifty-six. The years of his earlier prosperity came to seventy-eight, so the doubled time

of his later well-being comes to one hundred and fifty-six years. When the fourteen years of the plague are added in front, the total is one hundred and seventy years. So he is found to have lived one hundred and seventy years "after the plague," that is, from the time the plague was brought upon him, as the Scripture says. In this way the doubled repayment of his prosperity is also preserved. To sum up, then, you will count it like this: he lived seventy-eight years in wealth and with fine children; fourteen years in the loss of everything and the ruin of his body; and one hundred and fifty-seven years in his second prosperity. So the whole time of his life is two hundred and forty-eight years, as the sacred book about him says.

17. "And Job died, an old man and full of days. It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up." Aquila and Symmachus, when they came, concluded the book there, supposedly following the Hebrew. But Theodotion concludes in agreement with the Seventy, lacking nothing, neither time nor life. It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises, that is, with the righteous. For "the ungodly," it says, "will not rise in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the righteous." We accept these words too, even if they are not part of the whole fabric of the book, but were woven into it by one of the saints. Still, we accept everything, since we have received the book in this form from the fathers.

18. "This is translated from the book of the Lord." Here he calls the Hebrew language "Syriac," since many people call Judea "Syria" and the Palestinians "Syrians." The historian Herodotus also says, "The Indians, the Egyptians, the Arabs, and the Syrians in Palestine are circumcised." This is how they name the Jews.

Sources. Greek text: Charles de La Rue's edition (Origenis Opera Omnia, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857); Jean Baptiste Pitra's edition (Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata, Paris: A. Jouby et Roger, 1884), digitised by Open Greek and Latin and the First Thousand Years of Greek project (CC BY-SA 4.0). The English is a new translation made by SermonIndex with AI directly from the Greek, as a first reading version; it has not been checked line by line by a person and may contain mistakes. No older English translation was used. Where the digital Greek is flagged as damaged, the English is a best reading. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0.