

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN

COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF
SONGS

Commentarius in Cantica Canticorum

SABBATISMUS

Saint Ambrose of Milan (340–397)
Commentarius in Cantica Canticorum · Commentary on the Song of Songs

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CONTENTS

TO THE READER.....	5
[COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS.(G,S)*]	7
THE TEXT BEGINS.....	9
CHAPTER TWO. 1. (Vers. 1, 2.) "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys, as a lily in the midst of thorns";	49
CHAPTER THREE.....	95
CHAPTER FOUR.....	117
CHAPTER FIVE.....	153
CHAPTER SIX.....	203
Chapter eight.....	231

COMMENTARIUS IN CANTICA CANTICORUM E SCRIPTIS SANCTI AMBROSII A GUILLELMO, QUONDAM ABBATE SANCTI THEODERICI, POSTEA MONACHO SIGNIACENSI, COLLECTUS.

LECTORI.

Nostri quidem consilii fuerat hoc volumine non alia opera exhibere, quam quae ad veteris novique Testamenti expositionem pertinerent, et quae constaret ab Ambrosio, si tantum alteram David Apologiam excipias, esse conscripta. Verum cum tractatuum supposititiorum quos ad calcem sequentis voluminis edere constituimus, numerum expendentes, ne idem molis aequo majoris futurum esset, vereremur, huic primo supplementum aliquod putavimus adjiciendum. Cum autem ex legitimis Doctoris nostri lucubrationibus nulla occurreret quae vel satis cum superiorum argumento congrueret, vel inducendae inter utrumque volumen aequalitati satis esset; nihil commodius visum est, quam ut commentationem hanc subjiceremus. Ea sane mediae cujusdam inter vera et notha B. Ambrosii opera conditionis est, nec ab eo prorsus aliena, cum ejusdem verbis constet ac sentiis: nec rursus omnino ipsi propria, cum ab alio fuerit concinnata. Certum quippe est Ambrosium numquam ex proposito scripsisse in Cantica canticorum, sed cum eo libro tantopere ipsum delectatum esse appareret, ut illius illustrandi nullam in variis suis scriptis praetermisit occasionem, hoc in mentem induxit quibusdam operum Ambrosianorum studiosis, ut illic sparsa atque disjecta colligentes, ex eisdem inter se in centonis morem assutis unum commentarii corpus conficerent. Inde est quod anno 1558 Lovanii prodiit Expositio in Cantica canticorum a Costerio reg. Can. excerpta: cujus diligentiam tametsi praedicet Gillotius, eum tamen omnia commutasse; multa ademisse, plura de suo addidisse testificatur. Decennio post idem Gillotius in calce operum S. Ambrosii cura sua recognitorum aliam Cantici canticorum vulgavit Expositionem quae ab Ant. Monchiaceno Demochare, doctore Sorbonico, excerpta, et in unum corpus collecta memoratur. Verumtamen veri multo videtur similis eam collectionem a Demochare tantum auctam atque interpolatam fuisse; quandoquidem non modo in collegii Navarrici manuscripto annorum circ. 400, et in codice coenobii Vindocinensis ante annos 600 exarato eadem licet brevior continetur: sed etiam habetur in exemplari ann ut minimum 800, et a Floro diacono Lugdunensi, qui circ an 855 vivebat, in commentario in Epistolas S Pauli nondum edito citata reperitur. Hos autem duos codices Petrus Franc. Chiffetius penes se, dum in vivis ageret, asservabat.

COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS FROM THE WRITINGS
OF SAINT AMBROSE, COLLECTED BY WILLIAM, FORMERLY ABBOT OF
SAINT-THIERRY, LATER A MONK OF SIGNY.

TO THE READER.

It had indeed been our plan not to present in this volume any other works than those which pertained to the exposition of the Old and New Testaments, and which were established to have been written by Ambrose, with the exception of only the second Apology of David. However, while considering the number of supposititious treatises which we decided to publish at the end of the following volume, we feared lest the same should become of a size greater than fair; thus, we thought some supplement should be added to this first one. Moreover, since among the legitimate lucubrations of our Doctor none occurred which either sufficiently agreed with the argument of the preceding ones, or was sufficient for introducing equality between both volumes, nothing seemed more convenient than that we should subjoin this commentary. It is surely of a certain middle condition between the true and spurious works of Saint Ambrose, not entirely foreign to him, since it consists of his very words and sentences; yet again not entirely his own, since it was composed by another. For it is certain that Ambrose never wrote on the Song of Songs by design, but since he appeared to be so greatly delighted with that book that he omitted no opportunity of illustrating it in his various writings, this inspired certain students of Ambrosian works to collect what was scattered and dispersed there, and by sewing them together among themselves in the manner of a cento, to fashion one body of a commentary. Hence it is that in the year 1558 at Louvain appeared the Exposition on the Song of Songs excerpted by Coster, a regular Canon: whose diligence, although Gillot praises it, he nevertheless testifies that he changed everything; took away much, and added more of his own. Ten years later, the same Gillot published at the end of the works of St. Ambrose, revised by his care, another Exposition of the Song of Songs, which is mentioned as having been excerpted by Anthony Monchiacenus Demochares, a Sorbonne doctor, and collected into one body. Nevertheless, it seems much more likely that that collection was only increased and interpolated by Demochares; since not only in a manuscript of the College of Navarre of about 400 years, and in a codex of the monastery of Vendôme written 600 years ago, the same is contained although shorter: but it is also held in a copy of at least 800 years, and it is found cited by Florus, a deacon of Lyons, who lived about the year 855, in a commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul not yet published. Moreover, Peter Francis Chiflet kept these two codices in his possession as long as he lived.

Tertiam porro super eadem materia commentationem numquam antea praelo subjectam damus, quam etsi multis in bibliothecis suppresso auctoris nomine reperiamus manu exaratam, attamen constat ab altero collectam non esse, quam a Guillelmo, prius abbate S. Theoderici, postea Signiacensi monacho. Id quidem ex eo ipso licet intelligere, dum lucubrationes suas in praefatione tractatus De vita solitaria ad fratres de monte Dei recensens, ita loquitur: "Excerpsi enim ex libris S. Ambrosii quidquid in eis disseruit super Cantica canticorum, opus grande et inclytum." Quod sane de Chifletiano commentario intelligi neutiquam potest, cum Guillelmus ille tantum an. circiter 1142 floruerit. Sed argumentum decretorium illud est, quod nempe ejusdem Guillelmi codex autographus, inscripto ipsius nomine, exstet Signiaci; unde nobis apographum R P Casimirus Oudin Can Ord Praemonst e congr reformata, vir ad bene de omnibus merendum natus, manu propria descripsit. Hujus autem collectionis in memorato Signiacensi codice hic titulus est: Excerpta de libris beati Ambrosii super Cantica canticorum.

[COMMENTARIUS IN CANTICA CANTICORUM.]

(G, S)*]

PROLOGUS.

1545 I. Osculetur me osculo oris sui (Cant. I, 1): non hic foeditatis incentiva, sed castitatis celebrantur mysteria; ubi spiritualiter agitur et affectuali quadam contemplatione de nuptiis et conjunctione Christi et Ecclesiae, increati spiritus et creati, carnis et spiritus. Circumcidamus ergo cor nostrum: nihil vile, nihil corporeum quaeramus; vile autem omne terrenum. Nihil ergo terrenum, nihil carnale, nihil saeculare, nihil corporeum, nihil leve atque mutabile in his eloquiis constituamus coelestibus: Eloquia enim Domini eloquia casta; ut in his coelestium mysteriorum immaculata et pudica sinceritas 1546 spiritali interpretatione resplendeat. Non adulterina quadam opinione misceamus terrena divinis, et illud inviolabile sacramentum propheticae visionis aut perennis oraculi, naturae nostrae aestimatione violemus: sive enim de osculis, sive de talibus, totum decet, quidquid defertur religioni; ut nullum obsequium quod proficiat ad cultum et observantiam Christi erubescamus: sicut in illa saltatione David ante arcam; non enim illa deliciarum comes fuit atque luxuriae saltatio, sed quod unusquisque corpus attollat impigrum, nec humi pigra jacere membra, vel tardis sinat torpere vestigiis. Hoc enim nos magisterium non invenimus, sed accepimus; sic instituit ordinem mystici carminis, doctrina coelestis.

Furthermore, we give a third commentary on the same matter, never before subjected to the press, which although we find written by hand in many libraries with the author's name suppressed, yet it is established not to have been collected by any other than William, formerly abbot of St. Thierry, later a monk of Signy. This can indeed be understood from the fact itself, when reviewing his lucubrations in the preface to the treatise *On the Solitary Life* to the brothers of Mont-Dieu, he speaks thus: "For I have excerpted from the books of St. Ambrose whatever he discussed in them concerning the Song of Songs, a great and renowned work." Which surely can by no means be understood of the Chifletian commentary, since that William flourished only about the year 1142. But the decisive argument is this, that namely the autograph codex of the same William, with his own name inscribed, exists at Signy; whence Father Casimirus Oudin, a Canon of the Premonstratensian Order from the reformed congregation, a man born to deserve well of all, described the copy for us with his own hand. Moreover, the title of this collection in the aforementioned Signy codex is this: *Excerpts from the books of blessed Ambrose on the Song of Songs.*

[COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS.(G,S)*]

PROLOGUE.

1545 I. "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth" (Cant. 1:1): here not the incitements of foulness, but the mysteries of chastity are celebrated; where it is dealt with spiritually and with a certain affective contemplation concerning the nuptials and conjunction of Christ and the Church, of the uncreated spirit and the created, of the flesh and the spirit. Let us therefore circumcise our heart: let us seek nothing vile, nothing corporeal; for all that is earthly is vile. Let us therefore establish nothing earthly, nothing carnal, nothing secular, nothing corporeal, nothing light and changeable in these heavenly utterances: for "the utterances of the Lord are pure utterances"; so that in these the immaculate and modest sincerity of heavenly mysteries may shine forth with spiritual interpretation. Let us not mix earthly things with divine by some adulterous opinion, and let us not violate that inviolable sacrament of prophetic vision or perennial oracle by the estimation of our nature: for whether concerning kisses, or concerning such things, everything is becoming which is deferred to religion; so that we may not be ashamed of any service which profits the worship and observance of Christ: just as in that dancing of David before the ark; for that dancing was not the companion of delights and luxury, but because each one should lift up his active body, and not allow sluggish limbs to lie on the ground, or to grow numb with slow steps. For we have not invented this mastery, but received it; so the heavenly doctrine established the order of the mystic song.

1547 2. Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui; quia bona ubera tua super vinum, et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata. Unguentum exinanitum est nomen tuum (Ibid.). Totus iste deliciarum locus ludum sonat, plausum excitat, amorem provocat. Ideo, inquit, adolescentulae dilexerunt te, et attraxerunt te; retro odorem unguentorum tuorum curramus. Induxit me rex in tabernaculum suum (Ibid., 3). Ab osculis coepit ut ad tabernaculum perveniret, atque illa impatiens dominici laboris exercitataeque virtutis, agitur ut aperiat manu claustra, in agrum exeat, in castellis maneat; in principio tamen retro odorem currit unguenti, cum in tabernaculum venerit, unguentum mutatura castellis. Denique quo evadat, vide.

3. Si murus, inquit, est, aedificemus super eum turres argenteas (Cant. VIII, 9). Quae ludebat osculis, jam turres erigit, ut pretiosis sanctorum turrata fastigiis, non solum hostiles frustretur incursus, verum etiam bonorum propugnacula struat tuta meritorum. Etiam in his conjugiiis temporalibus nubenti prius plauditur, quam imperatur; ne ante dura offendant imperia, quam blanditiis amor fatus inolescatur. Bucula plausus cujusdam sonitum discit amare, cervicis ne recuset jugum; denique prius assuescitur verbo 1548 lasciviae, quam verbere disciplinae. Ast ubi colla subdiderit jugo, et habena constringit, et stimulus urget, et compares trahunt, et jugalis invitat. Sic etiam Virgo nostra debuit prius amore pio cudere; aurea thori coelestis fulcra mirari, et in ipso vestibulo nuptiarum et postes frondium sertis cernere coronatos, et chori strepentis interius haurire delicias; ne se prius dominico jugo timefacta subduceret, quam vocata inclinaret. Oportet enim ut gradus quosdam profectuum et ordinem noverimus, quid prius, quid consequens esse debeat: nam scire quid facias, et ordinem nescire faciendi, non est perfectae cognitionis, offendunt enim plerumque praepostera. Itaque quia quot homines, tot sententiae, si quid defecatum est in sermone nostro, omnes legant: si quid decoctum, maturiores probent: si quid modestum, pectoribus inhaereat, genas pingat: si quid florulentum, aetas florulenta non improbet. Debuimus sponsae excitare amorem; scriptum est enim: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum (Deut. VI, 5): debuimus in nuptiis crines sponsae calamistris quibusdam orationis ornare; scriptum est enim: Plaudite manu, et percutite pede (Ezech. XXI, 14): debuimus perpetuos spargere thalamos rosis.

INCIPIT TEXTUS.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1547 2. "Let him kiss me from the kisses of his mouth; because your breasts are good above wine, and the odor of your ointments is above all aromatics. Your name is as ointment poured forth" (Ibid.). This whole place of delights sounds of play, excites applause, provokes love. "Therefore," it says, "the young maidens loved you, and drew you; let us run after the odor of your ointments. The king has brought me into his tabernacle" (Ibid., 3). It began from kisses so as to arrive at the tabernacle, and she, impatient of the Lord's labor and exercised virtue, is moved to open the enclosures with her hand, go out into the field, and remain in the forts; in the beginning, however, she runs after the odor of the ointment, intending to change the ointment for forts when she comes into the tabernacle. Finally, see where she escapes.

3. "If it is a wall," it says, "let us build upon it silver towers" (Cant. 8:9). She who was playing with kisses, now erects towers, so that, towered with the precious summits of the saints, she may not only frustrate hostile incursions, but also build safe bulwarks of good merits. Even in these temporal marriages, the one marrying is first applauded before she is commanded; lest harsh commands offend before love, cherished by blandishments, grows strong. The heifer learns to love the sound of a certain applause, lest it refuse the yoke of the neck; finally, it is first accustomed to the word 1548 of playfulness, before the lash of discipline. But when it has submitted its neck to the yoke, the rein also constricts, and the goad urges, and the companions draw, and the yoke-mate invites. So also our Virgin ought first to forge with pious love; to wonder at the golden supports of the heavenly bed, and to see in the very vestibule of the nuptials even the doorposts crowned with wreaths of leaves, and to drink in the delights of the choir sounding within; lest she, terrified, should withdraw herself from the Lord's yoke before, being called, she should incline. For it is necessary that we should know certain steps of progress and order, what ought to be first, what following: for to know what you do, and not to know the order of doing, is not of perfect knowledge, for preposterous things often offend. Therefore, because there are as many opinions as there are men, if anything is filtered in our discourse, let all read it: if anything is matured, let the more mature approve: if anything is modest, let it remain in hearts, paint the cheeks: if anything is flowery, let the flowery age not disapprove. We ought to excite the love of the bride; for it is written: "You shall love the Lord your God" (Deut. 6:5): we ought to adorn the hair of the bride in nuptials with certain curling-irons of speech; for it is written: "Clap with the hand, and strike with the foot" (Ezek. 21:14): we ought to strew the perpetual marriage-beds with roses.

THE TEXT BEGINS.

CHAPTER ONE.

1547 1. Ante vita quam doctrina quaerenda est; vita enim bona et sine doctrina habet gratiam, doctrina sine vita integritatem non habet, In malevolam etenim animam non cadit sapientia (Sap. I, 4): ideoque ait: Quaerent me mali, et non invenient (Prov. I, 28): quia improbitate caecatur mentis oculus, et caligante sibi iniquitate mysteria profunda invenire non potest. Primum ergo exercenda est vitae militia, corrigendi mores. Cum haec instituerimus ad cursum debitum, ut sit offensionis correctio, puritatis gratia: tunc ad studia percipiendae cognitionis veniamus suo ordine et via. Prima igitur sunt moralia, secunda mystica: in illis vita, in his cognitio; ita ut si perfectionem requiras, nec vita sine cognitione, nec cognitio sine vita sit, utrumque astipuletur alteri. Quam institutionem secutus Salomon librum de Proverbiis scripsit, quo moralem locum uberius expressit, naturalem in Ecclesiaste, mysticum in Canticis canticorum: quamquam si diligenter discutias, et in Proverbiis mystica pleraque reperiās, et in Canticis moralium suavitatem. Nam utique mysticum est: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, et subdidit columnas septem, interfecit hostias suas, etc. (Pov. IX, 1). Hoc quippe in Canticis lucet mysticum quod morale, in quo blanditiarum suavis et affectus amantis exprimitur.

2. (Vers. 1, 2.) Osculetur me ab osculo oris sui; quoniam optima ubera tua super vinum, et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata. Constitue ergo Virginem desponsatam multo tempore, et justo ferventem amore, quae multa praeclara opera dilecti, probabilium testium assertione cognoverit, desideriis suspensis dilatam frequenter, jam non ferentem moras, quae omnia fecisset ut sponsum deret: aliquando votis potitam suis, ad improvisum sponsi adventum gaudio turbatam, non quaerere primordia salutationis, non verborum vices, sed statim quod desiderasset exigere. Ita ergo et sancta Ecclesia quae in primordiis mundi desponsata in paradiso, praefigurata in diluvio, annuntiata per Legem, vocata per prophetas, cum diu redemptionem hominum, Evangelii decorem, dilecti exspectasset adventum; impatiens morae, in oscula ruit dicens: Osculetur me ab osculo oris sui; et delectata osculis, adjicit: quoniam optima ubera tua super vinum.

1547 1. Life is to be sought before doctrine; for a good life even without doctrine has grace, but doctrine without life has no integrity. "For wisdom does not enter into a malevolent soul" (Wis. 1:4): and therefore he says: "The evil shall seek me, and shall not find me" (Prov. 1:28): because the eye of the mind is blinded by wickedness, and in the darkening of iniquity it cannot find deep mysteries. First, therefore, the warfare of life must be exercised, and morals corrected. When we have established these toward the due course, so that there is a correction of offense and the grace of purity: then let us come to the studies of perceiving knowledge in its own order and way. Therefore, the first things are moral, the second mystic: in the former is life, in the latter knowledge; so that if you seek perfection, neither is life without knowledge, nor knowledge without life, but each should support the other. Following this institution, Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, in which he expressed the moral place more abundantly; the natural in Ecclesiastes; the mystic in the Song of Songs: although if you discuss it diligently, you may find many mystic things even in Proverbs, and the sweetness of moral things in the Song. For surely it is mystic: "Wisdom has built herself a house, and she has set up seven pillars, she has slain her victims," etc. (Prov. 9:1). Indeed, that mystic quality shines in the Song which is moral, in which the sweetness of blandishments and the affection of the lover is expressed.

2. (Vers. 1, 2.) "Let him kiss me from the kiss of his mouth; since your breasts are best above wine, and the odor of your ointments is above all aromatics." Set then before you a Virgin betrothed for a long time, and burning with a just love, who has known many distinguished works of the beloved by the assertion of credible witnesses, frequently delayed with suspended desires, no longer bearing delays, who had done all things so that she might see the bridegroom: at last having obtained her vows, troubled with joy at the unforeseen coming of the bridegroom, she does not seek the beginnings of salutation, nor the turns of words, but immediately demands what she had desired. So therefore also the holy Church, which was betrothed in paradise at the beginnings of the world, prefigured in the flood, announced through the Law, called through the prophets, when she had long expected the redemption of men, the beauty of the Gospel, and the coming of the beloved; impatient of delay, she rushes into kisses saying: "Let him kiss me from the kiss of his mouth"; and delighted with the kisses, she adds: "since your breasts are best above wine."

3. Et ut moralius dicamus, intelligo mihi carnem illam quae madefacta fuerat in Adam serpentis veneno, quae criminum marcebat fetore, quae procedebat in filiabus Sion alta cervice et nutibus oculorum, et itinere pedum trahens tunicas, et pedibus suis ludens, crinium cincinnis et compositis vultibus atque redimiculis, et omni affectata decore plus dedecens, eandem tamen plurimis 1548 edoctam oraculis, quod venturus esset qui serpentis illecebris exclusis, Spiritus sancti infunderet gratiam; ut omnis caro videret salutare Dei, omnis caro ad Deum veniret, marcuisset desiderio: sed metuentem ne ut impatiens, ut lasciva, ut luxuriosa, ut querula, sicut ante fuerat displiceret, quamvis longiore quam ferre jam poterat, morantis adventus Dominici expectatione quateretur: non murmurantem tamen nec transgredientem, sed levantem in omni loco puras manus, sine ira et disceptatione, in habitu ornato cum verecundia et sobrietate, ornantem se non in tortis crinibus aut auro aut margaritis aut veste pretiosa, sed his quae castitatis et bonae conversationis decerent gratiam, orare dicentem: Osculetur me ab osculo oris sui; quoniam optima ubera tua super vinum. Jam volebat adhaerere Christo caro, jam festinabat innubere; ut esset unus spiritus, et fieret caro Christi quae erat ante meretricis. Osculetur, inquit, me: osculatur nos Dei Verbum, quando sensum nostrum spiritus cognitionis illuminat.

4. Igitur vel Ecclesia est jamdiu promisso sibi per prophetas Dominico adventu per tempora multa suspensa, vel anima quae elevans se a corpore abdicatis luxuria atque deliciis, voluptatibusque carnalibus, exuta quoque sollicitudine saecularium vanitatum, jamdudum infusionem sibi divinae praesentiae et gratiam Verbi salutaris exoptet, commacerari eam quod sero veniat, et affligitur; ideo quasi vulnerata charitatis, cum moras ejus ferre non possit, conversa ad Patrem, rogare ut mittat sibi Deus Verbum, et causam qua sit ita impatiens declarare dicentem: Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui.

5. Non unum osculum quaerit, sed plura oscula, ut desiderium suum possit explere; quae enim diligit, non est unius osculi paritate contenta, sed plurima exigit, plura vindicat, et ita se amplius dilecto commendare consuevit. Denique illa in Evangelio sic probata est, Quia non cessavit, inquit Dominus, osculari pedes meos, et ideo remissa sunt ei peccata multa, quia dilexit multum (Luc. VII, 46, 47). Ergo et haec anima oscula Verbi multa desiderat, ut illuminetur divinae cognitionis lumine; hoc est enim osculum Verbi, lumen scilicet cognitionis sacrae.

3. And that we may speak more morally, I understand as my own that flesh which had been moistened in Adam with the serpent's poison, which was withering with the stench of crimes, which was proceeding in the daughters of Zion with high neck and winks of the eyes, and with the journey of the feet trailing tunics, and playing with its feet, with curls of hair and composed faces and headbands, and in all affected beauty more unseemly; yet taught by many 1548 oracles that he was to come who, the allurements of the serpent being excluded, would infuse the grace of the Holy Spirit; so that all flesh might see the salvation of God, and all flesh might come to God, it withered with desire: but fearing lest as impatient, as lascivious, as luxurious, as querulous, as it had been before, it might displease, although it was shaken by a longer expectation of the Lord's coming than it could now bear: yet not murmuring nor transgressing, but lifting up pure hands in every place, without anger and dispute, in adorned habit with modesty and sobriety, adorning itself not in braided hair or gold or pearls or precious garment, but in those things which would become the grace of chastity and good conversation, it prays saying: "Let him kiss me from the kiss of his mouth; since your breasts are best above wine." Already the flesh wished to adhere to Christ, already it hastened to marry; so that it might be one spirit, and that which was before the flesh of a harlot might become the flesh of Christ. "Let him kiss," it says, "me": the Word of God kisses us when the spirit of knowledge illuminates our sense.

4. Therefore, it is either the Church, long suspended through many times by the Lord's coming promised to her through the prophets, or the soul which, elevating itself from the body and having renounced luxury and delights and carnal pleasures, and also having stripped off the care of secular vanities, now for a long time desires the infusion of the divine presence and the grace of the saving Word for itself; she is consumed because he comes late, and she is afflicted; therefore, as if wounded by charity, since she cannot bear his delays, turned to the Father, she asks that God send the Word to her, and declares the cause for which she is so impatient, saying: "Let him kiss me from the kisses of his mouth."

5. She seeks not one kiss, but many kisses, so that she may be able to fulfill her desire; for she who loves is not content with the parsimony of a single kiss, but demands very many, claims more, and thus has been accustomed to commend herself more to the beloved. Finally, that woman in the Gospel was so approved, of whom the Lord said: "Since she has not ceased to kiss my feet, and therefore many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much" (Luke 7:46, 47). Therefore, also this soul desires many kisses of the Word, so that she may be illuminated by the light of divine knowledge; for this is the kiss of the Word, namely, the light of sacred knowledge.

Osculatur enim nos Deus Verbum, quando cor nostrum et ipsum principale hominis Spiritus divinae cognitionis illuminat; quo anima donata charitatis pignore nuptiali, laeta atque ovans dicit: Os meum aperui et eduxi spiritum (Psal. CXVIII, 131). Osculum est enim quo invicem amantes sibi adhaerent, et velut gratiae interioris suavitate potiuntur. Per hoc osculum adhaeret anima Dei Verbo, quod sibi spiritus transfunditur osculantis: sicut etiam hi qui se osculantur, non sunt labiorum praelibatione contenti, sed spiritum suum sibi invicem videntur infundere.

1549 6. Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui. Vis ad Christum aptare? Nihil gratius. Vis ad animam tuam? Nihil jucundius. Osculetur me, videt te mundum esse ab omni peccato, quia delicta de terra sunt; ideo te sacramentis coelestibus dignum judicat, et ideo invitat ad coeleste convivium; ut Osculetur te ab osculis oris sui. Tamen propter sequentia, anima tua, vel humana conditio, vel Ecclesia vidit se ab omnibus mundatam esse peccatis, dignam quae ad altare Dei possit accedere. Quid est enim altare, nisi forma corporis Christi? Vidit sacramenta mirabilia, et ait: Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui; hoc est, osculum mihi Christus infigat. Quare? quia: 7. Meliora ubera tua super vinum, hoc est, meliores sensus, meliora tua sacramenta super vinum, super illud vinum quod etsi suavitatem habet, laetitiam habet, gratiam habet: tamen in illo laetitia saecularis, in te autem jucunditas spiritalis est.

