

Chapter 24

God in his prouidence knoweth when he wil punish the wicked, which his true feruantes know not, much leffe the impious.

Times are not hid from the Omnipotent: but they ^a)that know him, know not his daies. ² Some haue transferred boundes, fpoiled flockes, & fed them. ³ They haue driuen away the affe of pupilles, & haue taken away the widowes oxe for a pledge. ⁴ They haue fubuerted the way of the poore, and haue oppreffed together the meeke of the earth. ⁵ Others as wilde affes in the deferte goe forth to their worke: watching to the praye, doe prepare bread for their children. ⁶ They reape the filde that is not theirs, and gather the grapes of his vineyard, whom by violence they haue oppreffed. ⁷ They fend men away naked, taking away their clothes, which haue no couering in the cold. ⁸ Whom the fhowers of the moutaynes doe wafh, and not hauing a couert, they embrace ftones. ⁹ They did violence fpoyling the pupilles, and the common poore people they fpoyled. ¹⁰ From the naked and them that goe without clothing, and the hungrie they haue taken away the eares of corne. ¹¹ They haue refted the noonetide among their heapes, which hauing troden the wine preffes are athirft. ¹² Out of the cities they haue made men to mourne, and the foule of the wounded hath cryed, and God doth not fuffer it to paffe vnreuenged. ¹³ They haue bene ^b)rebellious to the light, they haue not knowen his wayes, neither did they returne by his pathes. ¹⁴ At the verie breake of day the murderer ryfeth, he killeth the needie, and the poore man: but by night he wil be as a theefe. ¹⁵ The eie of the aduouterer obserueth darkeneffe, faying: Eie fhall not

^a Gods feruantes know that he wil punifh wickednes, but know not when: the wicked perfume that he wil neuer punifh them.

^b Heretikes doing and teaching againft their owne knowlege, are afterward ftriken with blindnes, that they can not fee the truth. *S. Greg/ li. 16. c. 26.*

fee me: and he wil couer his face. ¹⁶ He diggeth through houfes in the darke, as in the day they had appoynted with them felues, and they haue not knowen the light. ¹⁷ If fodenly the morning shal appeare, they thinke it the fhadow of death: and they walke fo in darkeneffe as it were in light. ¹⁸ He is light about the face of the water: curfed be his portion in the earth, neither walke he by the way of the vineyardes. ¹⁹ Let him paffe ^{a)}from fnow waters to exceding heate, and his finne euen vnto hel. ²⁰ Let mercie forget him: wormes his fweetnes: be he not in remembrance, but be he broken in peeces as an vnfruitful tree. ²¹ For he hath fedd the barren, and her that bareth not, and to the widow he hath not done good. ²² He hath pulled downe the ftrong in his ftrength, and when he shal fstand, he wil not credit his life. ²³ God hath geuen him place for penance, and he ^{b)}abufeth it vnto pride: but his eies be vpon his waies. ²⁴ They are eleuated for a litle, and shal not fstand, and shal be humbled as al thinges, and shal be taken away, and as the toppes of the eares of corne they fhall be broken. ²⁵ And if it be not fo, who can reprove me that I haue lied, and fet my wordes before God?

^a Sinners running into both extremes of defect and exceffe, are likewise punished with contrarie tormentes.

^b Man by powre of free wil oftē prefumeth to fpend the time in finning which God granteth him to do penance, for former finnes. *Rom. 2.*