Jam tunc ergo Salomon inducebat nuptias vel Christi et Ecclesiae, vel spiritus et carnis et animae. Et tamquam despiciens omnes jucunditates et delectationes suas, coelestibus cupieos inhaerere mandatis, ait: quoniam optima praecepta testamentorum tuorum super omnem appetentiam carnis, et saeculi voluptatem; meminerat enim se in Eva ante sic lapsam, dum voluptatem corporis praefert mandatis coelestibus. Ostendens itaque non solam speciem Verbi, et vultum quemdam, sed omnia interiora ejus diligere, adjungit ad osculorum gratiam: Quia bona, inquit, ubera tua super vinum, et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata. Illa osculum poposcit, Deus Verbum se ei totus infudit, et nudavit ei ubera sua, hoc est, dogmata sua et interioris sapientiae disciplinas, et unguentorum suorum dulci odore fragravit: quibus capta dicit uberiores esse jucunditatem divinae cognitionis, quam laetitiam omnis corporeae voluptatis.

For God the Word kisses us when the Spirit illuminates our heart and the very principal part of man with divine knowledge; with which bridal pledge of charity having been given to the soul, joyful and exultant she says: "I opened my mouth and drew in the spirit" (Psalm 118:131). For the kiss is that by which lovers in turn adhere to each other, and as if by the sweetness of interior grace, they take possession. Through this kiss the soul adheres to God the Word, because the spirit of the one kissing is transfused into her: just as also those who kiss each other are not content with the prelibation of the lips, but seem to infuse their spirit into each other in turn.

1549 6. "Let him kiss me from the kisses of his mouth." Do you wish to fit it to Christ? Nothing more pleasing. Do you wish to fit it to your soul? Nothing more pleasant. "Let him kiss me": he sees that you are clean from all sin, because faults are of the earth; therefore he judges you worthy of heavenly sacraments, and therefore invites you to the heavenly banquet, so that "He may kiss you from the kisses of his mouth." Nevertheless, on account of what follows, your soul, or the human condition, or the Church, saw that she was cleansed from all sins, worthy of being able to approach the altar of God. For what is the altar, except the form of the body of Christ? She saw the wonderful sacraments, and says: "Let him kiss me from the kisses of his mouth"; that is, let Christ fix a kiss upon me. Why? Because: 7. "Better are your breasts above wine," that is, better senses, better are your sacraments above wine, above that wine which although it has sweetness, has joy, has grace: yet in that is secular joy, but in you is spiritual pleasantness.

Already then Solomon was introducing the nuptials of either Christ and the Church, or of the spirit and the flesh and the soul. And as if despising all his pleasantnesses and delights, desiring to adhere to heavenly commands, he says: because the best precepts of your testaments are above all desire of the flesh and pleasure of the world; for he remembered that he had fallen thus before in Eve, while she preferred the pleasure of the body to heavenly commands. Showing therefore that she loves not only the appearance of the Word and a certain countenance, but all his interior things, she adds to the grace of kisses: "Because good," she says, "are your breasts above wine, and the odor of your ointments above all aromatics." She asked for a kiss, God the Word infused himself entirely into her, and bared his breasts to her, that is, his dogmas and the disciplines of interior wisdom, and he fragrant with the sweet odor of his ointments: captured by which she says that the pleasantness of divine knowledge is more abundant than the joy of all corporeal pleasure.

8. Unguentum exinanitum vel oleum effusum nomen tuum; hoc est, totus immundis impuritatibus diversorum facinorum fetebat hic mundus, nunc spirat ubique suavitas pudicitiae, unguentum fidei, flos integritatis. Aspirat etiam in Verbo odor gratiae et remissio peccatorum, quae in totum diffusa mundum, omnia tamquam exinanito replevit unguento, quia per universos gravis illuvies detersa vitiorum est. Hoc unguentum exinanitum est supra Judaeos, et collectum est agentibus: exinanitum in Judaea, et redoluit in omnibus terris. Hoc unguento uncta est Maria, et Virgo concepit, Virgo peperit bonum odorem Dei Filium: hoc unguentum effusum est super aquas, et sanctificavit aquas: hoc unguento uncti sunt tres pueri, et humorem his flamma roravit; hoc unguento Daniel unctus est, et leonum ora molliovit, feritatemque permulsit. Fluit hoc unguentum quotidie, et numquam deficit. Accipe vas tuum, virgo, et accede, ut possis hoc unguento repleri: accipe unguentum aestimatum trecentis denariis, sed gratis datum, non venditum, ut omnes haberent gratis. Virgo, ungere; noli contristari sicut Judas, quia hoc unguentum effunditur, sed consepeli in te Christum: claude sane vas tuum, ne unguentum effluat: claude integritatis clave, loquendi verecundia, abstinencia gloriandi; hoc quae habet unguentum, Christum recipit: Unguentum exinanitum nomen tuum.

9. (Vers. 2.) Propterea adolescentulae dilexerunt te. Quae sunt istae adolescentulae, nisi animae singulorum, quae deposuerunt istius corporis senectutem, renovatae per Spiritum sanctum? Unguentum effusum nomen tuum, cujus virtute sermonis nihil potest esse praestantius. Nam sicut inclusum in vase aliquo unguentum cohibet odorem suum, qui odor quamdiu vasis illius angustiiis coercetur, etsi ad plures non potest pervenire, tamen vim suam servat: cum vero de vase illo quo claudebatur unguentum fuerit effusum, longe lateque diffusum dicitur: ita et Christi nomen ante ejus adventum in Israel populo, quasi in vase aliquo Judaeorum mentibus claudebatur: Notus enim in Judaea Deus, in Israel magnum nomen ejus (Psal. LXXV, I). Hoc itaque nomen quod vasa Judaeorum angustiiis suis coercitum continebant. Magnum quidem et tunc nomen, cum infirmorum atque paucorum haereret angustiiis, sed magnitudinem sui nondum per corda gentium et in fines totius orbis effuderat: 1550 postquam vero per omnem mundum suo illuxit adventu, per omnem utique creaturam divinum illud suum nomen extendit, non repletum accessione aliqua, plenitudo enim nescit augmentum; sed replens vacua, ut esset admirabile nomen ejus in universa terra. Hujus igitur effusio nominis abundantem quamdam exuberantiam gratiarum, bonorumque coelestium significat ubertatem, ex abundanti enim superfluit quidquid effunditur.

8. "Your name is as ointment emptied or oil poured out"; that is, this whole world was stinking with the foul impurities of diverse crimes, now everywhere breathes the sweetness of modesty, the ointment of faith, the flower of integrity. There also breathes in the Word the odor of grace and the remission of sins, which, having been diffused into the whole world, has filled all things as if with emptied ointment, because through all peoples the heavy filth of vices has been wiped away. This ointment was emptied upon the Jews, and it was gathered by those who act: emptied in Judea, and it gave forth its scent in all lands. With this ointment Mary was anointed, and a Virgin conceived, a Virgin brought forth the good odor, the Son of God: this ointment was poured out upon the waters, and it sanctified the waters: with this ointment the three youths were anointed, and the flame bedewed them with moisture; with this ointment Daniel was anointed, and he softened the mouths of the lions, and soothed their ferocity. This ointment flows daily, and never fails. Take your vessel, O virgin, and approach, so that you may be able to be filled with this ointment: take the ointment valued at three hundred denarii, but given freely, not sold, so that all might have it freely. Virgin, be anointed; do not be saddened like Judas because this ointment is poured out, but bury Christ within you: surely close your vessel, lest the ointment flow out: close it with the key of integrity, with modesty of speaking, with abstinence from boasting; she who has this ointment receives Christ: "Your name is as ointment emptied."

9. (Vers. 2.) "Therefore the young maidens loved you." Who are these young maidens, if not the souls of individuals, who have laid aside the old age of this body, renewed through the Holy Spirit? "Your name is as ointment poured out," than the power of whose speech nothing can be more excellent. For just as ointment included in some vessel restrains its odor, which odor as long as it is coerced by the narrowness of that vessel, although it cannot reach many, yet it keeps its strength: but when from that vessel in which it was closed the ointment has been poured out, it is said to be diffused far and wide: so also the name of Christ before his coming was closed in the minds of the Jews among the people of Israel, as if in some vessel: for "God is known in Judea, great is his name in Israel" (Psalm 75:1). This name, therefore, which the vessels of the Jews contained, coerced by their narrowness. Indeed, it was a great name even then, when it adhered to the narrowness of the weak and the few, but it had not yet poured forth its greatness through the hearts of the nations and into the ends of the whole world: 1550 but after it shone through all the world by its coming, it certainly extended that divine name of its own through every creature, not filled by any addition, for fullness knows no increase; but filling empty places, so that its name might be admirable in all the earth. Therefore, the pouring out of this name signifies a certain exuberant abundance of graces, and a wealth of heavenly goods, for whatever is poured out overflows from abundance.

Ideo adolescentulae dilexerunt te. Bona, inquit, prudentia, sed dulcis misericordia; illam enim pauci assequuntur, haec ad omnes pervenit: propter hanc, inquit, indulgentiam tuam diligunt te animae renovatae spiritu.

10. (Vers. 3.) Attrahe nos post te, curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum. Osculata jam anima sancta Verbum Dei, modum non capit, nec expletur dicens: Suavis es, Domine, et in jucunditate tua doce me justificationes tuas (Psal. CXVIII, 12). Osculata Dei Verbum concupiscit super omnem decorem, diligit super omnem laetitiam, delectatur super omnia aromata, cupit frequenter videre, saepe intendere, cupit attrahi ut sequi possit: Unguentum, inquit, exinanitum nomen tuum, propterea te diligimus adolescentulae; propterea certamus, sed comprehendere non possumus: attrahe nos, ut possimus currere; ut odore unguentorum tuorum accipiamus virtutem sequendi. Festinat etiam interna mysteria videre, ipsam requiem Verbi, ipsam boni illius summi habitationem, et lucem ejus et claritatem in illo sinu ac recessu patrio; festinat audire sermones ejus, et cum audierit super omnem suavitatem accipit.

11. Doceat te propheta qui gustavit, et ait: Quam dulcia faucibus meis verba tua, super mel et favum ori meo (Psal. CXVIII, 103)! Quid enim aliud desiderat anima, quae semel Verbi suavitatem gustaverit, quae semel claritatem ejus viderit? Moyses in monte positus quadraginta diebus Legem accipiens, cibum corporis non requirebat: Elias ad illam festinans requiem, rogabat ut acciperetur anima sua a se: Petrus aspiciens et ipse in monte Dominicae resurrectionis gloriam, nolebat descendere, dicens: Domine, bonum est nos hic esse (Matth. XVII, 4). Quanta igitur illa divinae substantiae gloria, quanta Verbi dona, in quae concupiscunt et angeli prospicere!

12. Anima igitur quae illud videt, corpus hoc non requirit, minimamque familiaritatem cum eo esse debere intelligit, renuntiat saeculo, abducit se a vinculis carnis, et exuit omnibus voluptatum istarum nexibus. Denique Stephanus Jesum videbat, et lapidari non formidabat; immo cum lapidaretur, non pro se, sed pro illis a quibus perimebatur, rogabat. Paulus quoque raptus usque ad tertium coelum, cum corpore esset vel sine corpore nesciebat, raptus, inquam, in paradysum, usum proprii jam non sentiebat corporis, et audiens verba Dei, quomodo ad corporis infirmitates descenderet, erubescibat.

"Therefore the young maidens loved you." Good, she says, is prudence, but sweet is mercy; for the former few attain, the latter reaches all: on account of this your indulgence, she says, the souls renewed by the spirit love you.

10. (Vers. 3.) "Draw us after you, we will run in the odor of your ointments." The holy soul, having already kissed the Word of God, does not contain her measure, nor is she satisfied, saying: "You are sweet, O Lord, and in your pleasantness teach me your justifications" (Psalm 118:12). Having kissed the Word of God, she covets him above all beauty, loves him above all joy, is delighted above all aromatics, desires frequently to see him, often to gaze upon him, desires to be drawn so that she may be able to follow: "Your name," she says, "is as ointment emptied, therefore we young maidens love you; therefore we strive, but we cannot comprehend: draw us, so that we may be able to run; so that by the odor of your ointments we may receive the power of following." She hastens also to see the internal mysteries, the very rest of the Word, the very habitation of that highest good, and his light and brightness in that paternal bosom and retreat; she hastens to hear his speeches, and when she has heard them, she receives them above all sweetness.

11. Let the prophet who has tasted teach you, and say: "How sweet are your words to my throat, more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth" (Psalm 118:103)! For what else does the soul desire, which has once tasted the sweetness of the Word, which has once seen his brightness? Moses, placed on the mountain for forty days receiving the Law, did not require the food of the body: Elijah, hastening to that rest, asked that his soul might be taken from him: Peter himself, beholding on the mountain the glory of the Lord's resurrection, did not want to descend, saying: "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matthew 17:4). How great, then, is that glory of the divine substance, how great the gifts of the Word, into which even the angels desire to look!

12. Therefore, the soul that sees that [glory] does not require this body, and understands that there ought to be the least familiarity with it; she renounces the world, withdraws herself from the bonds of the flesh, and strips off all the knots of those pleasures. Finally, Stephen saw Jesus, and did not fear to be stoned; rather, while he was being stoned, he prayed not for himself, but for those by whom he was being slain. Paul also, caught up even to the third heaven, did not know whether he was with the body or without the body; caught up, I say, into paradise, he no longer felt the use of his own body, and hearing the words of God, he was ashamed of how he might descend to the infirmities of the body.

Itaque sciens quid vidisset in paradiso, vel quid audisset, clamabat dicens: Quid adhuc velut viventes de hoc mundo decernitis? Ne tetigeritis, ne attaminaveritis, ne gustaveritis, quae sunt omnia ad corruptelam ipso usu (Coloss. II, 20 et 21). Volebat enim nos in figura esse istius mundi, non possessione atque usu, ut ita utamur hoc mundo tamquam non utamur, tamquam praetereuntes, non tamquam residentes; ambulantes tamquam in imagine saeculi, non in cupiditate, ut velocissima disputatione ipsam imaginem huius mundi transeamus. Denique ipse fide ambulans, non specie, peregrinabatur a corpore, aderat Deo: et cum esset in terris, non in terrenis, sed in coelestibus conversabatur. Ergo anima nostra quae Deo vult appropinquare, elevet se a corpore, semper illi summo bono adhaereat, illi bono quod est divinum, quod est semper, et quod erat ab initio, et quod erat apud Deum (I Joan. I), hoc est, Dei Verbum: ipsum est illud divinum, In quo vivimus, et sumus, et movemur (Act. XVII, 28).

13. Curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum. Hunc odorem fragrat anima quae Christo aperire incipit, ut accipiat primum odorem Dominicae sepulturae, et credat, quia caro ejus non vidit corruptionem, nec odore aliquo mortis emarcuit: sed aeterni illius floris et semper virentis odore condita surrexit. Quomodo enim poterat vel in carne marcescere, cujus nomen Unguentum exinanitum 1551 est? Exinanivit se ut spiraret tibi; semper hoc unguentum erat, sed erat apud Patrem, erat in Patre, olebat tantum angelis et archangelis, tamquam intra vas coeli. Aperuit os Pater dicens: Ecce posui te in testamentum generis mei, in lucem gentium; ut sis in salutem usque ad extremum terrae (Esai. XLIX, 6). Descendit Filius, repleta sunt omnia novo odore Verbi, eructavit cor Patris Verbum bonum, fragravit Filius, Spiritus sanctus exhalavit, atque per omnium corda diffudit: Diffusa est enim charitas Dei in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum (Rom. V, 5). Ipse Dei Filius in corpore tamquam in vase odorem primo cohibebat suum, opperiens tempus sicut ait: Dominus dat mihi linguam eruditionis, ut sciam quando oporteat dicere sermonem. Venit hora, aperuit os, exivit unguentum, quando virtus exibat de eo. Et ideo ista festinat ad Verbum, et rogat ut attrahatur, ne forte derelinquatur; quia currit Dei Verbum, et non est alligatum. Denique Exsultat tamquam gigas ad currendum viam (Psal. XVIII, 6). Et quia Egressus ejus summo coelo, et occursus ejus usque ad summum ejus (Ibid., 7), videns se imparem tantae velocitati, dicit: Attrahe nos.

Therefore, knowing what he had seen in paradise, or what he had heard, he cried out saying: "Why do you still decree concerning this world as if living [in it]? Do not touch, do not handle, do not taste, which are all for corruption by the very use" (Colossians 2:20 and 21). For he wanted us to be in the figure of this world, not in its possession and use, so that we may use this world as if we do not use it, as if passing through, not as if residing; walking as if in the image of the age, not in desire, so that with the swiftest discourse we may pass through the very image of this world. Finally, he himself walking by faith, not by sight, was a pilgrim from the body, he was present with God: and while he was on earth, he conversed not in earthly things, but in heavenly things. Therefore, let our soul, which wants to approach God, lift itself from the body, let it always cling to that highest good, to that good which is divine, which is always, and which was from the beginning, and which was with God (1 John 1), that is, the Word of God: he himself is that divine thing, "In whom we live, and are, and move" (Acts 17:28).

13. "We will run in the odor of your ointments." The soul that begins to open to Christ breathes this odor, so that she may receive first the odor of the Lord's burial, and believe, because his flesh did not see corruption, nor did it wither by any odor of death: but it rose up seasoned with the odor of that eternal and ever-green flower. For how could it wither even in the flesh, whose name is "Ointment emptied"? He emptied himself so that he might breathe for you; this ointment was always, but it was with the Father, it was in the Father, it smelled only to the angels and archangels, as if within the vessel of heaven. The Father opened his mouth saying: "Behold, I have set you for a covenant of my race, for a light to the nations; that you may be for salvation even to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6). The Son descended, all things were filled with the new odor of the Word, the Father's heart brought forth the good Word, the Son gave off fragrance, the Holy Spirit exhaled, and diffused it through the hearts of all: "For the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). The Son of God himself first contained his odor in the body as if in a vessel, waiting for the time as he says: "The Lord gives me the tongue of learning, that I may know when it behooves to speak a word." The hour came, he opened his mouth, the ointment went out, when power went out from him. And therefore she hastens to the Word, and asks to be drawn, lest perhaps she be left behind; because the Word of God runs, and is not bound. Finally, "He exults as a giant to run the way" (Psalm 18:6). And because "His going forth is from the highest heaven, and his circuit even to the highest point of it" (Ibid., 7), seeing herself unequal to such velocity, she says: "Draw us."

14. Bona anima quae non pro se sola, sed pro omnibus rogat: Attrahe, inquam, nos; habemus enim cupiditatem sequendi, quam unguentorum tuorum inspirat gratia: sed quia cursus tuos aequare non possumus, Attrahe nos; ut auxilio tuo fultae, vestigiis tuis possimus insistere. Si enim tu attraxeris, curremus et nos, et spiritalia velocitatis flabra capiemus. Deponitur enim sarcina quibus manus tua fulcro est: et oleum tuum infunditur, quo curatus est ille qui a latronibus vulneratus est.

15. At ne impudens tibi videatur quod ait: Attrahe nos, audi dicentem: Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis, et onerati estis, et ego vos reficiam (Matth. XI, 28). Vides quod libenter nos attrahit, ne remaneamus sequentes: sed qui vult attrahi, currat ut comprehendat, et currat posteriora obliviscens, et ea quae sunt priora appetens, sic enim poterit Christum comprehendere; unde et Apostolus ait: Sic currite ut comprehendatis. Vult et ista ad bravium pervenire, quae desiderat comprehendere. Prudenter ergo rogat ut attrahatur, quia non omnes sequi possunt. Denique Petro dicenti: Quo vadis? respondit Verbum Dei: Non potes me sequi modo, sequeris autem postea (Joan. XIII, 36; Matth. XIV, 30). Claves ei commiserat regni coelorum, et in sequendo se imparem iudicavit. Hanc tamen animam non distulit, quia non praesumebat, sed rogabat. Denique,

16. (Vers. 3.) Introduxit me in cubiculum suum. Beata anima quae Verbi ingreditur penetralia, namque ea insurgens de corpore, ab omnibus fit remotior; atque illud quod est supra semetipsum, divinum illud si quomodo assequi possit, scrutatur et quaerit: quod cum potuerit comprehendere, ea quae sunt intelligibilia supergressa, in illo confirmatur, atque eo pascitur. Talies erat Paulus qui sciebat se raptum in paradysum, sed sive extra corpus sive in corpore nesciebat. Assurrexerat enim anima ejus de corpore, et se a visceribus et vinculis carnis abduxerat atque levaverat, factusque a semetipso alienus, intra semetipsum tenuit verba ineffabilia quae audivit et vulgare non potuit, quae advertit ea homini loqui non licere. Anima ergo bona contemnit visibilia et sensibilia, nec consistit in eis, nec in respiciendis his immoratur et residet: sed ascendit ad illa aeterna et invisibilia et plena miraculis, puro sensu se piaie mentis attollens. Etenim perfectioni studens, solum illud bonum divinitatis intendit, nec aliud quidquam requirendum putat, quia tenet quod summum est.

14. A good soul is she who asks not for herself alone, but for all: "Draw," I say, "us"; for we have the desire of following, which the grace of your ointments inspires: but because we cannot equal your courses, "Draw us"; so that, supported by your help, we may be able to press upon your footsteps. For if you draw, we also will run, and we will catch the spiritual breezes of velocity. For the burden is laid down for those whom your hand supports: and your oil is poured in, by which he was cured who was wounded by robbers.

15. But lest it seem impudent to you what she says, "Draw us," hear him saying: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matthew 11:28). You see that he willingly draws us, lest we remain behind in following; but he who wants to be drawn, let him run that he may comprehend, and let him run forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching out to the things that are before, for so he will be able to comprehend Christ; whence also the Apostle says: "So run that you may comprehend." This [soul] also wants to reach the prize, she who desires to comprehend. Prudently, therefore, she asks to be drawn, because not all can follow. Finally, to Peter saying: "Where are you going?" the Word of God answered: "You cannot follow me now, but you shall follow afterwards" (John 13:36; Matthew 14:30). He had committed to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and judged him unequal in following himself. Yet he did not put off this soul, because she did not presume, but asked. Finally,

16. (Vers. 3.) "He brought me into his chamber." Blessed is the soul that enters the secret places of the Word, for she, rising from the body, becomes more remote from all things; and that which is above itself, that divine thing if in any way it can be attained, she scrutinizes and seeks: which when she has been able to comprehend, having surpassed those things which are intelligible, she is confirmed in him, and is fed by him. Such was Paul, who knew himself caught up into paradise, but whether outside the body or in the body he did not know. For his soul had risen up from the body, and had withdrawn and lifted itself from the vitals and bonds of the flesh, and having become a stranger to himself, he held within himself the ineffable words which he heard and could not make common, which he noted that it is not lawful for a man to speak. Therefore, a good soul despises visible and sensible things, nor does she consist in them, nor does she delay and reside in looking back at them: but she ascends to those eternal and invisible things and [those] full of miracles, lifting herself by the pure sense of a pious mind. For indeed, striving for perfection, she intends only that good of divinity, nor does she think anything else is to be sought, because she holds that which is highest.

17. Introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum. Simplex est osculum, sed negotiosum cubiculi secretum; hoc enim loco mysteria plenius cognoscere se velle testatur, ut ingrediatur penetralia mysteriorum coelestium, et aperiantur sibi thesauri sapientiae et scientiae in Christo absconditi: quod ut possit, fortasse illud ait quod supra: Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui. Significat Spiritus sancti supervenientis gratiam, sicut Angelus ad Mariam dixit: Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te, et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi (Luc. I, 35). Quando autem introduxit eam rex in cubiculum suum, passionis tempus, lateris compunctio declarat, sanguinis effusio, sepulturae unguentum, resurrectionis mysterium; ut osculum quasi sponsa acceperit: in cubiculum autem Christi sit introducta Ecclesia, non jam quasi tantummodo desponsata, sed etiam quasi nupta: nec solum thalamum sit ingressa, sed etiam legitimae claves copulae consecuta sit. Ideoque quasi in thalamo sita ait: Colligatio guttae frater meus mihi, inter media ubera mea requiescit (Vers. 12).

18. Quod si cubiculum quaerimus, ipse nos edocet qui ait: tu autem cum orabis, intra in cubiculum tuum, et clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito (Matth. VI, 6). Cubiculum Ecclesiae corpus est Christi. Introduxit eam rex in omnia interiora mysteria, dedit ei claves ut aperiret sibi thesauros scientiae, sacramentorum clausas ante fores panderet, cognosceret quiescentis gratiam, defuncti somnum, virtutem resurgentis. In illo cubiculo iustitias Domini Jesu nupta reperit. Quae sunt illae iustitiae? Utiq̃ue sacramenta baptismatis, sicut legimus, quia cum venienti ad baptismum diceret Joannes: Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me; respondit Jesus: Sine modo, sic enim decet nos implere omnem iustitiam (Matth. III, 15). In illo cubiculo justificationes Domini discit, consilium Dei cognovit, quo nihil potest esse sublimius; hoc est enim divinum, in quo fit remissio peccatorum.

19. Haec a Domino quaerit discere, quae homines docere non poterant, nisi antea Deus docuisset: quae posteaquam a Christo didicerunt apostoli, Ecclesia dicit: Introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum, hoc est, in illud secretum, in quo sunt omnes thesauri scientiae et cognitionis suae. Ideoque tibi dicitur: Cum oras, intra in cubiculum tuum (Matth. VI, 6). quod significat mentis animaeque secretum. In hoc cubiculo iustitiarum sponsa se poposcit induci, cum post odorem unguenti excurret, quod semper fluit, et numquam deficit.

17. "The king brought me into his chamber." Simple is the kiss, but busy is the secret of the chamber; for in this place she testifies that she wants to know the mysteries more fully, so that she may enter the secret places of the heavenly mysteries, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ may be opened to her: so that she may do this, perhaps she says what [she said] above: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." It signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit coming upon [her], as the Angel said to Mary: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you" (Luke 1:35). But when the king brought her into his chamber, the time of the passion, the piercing of the side declares it, the shedding of blood, the ointment of burial, the mystery of the resurrection; so that she received the kiss as a bride: but into the chamber of Christ let the Church be introduced, no longer as if only betrothed, but also as if married: and not only has she entered the bridal chamber, but also she has obtained the legitimate keys of the union. And therefore, as if situated in the bridal chamber, she says: "A bundle of myrrh is my brother to me, he rests between my breasts" (Vers. 12).

18. But if we seek the chamber, he himself teaches us who says: "But you, when you shall pray, enter into your chamber, and having shut the door, pray to your Father in secret" (Matthew 6:6). The chamber of the Church is the body of Christ. The king brought her into all the interior mysteries, gave her the keys that she might open to herself the treasures of knowledge, might spread open the closed doors before the sacraments, might know the grace of him resting, the sleep of him deceased, the power of him rising. In that chamber the bride found the justifications of the Lord Jesus. What are those justifications? Surely the sacraments of baptism, as we read, because when John said to him coming to baptism: "I ought to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus answered: "Suffer it now, for so it behooves us to fulfill all justice" (Matthew 3:15). In that chamber she learns the justifications of the Lord, she knew the counsel of God, than which nothing can be more sublime; for this is that divine thing, in which the remission of sins is made.

19. These things she seeks to learn from the Lord, which men could not teach, unless God had taught before: which after the apostles learned from Christ, the Church says: "The king brought me into his chamber," that is, into that secret [place], in which are all the treasures of his knowledge and cognition. And therefore it is said to you: "When you pray, enter into your chamber" (Matthew 6:6), which signifies the secret of the mind and soul. Into this chamber of justifications the bride asked to be led, when she has run out after the odor of the ointment, which always flows, and never fails.

20. Introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum, Graecus in promptuarium suum et in cellarium suum habet: ubi bona libamina, ubi boni odores, mella suavia, ubi fructus diversi, ubi epulae variae sunt, ut plurimis epulis tuum prandium condiatur. Denique in illud divini illius sponsi introducta secretum:

21. Exsultemus, inquit, et laetemur in te; diligamus ubera tua super vinum; non enim in divitiis et auri argentique thesauris, non in possessionum fructibus, non in potestatibus, non in conviviis, sed in solo Deo exultat, dicens ad eum: Diligamus ubera tua super vinum. Sic tamen bibebat, ut non absorberetur a vino, sed gratia ejus laetitiam cordis hauriret, non corporis ebrietate titubaret. Denique bibens hoc vinum, aperuit oculos suos, et vidit viam rectam, reliquit tortuosas vias dicens: Aequitas dilexit te, hoc est, non flexuosa itinera te sequuntur: sed solus ad te potest justitiae trames pervenire, qui enim diligit justitiam non se avertit a Christo. Quomodo enim arbitrum justitiae, remuneratoremque meritorum innocens metuat conscientia? Eadem tamen anima cognoscens corporis societate se fuscata, dicit ad alias animas, vel ad alias coelestes et appositae sacro mysterio potestates: Nolite aspicere me, quoniam obfuscata sum, quia non est intuitus me sol.

22. (Vers. 4.) Fusca sum et decora, filiae Hierusalem. Constitue Dominum Jesum recumbentem in convivio, reclinantem se Joannem supra pectus ejus, mirantes alios quod servus supra Dominum reclinaret, quod caro illa peccatrix supra templum Verbi recumberet, quod anima illa carnis vinculis innexa aulam divinae plenitudinis scrutaretur. Haec ergo mirantibus aliis, respondit anima Joannis: Fusca sum et decora, filiae Jerusalem; fusca per culpam, decora per gratiam. Dicit et caro, fusca sum et decora; fusca pulvere saeculari, quem certando collegit, decora oculo spiritali, quo mundi hujus pulverem squaloremque deterisit: fusca per vitium, sed decora jam per lavacrum, quod abluit omne delictum: fusca sum quia peccavi, decora quia jam me diligit Christus; quam relegaverat enim in Eva, recipit in virgine, suscipit ex Maria.

23. Dicit etiam Synagoga, cujus mysteria hoc loco plerisque videntur exprimi; quae cum se rejici videret propter totius plebis impietatem; solabatur se tamen, 1553 quia ipsum Christum de populo suo non tantum, sed et Petrum, Joannem, Jacobum Christo adhaerentes videbat, quia habebat eloquia sibi credita. Et ideo dicebat: Fusca sum et decora, filiae Hierusalem: fusca per incredulitatem, decora per legem: fusca per lapsum, decora quia dilexit me sol, et prior facta sum congregatio Dei.

20. "The king brought me into his chamber," the Greek has "into his storehouse" and "into his cellar": where there are good libations, where there are good odors, sweet honeys, where there are diverse fruits, where there are various banquets, so that your dinner may be seasoned with very many banquets. Finally, introduced into that secret of that divine bridegroom:

21. "Let us exult," she says, "and be glad in you; let us love your breasts above wine"; for not in riches and treasures of gold and silver, not in the fruits of possessions, not in powers, not in banquets, but in God alone she exults, saying to him: "Let us love your breasts above wine." Yet she so drank, that she was not absorbed by the wine, but his grace might draw the gladness of the heart, she might not stagger by the drunkenness of the body. Finally, drinking this wine, she opened her eyes, and saw the right way, she left the tortuous ways saying: "Equity has loved you," that is, not flexuous journeys follow you: but alone to you can the path of justice reach, for he who loves justice does not turn away from Christ. For how should an innocent conscience fear the judge of justice, and the remunerator of merits? Yet the same soul, knowing herself darkened by the society of the body, says to other souls, or to other heavenly powers set over the sacred mystery: "Do not look at me, because I am darkened, because the sun has not looked upon me."

22. (Vers. 4.) "I am dark and comely, O daughters of Jerusalem." Imagine the Lord Jesus reclining at the banquet, John reclining himself upon his breast, others wondering that a servant should recline upon the Lord, that that sinful flesh should recline upon the temple of the Word, that that soul bound by the bonds of the flesh should scrutinize the hall of the divine fullness. Therefore, while others wondered at these things, the soul of John answered: "I am dark and comely, O daughters of Jerusalem"; dark through fault, comely through grace. The flesh also says, "I am dark and comely"; dark with the dust of the age, which it collected by striving, comely with the spiritual eye, with which it wiped away the dust and squalor of this world: dark through vice, but comely now through the laver, which washed away every offense: I am dark because I have sinned, comely because now Christ loves me; for her whom he had banished in Eve, he receives in the virgin, he takes up from Mary.

23. The Synagogue also says, whose mysteries in this place seem to most to be expressed; which when she saw herself rejected on account of the impiety of the whole people, she nevertheless consoled herself, because she saw Christ himself [come] from her people not only, but also Peter, John, and James clinging to Christ, because she had the oracles committed to her. And therefore she said: "I am dark and comely, O daughters of Jerusalem": dark through incredulity, comely through the law: dark through her fall, comely because the sun has loved me, and I was made first the congregation of God.

Nolite me refugere quia fusca sum; ideo fusca sum quia sol me reliquit justitiae, qui ante illuminare consueverat. Amisi colorem vultus mei, obtusa facta est acies oculorum meorum quibus ante solem videbam: in tenebris ambulo, quae diem Christi nescio. Nolite tamen despiciere me, quoniam qui reliquit, potest rursum aspicere. Misereri iterum solet, congregare dispersos, desertos requirere, colligere destitutos. Omnes tribus Israel, convenite, aspiciate me decoram ante delicta; nolite aspicere me, quoniam obfuscata sum; hoc est, non hoc solum aspiciatis quia obfuscata sum; non est intuitus me sol, et ideo obfuscata sum. Sed lucet sol super justos et injustos, super justos pro gratia, super injustos pro misericordia; illis mercedem meritorum tribuens, istis peccata dimittens. Et gentibus non lucebat ante, nunc lucet, nunc illis oritur qui oriebatur mihi; qui illis remisit, remittet et mihi. Nolite arbitrari quoniam obfuscata sum, quod penitus reliquerit me sol, et jam non intueatur, non requirat aegram. Dissimulavit a me, quia non servavi mandata ejus: reconciliabitur cum viderit meorum poenitentiam delictorum. Non vidit me sol, quia non recepi advenientem, non aperui fenestras, ut vitae lumen intraret: cum aperuero, illuminabit oculos meos, qui venit ut totum mundum illuminaret, et videant etiam non videntes.

24. Vel dicit Ecclesia de gentibus: Nolite aspicere me quoniam fusca sum, quia non respexit me sol; eo quod velut pruinis hiemalibus geluque constricta gentilis erroris, congregationem gentium sol justitiae diu indignam aestimaverit, quam serena vultus sui luce lustraret. Nonne tibi videbatur hiberni rigor temporis, quando notus erat in Judaea tantummodo Deus? Nunc autem plenitudo lucis fulget aestivae, quando omnia et in omnibus Christus. Nonne terra Domini et plenitudo ejus (Psalm. XXIII, 1)? Et vere orbis terrarum in Ecclesia, quia non Judaeus tantummodo aut Graecus, non Barbarus aut Scythia, non servus aut liber: sed omnes in Christo unum sumus (Coloss. III, 11). Sol omnibus fulget, dies omnibus lucet. Nigra sum, et decora. Praemisit nigram, ut augetet decorem: non dixit: Nigra sum decora, ne quod nigrum est decorum aestimaretur: sed ait: Nigra sum superiore peccato, sed decora confessione peccati, et correctionis studio, atque amore virtutis. Quamvis ergo Et syllaba ut grammatici appellant conjunctiva sit, habet tamen distinctionem, qua confusio distinguitur ac separatur; ut si dicas Ambrosium Bassum intus esse, unus putatur: sin autem asseras Ambrosium et Bassum intus esse, duo utique intelliguntur.

"Do not shun me because I am dark; I am dark for this reason, because the sun of justice has left me, who before was accustomed to illuminate [me]." I have lost the color of my countenance, the sharpness of my eyes has become blunt with which I before saw the sun: I walk in darkness, who do not know the day of Christ. Yet do not despise me, because he who left, can look again. He is accustomed to have mercy again, to gather the dispersed, to seek the deserted, to collect the destitute. All you tribes of Israel, come together, look at me comely before my offenses; "do not look at me, because I am darkened"; that is, do not look at this alone, that I am darkened; the sun has not looked upon me, and therefore I am darkened. But the sun shines upon the just and the unjust, upon the just for grace, upon the unjust for mercy; to the former attributing the reward of merits, to the latter forgiving sins. And to the nations it did not shine before, now it shines, now it arises for them who arose for me; he who forgave them, will forgive me also. Do not judge that because I am darkened, the sun has completely left me, and no longer looks upon me, nor seeks the sick one. He hid himself from me, because I did not keep his mandates: he will be reconciled when he sees the penitence of my offenses. The sun did not see me, because I did not receive him coming, I did not open the windows, that the light of life might enter: when I shall have opened, he will illuminate my eyes, who came that he might illuminate the whole world, and that even those not seeing might see.

24. Or the Church says concerning the nations: "Do not look at me because I am dark, because the sun has not looked back at me"; for the reason that as if constricted by winter frosts and ice of gentile error, the sun of justice long deemed the congregation of nations unworthy, that he might look upon it with the serene light of his countenance. Did it not seem to you the rigor of winter time, when God was known in Judea only? But now the fullness of summer light shines, when Christ is all and in all. Is not "the earth the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 23:1)? And truly the orb of the lands is in the Church, because there is "not Jew only nor Greek, not Barbarian nor Scythian, not servant nor free: but we are all one in Christ" (Colossians 3:11). The sun shines for all, the day shines for all. "I am black, and comely." She put "black" first, that she might increase the comeliness: she did not say: "I am black comely," lest what is black should be judged comely: but she said: "I am black by former sin, but comely by the confession of sin, and the study of correction, and the love of virtue." Therefore, although the syllable "And" as the grammarians call it is conjunctive, it nevertheless has a distinction, by which confusion is distinguished and separated; as if you should say that Ambrose Bassus is within, he is thought to be one: but if you assert that Ambrose AND Bassus are within, two are surely understood.

25. Sicut tabernacula Cedar, sicut pelles Salomonis; tentoria enim de exuviis fiunt mortuorum animalium. Igitur quae hoc dicebat, mortua erat peccato, et vivebat Deo: et nos igitur peccato moriamur; ut Deo vivamus. Repleti spiritus, jucunditate et suavitate laetitiae, erimus exuviae spirituales, carentes infirmitate corporea, et integro mentis sinu infusam nobis divinorum mysteriorum gratiam reservantes. Tabernacula autem Cedar, pellesve Salomonis corpus hoc dici liquet ex pluribus locis: tamen etiam inde intellige, quod Adam et Eva ubi imaginem deposuere coelestis quam ante portabant, imaginem terreni hominis induentes, tunicas dicti sunt vestiti esse pelliceas; corporales enim eos fecerat de spiritualibus culpa commissa.

26. Nec illud absurdum ad intelligendum, quod ita se dicit sponsa factam sicut pelles solis adustas ardoribus; eo quod in asperitate licet tribulationum posita, mortificaverit tamen corpus suum, ne sentire possit illam asperitatem: sicut enim ardorem solis non sentit pellis tabernaculi, eo quod pellis sit animalis mortui; ita haec mortua peccato, ardorem peccati sentire non poterat: vel quia non frangebatur necessitatibus, vel quia corpus 1554 afflictionis sumus, et mortem Domini Jesu semper in corpore nostro circumferre debemus.

27. (Vers. 5.) Filii matris meae pugnaverunt adversum me; hoc est, impugnaverunt me corporis passiones, carnis illecebrae decoloraverunt: ideo sol justitiae mihi non refulsit, quia viduata praesidio devotionem meam et observantiam plenam servare non potui, hoc est enim, vineam meam non custodivi, quia spinas et non uvam attuli, id est faciens peccata pro fructibus. Et cum de Verbo loquitur, irradiante sibi verbi splendore, conversa ad ipsum dicit:

28. (Vers. 6.) Ubi pascis, ubi manes in meridiano? Recte dicit, ubi pascis, quia regale est Dei Verbum: ubi manes, quia morale: in meridiano, quia mysticum: siquidem meridie Joseph cum fratribus suis in convivio constitutus futurorum mysteria temporum revelabat. Sed etiam David dicit: Revela ad Dominum vitam tuam et spera in eum, et ipse faciet, et educet sicut lumen justitiam tuam, et iudicium tuum sicut meridiem (Psalm. XXXVI, 5). Et ipse Paulus circumfulsisse sibi lumen meridie asseruit, quando a persecutione est conversus ad gratiam.

29. Queritur ergo quod derelicta sit, quod destituta sit pauper ex divite; abundabat enim munere gratiarum: sed egere coepit, ubi divinae praesentiae sibi copia denegata est. Et ideo vel quasi mercenaria haberi postulat, quae ante sibi pretiosioris copulae gratiam vindicabat.

25. "As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon"; for tents are made from the spoils of dead animals. Therefore she who said this, was dead to sin, and was living to God: and let us therefore die to sin; that we may live to God. Filled with the spirit, with the pleasantness and sweetness of joy, we shall be spiritual spoils, lacking corporeal infirmity, and reserving in the whole bosom of the mind the grace of the divine mysteries infused into us. But that "the tents of Kedar," or "the curtains of Solomon" means this body is clear from many places: yet even from this understand, that where Adam and Eve laid down the heavenly image which they bore before, putting on the image of the earthly man, they are said to have been clothed with skin tunics; for the fault committed had made them corporeal from spiritual.

26. Nor is it absurd to understand, that the bride says she has been made like skins scorched by the heats of the sun; because although placed in the harshness of tribulations, she nevertheless mortified her body, so that she might not be able to feel that harshness: for as the skin of a tent does not feel the heat of the sun, for the reason that it is the skin of a dead animal; so she, dead to sin, could not feel the heat of sin: either because she was not broken by necessities, or because we are a body of affliction, and we ought always to carry about the death of the Lord Jesus in our body.

27. (Vers. 5.) "My mother's sons have fought against me"; that is, the passions of the body have attacked me, the allurements of the flesh have discolored [me]: therefore the sun of justice has not shone upon me, because, deprived of protection, I could not keep my devotion and full observance, for this is, "I have not kept my vineyard," because I brought forth thorns and not grapes, that is, doing sins for fruits. And when she speaks of the Word, the splendor of the Word irradiating her, having turned to him she says:

28. (Vers. 6.) "Where do you feed, where do you abide in the midday?" Rightly she says, "where do you feed," because the Word of God is kingly: "where do you abide," because [it is] moral: "in the midday," because [it is] mystical: since at midday Joseph, situated at the banquet with his brothers, revealed the mysteries of future times. But also David says: "Reveal your life to the Lord and hope in him, and he himself will do it, and he will bring forth your justice as the light, and your judgment as the midday" (Psalm 36:5). And Paul himself asserted that a light had shone around him at midday, when he was converted from persecution to grace.

29. Therefore she complains that she has been left, that she has been destitute, a poor one from a rich one; for she was abounding in the gift of graces: but she began to be in want, when the abundance of the divine presence was denied to her. And therefore she asks to be held even as a mercenary, who before claimed for herself the grace of a more precious union.

30. Posuerunt me custodem in vineis, vineam meam non custodivi (Vers. 5). Putant aliqui hoc de illis dici qui Synagogam ad legis praecepta constringunt, ut legem custodiat, vineam suam tueatur, quam custodire non potuit. Denique custodiebat ut faceret uvas, fecit autem spinas. Quae sit igitur vinea, venit David testificare nobis dicens: Vineam de Aegypto transtulisti, et eiecisti gentes, et plantasti eam (Psalm. LX-XIX, 9). Possunt et apostoli esse filii matris ejus, qui vere impugnauerunt Synagogam dicentes: Ecce convertimur ad gentes: et nationibus verbum Dei seminare coeperunt. Possunt et prophetae intelligi qui monendo denuntiandoque ut vineam suam custodiret Synagoga, nihil profecerunt; fecit enim spinas improbitatis, quae virtutis uberes fructus deferre debuerat: et ideo confitetur quod populum suum custodire non potuit meritoque sero quaerit tenere, quem cum teneret, amisit: multo dissimilior ejus quae dicit: Inveni quem diligit anima mea, tenui eum, et non relinquam eum (Cant. III, 4). Denique illa invitat in hortum suum sponsum; haec ubi pascat requirens, dicit ad ipsum:

31. Annuntia mihi quem dilexit anima mea. Cur quem dilexit anima mea, dicis, et non quem diligit? Cur dimisisti quem tenebas? Dilexisti patrum fide, amisisti incredulitate: tenebas charitatis vinculis, amisisti longo fune perfidiae. Ideo nescis ubi pascat, ubi maneat; nam si scires, non quaereres. Dicis enim: Ubi pascis, ubi manes in meridie? Meridiem nosti esse Ecclesiam quae teneat Christum, et tu eum in noctibus quaeris. Dic, inquit, mihi, Christe, responde vel propter id quia ante carus fuisti atque dilectus mihi; etsi ergo tantae praerogativam charitatis amisi, ut tamen quasi pius, responde mihi, Ubi pascis, ubi manes? Reliquisti me, abiisti ad gentes, recessisti longe a me, et illis propior factus es a quibus longe eras. Sed factus es prope, quia sanguine tuo crediderunt. A me recessisti, quia ego crucem non suscepi ut mundi redemptionem, sed ut noxii damnationem. Qui autem receperunt sicut salutis auctorem, in meridie sunt; illis lucet, illis refulget, illis calet gratia tua sicut merides. Mihi matutinus eras, cum adhuc crederem, sed non credebam plene, quia non sum inventa in meridie, sicut Joseph cum fratribus suis qui tenebant meridiem: illis merides factus es, qui pascuntur in divitiis tuis, et in te sperant. Ideo ut dixit David: Deduces eorum justitiam tamquam lumen, et iudicium eorum tamquam meridiem (Psalm. XXXVI, 6).

30. "They have set me a keeper in the vineyards, my vineyard I have not kept" (Vers. 5). Some think this is said of those who constrain the Synagogue to the precepts of the law, so that she may keep the law, may protect her vineyard, which she was not able to keep. Finally, she kept it so that she might make grapes, but she made thorns. What the vineyard is, David comes to testify to us saying: "You have transferred a vineyard out of Egypt, and you have cast out the nations, and planted it" (Psalm 79:9). The apostles can also be the sons of her mother, who truly attacked the Synagogue saying: "Behold, we turn to the nations": and began to sow the word of God for the nations. The prophets can also be understood, who by admonishing and denouncing that the Synagogue should keep her vineyard, profited nothing; for she made thorns of wickedness, who ought to have brought forth rich fruits of virtue: and therefore she confesses that she was not able to keep her people, and rightly she seeks too late to hold him, whom when she held, she lost: much more unlike her who says: "I found him whom my soul loves, I held him, and I will not let him go" (Cant. 3:4). Finally, that [soul] invites the bridegroom into her garden; this one, seeking where he may feed, says to him:

31. "Tell me, him whom my soul has loved." Why do you say, "him whom my soul has loved," and not "whom it loves"? Why have you let go of him whom you were holding? You loved by the faith of the fathers, you lost him by unbelief: you were holding him with the bonds of charity, you lost him by the long rope of perfidy. Therefore you do not know where he feeds, where he abides; for if you knew, you would not seek. For you say: "Where do you feed, where do you abide in the midday?" You know that the "midday" is the Church which holds Christ, and you seek him in the nights. Tell, he says, me, O Christ, answer even for this reason that before you were dear and beloved to me; even if therefore I have lost the prerogative of such great charity, yet as one who is pious, answer me: "Where do you feed, where do you abide?" You have left me, you have gone to the nations, you have withdrawn far from me, and you have become nearer to those from whom you were far. But you have become near, because they believed by your blood. From me you have withdrawn, because I did not receive the cross as the redemption of the world, but as the condemnation of a guilty one. But those who received him as the author of salvation, are in the midday; for them you shine, for them you reflect light, for them your grace is warm like the midday. To me you were as the morning, when I still believed, but I did not believe fully, because I was not found in the midday, like Joseph with his brothers who held the midday: for them you have become the midday, who are fed in your riches, and hope in you. Therefore as David said: "You shall lead forth their justice as the light, and their judgment as the midday" (Psalm 36:6).

32. Quaeris ergo tamquam aliena quae proxima eras, tamquam pauper quae dives fuisti: vis sequi quae praecedebas, atque utinam vel sequaris quos praecedere debuisti! Mercenaria esse desideras quae ante mercenarios colligebas; mercenariae itaque vox ista dicentis est: Ne forte fiam circumamicta super greges sodalium tuorum. Quae proselytos ex gentibus ante suscipiebas, nunc ipsa in nationibus vis pro proselytis suscipi, et tamquam advena congregari. Respondit Verbum Dei animae desideranti:

33. (Vers. 7.) Nisi cognoscas te decora inter mulieres. Nosce teipsum, homo, tuae animae dicitur, nisi cognoveris te formosam in mulieribus. Cognosce te, anima, quia non de terra, non de luto es, quia insufflavit in te Deus, et fecit in animam viventem. Opus es magnificum, Dei inspiratione formatum: Attende tibi, ut Lex dicit, id est animae tuae: saecularia te et mundana non teneant, terrestria non morentur. Ad illum tota intentione festina, ex cuius inspiratione consistis: Grande, inquit, homo, et pretiosum vir misericors: virum fidelem opus est invenire (Prov. XX, 6). Disce, homo, ubi grandis, atque pretiosus sis. Vilem te terra demonstrat, sed gloriosum virtus facit, fides rarum, imago pretiosum. Ubi namque quidquam tam pretiosum, quam imago est Dei? quae tibi primo fidem debet infundere, ut in corde tuo refulgeat quaedam auctoris effigies; ne qui mentem tuam interrogat, non agnoscat auctorem. An quidquam tam pretiosum, quam humilitas; ut naturam corporis animaeque perspicies, altero te subicias, altero recognoscas. Prona in vitium carnis illecebra misericordiam suadet; quia quod alteri contuleris, tibi solvis: quidquid a te procedit, in te recurrit, et quidquid feceris, tibi solvis: et quidquid profueris, tibi proficit. Vivacis animae vigor, sensus rationis et capax intellectus atque iudicii, ut digna domus tanto habitatore videatur, non amittat suae praerogativam naturae. Nisi cognoscas te, decora inter mulieres. Quae quereris quod derelicta sis, nisi te cognoscas, nisi poeniteat te lapsus tui, nisi intentionem devotionis approbes, nisi fides tua et sinceritas augeatur, querela nihil proderit. Aut sic, nisi cognoscas te quia decora es, nisi pulchritudinem naturae tuae serves, et corporis te illecebrae non demergant, nec impedimenta detineant, nihil tibi creaturae melioris nobilitas suffragabitur.

32. Therefore you seek as a stranger, you who were near, as a poor one, you who were rich: you wish to follow, you who used to lead, and would that you might at least follow those whom you ought to have preceded! You desire to be a mercenary, you who before gathered mercenaries; and so this is the voice of a mercenary saying: "Lest perhaps I become as one veiled over the flocks of your companions." You who before received proselytes from the nations, now you yourself wish to be received among the nations as a proselyte, and to be gathered as a stranger. The Word of God answered the desiring soul:

33. (Vers. 7.) "Unless you know yourself, O fair one among women." Know yourself, O man, it is said to your soul, unless you have known yourself as beautiful among women. Know yourself, O soul, that you are not from the earth, not from the mud, because God breathed into you, and made you into a living soul. You are a magnificent work, formed by the inspiration of God: "Attend to yourself," as the Law says, that is, to your soul: let not secular and worldly things hold you, let not earthly things delay you. Hasten with all intention to him, by whose inspiration you consist: "A great thing," he says, "is man, and a merciful man is precious: but a faithful man is hard to find" (Prov. 20:6). Learn, O man, where you are great and precious. The earth shows you to be vile, but virtue makes you glorious, faith rare, the image precious. For where is anything so precious as the image of God? which first ought to infuse faith into you, so that in your heart some likeness of the author may shine back; lest he who interrogates your mind, does not recognize the author. Is anything so precious as humility; so that perceiving the nature of the body and the soul, you subject yourself by the one, and recognize yourself by the other. The allurements of the flesh prone to vice persuades to mercy; because what you have bestowed on another, you pay to yourself: whatever proceeds from you, returns to you, and whatever you have done, you pay to yourself: and whatever you have profited, it profits you. Let the vigor of the living soul, the sense of reason and the capacity for intellect and judgment, so that it may seem a worthy house for so great an inhabitant, not lose the prerogative of its nature. "Unless you know yourself, O fair one among women." You who complain that you have been left, unless you know yourself, unless you repent of your fall, unless you approve the intention of your devotion, unless your faith and sincerity be increased, the complaint will profit nothing. Or thus: unless you know yourself that you are fair, unless you keep the beauty of your nature, and the allurements of the body do not submerge you, nor impediments detain you, the nobility of a better creature will not support you at all.

34. Cognosce igitur te et naturae tuae decorem, et exi quasi exuta vinculis pedum, et nudo exerta vestigio, ut carnalia integumenta non sentias: vestigium mentis tuae corporalia vincla non impliceant, ut pes tuus speciosus appareat. Tales enim sunt, qui ad regnum coelorum annuntiandum eliguntur a Domino, de quibus dictum est: Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem (Esai. LII, 7). Talis Moyses cui dicitur: Solve calceamentum pedum tuorum (Exod. III, 5); ut qui vocaturus populum ad Dei regnum procederet, prius carnis abjiciens exuvias, nudo spiritu vestigioque mentis incederet; hoc est ergo quod ait: Exi tu in calceamentis gregum, et pasce haedos tuos in tabernaculis pastorum.

35. Per greges regnum intelligimus, eo quod potestatis sit gregibus praesidere. Praesidet autem unusquisque sibi quadam potestate regali, si coerceat in se corporis luxus, et servituti redigat carnem suam; ideoque dictum est: Regnum Dei intra vos est. Unde pulchre ait ad animam: Exi, id est, exi a servitio, exi a carnis imperio atque dominatu, et exi non in carne sed in spiritu, exi ad regimen potestatis. Ideoque addidit: Pasce haedos tuos, hoc est, rege ea quae in sinistra tua sunt; nam si non regantur, facile labuntur. Coerce petulantiam, lasciviam tui corporis et luxuriam irrationabilem, edoma leves motus: pasce eos non in corporeis tabernaculis, sed in tabernaculis pastorum qui regere gregem norunt; sunt enim amabilia tabernacula Israel, sicut nemora obumbrantia super flumen, in quibus anima tamquam in procinctu bellico sita bonam exercet militiam, incursus explorat hostiles.

36. Nisi noscas te, decora inter mulieres. Quid est se noscere, nisi ut sciat unusquisque hominem se ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei factum, rationis capacem, qui terram suam excolere tamquam bonus agricola debeat aratro quodam et falce sapientiae; ut vel dura findantur, vel luxuriantia recidantur, qui interiorem sui portionem animi imperio debeat gubernare. Unde etiam in Lege scriptum est: Attende tibi, ne fiat verbum absconditum in corde tuo (Deut. XV, 9): tibi, inquit, attende, non utique dicit pecuniae tuae, non possessionibus tuis, non viribus corporis, sed animo tuo ac menti tuae, unde omnia consilia, facta, cogitationesque manant. Tibi ergo attende ibi, ubi potiolem esse te nosti. Nosce teipsum, quod Apollini Pythio assignant gentiles viri, quasi ipse auctor fuerit hujus sententiae; cum de nostro usurpatum ad sua transferant, et longe anterior Moyses fuerit qui scripsit librum Deuteronomii, quam philosophi qui ista finxerunt.

34. Know therefore yourself and the beauty of your nature, and go out as if stripped of the bonds of your feet, and with bare step exerted, so that you may not feel the fleshly coverings: let not the corporeal bonds entangle the step of your mind, so that your foot may appear beautiful. For such are those who are chosen by the Lord to announce the kingdom of heaven, of whom it was said: "How beautiful are the feet of those who evangelize peace" (Isaiah 52:7). Such was Moses to whom it was said: "Loosen the sandal from your feet" (Exodus 3:5); so that he who was to go forth to call the people to the kingdom of God, first casting off the spoils of the flesh, might walk with naked spirit and the step of the mind; this is therefore what he says: "Go out in the sandals of the flocks, and feed your kids in the tabernacles of the shepherds."

35. By "flocks" we understand a kingdom, for the reason that it belongs to power to preside over flocks. But each one presides over himself with a certain kingly power, if he restrains in himself the luxuries of the body, and brings his flesh into servitude; and therefore it was said: "The kingdom of God is within you." Whence he says beautifully to the soul: "Go out," that is, go out from service, go out from the empire and dominion of the flesh, and go out not in the flesh but in the spirit, go out to the governance of power. And therefore he added: "Feed your kids," that is, rule those things which are on your left; for if they be not ruled, they easily fall. Restrain petulance, the lasciviousness of your body and unreasonable luxury, tame light movements: feed them not in corporeal tabernacles, but in the tabernacles of shepherds who know how to rule a flock; for the tabernacles of Israel are lovable, like shading groves over a river, in which the soul situated as if in a military preparation carries on a good warfare, explores hostile incursions.

36. "Unless you know yourself, O fair one among women." What is it to know oneself, except that each one should know that he is a man made to the image and likeness of God, capable of reason, who ought to cultivate his earth like a good farmer with a certain plow and sickle of wisdom; so that either the hard things be split, or the luxuriant things be cut back, who ought to govern the inner portion of himself by the empire of the mind. Whence also it is written in the Law: "Attend to yourself, lest there be a hidden word in your heart" (Deut. 15:9): attend to yourself, he says, surely he does not say to your money, not to your possessions, not to the strengths of the body, but to your soul and to your mind, whence all counsels, deeds, and thoughts flow. To yourself, therefore, attend there, where you know that you are better. "Know thyself," which gentile men assign to the Pythian Apollo, as if he himself were the author of this sentence; since having usurped it from ours they transfer it to theirs, and Moses was far earlier who wrote the book of Deuteronomy, than the philosophers who feigned those things.

37. Unde et Salomon oraculum divinum secutus, scripsit in Canticis canticorum; Nisi scias te, decora inter mulieres; hoc est, nisi cognoscas te mortalem rationalem, et cito tua peccata fatearis, cito dicas iniquitates tuas ut justificeris, nisi convertaris, et prior accuses delicta tua, venit dies mortis et jam nullum conversionis remedium est; praeveniris dum cogitas. Accende facem tuam, priusquam sponsi tibi janua claudatur, qui exspectare diu non solet negligentes. Nisi scias te, inquit, decora inter mulieres; et dicas: Fusca sum et decora: fusca sum, quia peccavi, decora, quia diligor, quia genus sum Abrahæ, electum genus, dilectum Deo; nihil tibi proderit patrum gratia: Potens enim Deus est de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahæ (Matth. III, 9). Et alibi in Evangelio legisti, quia Abrahæ filiam ligavit diabolus nequitiae suae vinculis, quam Dominus solvit in die sabbati. Nisi ergo scias te, nihil tibi proderit. Etsi dicas, Abrahæ sum filia quæ non credis, quæ errorem non corrigis; Abraham quidem salvatur, sed te nobilitas generis non juvabit, nisi fides salvaverit. Non te decipiat data patribus repromissio, non suscipio personam hominis, non suscipio praerogativam generis; nisi videro congruentem generi morum nobilitatem, ut fiat iusti generis electio.

38. Quod si scias te, et cognoscas quia peccato obnoxia es, exeundum in calcaneis gregum est tibi. Exi ergo nuda pede, et pasce haedos tuos in tabernaculis pastorum. Qui sine peccato est, agnos pascit, oves pascit: quæ autem peccato obnoxia est, pascit haedos qui a sinistris sunt; non enim potest esse in dextera pastoris boni. Sequatur magis dicentem Petro: Veni retro me, Satana (Marc. VIII, 33). Sequendo Petrus meruit in dextera collocari; ideoque ei dicitur: Pasce agniculos meos (Joan. XXI, 16). Sed quo exeat audi: Ad tabernacula, inquit, pastorum, hoc est, ad gentes, ad dispersionem. Ideoque dixit: Percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves gregis (Zach. XIII, 7); ut repleatur totus orbis terrarum grege Christi, significans tunc fore salvam Synagogam, cum se huic dispersioni et ipsa sociaverit, quæ replevit hunc mundum; tabernacula enim pastorum sunt regna terræ.

37. Whence also Solomon, having followed the divine oracle, wrote in the Song of Songs: "Unless you know yourself, O fair one among women"; that is, unless you know yourself mortal and rational, and quickly confess your sins, quickly say your iniquities that you may be justified, unless you be converted, and be the first to accuse your faults, the day of death comes and now there is no remedy of conversion; you are anticipated while you think. Light your torch before the door of the bridegroom is closed to you, who is not accustomed to wait long for the negligent. "Unless you know yourself," he says, "O fair one among women"; and you say: "I am dark and beautiful: dark," because I have sinned, "beautiful," because I am loved, because I am of the race of Abraham, a chosen race, beloved by God; the grace of the fathers will profit you nothing: "For God is able from these stones to raise up sons to Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). And elsewhere in the Gospel you have read, that the devil of his wickedness bound a daughter of Abraham with bonds, whom the Lord loosed on the sabbath day. Unless therefore you know yourself, it will profit you nothing. Even if you say, "I am a daughter of Abraham," who do not believe, who do not correct your error; Abraham indeed is saved, but the nobility of the race will not help you, unless faith shall have saved you. Let not the promise given to the fathers deceive you, I do not accept the person of a man, I do not accept the prerogative of a race; unless I shall see a nobility of manners congruent to the race, so that there may be an election of a just race.

38. But if you know yourself, and recognize that you are subject to sin, you must go out in the heels of the flocks. Go out therefore with bare foot, and feed your kids in the tabernacles of the shepherds. He who is without sin, feeds lambs, feeds sheep: but she who is subject to sin, let her feed the kids who are on the left; for she cannot be on the right of the good shepherd. Let her rather follow him who said to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan" (Mark 8:33). By following, Peter deserved to be placed on the right; and therefore it is said to him: "Feed my little lambs" (John 21:16). But hear to where she should go out: "To the tabernacles," he says, "of the shepherds," that is, to the nations, to the dispersion. And therefore he said: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed" (Zech. 13:7); so that the whole world may be filled with the flock of Christ, signifying that the Synagogue will then be saved, when she herself associates herself with this dispersion, which has filled this world; for the tabernacles of the shepherds are the kingdoms of the earth.

39. (Vers. 8.) Equae meae in curribus Pharaonis assimilavi te, proxima mea. In quo dum velocium equorum cursui similitudo Ecclesiae comparari videtur, aestimatur dives ejus gratia. Non igitur unam equam divitis regis intelligas, sed absoluto pro equitatu, ut saepe diximus, qualis ovis illius est, pro grege ovium. Pharaon igitur ut potentissimus rex et praedives habebat equos potentes; unde et Scriptura dicit: Currus Pharaonis (Exod. XIV, 9), quasi potentissimum genus ad bellorum usum, et subsidium praeliandi: denique his curribus Pharaon fugientes Hebraeos facile comprehendit. Sicut ergo equi juncti facile trahunt currum, et patienter suscipiunt jugum, et portant cum gratia, et jugi illius susceptione mansuescunt: sic et congregatio nationum gentilibus indomita moribus se ante jactabat. Ubi vero suscepit jugum dicentis: Tollite jugum meum super vos, quia leve est; et onus meum, quia suave est (Matth. XI, 29 et 30); et coepit sponsa Christi concordia et mansuetudine populorum esse sublimis, et toto circumferri orbe, tamquam currus equis velocibus supra mundum rapta ascendit ad sponsum.

40. Habet enim equos suos Christus, de quibus dicit propheta: Immisisti in mare equos tuos, turbantes aquas multas (Habac. III); eo quod gentium populos qui moventur ut aquae multae, et excitantur in fluctus aquarum, evangelizando commoverint apostoli, ut assurgentes a terrenis idolorum ceremoniis, in Christum crederent. Et supra ait: Ascendisti in equos tuos, equitatus tuus sanitas. O bonorum equorum duo decajugum mirabile, quibus frena pacis, habenae sunt charitatis: constricti inter se concordiae vinculis, et jugo fidei subjecti, quatuor rotis Evangelii mysterium totius orbis finibus invehentes, bonum aurigam portantes Dei Verbum: cujus flagello fugatae sunt illecebrae saeculares, exterminatus mundi istius princeps, justorum cursus impletus est. O rationabilium equorum grande certamen! o mirandum mysterium! Rota intra rotam currebat, et non impediabatur, novum Testamentum in veteri Testamento, intra illud currebat per quod annuntiabatur. In quatuor partes ibant, rotae, et non revertebantur retrorsum; quia spiritus vitae erat in his, qui currebat in quatuor partes totius mundi: et sine offensione currebat, quia bona equorum vita quadrabat. Currebant igitur equi, quia non dormiebat qui ascenderat equos.

39. (Vers. 8.) "To my mare in the chariots of Pharaoh I have likened you, my near one." In which, while the likeness of the Church seems to be compared to the course of swift horses, her rich grace is esteemed. Therefore, do not understand one mare of a rich king, but absolutely for the cavalry, as we have often said, such as his sheep is, for the flock of sheep. Pharaoh, therefore, as a most powerful and very rich king, had powerful horses; whence also the Scripture says: "The chariots of Pharaoh" (Exodus 14:9), as a most powerful kind for the use of wars, and a support for fighting: finally, with these chariots Pharaoh easily overtook the fleeing Hebrews. Just as, therefore, horses joined together easily draw a chariot, and patiently receive the yoke, and carry it with grace, and become gentle by the reception of that yoke: so also the congregation of the nations formerly boasted in untamed gentile manners. But when she received the yoke of him who says: "Take my yoke upon you, because it is light; and my burden, because it is sweet" (Matt. 11:29 and 30); and the bride of Christ began to be sublime by the concord and gentleness of the peoples, and to be carried about the whole world, as a chariot with swift horses snatched above the world she ascended to the bridegroom.

40. For Christ has his own horses, of whom the prophet says: "You have sent your horses into the sea, troubling many waters" (Habakkuk 3); for the reason that the apostles, by evangelizing, moved the peoples of the nations who are moved as many waters, and are excited into waves of waters, so that rising up from the earthly ceremonies of idols, they might believe in Christ. And above he says: "You have ascended upon your horses, your cavalry is health." O wonderful decajugum (ten-yoke) of good horses, for whom the reins are of peace, the bridles are of charity: bound among themselves by the bonds of concord, and subjected to the yoke of faith, carrying the mystery of the Gospel to the ends of the whole world on the four wheels, carrying the good charioteer, the Word of God: by whose whip secular allurements were put to flight, the prince of this world was exterminated, the course of the just was fulfilled. O great contest of rational horses! O admirable mystery! Wheel was running within wheel, and was not hindered, the New Testament within the Old Testament, it was running within that through which it was announced. The wheels were going into four parts, and they did not return backward; because the spirit of life was in these, which was running into the four parts of the whole world: and it was running without offense, because the good life of the horses was squared. The horses therefore were running, because he who had ascended the horses was not sleeping.

41. Animarum igitur nostrarum auriga Jesus; qui nos quoque vult ascendere equos nostros, id est, corpora nostra; et vigilare semper ne dicatur nobis: Dormitaverunt qui ascenderunt equos (Psalm. LXXV, 7). Transeundum est hoc mare impigre, vix transitur a vigilantibus. Si quis autem dormierit, transire non poterit, sed demergitur, ut Aegyptius cujus et anima et corpus interiit. Equum enim et ascensorem projecit in mare (Exod. XV, 1), qui non sequebantur legem, sed per sequebantur.

42. Equae meae in curribus Pharaonis assimilavi te. Virtutis labor quaerit victoriam, ut non possit equae illi quae Salomonis est comparari, velox ad currendum, habilis ad partum; quoniam fecunditas animae desideratur et quaeritur. Haec ergo equa pretiosa est, et currus Pharaonis veloces. Sed hoc loco de anima dicendum suscepimus, hujus equae quae similis aestimatur huic animae, hoc est, propheticae vel apostolicae virtutis: quod in eorum annumeretur grege, qui fecunditate praedicationis suae totius orbis terrarum spatia repleverunt. Et quamvis in corpore constituti, nulla tamen cursus spiritalis sensere dispendia. Ideoque laudatur quod coelesti sibi illuminante praecepto, jam speciosa, jam pulchra sit quae vultu praeferat castitatis decorem, et redimicula cervicis tollat, in qua sunt patientiae et humilitatis insignia. Atque idcirco sponsam suam collaudans dicebat:

43. (Vers. 9.) Quam speciosae factae sunt genae tuae sicut turturis, cervix tua sicut redimicula. Vultus liberior est, ubi est charitatis conscientia; et portare jugum Christi suave est, si ornamenta putes cervicis tuae esse, non onera. Attolle ergo oculos semper ad Dominum tuum, et quaere Deum, ut invenias. Erige cervicem, redimicula non vincula geris: mutaque animalia redimiculis gaudent, et phalerari sibi magis, quam nodari videntur. Genae sicut turturis, perferant insignia verecundiae: Redimicula cervicis libertatis attollant fiduciam; leve est enim jugum Christi, et ideo cervix eo non premitur, sed levatur.

44. (Vers. 10, 11.) Similitudines, inquit, auri faciemus tibi, ex distinctionibus argenti, quoad usque rex erit in declinatione sua. Ex iis enim qui ex Lege sunt et prophetis, mediocriter ante crediderant gloriam Domini Jesu, et haereditas ejus diffusa per populos, quo frequentius examinata, hoc amplius est probata. Crebrae enim persecutiones Ecclesiae justorum nobis titulos, martyrii victorias ediderunt. Itaque sicut aurum bonum, ira Ecclesia cum utitur, detrimenta non sentit, sed magis fulgor ejus augetur, donec Christus veniat in regnum suum, et reclinet caput suum in Ecclesiae fide.

41. Jesus, therefore, is the charioteer of our souls; who wishes us also to ascend our horses, that is, our bodies; and to watch always lest it be said to us: "They have slumbered who ascended the horses" (Psalm 75:7). This sea must be crossed diligently; it is crossed with difficulty by those who are watching. But if anyone shall have slept, he will not be able to cross, but is submerged, as the Egyptian whose soul and body both perished. For "he cast the horse and the rider into the sea" (Exodus 15:1), who were not following the law, but were persecuting.

42. "To my mare in the chariots of Pharaoh I have likened you." The labor of virtue seeks victory, so that it cannot be compared to that mare which is Solomon's, swift to run, apt for bearing; since the fecundity of the soul is desired and sought. This mare, therefore, is precious, and the chariots of Pharaoh are swift. But in this place we have undertaken to speak concerning the soul, of this mare which is estimated similar to this soul, that is, of prophetic or apostolic virtue: that it should be numbered in the flock of those who by the fecundity of their preaching have filled the spaces of the whole world. And although situated in the body, they nevertheless felt no loss of their spiritual course. And therefore she is praised because, with the celestial precept illuminating her, she is now beautiful, now fair, who shows in her countenance the beauty of chastity, and takes up the ornaments of the neck, in which are the insignia of patience and humility. And for that reason, praising his bride, he was saying:

43. (Vers. 9.) "How beautiful your cheeks have been made like a turtledove's, your neck like ornaments." The countenance is more free where there is the conscience of charity; and it is sweet to carry the yoke of Christ, if you think the ornaments of your neck to be ornaments, not burdens. Lift up your eyes always to your Lord, therefore, and seek God, that you may find him. Erect your neck, you bear ornaments, not chains: even mute animals rejoice in ornaments, and seem to themselves to be decorated rather than tied. Let the "cheeks like a turtledove's" bear the insignia of modesty: let the "ornaments of the neck" lift up the confidence of liberty; for the yoke of Christ is light, and therefore the neck is not pressed down by it, but is lifted up.

44. (Vers. 10, 11.) "Likenesses of gold," he says, "we shall make for you, from the distinctions of silver, until the king shall be in his reclining." For from those who are from the Law and the prophets, they had moderately believed before the glory of the Lord Jesus, and his inheritance diffused through the peoples, the more frequently it was examined, the more fully it was proved. For the frequent persecutions of the Church brought forth for us the titles of the just, the victories of martyrdom. And so like good gold, when the Church uses it, she does not feel losses, but rather its splendor is increased, until Christ comes into his kingdom, and reclines his head in the faith of the Church.

Qui cum venisset ad oves perditas domus Israel, non habebat ubi caput suum reclinar: nunc autem jam redolet fides, ideoque dicit Ecclesia: Nardus mea dedit odorem suum; et dicit cum praesumptione exspectans retributionem. Fragrat unguentum gratiae, in quo virgo generavit, et Dominus Jesus sacramentum incarnationis assumpsit.

45. (Vers. 12, 13.) Colligatio guttae frater meus mihi, in medio uberum meorum manebit, sive commorabitur. Prius quidem dixerat, quod nardus sua dedisset ei odorem sponsi; et quia per unguentum quo unxerat, odoris ejus fragrantiam recepisset: nunc autem ait: Frater meus mihi guttam redolet, et hanc non diffusam neque ut libet dispersam, sed colligatam et constrictam, quo scilicet odor ipsius suavitatis densior reddatur et vehementior. Et hic, inquit, cum talis sit, in medio uberum meorum commoratur et commanet, et requiem ac mansionem suam facit in loco pectoris mei. Colligatio, inquit, guttae consobrinus meus, botrus cypri frater meus mihi, inter media ubera mea requiescet. Corpus enim suscipiens Dominus Jesus, charitatis se vinculis illigavit, et non solum se membris nostris et passionibus naturalibus, sed etiam cruci junxit; ideoque sicut botrus in Ecclesiae fide, et morali requiescit gratia.

46. Nardus cypri consobrinus meus in vineis Engaddi. Si locum quaerimus regionis cujusdam quae in Judaea est, locus sic dicitur in quo opobalsamum gignitur: si interpretationem, tentatio Latine significatur. In illis vero vineis lignum est, quod si quis compungat, unguentum emittit, hic fructus est ligni. Si non incidatur lignum, non ita fragrat et redolet, cum autem compunctum fuerit artificis manu, tunc lacrymam distillat. Sicut et Christus in illo tentationis ligno crucifixus, illacrymabat populum, ut peccata nostra dilueret, et de visceribus misericordiae suae fundebat unguentum dicens: Pater, dimitte illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt (Luc. XXIII, 34). Tunc ergo in ligno compunctus lancea, exivit de eo sanguis et aqua, omni unguento suavior, accepta Deo hostia, per totum mundum odorem sanctificationis effundens. Et quasi balsamum ex arbore, sic virtus exibat e corpore, unde ait: Sentio virtutem de me exiisse (Luc. VIII, 46). Inde opobalsamum expressius dicitur, eo quod compunctione ligni balsamum per cavernam punctionis erumpit.

47. Compunctus igitur Jesus, odorem remissionis peccatorum et redemptionis effudit.

Who, when he had come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, had not where he might recline his head: but now the faith already is fragrant, and therefore the Church says: "My nard has given its scent"; and she says it with presumption, expecting retribution. The ointment of grace is fragrant, in which the virgin brought forth, and the Lord Jesus took up the sacrament of the incarnation.

45. (Vers. 12, 13.) "A bundle of myrrh is my brother to me, he shall remain," or "dwell, in the midst of my breasts." Earlier indeed she had said that her nard had given him the scent of the bridegroom; and because through the ointment with which she had anointed, she had received the fragrance of his scent: but now she says: "My brother smells of myrrh to me," and this not diffused nor dispersed as he pleases, but bundled and bound, so that surely the scent of the sweetness itself may be rendered more dense and more vehement. And here, he says, since he is such, he dwells and remains in the midst of my breasts, and makes his rest and mansion in the place of my chest. "A bundle of myrrh," she says, "is my cousin, a cluster of cypress is my brother to me, between the midst of my breasts he shall rest." For the Lord Jesus, taking up the body, bound himself with the bonds of charity, and not only joined himself to our members and natural passions, but even to the cross; and therefore he rests like a cluster in the faith of the Church, and in moral grace.

46. "My cousin is a cluster of cypress in the vineyards of Engedi." If we seek the location of a certain region which is in Judea, the place is so called in which opobalsamum is produced: if the interpretation, 'temptation' is signified in Latin. In those vineyards truly there is a tree which, if anyone pricks it, emits ointment; this is the fruit of the tree. If the tree be not cut, it is not so fragrant and does not smell so sweet, but when it has been pricked by the hand of the craftsman, then it distills a tear. Just as also Christ, crucified on that tree of temptation, was weeping for the people, so that he might wash away our sins, and from the bowels of his mercy he was pouring out ointment saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Then therefore, pricked on the tree with a lance, there went out from him blood and water, sweeter than every ointment, a sacrifice acceptable to God, pouring out the odor of sanctification through the whole world. And as balsam from a tree, so power went out from his body, whence he says: "I feel that power has gone out from me" (Luke 8:46). Thence it is called opobalsamum more expressively, for the reason that by the pricking of the tree the balsam breaks forth through the cavern of the puncture.

47. Jesus, therefore, having been pricked, poured out the odor of the remission of sins and of redemption.

Nam et constrictus erat, cum Verbum esset homo factus: et pauper factus est, cum dives esset; ut nos illius inopia ditaremur: potens erat, et despiciendum se praebuit, ita ut Herodes sperneret eum et illuderet ei: terram movebat, et haerebat in ligno: coelum obducebat tenebris, et mundum crucifigebat, et crucifixus erat: inclinabat caput, et exhibat Verbum: exinanitus erat, et replebat omnia: descendit Deus, ascendit homo: Verbum caro factum est, ut caro sibi Verbi solium in Dei dextera vindicaret: vulnus erat et fluebat unguentum: scarabaeus audiebatur, et Deus agnoscebatur. Respondit et Christus.

48. (Vers. 14.) Ecce bona es, proxima mea, ecce es bona: oculi tui columbae. Quoniam cognoverat Ecclesia mysterium, et pro totius mundi redemptione crucifixum Dominum Jesum praedicabat, meretur audire: Ecce es bona, quae me bonum dicis; Ecce es bona, quae vidisti gloriae meae decorem, et ipsa speciosa es et decora. Quid est autem dicere Christum: Bona es, vel decora es, nisi illud Evangelium: Constans esto, filia, remissa sunt tibi peccata tua (Matth. IX, 22)? Ergo cui Christus peccata donavit, recte dicit: Retribue servo tuo, ut vivam, et custodiam mandata tua (Psal. CXVIII, 146). Non habet in retributione quid desperet; quia Dominus Jesus venit mundum salvare, non perdere. Ideo immemor est injuriae, memor gratiae, sicut in prophetico libro testificatur ipse dicens: Ego sum, ego sum qui deleo iniquitates tuas, et memor non ero: tu autem memor esto et judicemur, dic tu prius iniquitates tuas ut justificeris (Esai. XLIII, 25 et 26). Quicumque ergo dicit iniquitates suas Deo, justificatur: et quicumque justificatur, retributionem non timet, sed exposcit: qui retributionem non timet, vivit.

49. (Vers. 15, 16.) Ecce, inquit, formosus consobrinus meus, et quidem pulcher. Acclinatio nostra opaca, trabes domorum nostrarum cedri, lacunaria nostra cupressi. Laudat sponsi decorem Ecclesia, quem plus unusquisque tacito laudat affectu, et fidus mysteriorum interpret tacendo plus praedicat. Nam quae arcana divulgat, imminuit Christi decorem; ideo nemo mittat margaritas suas porcis, ne conculcari faciat ornamenta pretiosa. Non ergo in tabernaculo loquacis et garruli; quia multiloquio peccatum admittitur: sed in viri serii, qui sit parvus alloquii, nec sermonis intemperans, et verborum sobrietate temulentiam loquacitatis evitans, caput suum Christus reclinat.

For he was also constrained, when the Word was made man: and he was made poor, though he was rich; so that we might be enriched by his want: he was powerful, and offered himself to be despised, so that Herod might scorn him and mock him: he moved the earth, and was fixed to the tree: he covered the heaven with darkness, and crucified the world, and was himself crucified: he bowed his head, and the Word went out: he was emptied, and filled all things: God descended, man ascended: the Word was made flesh, so that the flesh might claim for itself the throne of the Word at the right hand of God: there was a wound and ointment was flowing: the beetle was heard, and God was recognized. And Christ responded.

48. (Vers. 14.) "Behold you are good, my near one, behold you are good: your eyes are of a dove." Since the Church had known the mystery, and was preaching the Lord Jesus crucified for the redemption of the whole world, she deserves to hear: 'Behold you are good,' who call me good; 'Behold you are good,' who have seen the beauty of my glory, and you yourself are fair and beautiful. But what is it for Christ to say: 'You are good,' or 'You are fair,' except that Gospel: 'Take heart, daughter, your sins are forgiven you' (Matt. 9:22)? Therefore he to whom Christ has given his sins, rightly says: 'Requite your servant, that I may live, and keep your mandates' (Psalm 118:146). He has nothing in retribution for which he should despair; because the Lord Jesus came to save the world, not to destroy it. Therefore he is unmindful of injury, mindful of grace, as he himself testifies in the prophetic book saying: 'I am he, I am he who blots out your iniquities, and I will not be mindful: but you be mindful and let us be judged, you first tell your iniquities that you may be justified' (Isaiah 43:25 and 26). Whoever therefore tells his iniquities to God, is justified: and whoever is justified, does not fear retribution, but demands it: he who does not fear retribution, lives.

49. (Vers. 15, 16.) 'Behold,' he says, 'my cousin is fair, and indeed beautiful.' Our reclining is shady, the beams of our houses are cedars, our ceilings are cypresses. The Church praises the beauty of the bridegroom, whom each one praises more with silent affection, and a faithful interpreter of mysteries preaches more by being silent. For she who divulges secrets, diminishes the beauty of Christ; therefore let no one cast his pearls before swine, lest he cause precious ornaments to be trampled. Therefore not in the tabernacle of the talkative and talkative; because by much speaking sin is admitted: but in the serious man, who is sparing of speech, and not intemperate in discourse, and avoiding the drunkenness of loquacity by the sobriety of words, Christ reclines his head.

50. Et merito opacam significat reclinationem; quia in Ecclesia constitutos virtus obumbrat Altissimi. Hac umbra David protegi postulabat, ne eum per diem sol ureret, vel luna per noctem (Psalm. CXX, 6). Hanc umbram spiritualis ministrat gratia, torrida saeculi hujus et mundi aestiva fugientibus. Opaca igitur acclinatio Christi et Ecclesiae, quibus Dei Patris aeterna illa requies aspirat. In hac ergo requiescamus umbra, peccatorum nostrorum aestibus fatigati si quos adussit libido, hos Domini crux refrigeret, in qua se reclinavit, ut nostra debita susciperet. Si quos culpa lassavit, hos Jesus gremio excipiat suo, et molli foveat amplexu; unde audeo dicere, quod caro Christi acclinatio est Ecclesiae.

51. Trabes domorum nostrarum cedri. Cedri specie, majorum qui justii fuerunt, gloria designatur. Justus enim ut palma florebit, et sicut cedrus quae in Libano est, multiplicabitur (Psalm. XCI, 13); sicut enim cedrus non putrescit, ita nec majorum gloria ulla vetustate corrumpitur.

52. Lacunaria nostra cupressi. Genus hoc arboris numquam amittit viriditatem suam, hieme juxta atque aestate comam pascit, nec diverso colore mutatur. Solam hanc arborem ventus numquam suo honore despoliat, sola numquam veteri exuitur amictu, aut novo flore vestitur. Sic apostolica quoque gratia nescit defectum, sed vetustate sui floret. Anima ergo corrumpi nescit, quae florentibus membris viget, semper justitiae caeterarumque virtutum culmina patienti magnanimitate sustentat; et ideo non defluit, neque deficit; quia nihil in ea rimosum est ac remissum, nihil mobile, nihil lubricum, nihil quod vitio sermonis ex ea possit effundi. Sequitur Ecclesia vel fidelis anima, animam dico, ideo quia nihil tam est homo, quam anima.

CAPUT SECUNDUM.

1. (Vers. 1, 2.) *Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium, sicut lilium in medio spinarum;*

50. And rightly she signifies a shady reclining; because the power of the Most High overshadows those established in the Church. David was asking to be protected by this shadow, lest the sun should burn him by day, or the moon by night (Psalm 120:6). Spiritual grace ministers this shadow to those fleeing the torrid summers of this age and of the world. Shady therefore is the reclining of Christ and the Church, upon whom that eternal rest of God the Father breathes. In this shadow, therefore, let us rest, we who are fatigued by the heats of our sins; if lust has scorched any, let the cross of the Lord refresh them, on which he reclined himself, so that he might take up our debts. If fault has weary any, let Jesus receive them in his bosom, and cherish them with a soft embrace; whence I dare to say, that the flesh of Christ is the reclining place of the Church.

51. "The beams of our houses are cedars." In the appearance of the cedar, the glory of the ancestors who were just is designated. "For the just shall flourish like the palm tree, and shall be multiplied like the cedar which is in Lebanon" (Psalm 91:13); for as the cedar does not rot, so neither is the glory of the ancestors corrupted by any antiquity.

52. "Our ceilings are cypresses." This kind of tree never loses its greenness, it feeds its foliage in winter as well as in summer, nor is it changed by a different color. This tree alone the wind never despoils of its honor, alone it is never stripped of its old garment, or clothed with a new flower. So also apostolic grace knows no defect, but flourishes in its antiquity. The soul therefore knows not how to be corrupted, which thrives with flourishing members, always supporting the heights of justice and of the other virtues with patient magnanimity; and therefore it does not flow down, nor does it fail; because nothing in it is leaky and loose, nothing mobile, nothing slippery, nothing which can flow out from it by a vice of speech. The Church or the faithful soul follows, the soul I say, for the reason that nothing is so much a man, as the soul.

CHAPTER TWO. I. (VERS. 1, 2.) "I AM THE FLOWER OF
THE FIELD, AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS, AS A LILY
IN THE MIDST OF THORNS";

in totam enim terram fides populi credentis exivit, et in spatioso posuit pedes suos Christus; et ideo pulchre ait florem se esse campi. Flos erat etiam Paulus qui dicebat: Bonus odor Christi sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15). Et vere flos, qui poterat nova et vetera de sui cordis proferre thesauro. Ego flos campi. Et bene flos est Ecclesia quae fructum annuntiat, hoc est, Dominum Jesum Christum, de quo dictum est Mariae: Benedicta tu inter mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tui (Luc. I, 42).

2. Alio quoque sensu florem tibi demonstro carpendum, illum utique qui dixit: Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium. Plerique comparisonem hanc secundum naturam floris, et usum propositi germinis aptiorem; eo quod lilia nullius annui usus cultum requirant, nec sicut erga proventum fructuum caeterorum, ita etiam erga generationem istius floris, sollicitis in orbem redeat labor actus agricolis; quibuslibet enim siccitatibus agri, omne illud quod alitur in florem quadam virtute genitili ex sese, atque in se succi semper virentis animatur; ita ut cum foliorum puberum caulem videas aruisse, floris tamen natura virescat; absconditur enim viriditas, non amittitur. Ast ubi vernis fuerit provocata blanditiis, indumentum germinis, comam floris, liliive resumit ornatus.

3. Illud etiam delectat advertere, quia non in asperitatibus montium incultisque silvarum lilia, sed in hortorum amoenitate generantur. Sunt enim horti quidam diversarum pomiferi virtutum, juxta quod scriptum est: Hortus conclusus, etc. (Cant. IV, 12), eo quod ubi integritas, ubi castitas, ubi religio, ubi fida silentia secretorum; ibi claritas angelorum est, ibi confessorum violae, lilia virginum, rosae martyrum sunt. Bene lilium Christus est, quia ubi martyrum sanguis, ibi Christus qui est flos sublimis, immaculatus, innoxius, in quo non spinarum offendat asperitas, sed gratia circumfusa clarebat. Sunt enim spinae rosarum, quae sunt tormenta martyrum; non habet spinas inoffensa divinitas, quae tormenta non sensit.

4. Tamquam lilium in medio spinarum. Quod est evidentis indicii spiritualium nequitiarum sentibus virtutem obsideri, unde fructum nemo referat, nisi qui cautus accedat. Sume igitur alas virgo, sed spiritus: ut supervoles vitia, si contingere cupis Christum, Qui in altis habitat, et humilia respicit (Psalm. CXII, 5). Et species ejus sicut cedrus Libani, quae comam nubibus, radicem terris inserit; principium enim ejus de coelo, posteriora ejus in terris, fructus coelo proximos ediderunt.

for the faith of the believing people has gone out into the whole earth, and Christ has placed his feet in a spacious place; and therefore he says beautifully that he is the flower of the field. Paul also was a flower who said: "We are the good odor of Christ to God" (2 Cor. 2:15). And truly a flower, who was able to bring forth new and old things from the treasure of his heart. "I am the flower of the field." And well is the Church the flower which announces the fruit, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was said to Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42).

2. In another sense also I show you the flower to be plucked, him surely who said: "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys." Most people think this comparison more apt according to the nature of the flower, and the use of the proposed germ; for the reason that lilies require the cultivation of no annual use, nor as towards the production of other fruits, so also towards the generation of this flower, does the labor performed by anxious farmers return in a circle; for in whatever droughts of the field, all that which is nourished into a flower is animated from itself by a certain genital power, and in itself by a juice of always greening; so that when you see the stalk of the youthful leaves to have dried up, the nature of the flower nevertheless grows green; for the greenness is hidden, not lost. But when it has been provoked by the spring blandishments, it resumes the clothing of the germ, the foliage of the flower, or the ornament of the lily.

3. It also delights to notice that not in the harshness of mountains and the uncultivated places of forests are lilies generated, but in the pleasantness of gardens. For there are certain gardens bearing the fruits of diverse virtues, according to what is written: "An enclosed garden," etc. (Cant. 4:12), for the reason that where there is integrity, where chastity, where religion, where the faithful silence of secrets; there is the brightness of angels, there are the violas of confessors, the lilies of virgins, the roses of martyrs. Rightly Christ is a lily, because where the blood of martyrs is, there is Christ who is the sublime flower, immaculate, harmless, in whom the harshness of thorns does not offend, but the circumfused grace was shining clearly. For there are thorns of roses, which are the torments of martyrs; the unoffended divinity has no thorns, which felt no torments.

4. "As a lily in the midst of thorns." Which is an evident indication that virtue is besieged by the briars of spiritual wickednesses, whence no one brings back fruit, except him who approaches cautiously. Take up therefore wings, O virgin, but of the spirit: that you may fly over vices, if you desire to touch Christ, "Who dwells in the high places, and looks upon the humble" (Psalm 112:5). And his appearance is like the cedar of Lebanon, which inserts its foliage in the clouds, its root in the lands; for its beginning is from heaven, its posterior parts in the lands, have brought forth fruits nearest to heaven.

Scrutare diligentius tam bonum florem, necubi eum in pectoris tui convalle reperias; humilibus enim frequenter inhalatur. Amat generari in hortis, in quibus cum Susanna dum deambulet, invenit: mori potius quam violari parata.

5. Aliter, Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium, tamquam lilium in medio spinarum. Ecce alium locum in quo solet Dominus conversari, immo non in uno, sed in pluribus: Ego, inquit, flos campi; quia patentem simplicitatem purae mentis frequentat. Et lilium convallium; flos enim humilitatis est Christus, non luxuriae, non voluptatum atque lasciviae, sed flos simplicitatis, flos humilitatis. Flos odorem suum et succis reservat, et contritus accumulat, nec avulsus amittit; ita et Dominus Jesus in illo patibulo crucis nec contritus emarcuit, nec avulsus evanuit, et illa lanceae punctione succisus, sacro speciosior fusi cruoris colore vernavit, mori ipse nescius, et mortuis aeternae vitae munus exhalans.

6. (Vers. 3.) Tamquam lilium in medio spinarum, nonne inter asperitates laborum contritionesque animorum boni flos odoris assurgit; quia contrito corde Deus placatur. Hoc est desertum, filiae, quod ducit ad regnum, hoc est etiam desertum, quod floret ut lilium, juxta illud quod scriptum est: Laetare, sterilis, et exsulta, desertum, et floreat ut lilium (Esai. XXXV, 1). In hoc deserto, filiae, arbor illa bona fructifera quae bonos fructus facit, incipit brachia factorum suorum diffundere, verticem divinitatis attollere, juxta quam nostrae ligna silvae frutescant; quia sicut arbor mali inter ligna silvae, ita frater meus in medio filiorum; ut videns hoc Ecclesia, et fidei nostrae jam laeta successu, dicat: In umbra ejus concupivi et sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis in faucibus meis.

7. (Vers. 3, 4.) Nota quod saepe in hoc Canticorum libro Salomon triplicem illam sapientiam evidenter expressit, moralem scilicet, naturalem, et mysticam, sicut in Proverbiis dixerat; ut tripliciter sibi scriberet, qui sapientiam ejus vellet audire. Ait ergo in Canticis sponsa de sponso: Ecce pulcher es, consobrinus meus, ecce pulcher es et decorus; acclinatio nostra opaca, trabes domorum nostrarum cedri, lacunaria nostra cupressi (Cant. I, 15 et 16). Possumus hoc de moralibus accipere; ubi enim requiescit Christus et Ecclesia, nisi in operibus suae plebis?

Scrutinize more diligently so good a flower, lest anywhere you find him in the valley of your breast; for he is frequently inhaled by the humble. He loves to be generated in gardens, in which when Susanna was walking about, she found him: prepared to die rather than to be violated.

5. Otherwise, "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys, as a lily in the midst of thorns." Behold another place in which the Lord is accustomed to converse, or rather not in one, but in several: "I am," he says, "the flower of the field"; because he frequents the open simplicity of a pure mind. And the lily of the valleys; for Christ is the flower of humility, not of luxury, not of pleasures and lasciviousness, but the flower of simplicity, the flower of humility. A flower reserves its scent even when cut, and accumulates it when crushed, nor does it lose it when plucked; so also the Lord Jesus on that gallows of the cross neither withered when crushed, nor vanished when plucked, and cut by that pricking of the lance, he bloomed more beautiful with the sacred color of the poured blood, himself not knowing how to die, and breathing out the gift of eternal life to the dead.

6. (Vers. 3.) "As a lily in the midst of thorns," does not the flower of good odor rise up among the harshness of labors and the contritions of souls; because God is appeased by a contrite heart. This is the desert, daughters, which leads to the kingdom, this is also the desert which flourishes as a lily, according to that which is written: "Rejoice, O barren one, and exult, O desert, and let it flourish as a lily" (Isaiah 35:1). In this desert, daughters, that good fruitful tree which makes good fruits begins to spread the branches of its deeds, to lift up the height of its divinity, near which the trees of our forest may put forth fruit; because as an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my brother in the midst of the sons; so that the Church seeing this, and now happy with the success of our faith, may say: "In his shadow I have desired and sat, and his fruit is sweet in my throat."

7. (Vers. 3, 4.) Note that often in this book of Songs, Solomon evidently expressed that triple wisdom, moral namely, natural, and mystical, as he had said in the Proverbs; so that he might write in a triple way for himself, who wished to hear his wisdom. He says therefore in the Songs, the bride concerning the bridegroom: "Behold you are beautiful, my cousin, behold you are beautiful and fair; our reclining is shady, the beams of our houses are cedars, our ceilings are cypresses" (Cant. 1:15 and 16). We can take this of moral things; for where do Christ and the Church rest, except in the works of their people?

Denique ubi impudicitia, ubi superbia, ubi iniquitas erat, ibi ait Dominus Jesus: Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput suum reclinet (Matth. VIII, 20). De naturalibus autem quid accipiamus? In umbra, inquit, ejus concupivi et sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis in faucibus meis; qui enim terrena supergreditur, et cui mundana moriuntur (quoniam crucifigitur ei mundus, et ipse mundo) omnia quae sunt sub sole, refugit et contemnit. De mysticis quoque ait: Introducite me in domum vini, constituite in me charitatem. Etenim sicut vineam suam vitis, ita Dominus Jesus populum suum quasi vitis aeterna quibusdam brachiis charitatis amplectitur.

8. Considera singula; in moralibus flos est inter spinas lilium, sicut ipse ait: Ego flos campi, et lilium convallium (Sup., v. 1). In moralibus ergo flos est, sicut in naturalibus sol justitiae, qui oriens et resurgens illuminat, occidens obumbrat. Cave ne tibi occidat, quia scriptum est: Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram (Ephes. IV, 26). In mysticis charitas est, quia plenitudo legis est Christus. Et ideo Ecclesia quae diligit Christum, vulnerata est charitate.

9. Pulchre etiam lilium dicitur Ecclesia; sicut enim lilium fulget, ita etiam splendent opera sanctorum. Pulcherrime etiam dictum est: Lilium convallium; quia in humilibus magis elucet gratia. Sed hoc lilium in medio spinarum, hoc est, inter Judaeos et haereticos, hoc est inter sollicitudines hujus saeculi, quae mentem hominis animumque compungunt. Possumus etiam aliter accipere, quia sicut lilium inter spinas eminet, ita super omnes conventus Ecclesia Dei refulget.

10. Refert etiam considerare, quod hoc lilium splendore circumfusus sit, intus autem quod habet, rubeum sit, boni et ipsum odoris; eo quod caro Christi velut morali divinitatis claritudine circumsepta, coelestis habuerit protectionem gratiae. Denique in posterioribus ait: Fraternus meus candidus, et rubeus (Cant. V, 10): candidus claritate divina, rubeus specie coloris humani, quem sacramento incarnationis assumpsit. Meritoque et ipsum quod est rubrum, bene olet, quia caro Christi sine peccato est, quam perfidi contrectantes, manus suas inquinaverunt: sancti venerantes, pietatis odore fragrarunt.

11. Accepit hunc odorem Dominus Jesus fragrantis Ecclesiae suae, et ait: Ecce proxima mea bona. Et Ecclesia dicit ad Christum: Ecce es bonus fraternus meus, ecce es bonus, tamquam malum in lignis silvae. Pulcherrima collatio! Quid enim pulchrius aptiusque dici queat, quam ut sponsum arbori mali comparet? Hujusmodi enim pomum odorem gratum habet, ut caeterorum pomorum fragrantiam vincat. Et Christus affixus ad lignum, sicut malum pendens in arbore, bonum odorem mundanae fundebat redemptionis, quae peccati gravem detersit fetorem, et unguentum potus vitalis effudit.

Finally, where there was impurity, where pride, where iniquity, there the Lord Jesus says: "But the Son of man has not where he may recline his head" (Matt. 8:20). But what should we take of natural things? "In his shadow," she says, "I have desired and sat, and his fruit is sweet in my throat"; for he who transcends earthly things, and to whom worldly things die (since the world is crucified to him, and he to the world), he flees and contemns all things which are under the sun. Of mystical things also he says: "Introduce me into the house of wine, ordain charity in me." For indeed as the vine its vineyard, so the Lord Jesus embraces his people as the eternal vine with certain arms of charity.

8. Consider each one; in moral things the flower is the lily among thorns, as he himself says: "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys" (Sup., v. 1). In moral things therefore he is the flower, just as in natural things the sun of justice, who rising and resurging illuminates, setting overshadows. Beware lest he set for you, because it is written: "Let not the sun set upon your anger" (Ephes. 4:26). In mystical things he is charity, because Christ is the fullness of the law. And therefore the Church which loves Christ, is wounded by charity.

9. Beautifully also the Church is called a lily; for as the lily shines, so also the works of the saints shine. Most beautifully also it was said: "The lily of the valleys"; because in the humble, grace shines out more. But this lily is in the midst of thorns, that is, among Jews and heretics, that is, among the cares of this age, which prick the mind and soul of man. We can also take it otherwise, because as the lily stands out among thorns, so over all gatherings the Church of God shines back.

10. It is also relevant to consider, that this lily is circumfused with splendor, but that which it has within is red, and it is also of a good odor; for the reason that the flesh of Christ, as if surrounded by the moral brightness of divinity, had the protection of celestial grace. Finally in the later parts he says: "My brother is white and red" (Cant. 5:10): white by divine brightness, red by the appearance of human color, which he took up in the sacrament of the incarnation. And rightly also that which is red smells well, because the flesh of Christ is without sin, which the perfidious touching, defiled their hands: the saints venerating it, were fragrant with the odor of piety.

11. The Lord Jesus accepted this odor of his fragrant Church, and says: "Behold my near one is good." And the Church says to Christ: "Behold you are good, my brother, behold you are good, as an apple tree among the trees of the forest." Most beautiful comparison! For what can be said more beautiful and more apt, than that she compares the bridegroom to an apple tree? For a fruit of this kind has a grateful odor, so that it surpasses the fragrance of other fruits. And Christ fixed to the tree, as an apple hanging on a tree, was pouring out the good odor of worldly redemption, which wiped away the heavy stench of sin, and poured out the ointment of vital drink.

12. Tamquam malum, inquit, in lignis silvae, ita consobrinus meus in medio filiorum; eo quod super prophetas et apostolos, intima corda hominum, verborum suavitate mulcebat. Sed non solum odor, verum etiam cibus suavis in malo est: ergo cibus suavis est Christus.

13. In umbra ejus concupivi, et sedi; legem enim acceperat, hanc sequebatur, hanc currebat viam: in lege itaque requiescens, in umbra Christi requiescebat. Bona umbra, quae nos ab iniquitatis sole defendit! Cui autem dubium quod lex Dei umbra sit Christi? Quid est lex diei festi, neomeniae, sabbatorum, nisi umbra futurorum? Qui dies secundum legem Moysi: Ut videam sex dies, et iterum septimum diem, et sic perpetua saecula? Quis mensis secundum legem Moysi, ut sciens mensem, sciam primam mensis neomeniam, et vere sancta in neomeniis offerenda? Quis secundum legem Moysi annus, sex illis diebus constans de quibus ait: Sex annis serviet Hebraeus, et septimo anno liberabitur (Deut. XV, 12); ut inveniantur sex anni quibus aliquis operatur terram, septimo autem anno remittit illam proselytis, et pauperibus, et bestiis terrae? Quis septimus annus, quo concedantur omnia debita Hebraeis?

14. In hac umbra requiescebat Patrum fides, prophetarum sancta devotio. Dic ergo congregatio religiosa vel sancta anima: In umbra ejus concupivi, et sedi. Umbra est jubilaeus annus: quis enim ejus mystica videt, ut facie ad faciem cognoscat quae anno quingentesimo complenda Lege praescripta sunt? Umbra sunt dies festi secundum Legem a primo mense decima die mensis, usque ad quartam decimam, et inde usque ad vigesimam primam mensis. Quae umbra est celebritas illa inter primum et septimum mensem in tempore illo anonymo? Umbra est sanctificata libertas in sabbato. Umbra est dies festus septimi mensis neomeniae, et memoriale tubarum, septimi mensis dies decimus, dies propitiationis. Vides quia monas et decas, duo festi dies. Item quintus decimus dies, dies Tabernaculorum per octo dies: in umbra haec omnia. In umbra prima dies vocata, et octava dies vocata in umbra, quae scenopaegiis praescripta secundum Legem.

15. Constitue mihi aliquos ex circumcisione credentes, in Lege doctos, observantiae sollicitae viros, et nunc Evangelii agnitione illuminatos, spiritali saginatos gratia, dicit in his Ecclesia quae videt Christum, quae sponsum recipit, quae cibo ejus pascitur: In umbra ejus concupivi, et sedi, et fructus ejus dulcis in faucibus meis. Quis fructus ejus dulcis, nisi praedicatio Dominicae passionis? ut ipse ait: Ecce haereditas Domini, filii merces fructus ventris (Psal. CXXVI, 3). Quis enim dulcior fructus potest esse in faucibus nostris, quam remissio peccatorum?

12. "As an apple tree," she says, "among the trees of the forest, so is my cousin in the midst of the sons"; for the reason that above the prophets and apostles, he was soothing the innermost hearts of men with the sweetness of his words. But not only odor, but also sweet food is in the apple: therefore Christ is sweet food.

13. "In his shadow I have desired, and sat"; for she had received the law, she was following this, she was running this way: thus resting in the law, she was resting in the shadow of Christ. Good shadow, which defends us from the sun of iniquity! But to whom is it doubtful that the law of God is the shadow of Christ? What is the law of the feast day, of the new moon, of the sabbaths, if not a shadow of future things? Which day according to the law of Moses: that I may see six days, and again the seventh day, and thus perpetual ages? Which month according to the law of Moses, so that knowing the month, I may know the first new moon of the month, and truly holy things to be offered in the new moons? Which year according to the law of Moses, consisting of those six days of which he says: "Six years the Hebrew shall serve, and in the seventh year he shall be set free" (Deut. 15:12); so that six years be found in which someone works the earth, but in the seventh year he leaves it to the proselytes, and to the poor, and to the beasts of the earth? Which is the seventh year, in which all debts are granted to the Hebrews?

14. In this shadow was resting the faith of the Fathers, the holy devotion of the prophets. Say therefore, O religious congregation or holy soul: "In his shadow I have desired, and sat." The jubilee year is a shadow: for who sees its mystical things, so as to know face to face those things which were prescribed by the Law to be completed in the fiftieth year? Feast days according to the Law are a shadow, from the first month on the tenth day of the month until the fourteenth, and thence until the twenty-first of the month. What shadow is that celebration between the first and the seventh month in that anonymous time? Sanctified liberty in the sabbath is a shadow. The feast day of the seventh month of the new moon is a shadow, and the memorial of trumpets, the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of propitiation. You see that the monad and the decad are two feast days. Likewise the fifteenth day, the day of Tabernacles for eight days: all these in the shadow. In the shadow the first day called, and the eighth day called in the shadow, which were prescribed for the Scenopegia (Feast of Tabernacles) according to the Law.

15. Set before me some believers from the circumcision, learned in the Law, men of solicitous observance, and now illuminated by the recognition of the Gospel, fattened by spiritual grace, the Church says in these, she who sees Christ, who receives the bridegroom, who is fed by his food: "In his shadow I have desired, and sat, and his fruit is sweet in my throat." What is his sweet fruit, except the preaching of the Lord's passion? as he himself says: "Behold the inheritance of the Lord, the reward of the sons is the fruit of the womb" (Psalm 126:3). For what sweeter fruit can there be in our throats, than the remission of sins?

16. Et fructus ejus dulcis gutluri meo. Est spirituale manna, hoc est, pluvia spiritalis sapientiae, quae ingeniosis et quaerentibus de coelo infunditur, et irrorat mentes piorum, et obdulcat fauces eorum: qui igitur intellexerit infusionem divinae sapientiae, delectatur nec alium cibum quaerit, nec in solo pane vivit, sed in omni verbo Dei. Qui curiosior fuerit, quaerit quid sit illud quod melle dulcius sit: respondet illi minister Dei: Hic est panis quem dedit vobis Dominus manducare. Quid sit iste panis, audi: Verbum, inquit, quod ordinavit Deus. Haec ergo ordinatio Dei, haec alimonia alit animam sapientis, et illuminat atque obdulcat, resplendens veritatis corusco, et mulcens tamquam favo quodam, ita diversarum virtutum suavitate, et sermone sapientiae. Favi enim mellis sermones sunt boni, sicut scriptum est in Proverbiis. Ergo ubi gustavit fructum suavitatis, impatiens ad perfectiora festinat, dicens:

17. (Vers. 4-7.) Introducite me in domum vini, constituite in me dilectionem, confirmate me in unguentis, stipate me in malis; quia vulneratae dilectionis ego sum. Laeva ejus sub capite meo, et dextera ejus complectetur me. Adjuravi vos, filiae Hierusalem, in virtutibus et fortitudinibus agri, si suscitaveritis et resuscitaveritis dilectionem, usquequo voluerit. Merito quaerit eum, merito desiderat; quia bene omnia in hoc cursu atque itinere disposuit imperator noster. Primum omnium fidei fundamento tabernaculum hoc confirmandum putavit. Deinde si qua est nobis aspera atque arida et praeupta mansio, Imperator tamen iste turbata discernit, arida irrigat, deserta fecundat. Si quid amaritudinis, si quid tentationis, si quid infirmitatis est, ductor noster et amara temperat, et sollicita mitigat; dura dissolvit et in valida confirmat.

18. Sicubi vult requiescere rex terrae exercitum suum, non ignobilem vicum non comitatibus indigentem, non arenosa et nuda gignentium: sed urbem aedificiis nobilem, relectam et uberem copiarum, aut agrum amoenum, aut virentem pascuis, aut nemorosa et campestria stativis opportuna decernit. Ergo si reges terrae norunt comoda providere sequentibus se, quanto magis Deus qui bonus est, quanto magis Deus qui bonus est, novit quemadmodum profutura disponat diligentibus se? Ac primum si incognitum carpendum est iter, duces eliguntur viarum, qui praecurrant agmini, sed hoc imperatores isti injuriosum sibi arbitrantur: Deus autem praeibat, cum Hebraei facerent iter, denique in columna nubis loquebatur ad eos. Et ut scias quia praeibat, Deus, inquit, praeibat illos: interdium quidem in columna nubis ostendens illis viam; noctu autem in columna ignis, et non deficiebat columna nubis interdium (Exod. XIII, 21 et 22).

16. "And his fruit is sweet to my throat." It is spiritual manna, that is, the rain of spiritual wisdom, which is infused from heaven into the ingenious and those who seek, and bedews the minds of the pious, and sweetens their throats: he therefore who has understood the infusion of divine wisdom, is delighted nor seeks other food, nor lives on bread alone, but on every word of God. He who is more curious, seeks what that is which is sweeter than honey: the minister of God answers him: This is the bread which the Lord gave you to eat. What this bread is, hear: "The Word," he says, "which God ordained." This ordination of God, therefore, this nourishment feeds the soul of the wise man, and illuminates and sweetens it, resplendent with the flash of truth, and soothing as if by a certain honeycomb, thus with the sweetness of diverse virtues, and the speech of wisdom. For "good speeches are honeycombs," as it is written in the Proverbs. Therefore when she has tasted the fruit of sweetness, impatient she hastens to more perfect things, saying:

17. (Vers. 4-7.) "Bring me into the house of wine, ordain love in me, strengthen me with ointments, stay me with apples; for I am of wounded love." His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me. I have adjured you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the virtues and the strengths of the field, if you shall have raised and resuscitated love, until he should wish. Rightly she seeks him, rightly she desires him; because our Emperor has disposed all things well in this course and journey. First of all he thought that this tabernacle must be confirmed by the foundation of faith. Then if there is for us any harsh and arid and steep dwelling, this Emperor nevertheless discerns the troubled things, waters the arid, fertilizes the deserts. If there is anything of bitterness, if anything of temptation, if anything of infirmity, our leader both tempers the bitter and mitigates the anxious; he dissolves the hard and confirms the weak.

18. Wherever a king of the earth wishes to rest his army, he does not decide upon an ignoble village not needing supplies, not sandy and bare of things produced: but a city noble for its buildings, refreshed and rich in supplies, or a pleasant field, or one green with pastures, or woody and level places opportune for encampments. Therefore if the kings of the earth know how to provide conveniences for those following them, how much more does God, who is good, know in what manner he may dispose things that will profit those who love him? And first if an unknown journey must be taken, leaders of the ways are chosen, who may run before the army, but these emperors think this injurious to themselves: but God was going before, when the Hebrews were making the journey, finally he was speaking to them in a pillar of cloud. And that you may know that he was going before, "God," it says, "was going before them: by day indeed in a pillar of cloud showing them the way; but by night in a pillar of fire, and the pillar of cloud did not fail by day" (Exodus 13:21 and 22).

Hanc praecedentem nobis columnam sequens Ecclesia, non deficientem ne ipsa deficeret, umbra ejus refrigerabatur; et ideo dicit: In umbra ejus concupivi, et sedi, et dulcis ejus fructus in faucibus meis (Sup., v. 3); quia a Domino pascebatur, et deducta in locum pascuorum et aquam refectionis.

19. Introducite me in domum vini. De copiis praeparatis, quaerit progredi ad aliam mansionem in qua mysteriorum gratiam et laetitiae capiat suavitatem. Hinc quoque promovens verum iter, ait: Ordinate in me dilectionem. Bona stativa, ubi plenitudo est charitatis. Charitas non potest esse sine fide; tres enim velut vades sunt Ecclesiae, spes, fides, charitas, cum spes praecesserit, fides fundata fuerit, ordinatur charitas, Ecclesia copulatur.

20. Confirmate me, inquit, in unguentis, stipate me in malis. Habes alias mansiones, ad quas Ecclesia cum delectatione succedit. Istae mansiones sunt crucis Christi et sepulturae, in quibus vulnerata est Ecclesia, sed vulnere charitatis; vulnus enim est quod Christus excepit, sed unguentum est quod effudit. Pomum est quod pependit, hoc pomum gustavit Ecclesia, et ait: Et fructus ejus dulcis in faucibus meis. Et ut scias quia pomum est Dominus, legisti supra: Tamquam malum in lignis silvae, ita conso-brinus meus. Nos quoque vulnus fatemur, cum praedicamus Christum crucifixum, sed bonus odor sumus Deo; quia crux Christi Judaeis scandalum, Graecis stultitia, nobis autem virtus Dei atque sapientia est. Hoc vulnere Ecclesia vulneratur, cum Salvatoris sui praedicat mortem, sed hoc vulnus est charitatis. Denique qui non credit, negat: qui diligit, confitetur. Manichaeus negat, Christianus fatetur; et ideo scriptum est: Utiliora vulnera amici, quam voluntaria oscula inimici (Prov. XXVII, 6). Pulchre ergo dicit Ecclesia: Quia vulnerata charitate ego sum.

21. Nudemus membra nostra bono vulnere, nudemus sagittae electae: sagitta haec Christus est qui dicit: Posuit me sicut sagittam electam (Esai. XLIX, 2); bonum est ergo hac vulnerari sagitta, non mediocris mansionis iste processus, non omnes possunt dicere, quia vulnerati sunt dilectione. Dicebant apostoli, cum pro Christo lapidarentur et Christum praedicarent: dicebat Paulus cum ter virgis caederetur, et die ac nocte Christum adorandum gentibus disputaret: dicunt hoc martyres, qui vulnerantur pro Christo; et quia vulnerari pro ejus meruerunt nomine, plus diligunt. Ad hanc ergo veniens mansionem Ecclesia, ad hunc processum, ut pro Christo filios suos offerat, ut excipiat vulnera charitatis, quasi bona fidei alimenta reperiens, pietatis fructus gustavit ipsa, et hortari caeteros coepit, dicens: Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus. Et addidit Ecclesia dicere:

The Church following this pillar going before us, not failing lest she herself should fail, was refreshed by its shadow; and therefore she says: "In his shadow I have desired, and sat, and his fruit is sweet in my throat" (Sup., v. 3); because she was being fed by the Lord, and led into a place of pastures and the water of refreshment.

19. "Bring me into the house of wine." From the prepared supplies, she seeks to progress to another dwelling in which she may take the grace of mysteries and the sweetness of joy. From here also promoting the true journey, she says: "Ordain love in me." Good encampments, where the fullness of charity is. Charity cannot be without faith; for there are three as if pledges of the Church: hope, faith, charity; when hope shall have preceded, faith shall have been founded, charity is ordained, the Church is joined.

20. "Strengthen me," she says, "with ointments, stay me with apples." You have other mansions, to which the Church proceeds with delight. These mansions are of the cross of Christ and of his burial, in which the Church was wounded, but with the wound of charity; for the wound is what Christ received, but the ointment is what he poured out. The pome is what hung there; this pome the Church tasted, and says: "And his fruit is sweet in my throat." And that you may know that the Lord is the pome, you read above: "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my kinsman." We also confess the wound when we preach Christ crucified, but we are a good odor to God; because the cross of Christ is a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks, but to us it is the power of God and wisdom. With this wound the Church is wounded when she preaches the death of her Savior, but this is the wound of charity. Finally, he who does not believe, denies; he who loves, confesses. The Manichean denies, the Christian confesses; and therefore it is written: "Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy" (Prov. 27:6). Beautifully, therefore, the Church says: "Because I am wounded by charity."

21. Let us bare our members to the good wound, let us bare them to the chosen arrow: this arrow is Christ, who says: "He has set me as a chosen arrow" (Isa. 49:2). It is good, therefore, to be wounded by this arrow; this process is not of an ordinary mansion; not all can say that they are wounded by love. The apostles said it when they were stoned for Christ and preached Christ; Paul said it when he was beaten thrice with rods and disputed day and night that Christ should be adored by the nations; the martyrs say this, who are wounded for Christ; and because they merited to be wounded for his name, they love more. Coming therefore to this mansion, the Church, to this process, that she may offer her sons for Christ, that she may receive the wounds of charity, as if finding good nourishments of faith, she herself tasted the fruits of piety, and began to exhort others, saying: "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." And the Church added to say:

22. Laeva ejus sub capite meo, et dextera ejus complectetur me. Et istae mansiones sunt via regali incedentis Ecclesia; Multae enim sunt mansiones apud Patrem meum (Joan. XIV, 2). Testificatur Dominus Jesus: Et ecce venio, et accerso vos (Ibid.). Bona mansio sapientiae, et sive in laeva ejus, sive in dextera, bona mansio; quia via regalis est. Ideoque sapientes nuntii dicunt: Via regali ibimus, non divertemus in dextera, neque in sinistra, quoadusque transeamus terminos tuos (Num. XX, 17). Hoc dixerunt missi a Moyse nuntii ad regem Edom, hoc est terrenum; quia terrena omnia sive in dextera, sive in sinistra, mala sunt. Mala mansio insipientia, mala mansio intemperantia; et ideo pertransit has mansiones Hebraeus: non divertit ad eas, sed pertransit; ut perveniat ad sinistram sapientiae et dexteram, et in ipsis maneat, ubi divitiae simplicitatis, ubi gloria, ubi longitudo vitae est. Longitudo enim vitae in dextera ejus, ut ait Salomon: In sinistra autem ejus divitiae et gloria (Prov. III, 16): in dextera vita est, in sinistra requies. Utinam super sinistram ejus requiescam, nec quaeram cervicalia! Vae enim his qui assuunt cervicalia, Ezechiel dicit (Ezech. XIII, 18). Has mansiones praeparat Ecclesiae suae bonus ductor, et per vias sapientiae dirigit iter ejus. Denique laudat sapiens vias ejus: Viae ejus viae bonae, et omnes semitae ejus in pace (Prov. III, 17).

23. Laeva ejus sub caput meum, et dextera illius complectetur me. Haec loquitur sponsa de Christo, anima de Verbo Dei: Christus autem idem est Verbum Dei atque sapientia. Beata ergo anima quam complectitur sapientia. Magna est sapientiae manus, magna dextera, totam complectitur animam; tota enim munita est, quae desponsata Verbo Dei est. Plenitudo enim sapientiae, timere Deum: quae ergo Deum timet anima, pleno se munit ipsa praesidio. Mittit sapientia laevam suam sub collum ejus, dexteram autem in complexum ejus. Utrumque quidem brachium ejus ad utilia extenditur; habent tamen propria sua singulae manus sapientiae: In dextera longitudo vitae est, in sinistra autem divitiae et gloria. Bonis utique manus utroque dotata est dotibus; in eo tamen habent varietatem sui muneris, quod et praesentia et futura tempora comprehendunt; ut laeva praesentium remuneratrix, dextera futurorum sit.

24. Possumus hoc etiam de prophetia sancti patriarchae Israel cognoscere, nam cum dexteram suam posuisset super Ephraem, sinistram autem super Manassen, et convertere eas Joseph aetatis consideratione voluisset; ut dexteram patris super caput Manasse senioris filii collocaret, noluit, et dixit: Scio, fili, et hic erit in populum, et hic exaltabitur, sed frater junior major erit illo (Genes. XLVIII, 19).

22. "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me." And these mansions are for the Church walking in the royal way; "For there are many mansions in my Father's house" (John 14:2). The Lord Jesus testifies: "And behold, I come, and I take you." A good mansion of wisdom, and whether on his left or on his right, a good mansion; because it is the royal way. And therefore wise messengers say: "We will go by the royal way, we will not turn to the right nor to the left, until we pass your borders" (Num. 20:17). This the messengers sent by Moses said to the king of Edom, that is, the earthly one; because all earthly things, whether on the right or on the left, are evil. A bad mansion is foolishness, a bad mansion is intemperance; and therefore the Hebrew passes through these mansions: he does not turn aside to them, but passes through, so that he may reach the left and the right of wisdom, and remain in them, where there are riches of simplicity, where there is glory, where there is length of life. For length of life is in his right hand, as Solomon says: "But in his left hand are riches and glory" (Prov. 3:16); in the right hand is life, in the left hand is rest. Would that I might rest upon his left hand, and not seek pillows! "For woe to those who sew pillows," Ezekiel says (Ezek. 13:18). The good leader prepares these mansions for his Church, and directs her journey through the ways of wisdom. Finally, the wise man praises her ways: "Her ways are good ways, and all her paths are in peace" (Prov. 3:17).

23. "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me." The bride speaks these things about Christ, the soul about the Word of God; for Christ is the same Word of God and wisdom. Blessed therefore is the soul which wisdom embraces. Great is the hand of wisdom, great is the right hand; it embraces the whole soul; for she is entirely fortified who is betrothed to the Word of God. For the fullness of wisdom is to fear God; therefore, the soul that fears God fortifies herself with a full protection. Wisdom places its left hand under her neck, and its right hand in her embrace. Indeed, both of its arms are extended for useful things; yet each hand of wisdom has its own specific properties: "In the right hand is length of life, but in the left are riches and glory." Certainly, the hand is endowed with good gifts in both; yet they have a variety in their office, in that they encompass both present and future times; so that the left may be the rewarder of present things, and the right of future things.

24. We can also know this from the prophecy of the holy patriarch Israel; for when he had placed his right hand over Ephraim, and his left over Manasseh, and Joseph wanted to change them considering their age, so that he might place the father's right hand over the head of Manasseh the elder son, he refused and said: "I know, son, and he also shall become a people, and he shall be exalted; but his younger brother shall be greater than he" (Gen. 48:19).

In quo major? in eo utique quia benedictione praelatus est, dicentibus posteris Ephraem: Faciat vos Deus sicut fecit Ephraem et Manassen (Ibid., 20): vel quia semen ejus multitudo gentium, quae in hoc saeculo laborem elegit, credens in Dominum Jesum, ut consolationem habeat futurorum. Manasse autem semen est populus oblivionis, qui proprium oblitus auctorem, exaltatus ad tempus in hoc saeculo est, daturus in reliquum poenas graves; quia Deum suum et Dominum denegavit.

25. Hoc eo diximus, ut probaremus ea esse potiora quae futura sunt. Denique laeva sapientiae sub sponsae capite est, dextera autem superior, quae totam complectitur sponsam. Itaque illa quasi fulcrum est quietis praesentis, quo anima innixa requiescit. Habet ubi reclinet caput suum, quia laeva sapientiae divitiae sunt et gloria. Per id tempus haec mulcent, et ex parte solatio sunt, et ideo; Filius hominis non habebat ubi caput suum reclinaret (Matth. VIII, 20); quia cum dives esset, pauper factus est (II Cor. VIII, 9). Nec gloriam aliquam istius saeculi requirebat; quia venerat non ut in portione, sed ut universo humano generi subveniret, dicens: Mihi indignamini quia totum hominem sanum feci in sabbato (Joan. VII, 23); hoc est totum, non ut facultatum collatione ditaret, non ut honorum insignibus, non ut gloriae saecularis cumlaret augmento; haec enim non habent beatitudinis et gratiae plenitudinem: sed totum, hoc est, quod longitudinem vitae complecteretur aeternae. Neque enim communis vitae similis vita in dextera est sapientiae, sed longitudo vitae est, ut qui accipit vitam a sapientia, non exiguitatem vitae, sed perpetuitatem et aeternitatis longitudinem adipiscatur.

26. Bonus amictus aeternitas vitae. Itaque sponsa malorum granatorum, hoc est, diversorum et innumerabilium fructuum, et praecipue fidei odoribus, gratiae, sapientiae et gloriae, vitaeque aeternae subnixa divitiis quae sunt circa sinistram et dexteram sponsi, per animas sanctas laudantium congregationum plausibus excitat Christum, dicens:

27. Adjuravi vos, filiae Hierusalem, in virtutibus et fortitudinibus agri, si suscitaveritis, et resuscitaveritis dilectionem usquequo voluerit. Ager ille quem benedixit Dominus, non iste terrenus aut horridus silvis, aut confragosus torrentibus, aut inutilis vitibus, aut infecunda glareasaxosus, aut hiulcus, et aridus siccitate, aut sanguine madidus, aut sentibus incultus et spinis, sed ille ager de quo Dominus ait: Et species agri mecum est (Psalm. XLIX, 19).

Greater in what? In this certainly, that he was preferred in blessing, with posterity saying of Ephraim: "God make you as he made Ephraim and Manasseh" (ibid., 20); or because his seed is a multitude of nations, which chose labor in this world, believing in the Lord Jesus, that it might have the consolation of future things. But Manasseh's seed is the people of forgetfulness, who, having forgotten their own author, were exalted for a time in this world, to pay heavy penalties thereafter, because they denied their God and Lord.

25. We have said this so that we might prove that those things which are to come are more powerful. Finally, the left hand of wisdom is under the bride's head, but the right hand is superior, which embraces the whole bride. And so that one is as if a support of present rest, upon which the leaning soul rests. She has where she may recline her head, because the left hand of wisdom is riches and glory. During this time these things soothe and are in part a consolation; and therefore: "The Son of Man had not where he might recline his head" (Matt. 8:20); "because though he was rich, he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9). Nor did he seek any glory of this world, because he had come not to help in part, but to help the entire human race, saying: "Are you angry at me because I made the whole man healthy on the sabbath?" (John 7:23); this is "the whole," not so that he might enrich with the collation of resources, nor with the insignia of honors, nor so that he might accumulate with the increase of secular glory; for these things do not have the fullness of beatitude and grace; but "the whole," that is, what would encompass the length of eternal life. For the life in the right hand of wisdom is not like common life, but it is length of life, so that he who receives life from wisdom may obtain not a meager life, but perpetuity and the length of eternity.

26. A good garment is the eternity of life. And so the bride, leaning upon the odors of pomegranates—that is, of diverse and innumerable fruits, and especially of faith—of grace, wisdom, and glory, and upon the riches of eternal life which are around the left and right hand of the bridegroom, through the holy souls of the praising congregations, excites Christ with applause, saying:

27. "I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the strengths of the field, if you shall stir up and awaken love until he pleases." That field which the Lord blessed, not this earthly one, either shaggy with woods, or rugged with torrents, or useless for vines, or stony with unfruitful gravel, or gaping and parched with drought, or wet with blood, or uncultivated with briars and thorns; but that field of which the Lord says: "And the beauty of the field is with me" (Ps. 49:11).

In hoc agro uva illa reperitur quae expressa sanguinem fudit, et mundum diluit: in hoc agro est ficus illa sub qua sancti requiescent, spiritalis gratiae suavitate recreati: in hoc agro est oliva illa fructifera, dominicae fluens pacis unguentum: in hoc agro florent malogranata, quae plurimos fructus uno fidei munimine tegunt, et quodam foveant charitatis amplexu.

28. Quia igitur sapientia et honesta claritas ita perfecta sunt, si habeant charitatem (plenitudo enim legis (Rom. XIII, 10) est charitas) suscitari et resuscitari vult charitatem, suscitari in veteri Testamento, resuscitari in novo. Charitas Deus est, ut legimus, charitas Christus est (I Joan. IV, 8). Suscitatur tamquam leo, et catulus leonis; ut Judae ascendat ex germine (Gen. XLIX, 9): resuscitatur ut dormiens, ut recumbens; quia non humana, sed sua et Patris majestate suscitatus est a mortuis. Unde ait Scriptura: Quis suscitabit illum? Non enim poterat illum aut angelus aut Potestas suscitare aliena, cum ipse alios suscitaret. Ergo cum hic dicit: Si suscitaveritis et resuscitaveritis dilectionem, usquequo voluerit; de iis dicit, qui resurrectionem ejus congrue possunt praedicare, ut audientibus ardorem fidei et devotionis accendant: vel suscitatur Christus in his qui primum accedunt, resuscitatur in his qui postquam accesserint, dormierunt. Dormit ergo Christus negligentibus, suscitatur in sanctis.

29. Hanc itaque charitatem suscitatur et resuscitat, donec vocem ejus accipiat, et praesentiam ejus accersat: quia quaesitus non solum venit, sed etiam saliens venit. Sed jam sponsus aderat, ut probaret illud quod adhuc loquentibus nobis dicit: Adsum. Adest, quia suscitatus a filiabus Judae, quasi resuscitatus a filiabus Hierusalem. Audit Ecclesia sonum vocis ejus et dicit:

30. (Vers. 8.) Vox consobrini mei, ecce hic advenit saliens super montes, transiliens super colles. Manipularis est hic liber multas habens personas nobiles, velut manipulus triumphalis, multosque actus significans, quos intelligere magis quam expressos tenere possumus. Nam quasi advenientem sponsum audierit cum aliquibus pariter viantibus collonquentem, dicit sponsa: Vox consobrini mei. Dum loquitur cum filiabus Hierusalem, et rogat ut excitent, et resuscitent sponsum; subito tamquam de longinquo missae vocis sonum sentiens, dicit: Vox consobrini mei, annuntians quem nuntiari sibi ante quaerebat. Quem cupiebat ab aliis suscitari, sua prece resuscitatum, a Patre venire jam credens, laeta dicit: Vox consobrini mei. Bene addidit, consobrini mei; ut non aliae, sed consobrina sola sibi ejus vindicaret adventum.

In this field that grape is found which, when pressed, poured out blood and washed the world; in this field is that fig tree under which the saints shall rest, refreshed by the sweetness of spiritual grace; in this field is that fruitful olive, the flowing ointment of the Lord's peace; in this field pomegranates flourish, which cover many fruits with one defense of faith and cherish them with a certain embrace of charity.

28. Since, therefore, wisdom and honest clarity are so perfect if they have charity (for charity is the fullness of the law [Rom. 13:10]), she wants charity to be stirred up and awakened—stirred up in the Old Testament, awakened in the New. Charity is God, as we read; charity is Christ (1 John 4:8). He is stirred up as a lion and a lion's whelp, so that from the seed of Judah he may ascend (Gen. 49:9); he is awakened as one sleeping, as one reclining; because he was raised from the dead not by human majesty, but by his own and the Father's. Whence the Scripture says: "Who shall stir him up?" For neither angel nor foreign Power could stir him up, since he himself raised others. Therefore, when he says here: "If you shall stir up and awaken love, until he pleases," he speaks of those who can suitably preach his resurrection, so that they may kindle the ardor of faith and devotion in their hearers; or Christ is stirred up in those who first approach, and awakened in those who, after they have approached, have fallen asleep. Christ sleeps, therefore, to the negligent; he is stirred up in the saints.

29. He thus stirs up and awakens this charity, until she receives his voice and summons his presence; because when sought, he not only comes, but comes leaping. But already the bridegroom was present, that he might prove that which he says while we are still speaking: "I am here." He is present, because having been stirred up by the daughters of Judah, as if awakened by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Church hears the sound of his voice and says:

30. (Verse 8.) "The voice of my kinsman, behold he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills." This book is of a company, having many noble persons, like a triumphal troop, and signifying many acts which we can understand rather than hold expressed. For as if she had heard the bridegroom coming and speaking together with some fellow travelers, the bride says: "The voice of my kinsman." While she speaks with the daughters of Jerusalem and asks that they excite and awaken the bridegroom, suddenly, as if feeling from afar the sound of a voice sent forth, she says: "The voice of my kinsman," announcing him whom she was seeking to be announced to her before. Him whom she desired to be stirred up by others, now believing him to have been awakened by her prayer and to be coming from the Father, she says joyfully: "The voice of my kinsman." Well did she add, "my kinsman," so that no others, but only she as a kinswoman might claim his coming for herself.

31. Ecce, inquit, iste advenit, adhuc ego eum quaero, et ille jam venit: adhuc ego suffragia capto ut veniat, et ille jam proximus est: ego suscitari mihi charitatem cupio, ego me vulneratam charitatis puto, et ad me plus ipsa charitas festinat: ego dixi, veni; salit ille et transilit: ego rogo eum venire cum gratia, iste gratiarum operatur augmenta; et dum venit, incrementa gratiae secum vehit, et veniendo acquirit, quia studet etiam ipse suae placere dilectae. Salit super excelsa, ut ascendat ad sponsam; sponsae enim thalamus tribunal est Christi. Salit super Adam, transilit super Synagogam; salit super Gentes, transilit super Judaeos.

32. Videamus salientem Salit de coelo in Virginem, de utero in praesepe, de Jordane in crucem, de cruce in tumulum, in coelum de sepulcro. Proba mihi David salientem, proba currentem; tu enim dixisti: Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam, a summo coelo egressio ejus; et occursum ejus usque ad summum ejus, nec est qui se abscondat a calore ejus (Psal. XVIII, 6 et 7). Et nunc salit, et nunc currit, de corde Patris super sanctos suos, de Oriente super Occidentem, de Septentrione super Meridiem. Iste est qui ascendit super Occasum, ipse super coelos coelorum ad Orientem, ipse ascendit super montes, ipse super colles.

33. Utinam ego miser dicam, dicat anima mea: Ecce iste advenit, et advenit non super terrena, non super valles, sed advenit: Saliens super montes; Deus enim Deus montium est, non vallium: ubi ergo salit, super montes salit. Si sis mons, salit super te, salit super Isaiam, salit super Hieremiam, salit super Petrum, Joannem, Jacobum. Montes in circuitu ejus (Psalm. CXXIV, 2): si non potest esse mons et non praevalere, esto vel collis, ut super te Christus ascendat: et si transilit, ut te transitus ejus custodiat.

34. Diximus de Christo et Ecclesia, dicamus de anima et Verbo. Anima justi sponsa est Verbi, haec si desideret, si cupiat, si oret et oret assidue, et oret sine ulla disceptatione, et tota intendat in Verbum: subito vocem sibi videtur ejus audire quem non videt, et in timore sensus odorem divinitatis ejus agnoscit, quod patiuntur plerumque qui bene credunt. Replentur subito nares animae spiritali gratia, et sentit sibi praesentiae ejus flatum aspirare quem quaerit, et dicit: Ecce iste ipse est quem requiro, ipse quem desidero.

31. "Behold," she says, "he comes; I am still seeking him, and he has already come; I am still trying to win favor that he may come, and he is already near; I desire charity to be stirred up for me, I think myself wounded by charity, and charity itself hastens more toward me; I said, 'Come'; he leaps and skips over; I ask him to come with grace, he works the increases of graces; and while he comes, he carries with him the increments of grace, and acquires them by coming, because he himself also strives to please his beloved. He leaps over the high things, that he may ascend to the bride; for the bride's chamber is the tribunal of Christ. He leaps over Adam, he skips over the Synagogue; he leaps over the Gentiles, he skips over the Jews.

32. Let us see him leaping: he leaps from heaven into the Virgin, from the womb into the manger, from the Jordan onto the cross, from the cross into the tomb, into heaven from the sepulcher. Prove to me David leaping, prove him running; for you have said: "He rejoiced as a giant to run the way, his going out is from the highest heaven; and his meeting even unto the summit thereof, nor is there anyone who may hide himself from his heat" (Ps. 18:6-7). And now he leaps, and now he runs, from the heart of the Father over his saints, from the East over the West, from the North over the South. This is he who ascends over the Sunset, he himself above the heavens of heavens to the East; he himself ascends over the mountains, he himself over the hills.

33. Would that I, miserable, might say, that my soul might say: "Behold he comes," and he comes not over earthly things, not over valleys, but he comes: "Leaping over the mountains"; for God is the God of mountains, not of valleys; where therefore he leaps, he leaps over mountains. If you are a mountain, he leaps over you; he leaps over Isaiah, he leaps over Jeremiah, he leaps over Peter, John, James. "Mountains are round about him" (Ps. 124:2); if you cannot be a mountain and do not prevail, be at least a hill, so that Christ may ascend over you; and if he skips over, so that his passage may guard you.

34. We have spoken of Christ and the Church; let us speak of the soul and the Word. The soul of the just is the bride of the Word; if she should desire, if she should covet, if she should pray and pray assiduously, and pray without any dispute, and intend entirely upon the Word, suddenly she seems to herself to hear the voice of him whom she does not see, and in the fear of sense she recognizes the odor of his divinity, which those who believe well frequently experience. The nostrils of the soul are suddenly filled with spiritual grace, and she feels the breath of his presence breathing upon her whom she seeks, and she says: "Behold, this is he whom I require, he himself whom I desire."

35. Nonne cum aliquid de Scripturis cogitamus, et explanationem ejus invenire non possumus; dum dubitamus, dum quaerimus, subito nobis quasi super montes, id est, altissima dogmata videtur, ascendere. Deinde quasi super colles apparens nobis, illuminat mentem, ut infundat sensibus, quod invenire posse difficile videbatur: ergo quasi ex absente fit praesens Verbum in cordibus nostris. Et rursus cum aliquid nobis subobscurum est, tamquam subducitur Verbum, et tamquam absentis adventum desideramus; et iterum apparet, ostendit se nobis tamquam praesens sit nobis in iis quae requirimus cognoscendis.

36. Salit ergo in uniuscujusque corde frequenter, transilit et exit et revertitur: si sequare, si requiras, si tibi fidelium grata disputatione doctorum Verbum quod exierat atque transierat, postules resuscitari. Sicut illa quae quaesivit et invenit, quae dixit: Frater meus transivit, anima mea exivit in verbo ejus (Cant. V, 6). Ergo etsi super montes salit, sequere: etsi super colles, sequere. Reperiuntur enim in montibus et in collibus venatores Domini, qui investigant eos qui capiuntur ad vitam; sic enim dixit per Hieremiam Deus: Ecce mitto multos piscatores et multos venatores, et venabuntur eos super omnem montem et super omnem collem (Jerem. XVI, 16). Ibi ergo populus Dei quaeratur et inveniatur in Petri et in Pauli doctrina, gratia, disciplina; ut non in convalle sint, ubi fletus, sed in montibus a quibus unumquemque Christus illuminat, et cum Petrum legimus, Christus illuminat: et cum Paulum legimus, Christus illuminat. Curavit Paulus, Christus illuminavit; quoniam invocato Domini Jesu nomine, resurrexit, cujus sanatus est munere. Suscitavit mortuam Petrus, Christus illuminavit; et ideo ait: Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus aeternis (Psal. LXXV, 5).

37. Nos igitur qui montes esse non possumus, stemus in montibus vel in collibus; ut cum miserit piscatores suos Dominus et venatores, ut venentur eos qui supra omnem montem sunt, vel super omnem collem, id est, in legis et prophetarum praeceptis; et novi et veteris Testamenti cognitione omnem habentes conversationem, inveniant nos paratos, et velut bonas colligant spicas, opportuno missi messorum tempore; quia si quis extra montem aut collem fuerit repertus, colligi velut bona spica non poterit ab his, qui ut comparationis faciamus alterius mentionem, triticum a paleis separare mittentur. Plurimarum igitur operationum solertes ministros Dominus habet, iidem piscatores, iidem etiam venatores sunt, atque messorum. Si in tempore messis quo diriguntur isti metere, maturus expectes, salientem in montibus poteris intueri, et videbis Dominum Jesum similem capreolo aut hinnulo cervorum super montes Bethel. Salit enim super Ecclesiam quae est domus panis, eo quod fidelium corda confirmet; unde et sponsa de eo dicit:

35. Is it not so that when we think of something from the Scriptures and cannot find its explanation, while we doubt, while we seek, suddenly he seems to us to ascend as if over the mountains, that is, the highest dogmas? Then appearing to us as if over the hills, he illuminates the mind, so that he may pour into the senses what seemed difficult to find; therefore, as if from being absent, the Word becomes present in our hearts. And again when something is somewhat obscure to us, the Word is as if withdrawn, and as if of one absent we desire his coming; and again he appears, he shows himself to us as if he were present to us in those things which we require in order to know them.

36. He leaps, therefore, in each person's heart frequently; he skips over and exits and returns; if you follow, if you seek, if you ask for the Word which had gone out and passed over to be stirred up for you by the grateful disputation of faithful doctors. Just as she who sought and found, who said: "My brother has passed over, my soul went out at his word" (Cant. 5:6). Therefore, even if he leaps over mountains, follow; even if over hills, follow. For hunters of the Lord are found on mountains and on hills, who track down those who are captured for life; for thus God said through Jeremiah: "Behold, I send many fishers and many hunters, and they shall hunt them over every mountain and over every hill" (Jer. 16:16). There therefore let the people of God be sought and found in the doctrine, grace, and discipline of Peter and of Paul; so that they may not be in the valley where there is weeping, but on the mountains from which Christ illuminates each one; and when we read Peter, Christ illuminates; and when we read Paul, Christ illuminates. Paul cured, Christ illuminated; since, having invoked the name of the Lord Jesus, he rose up, by whose gift he was healed. Peter raised the dead woman, Christ illuminated; and therefore he says: "Illuminating wonderfully from the eternal mountains" (Ps. 75:5).

37. We, therefore, who cannot be mountains, let us stand on the mountains or on the hills; so that when the Lord shall send his fishers and hunters, that they may hunt those who are upon every mountain or upon every hill—that is, in the precepts of the law and the prophets—and having every conversation in the knowledge of the New and Old Testament, they may find us ready, and the sent reapers may gather us as good ears of corn in the opportune time; because if anyone shall be found outside the mountain or hill, he cannot be gathered as a good ear by those who, to mention another comparison, shall be sent to separate the wheat from the chaff. The Lord therefore has skillful ministers of very many operations; the same are fishers, the same are also hunters and reapers. If in the time of the harvest in which these are directed to reap, you should wait maturely, you will be able to behold him leaping in the mountains, and you will see the Lord Jesus like a young stag or a fawn of harts upon the mountains of Bethel. For he leaps over the Church, which is the house of bread, because he confirms the hearts of the faithful; whence also the bride says of him:

38. (Vers. 9.) Similis est consobrinus meus capreae aut hinnulo cervorum, super montes Bethel; salit enim super Ecclesiam, quae est domus Dei, eo quod fidelium corda confirmet. Merito sicut capreola, quia capra in altis pascitur. Dorcas dicitur a videndo, dorcadion enim visus acutioris est. Quid hoc aptius Christo, qui Patrem vidit quem nemo vidit: aut si quis vidit in Christo, ipse filius revelavit? Merito sicut hinnulus cervorum, hinnulus quasi filius, cui paternae inoleverit vis naturae; ut eum occulta non lateant, serpentes fugiant, venena non laedant. Denique eductus de latibulis suis serpent qui educebatur ex homine, dicebat: Quid venisti ante tempus torquere nos (Matth. VIII, 29). Spectemus ergo salientem hunc hinniculum, ut non possimus timere serpentem.

En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per retia. Venit ergo et primo post parietem est, ut inimicitias animae et corporis solvat, sublato pariete qui impedimentum concordiae videbatur afferre. Deinde prospicit per fenestras: quae sint fenestrae, audi Prophetam dicentem: Fenestrae apertae sunt e coelo (Esai. XXIV, 18). Prophetas itaque significat, per quos Dominus genus respexit humanum, priusquam in terras ipse descenderet. Et hodie si qua eum anima multum requirat, multum merebitur misericordiae; quoniam qui multum requirit, multum debetur ei. Si qua ergo anima eum studiosius quaerat, longe audit vocem ejus: et quamvis ab aliis requirat, prae ipsis a quibus quaerit, audit vocem ejus. Videt eum salientem ad se venire, id est, properantem atque currentem et transilientem eos, qui infirmo corde virtutem ejus capere non possunt: deinde prospicientem per aenigmata prophetarum, legendo eos, et tenendo eorum sermones; videt enim prospicientem, sed quasi per fenestram, non quasi adhuc praesentem. Videt eum eminentem super retia. Quid est hoc? Nisi forte quia illa retia nobis sunt, non illi retia sunt, eo quod illa anima adhuc intra sensibilia et mundana sit, quae mentem hominis capere et quodam sinu proprio consueverunt involvere.

40. En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per retia. Viderat enim Ecclesia vel anima justi salientem sicut hinniculum super montes, et repente primum aspiciens post parietem domus suae, prospicientem per fenestras, eminentem per retia, exsultat et gaudet, quia etiam ipsa amatur a Sponso.

38. (Verse 9.) "My kinsman is like a roe or a fawn of harts, upon the mountains of Bethel"; for he leaps over the Church, which is the house of God, because he confirms the hearts of the faithful. Deservedly like a roe, because the goat feeds in high places. It is called Dorcas from "seeing," for the gazelle is of sharper sight. What is more apt for this than Christ, who saw the Father whom no one has seen—or if anyone has seen him in Christ, the Son himself has revealed it? Deservedly like a fawn of harts, a fawn as if a son in whom the paternal force of nature has grown; so that hidden things may not be concealed from him, serpents may flee, and poisons may not harm him. Finally, the serpent being led out from his hiding places, which was being led out from a man, said: "Why have you come to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8:29). Let us behold therefore this leaping fawn, so that we cannot fear the serpent.

"Behold, he himself stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peering through the nets." He comes therefore and first is behind the wall, so that he may dissolve the enmities of the soul and the body, the wall having been removed which seemed to bring an impediment to concord. Then he peers through the windows; what the windows may be, hear the Prophet saying: "The windows are opened from heaven" (Isa. 24:18). He signifies therefore the prophets, through whom the Lord looked upon the human race before he himself descended to the lands. And today, if any soul should seek him much, it will merit much of mercy; since to him who seeks much, much is owed. If any soul therefore should seek him more studiously, she hears his voice from afar; and although she seeks him through others, she hears his voice before those from whom she seeks him. She sees him coming leaping to her, that is, hastening and running and skipping over those who cannot grasp his power with a weak heart; then peering through the enigmas of the prophets, by reading them and holding their words; for she sees him peering, but as if through a window, not as if yet present. She sees him eminent above the nets. What is this? Unless perhaps because those nets are for us, they are not nets for him, in that that soul is still within sensible and worldly things, which are accustomed to capture the mind of man and involve it in their own bosom.

40. "Behold, he himself stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peering through the nets." For the Church or the soul of the just had seen him leaping like a fawn upon the mountains, and suddenly seeing him first behind the wall of her house, peering through the windows, eminent through the nets, she exults and rejoices, because she herself also is loved by the Bridegroom.

Qui tamquam et ipse vulneratur charitatis decore, dilectae cum primum abesset, ad oscula rogatus adfuerit (rogatur enim cum dicitur (Cant. I, 1): Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui), deinde preces blanditiasque sponsae non spreverit, dilecta sibi ubera praebentis; atque in interiora domus eam benignus induxerit: deinde tamquam lascivienti ludens amore, quia vellet pertentare sensus amantis, saepe egressus ut quaereretur a Sponsa, saepe regressus ut invitaretur ad oscula, astiterit post parietem, prospexerit per fenestras, eminens super retia; ut non totus abesset, nec quasi totus intraret, et ipse ad se sponsam vocaret; ut veniendi ad se invicem fierent gratiora commercia, amoremque mutuis adolerent sermonibus.

41. (Vers. 10.) Exsurge, inquit, veni, proxima mea, formosa mea, columba mea; et tu si habeas fundatum parietem, non illum medium qui domus unius separet membra, sed aedificatum supra fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum, ut compaginata ejus structura crescat in templum, nec distermine ejus interna, sed muniat. Si habeas ergo in te aedificationem Dei, et ad Orientem pateant semper fenestrae tuae, venit Verbum, Stat post parietem tuum (Cant. II, 9); oculi enim Domini super justos (Psal. XXXIII, 16); prospicit per fenestras tuas (Cant. II, 9).

42. Quae sunt fenestrae istae? Legimus fenestras de quibus dicit Hieremias: Intravit mors per fenestras (Jerem. IX, 21), per quas intravit avaritia, intravit libido. Oculus tuus fenestra est. Si videris mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, intravit mors per oculum tuum: si videris possessionem viduae, vel thesauros minoris, et tuas excitaveris cupiditates, Intravit mors per fenestram. Sicut ergo per haec intrat mors, intrat et vita: si decorem puellae aspiciens sacrae, venereris Dominum Jesum, quod in teneros annos venerit aetas senectutis, vita immaculata, et ipse filiam tuam offeras; ut pio consecratur velamine: si possessionem minoris non tamquam sollicitus invasor aspicias, sed quasi parens sedulus religioso tuearis affectu: per has fenestras prospicit Christus, ut vocet sponsam.

43. Eminens super retia: bene eminens; quia solus est quem retia non involverint peccatorum. Omnes intra retia eramus, immo adhuc intra retia sumus; quia nemo sine peccato nisi solus Jesus, quem non cognoscentem peccatum, peccatum pro nobis fecit Pater, etenim tradidit eum laqueis, tradidit eum retibus: mittens eum non in peccato in quo erant omnes homines, sed in similitudinem carnis peccati, ut de peccato damnaret peccatum in carne. Peccatum erat caro, secundum illud quia haereditario erat damnata maledicto, peccatum erat illecebra et ministra peccati.

Who as if he himself is wounded by the beauty of charity, when he had been absent from his beloved at first, he was present when asked for kisses (for he is asked when it is said [Cant. 1:1]: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth"), then he did not despise the prayers and blandishments of the bride offering him breasts; and he kindly led her into the interior of the house. Then, as if playing with a wanton love, because he wished to test the senses of the lover, having often gone out so that he might be sought by the Bride, and often returned so that he might be invited to kisses, he stood behind the wall, peered through the windows, eminent above the nets; so that he might not be entirely absent, nor enter as if entirely, and he himself might call the bride to himself; so that the dealings of coming to each other might become more pleasing, and they might kindle love with mutual discourses.

41. (Verse 10.) "Arise," he says, "come, my near one, my beautiful one, my dove"; and you, if you should have a founded wall—not that middle one which separates the members of one house, but one built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, so that its joined structure may grow into a temple, nor may it divide its internals, but fortify them. If you should have therefore in yourself the building of God, and your windows should always be open toward the East, the Word comes, "He stands behind your wall" (Cant. 2:9); for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the just" (Ps. 33:16); "he peers through your windows" (Cant. 2:9).

42. What are those windows? We read of windows of which Jeremiah says: "Death has entered through the windows" (Jer. 9:21), through which avarice entered, lust entered. Your eye is a window. If you shall see a woman to lust after her, death has entered through your eye; if you shall see the possession of a widow, or the treasures of a minor, and shall stir up your desires, "Death has entered through the window." Just as therefore death enters through these, life also enters: if, looking upon the beauty of a sacred girl, you should worship the Lord Jesus, because the age of old age has come into tender years, an immaculate life, and you yourself offer your daughter, so that she may be consecrated with a pious veil; if you should look upon the possession of a minor not as a solicitous invader, but as a diligent parent you should protect it with religious affection; through these windows Christ peers, so that he may call the bride.

43. "Eminent above the nets": well "eminent"; because he is the only one whom the nets of sins have not entangled. We were all within the nets, rather we are still within the nets; because no one is without sin except Jesus alone, whom, not knowing sin, the Father made sin for us, for indeed he delivered him to snares, he delivered him to nets: sending him not in sin in which all men were, but in the likeness of the flesh of sin, so that he might condemn sin from sin in the flesh. The flesh was sin, according to that because it had been condemned by a hereditary curse; the flesh was the enticement and the minister of sin.

Venit Dominus Jesus, et in carne peccato obnoxia militiam virtutis exercuit: facta sunt membra nostra jam non arma libidinis, sed arma virtutis; namque ubi erant incentiva libidinis, ibi nunc sunt domicilia castitatis. Hic ergo venit ad laqueos, sed voluntarius: venit ad retia, sed securus. Plena erant omnia retibus, referta laqueis, audi dicentem: In via hac quam ambulabam, absconderunt superbi laqueum mihi (Psal. CXLI, 4). Et in libro sapientiae Sirach moneris ut cognoscas quia in medio laqueorum ambulas (Eccli. IX, 20). Quot vitia, tot retia: quot peccata, tot laquei.

44. Haereditarii jam te nexus tenebant, venit ad laqueos Jesus, ut Adam solveret: venit liberare quod perierat. Omnes retibus tenebamur, nullus alium eruere poterat, cum se ipsum non posset eruere. Talis ergo necessarius fuit, quem vincula generationis humanae delictis obnoxia non tenerent, non cepisset avaritia, non ligasset dolus. Is solus erat Jesus, qui cum hujus carnis se circumdedisset vinculis, captus non erat, non erat alligatus: sed dirumpens ea atque dissolvens, ad se magis vocavit Ecclesiam, Prospiciens per laqueos, eminens super retia; ut et ipsa disceret vinculis non teneri. Denique eo usque non longe a vinculis fuit, ut pro nobis subiret et mortem, sed tamen non servus mortis effectus, sed liber inter mortuos; liber enim erat qui solvendae mortis potestatem habebat. Denique ipse te doceat qui ait: Solvite templum hoc, et in triduo resuscitabo illud (Joan. II, 19). Audiamus itaque quid dicat:

45. (Vers. 11 - 13). Exsurge, veni proxima mea; hoc est, surge a mortuis, exsurge a vinculis, quibus circumdata tenebaris. Exsurge, quia ego resurrexi tibi: solve vincula iniquitatis, quia ego jam solvi tibi: veni, quia jam retia soluta sunt, Virgo peperit, puer natus ex virgine est, nihil debet muliebri haereditati, quasi filius mulieris non tenetur: cerne medium parietem maceriae jam solutum, qui interiorum affectuum concordiam dividebat, et in diversum excitabat dissensiones corporalium passionum. Veni ergo secura, cupio videre faciem tuam, et audire vocem tuam: veni, ut jam me per retia non videas, sed facie ad faciem vultibus amatoris dilecta potiaris.

The Lord Jesus came, and in flesh subject to sin he exercised the warfare of virtue: our members were made no longer weapons of lust, but weapons of virtue; for where there were incentives of lust, there now are the dwellings of chastity. He therefore came to the snares, but voluntarily; he came to the nets, but securely. All things were full of nets, packed with snares; hear him saying: "In this way which I walked, the proud have hidden a snare for me" (Ps. 141:4). And in the book of wisdom of Sirach you are warned so that you may know that you walk in the midst of snares (Sir. 9:20). As many vices, so many nets; as many sins, so many snares.

44. Hereditary bonds already held you; Jesus came to the snares so that he might loosen Adam: he came to liberate what had perished. We were all held by nets; no one could rescue another, since he could not rescue himself. Such a one therefore was necessary, whom the bonds of human generation subject to offenses would not hold, whom avarice would not have captured, whom deceit would not have bound. He alone was Jesus, who though he had surrounded himself with the bonds of this flesh, was not captured, was not bound: but breaking them and dissolving them, he rather called the Church to himself, "Looking through the snares, eminent above the nets"; so that she also might learn not to be held by bonds. Finally, he was so far not distant from bonds that he underwent even death for us, but yet not made a servant of death, but free among the dead; for he was free who had the power of dissolving death. Finally, let him teach you who says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Let us hear therefore what he says:

45. (Verses 11-13.) "Arise, come, my near one"; that is, rise from the dead, arise from the bonds with which you were held surrounded. Arise, because I have risen for you; loosen the bonds of iniquity, because I have already loosened them for you; come, because now the nets are loosened, the Virgin has brought forth, the child is born of the virgin, he owes nothing to the womanly inheritance, as a son of a woman he is not held; see the middle wall of the fence now loosened, which divided the concord of interior affections and stirred up in different directions the dissensions of corporal passions. Come therefore secure, I desire to see your face and hear your voice; come, so that now you may not see me through nets, but you, beloved, may enjoy face to face the countenances of your lover.

46. Et hic ista ethice decursa sint. Mystica autem illa si possimus, vel linea intueamur extrema. Sedebat intra domum Sponsa devota Domino, intra parietem Legis et prophetarum, spiritualium lapidum exaedificatione fundatum, qui claudebat atque vallabat domum regiam, plenam jucunditatis atque laetitiae. Mirabatur thesauros regios, et intuebatur sollicite, cupiens sapientiam quae has sibi divitias demonstraret, adsciscere. In secreto erat, sed secreti ipsius interpretem requirebat. Venit Dominus Jesus saliens super montes. Nobis sero videbatur venire, sed ille properabat. Saliebat denique et transiliebat, ut Judaeorum corporalia et saxosa dogmata transiliret. Astitit post parietem domus quae erat in veteri Testamento, prospiciens per Legis fenestram, et prophetarum cavernas.

47. Nondum erant domus illius aperta vestibula, nondum claves sapientiae portarum claustra patefecerant, quibus Legis claudebantur interna; de superiore tamen, hoc est, spiritali parte prospectans Ecclesiam vocat, ut per Legem et prophetas, Evangelii vertice sublimis assurgens, retia Judaicae interpretationis, et nodos intrepido calcet vestigio. Ideoque Proxima vocatur, ut adhaereat Christo, mundana non quaerat: ideo Formosa, ut speciosos evangelizantium pedes perferat: ideo Columba, ut spiritalia petat, terrestria derelinquat.

48. Ecce, inquit, hiems proeteriit, imber abiit, discessit sibi, flores visi sunt in terra, tempus secandi advenit. Ante adventum Christi hiems erat: venit Christus, fecit aestatem. Tunc omnia erant florum indiga, nuda virtutum: passus est Christus, et omnia coeperunt novae gratiae fecundari germinibus. Imber abiit luxuriae profluentis, et nubila tetris orta flagitiis aestiva jam purae conscientiae serenitate laxantur. Ideo non evadunt quorum fuga in hieme fit; quia non sequuntur Domini passionem, non tollunt crucem suam, et Christum sequuntur.

49. Imber impedit flores: at nunc flores videntur in terra. Boni flores apostoli, qui diversorum scriptorum suorum atque operum fuderunt odorem. Tempus secandi advenit, quando matura in horreis frumenta conduntur; et qui metit, mercedem accipit. Vox turturis audita est, quia invenit sibi nidum; Ecclesia enim domus est castitatis. Ficus quae propter infecunditatem jubebatur excidi, fructus ferre jam coepit. Vineae translatae ex Aegypto, jam non maceris destructa depositis, incursatur a bestiis; nec informis sentibus, sed odora jam floribus.

46. And here these things may have been run through ethically. But let us look upon those mystical things, if we can, even in their extreme outlines. The Bride sat devoted to the Lord within the house, within the wall of the Law and the prophets, founded upon the building of spiritual stones, which closed and fortified the royal house, full of pleasantness and joy. She wondered at the royal treasures and looked upon them solicitously, desiring to take to herself the wisdom which would show these riches to her. She was in secret, but she required an interpreter of that secret itself. The Lord Jesus came leaping upon the mountains. He seemed to us to come late, but he was hastening. He leaped finally and skipped over, so that he might skip over the corporal and stony dogmas of the Jews. He stood behind the wall of the house which was in the Old Testament, looking through the window of the Law and the caverns of the prophets.

47. Not yet were the vestibules of that house open, not yet had the keys of wisdom opened the enclosures of the gates, by which the internals of the Law were closed; looking out however from the superior—that is, the spiritual—part, he calls the Church, so that through the Law and the prophets, rising sublime at the summit of the Gospel, she may tread upon the nets of Jewish interpretation and its knots with an intrepid footstep. And therefore she is called "Near," so that she may adhere to Christ and not seek worldly things; therefore "Beautiful," so that she may bring the beautiful feet of those who preach the gospel; therefore "Dove," so that she may seek spiritual things and relinquish terrestrial ones.

48. "Behold," he says, "the winter has passed, the rain has gone, it has departed for itself, flowers have been seen on the earth, the time of pruning has come." Before the coming of Christ it was winter; Christ came, he made summer. Then all things were in need of flowers, bare of virtues; Christ suffered, and all things began to be made fruitful with the buds of new grace. The rain of flowing luxury has gone, and the clouds arisen from foul crimes are now loosened by the summer serenity of a pure conscience. Therefore those whose flight happens in winter do not escape; because they do not follow the passion of the Lord, they do not take up their cross and follow Christ.

49. Rain prevents flowers; but now flowers are seen on the earth. The apostles are good flowers, who have poured out the odor of their diverse writings and works. "The time of pruning has come," when the mature grains are stored in the granaries; and he who reaps receives a reward. "The voice of the turtle-dove has been heard," because she has found a nest for herself; for the Church is the house of modesty. The fig tree which was ordered to be cut down because of unfruitfulness has now begun to bear fruit. The vineyard translated from Egypt, now no longer destroyed with its walls cast down, is attacked by beasts; nor is it shapeless with briars, but already fragrant with flowers.

50. Exsurge, inquit, veni, proxima mea, formosa mea, columba mea, perfecta mea; proxima utique fidei desiderio, formosa decore virtutis, columba gratia spirituali; pennae enim columbae deargentatae aeternam illam significant potestatem, et columbae volatus Spiritus sancti praesentiam declaravit. Vocat igitur ad se eam Christus ut veniat, quoniam spiritualibus jam pretiis dotata veniebat. Quia ecce, inquit, hiems proeteriit, imber abiit, discescit sibi, flores visi in terra. Videte quemadmodum sancta invitetur Ecclesia. Hiems, inquit, discessit sibi, ne hiemem nuda formidet, hiemem non temporis, sed infirmitatis, quae agrum animae fecundum omni flore dispoliat. Est enim hiems non terreni solis, est hiems mentis, quando animo frigus illabitur, quando vapor animi vanescit, quando solvitur vigor sensus, quando nimius humor exundat, et mentem gravat, quando interior caligat aspectus. Et ideo ait Dominus: Videte ne fiat fuga vestra hieme vel sabbato (Matth. XXIV, 20); bonum enim ut tunc dies iudicii vel mortis adveniat, cum viget animi blanda temperies, cum coeleste mysterium serena luce resplendet, cum cor nostrum ardet in nobis. Tunc enim Christus est praesens, sicut testatur in Evangelio Ammaon et Cleophas dicentes: Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis in via, cum aperuisset in nobis Scripturas (Luc. XXIV, 32). Viget autem animus, quando etiam flos videtur in terris. Quis est iste flos boni odoris, nisi ille qui dixit: Ego flos campi et lilium convallium (Supra, vers. 1): de quo et in Esaia scriptum est: Exiet virga de radice Jesse, et virga ex radice ascendet, et flos ex virga exiet (Esa. XI, 1). Radix utique familia Judaeorum est, virga Maria, flos Mariae Christus: qui quando nostra resplendet in terra, et in agro animae redolet, vel in Ecclesia sua vernat, nec frigus possumus timere, nec pluviam vereri, sed exspectare iudicii diem. Et ideo Ecclesia ut hunc florem videret, omni studio festinabat, sicut ipsa in posterioribus testatur dicens: In cubili noctibus quaesivi quem diligit anima mea (Cant. III, 1).

50. Ficus protulit grossos suos. Aptā Synagogae arboris istius comparatio est, quia sicut arbor ista foliis redundans fluentibus, spem possessoris sui cassa speratorum proventuum expectatione destituit: ita etiam in Synagoga, dum doctores ejus operibus infecundi, verbis tantum velut foliis redundantibus glorianantur, inanis umbra Legis exsuperat; spes autem falsi exspectata proventus, populi vota credentis illudit.

50. "Arise," he says, "come, my near one, my beautiful one, my dove, my perfect one"; near certainly by the desire of faith, beautiful by the decorum of virtue, a dove by spiritual grace; for the silvered feathers of the dove signify that eternal power, and the flight of the dove declared the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ therefore calls her to himself that she may come, since she was coming endowed now with spiritual prices. "For behold," he says, "the winter has passed, the rain has gone, it has departed for itself, flowers have been seen on the earth." See in what manner the holy Church is invited. "Winter," he says, "has departed for itself," lest she, naked, should fear the winter—the winter not of time, but of weakness, which despoils the fertile field of the soul of every flower. For there is a winter not of the earthly sun, there is a winter of the mind, when coldness glides into the soul, when the vapor of the spirit vanishes, when the vigor of sense is dissolved, when excessive moisture overflows and burdens the mind, when the interior sight is darkened. And therefore the Lord says: "See that your flight happen not in winter or on the sabbath" (Matt. 24:20); for it is good that the day of judgment or of death should come then, when the pleasant temper of the soul flourishes, when the celestial mystery shines with serene light, when our heart burns within us. For then Christ is present, as Ammaon and Cleopas testify in the Gospel, saying: "Was not our heart burning within us on the way, when he opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). But the soul flourishes when also the flower is seen on the earth. Who is this flower of good odor, except he who said: "I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys" (Above, verse 1); of whom it is also written in Isaiah: "A rod shall come out of the root of Jesse, and a rod shall ascend from the root, and a flower shall come out of the rod" (Isa. 11:1). The root certainly is the family of the Jews, the rod is Mary, the flower of Mary is Christ; who, when he shines in our land and is fragrant in the field of the soul, or blooms in his Church, we can neither fear the cold, nor dread the rain, but expect the day of judgment. And therefore the Church was hastening with all study that she might see this flower, as she herself testifies in later parts, saying: "In my bed by nights I sought him whom my soul loves" (Cant. 3:1).

50. [Continued] "The fig tree has brought forth its green figs." The comparison of this tree to the Synagogue is apt, because just as this tree, redundant with flowing leaves, destitute of the expected proceeds, frustrates the hope of its possessor with a vain expectation; so also in the Synagogue, while its doctors, unfruitful in works, boast only in words as if in redundant leaves, the empty shadow of the Law excels; but the expected hope of a false proceeds mocks the vows of the believing people.

51. Est etiam in natura arboris quo magis credas Synagogae speciem comparatione hujus expressam. Etenim si diligenter inquiras, discretam ab usu arborum caeterarum consuetudinem naturae hujus invenies; namque aliae florem ferunt antequam fructum, pomaque ventura praenuntio sui flore designant: haec sola ab initio poma germinat pro floribus: in aliis flos decutitur et poma nascuntur; in hac poma decidunt, ut poma succedant. Ergo priora illa cassa fructuum, vice floris emergunt: ita praecoci quodam nascendi usu, quae ordinem naturae nesciunt, beneficium naturae servare non possunt. Etenim qua se medio trudere de cortice gemma consuevit, ea minutissima quaeque hujus generis poma prorumpunt: de quibus legimus in Canticis canticorum: Ficus protulit grossos suos. Itaque caeteris albetibus primo vere virgultis, sola ficus proprio nescit flore canescere; eo forte quod nullus sit istis maturior usus in pomis. Namque succedentibus aliis quae quasi degenerantia despuuntur, et arenti infirma radice, renovatis quibus sit succus utilior, exuuntur. Manent tamen aliqua perrara, nec decidunt, quibus hic proventus arriserit, ut de medio duarum virgarum claviculo brevi erumpente promergant, quo geminis tecta praesidiis, tamquam naturae parentis gremio, succi fotu plenioris inolecant. Ea clementioris aurae provocata temperie: et prolixioribus adulta temporibus, ubi silvestrem animum succi prioris exuerint, specie caeteris et maturitatis gratia praeferuntur.

52. Specta nunc cultus et animos Judaeorum, qui quasi primi fructus male feracis Synagogae, quasi labentis similitudine corruerunt, ut mansura supra aevum nostri generis poma succederent. Etenim primus Synagogae populus, quasi radice operum infirmus arenti, ubertatem sapientiae naturalis haurire non potuit. Et ideo velut inutilis decidit fructus, ut quasi ex iisdem claviculis arboris fructuosae, de pinguedine religionis antiquae novus Ecclesiae populus emergeret. Ergo ille qui erat, esse desivit, ut iste inciperet qui non erat: primi tamen ex Israel, quos naturae validioris ramus extulerat, sub umbra Legis et crucis, in utriusque sinu succo gemino colorati, grossi maturescentis exemplo, pulcherrimorum gratia fructuum caeteris praestiterunt, quibus dicitur: Sedebitis super duodecim thronos, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28).

51. There is also in the nature of the tree that which makes you more believe that the likeness of the Synagogue is expressed by its comparison. For if you inquire diligently, you will find a custom of this nature discrete from the use of other trees; for others bring forth a flower before the fruit, and designate the coming pomes by their herald flower: this one alone from the beginning germinates pomes instead of flowers: in others the flower is shaken off and pomes are born; in this one pomes fall so that pomes may succeed. Therefore those prior ones, empty of fruits, emerge in the stead of a flower: thus by a certain precocious custom of being born, those which do not know the order of nature cannot preserve the benefit of nature. For where the bud is accustomed to push itself from the middle of the bark, there burst forth those very minute pomes of this kind, of which we read in the Song of Songs: "The fig tree has brought forth its green figs." And so while other shrubs are whitening in early spring, the fig tree alone does not know how to become white with its own flower; perhaps for this reason, that there is no more mature use in those pomes. For as others succeed which are rejected as if degenerating, and with a parched weak root, those in which there is more useful sap are despoiled when renewed. Yet some very rare ones remain and do not fall, upon which this produce has smiled, so that they may emerge from a short little club-shaped stem bursting from the middle of two rods, by which, covered by twin protections, as if in the bosom of parent nature, they may grow by the fostering of a fuller sap. These, provoked by the temperance of a more clement breeze and grown in more prolix times, when they have stripped off the wild spirit of the prior sap, are preferred to the others in appearance and by the grace of maturity.

52. Behold now the cults and spirits of the Jews, who like the first fruits of the poorly fertile Synagogue, fell by the likeness of one sliding, so that the pomes of our race, which are to remain beyond an age, might succeed. For the first people of the Synagogue, weak as if with a parched root of works, could not draw the abundance of natural wisdom. And therefore it fell like useless fruit, so that as if from the same little stems of the fruitful tree, from the fatness of the ancient religion the new people of the Church might emerge. Therefore that which was, ceased to be, so that this one might begin which was not: yet the first from Israel, whom a branch of stronger nature had brought forth, under the shadow of the Law and the cross, colored in the bosom of both by a twin sap, by the example of a maturing green fig, excelled the others by the grace of most beautiful fruits, to whom it is said: "You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

53. Vineae florentes dederunt odorem suum (Sup., v. 5). Bene per vineam Ecclesia designatur; ut enim vitis maritatur arboribus, ita corpus animae, anima quoque corpori conjungitur: ut vinea dum ligatur, erigitur, et recisa non minuitur, sed augeatur; ita plebs sancta dum ligatur, exuitur: dum humiliatur, attollitur: dum reciditur, coronatur. Quin etiam ut tener surculus, veteri abscissus ab arbore, in alterius fetu radicis inseritur: ita populus hic sanctus surculi veteris cicatricibus enodatis, in novo illo crucis signo tamquam gremio piaie parentis fatus inolescitur: Spiritusque sanctus in hoc carcere corpus infusus, velut in altis demissus terrarum scrobes, aquae salutaris irriguo diluit quidquid est fetidum, membrorumque nostrorum habitus in coelestem erigit disciplinam.

54. Hanc vineam diligens agricola fodere, rigare, contendere consuevit, eruderationisque terrenae molis aggeribus, opera corporis nostri nunc sole torrere, nunc imbre perfundere, stipare agrum solitus, ne sentibus gemma laedatur, ne luxuriat umbra foliorum, verborumque infructuosa jactantia virtutibus obumbrando, maturitatem naturalis indolis impediatur.

55. (Vers. 14.) Et veni, inquit, columba mea, in tegimento petrae, juxta praemunionem; hoc est, veni juxta Evangelium: propugnacula fidei tuae, gesta sunt Christi: muri tui subsidia, verba sunt Domini: passio Dominici corporis, tua virtus est.

56. Ostende mihi faciem tuam, et insinua vocem tuam; quia vox tua suavis est, et facies tua decora. Suavis est vox tua; quia ore fit confessio ad salutem: et decora facies; quia quae non erubescit auctorem, non confunditur redemptore. Ostendit ergo faciem suam, signaculum crucis praeferens: et insinuat vocem suam, auctoritatem praedicationis assumens. Integumento enim corporis Christi, quo redemptus est a peccato, munimentum gratiae spiritalis invenit; ut salutaria sibi et sentiat et loquatur. Suavis ergo vox, quae in divinis testimoniis loquebatur: Decora facies, quae in conspectu regum non confundebatur.

57. Exsurge, inquit, veni, proxima mea; id est, exsurge a delectationibus mundi, exsurge a terrenis, et veni ad me, quae adhuc laboras, et onerata es, quae sollicita es quae sunt mundi: veni supra mundum, veni ad me, quia ego vici mundum: veni prope me, jam pulchra aeternae vitae decore, jam columba, id est, mitis atque mansueta, jam tota plena gratiae spiritalis. Jure ergo jam retia timere non debet, cum is vocet ad se animam, qui tentamentis et retibus mundi non potuit capi. Nam cum homines in medio laqueorum ambulemus, per appetentiam escae retibus simul et laqueis obnoxii sumus.

53. "The flowering vineyards have given their odor" (Above, v. 13). Well is the Church designated by a vineyard; for as the vine is married to trees, so the body is joined to the soul, and the soul also to the body: as the vineyard while it is bound, is erected, and being cut back is not diminished but increased; so the holy people while it is bound, is stripped: while it is humbled, it is raised: while it is cut back, it is crowned. Moreover, just as a tender shoot, cut off from an old tree, is grafted into the offspring of another root: so this holy people, the scars of the old shoot having been smoothed, grows fostered in that new sign of the cross as if in the bosom of a pious parent: and the Holy Spirit infused into this prison-house body, as if flowered into the deep trenches of the lands, washes away by the irrigation of salutary water whatever is fetid, and erects the habits of our members into heavenly discipline.

The diligent farmer is accustomed to dig, water, and stretch this vineyard, and having cleared away the mounds of earthly mass, he is accustomed to now scorch the works of our body with the sun, now drench them with rain, to pack the field, lest the bud be harmed by thorns, lest the shadow of leaves luxuriate, and the unfruitful boast of words, by overshadowing the virtues, hinder the maturity of natural disposition.

55. (Verse 14.) "And come," he says, "my dove, in the cover of the rock, near the fortification"; that is, come near the Gospel: the ramparts of your faith are the deeds of Christ: the supports of your walls are the words of the Lord: the passion of the Lord's body is your virtue.

56. "Show me your face, and let your voice be heard; because your voice is sweet, and your face is beautiful." Your voice is sweet because with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; and your face is beautiful because she who does not blush for her author is not confounded by her redeemer. She shows her face, therefore, bearing the sign of the cross; and she lets her voice be heard, assuming the authority of preaching. For in the covering of Christ's body, by which she was redeemed from sin, she found the protection of spiritual grace; so that she may both feel and speak salutary things for herself. Sweet therefore is the voice which was speaking in divine testimonies; beautiful the face which was not confounded in the sight of kings.

57. "Arise," he says, "come, my near one"; that is, arise from the delights of the world, arise from earthly things, and come to me, you who still labor and are burdened, who are solicitous for the things of the world: come above the world, come to me, because I have overcome the world: come near me, already beautiful with the decorum of eternal life, already a dove—that is, mild and gentle—already entirely full of spiritual grace. Justly therefore she ought not now to fear the nets, since he calls the soul to himself who could not be captured by the temptations and nets of the world. For while we men walk in the midst of snares, through the appetite for bait we are subject at once to both nets and snares.

Ille in corpore positus retia non timebat, sed eminebat super retia, id est, supra tentamenta mundi et corporis passiones; immo et alios eminere faciebat.

58. Exsurge, veni, proxima mea, noli timere retia, jam praeteriit hiems. Venit pascha, venit indulgentia, venit remissio peccatorum, cessavit tentatio, imber abiit, procella abiit et quassatio. Ante adventum Christi hiems erat, post adventum Christi flores sunt, unde ait: Flores visi sunt in terra. Ubi ante spinae, ibi nunc flores; Tempus, inquit, secandi advenit. Ubi ante desertum, ibi messis est. Vox turturis audita est in terra nostra: bene addidit propheta nostra, quasi admirans, quod ubi ante impudicitia, ibi castitas. Ficus protulit grossos suos. Quae quasi infructuosa jubebatur abscindi, haec fructus afferre jam coepit. Sed quid dubitas, quia grossos dixit? Priores discutit, ut posteriores meliores afferat: sicut Synagogae fructus abjicitur, renovatur autem Ecclesiae.

Et quamvis plena tranquillitas sit, et adoleverint mysteria, iterum tamen dicit: Exsurge secunda in tegimento petrae, id est, tuta praesidio passionis meae et fidei munimento. Suxerunt enim mel de petra et oleum de firma petra. Hoc integimento animae piorum indutae, jam nudaе non sunt, et haec illis est praemunitio. Ideoque et huic animae ait: Et veni, tu columba mea, in tegimento petrae juxta praemunionem: ostende mihi faciem tuam, et insinua vocem tuam. Hortatur ad confidentiam, ut non erubescat crucem Christi, nec ejus signaculum. Hortatur ad confessionem, vult omnes insidias dimoveri; ut bonus fidei odor spiret, ut dies fulgeat, ut adversae noctis umbra non noceat; quoniam qui juxta Christum est, dicit: Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit (Rom. XXIII, 12). Est et umbra saecularium quae praeterit, et dies coelestium Christus, qui sanctis suis lucet.

60. (Vers. 15.) Prendite nobis vulpes pusillas exterminantes vineas, ut vineae nostrae floreat. Scriptura eum hominem dicit, qui est ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei: peccantem autem non hominem, sed aut serpentem, aut equum adhinnientem feminis, aut vulpeculam, aut jumentum vocare consuevit. De quorum uno ait Dominus: Ite, dicite vulpi illi (Luc. XIII, 32), hoc est, de Herode. Et alibi cum se fraudulenter interrogari adverteret, dixit: Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos, ubi requiescant (Matth. VIII, 20); eo quod fraudulenter in terrestrium passionum quibusdam latibulis demorentur.

He, placed in a body, did not fear the nets, but was eminent above the nets—that is, above the temptations of the world and the passions of the body; rather, he also made others to be eminent.

58. "Arise, come, my near one, do not fear the nets, now the winter has passed." Pascha has come, indulgence has come, the remission of sins has come, temptation has ceased, the rain has gone, the storm and the shaking have gone. Before the coming of Christ it was winter; after the coming of Christ there are flowers, whence he says: "Flowers have been seen on the earth." Where before were thorns, there now are flowers; "The time," he says, "of pruning has come." Where before was a desert, there is a harvest. "The voice of the turtle-dove has been heard in our land": well did the prophet add "our," as if wondering that where before was immodesty, there now is chastity. "The fig tree has brought forth its green figs." She which as if unfruitful was ordered to be cut off, this one has now begun to bear fruit. But why do you doubt because he said "green figs"? He shakes off the prior ones so that he may bring forth the later and better ones: just as the fruit of the Synagogue is cast away, but that of the Church is renewed.

And although there is full tranquility and the mysteries have matured, yet again he says: "Arise secure in the cover of the rock," that is, safe by the protection of my passion and the fortification of faith. For they sucked honey from the rock and oil from the firm rock. Clothed in this covering, the souls of the pious are no longer naked, and this is a fortification for them. And therefore he says also to this soul: "And come, you my dove, in the cover of the rock near the fortification: show me your face, and let your voice be heard." He exhorts to confidence, so that she may not blush for the cross of Christ nor for its sign. He exhorts to confession, he wants all snares to be moved away; so that the good odor of faith may breathe, so that the day may shine, so that the shadow of the adverse night may not harm; since he who is near Christ says: "The night has passed, but the day has approached" (Rom. 13:12). There is also the shadow of secular things which passes away, and Christ is the day of heavenly things, who shines for his saints.

60. (Verse 15.) "Catch for us the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, that our vineyards may flourish." Scripture calls that one "man" who is after the image and likeness of God; but it is accustomed to call the one sinning not "man," but either a serpent, or a horse neighing after women, or a little fox, or a beast of burden. Of one of whom the Lord says: "Go, tell that fox" (Luke 13:32), that is, concerning Herod. And elsewhere, when he perceived himself to be fraudulently questioned, he said: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, where they may rest" (Matt. 8:20); in that they fraudulently delay in certain hiding places of earthly passions.

61. Unde etiam Samson binas vulpes sibi nexuit, ad quarum caudas alligavit faces, et dimisit eas per messes Allophylorum (Judic. XV): per hanc figuram significans quod improbi ac fraudulentum homines, et maxime haeretici, liberam linguam habeant ad latrandum: sed exitus impeditos, aut litigiosa principia, finem vero fraudis suae incendio deputatum. Ideoque et trecentas vulpes dimisit, eo quod perfidi crucis quidem praedicatione se commendare desiderant: sed mysterium ejus tenere non possunt, qui hac praedicatione composita, et falsa atque simulata, urere magis fructus conantur alienos: cum utique vera crux Domini non exurat aliena merita, sed fecundet.

62. Meritoque scriptum est: Prendite nobis vulpes pusillas, exterminantes vineas, ut vineae nostrae florent. Quo ostenditur quod vel Dominus Jesus vel Ecclesia fraudulentorum dolos vineis suis exterminandos esse praecipiat; ne pusillulis vineis noceant, quia adultis jam vitibus nocere non possunt. Haereticus enim imperfectum tentare potest, non potest supplantare perfectum.

63. (Vers. 16.) Frater meus mihi, et ego illi. Vox ista est virginis; nam immaculatum corpus a virili permixtione servare, et palmam castimoniae, limoso in corpore usque ad angelorum conversationem, custodia integritatis evehere, utilitas privata, laus est publica. Quam rarus in terris, qui hoc potest dicere, quam alienus a vitiis, quam segregatus ab omni labe peccati, qui nihil habeat cum saeculo commune, dicens: Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi, in medio uberum meorum commorabitur. Scilicet nihil mundi hujus sibi vindicet, cui non sit corporalium possessio cupiditatum, quem non inflammet libido, non stimulet avaritia, non lascivia effeminet, non luxuria decoloret, non sternat ambitio, non maceret invidia, non aliqua negotiorum saecularium cura sollicitet: verus minister altaris, Deo natus, non sibi; Levi enim, ut habet interpretatio, significat: Ipse mihi assumptus; significat: Et ipse meus; significat et tantum: Assumptus; significat: Et assumptus mihi.

64. Ipse idem, et mihi Levi et Deo est. Quomodo idem et mihi sacerdos et Deo est. Et mihi advocatus et Domini deprecator est: pro me offerens sacrificium, et idem se offerens Domino. Denique et alibi Levi interpretatione dicitur, Pro me; etenim si a me nominetur Levi, Levi pro me est: si pro me offerat, pro me est: si pro me interveniat, pro me est: sin autem vocetur a Domino, ipse mihi dicitur: hoc est, non alii tributarius, non decimarius, non de possessione munificus. Ipse mihi, hoc est, tamquam abundans pro suis omnibus.

61. Whence also Samson bound pairs of foxes to one another, to whose tails he tied torches, and sent them through the harvests of the foreigners (Judges 15): signifying through this figure that wicked and fraudulent men, and especially heretics, have a free tongue for barking; but their exits are impeded, or their beginnings are contentious, and the end of their fraud is indeed destined for fire. And for that reason he also sent out three hundred foxes, because the faithless indeed desire to commend themselves by the preaching of the cross; but they cannot hold its mystery, who—having composed this preaching both false and simulated—endeavor rather to burn the fruits of others; whereas surely the true cross of the Lord does not burn up the merits of others, but makes them fruitful.

62. And deservedly it is written: "Catch for us the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, that our vineyards may flourish." By which it is shown that either the Lord Jesus or the Church commands that the deceits of fraudulent men be exterminated from her vineyards; lest they harm the very small vineyards, because they can no longer harm the adult vines. For a heretic can tempt the imperfect; he cannot supplant the perfect.

63. (Verse 16.) "My brother is mine, and I am his." That voice is the voice of a virgin; for to keep the immaculate body from masculine mixture, and to elevate the palm of chastity in a muddy body even to the conversation of angels by the guard of integrity, is a private utility and a public praise. How rare on earth is he who can say this, how foreign to vices, how segregated from every stain of sin, who has nothing in common with the world, saying: "My beloved is mine and I am his, he shall dwell in the midst of my breasts." That is, let him claim nothing of this world for himself, to whom there is no possession of corporal desires, whom lust does not inflame, whom avarice does not stimulate, whom lasciviousness does not effeminate, whom luxury does not discolor, whom ambition does not prostrate, whom envy does not macerate, whom no care of secular business solicits: a true minister of the altar, born for God, not for himself; for Levi, as the interpretation has it, signifies: "He himself assumed for me"; it signifies: "And he himself is mine"; it signifies also just: "Assumed"; it signifies: "And assumed for me."

64. He himself is the same, both Levi for me and for God. In the same way he is both priest for me and for God. He is both advocate for me and a seeker of favor from the Lord: offering sacrifice for me, and the same one offering himself to the Lord. Finally, elsewhere he is called Levi by interpretation, "For me"; for if Levi is named by me, Levi is for me: if he offers for me, he is for me: if he intervenes for me, he is for me: but if he is called by the Lord, he himself is said to be for me: that is, not a tributary to another, not a tither, not munificent from possession. He himself for me, that is, as if abounding for all his own.

Non ab hoc decimas quaero, non fructus, non dona, non munera; ipse mihi pro munere est, ipse est pro tributo. Non in possessione sua munificus mihi, sed ipse mihi possessio, ipse meus fructus, ipse meus sensus. Assumptus a me, vel assumptus mihi, non potest hoc sine divina esse gratia. Sicut enim possessio non potest mea esse, nisi emero eam: sic non potest esse Levi, nisi fuerit assumptus a Domino, cum enim assumptus fuerit, recte dicitur, ipse meus. Denique cum Moysi dictum esset, ut populo Judaeorum per tribus singulas divideret incolatus, et distribueret singulis tribubus portionem: tribum Leviticam excepit Deus dicens filiis Levi: Non erit ei portio, neque sors in medio fratrum suorum; quia Dominus Deus pars eorum est (Deut. X, 9): et alibi: Ego Dominus portio eorum (Num. XVIII, 20).

65. Negatur his terrena divisio, ut ipsi dum saecularem sibi non vindicant portionem, fiant coelestis possessio: vel hoc solum noverint possidere, hoc est, fidei et devotionis obsequium, multo ditiores quam qui possessionum suarum spatia ampla diffundunt. Quantumlibet enim fines suos extendant, et terra deficit, et mare includit insanas cupiditates, et pendunt tributa majora quam fructus sunt. At vero iste nihil possidens, nulli nisi Deo militat, supra terram ejus est portio, non cum terra deficit, non mari clauditur. Cujus portio Deus est, totius possessor est naturae. Pro agris igitur ipse sibi satis est, habens bonum fructum, qui numquam possit perire. Pro domibus satis est sibi, ut sit habitatio Domini, et templum Dei, quo nihil potest esse pretiosius. Quid enim pretiosius Deo? Aut quid deest huic viro qui potest dicere: Non contingat mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo (Galat. VI, 4)?

66. Non potest in hoc princeps mundi hujus sibi consortium vindicare, in quo nihil suum invenit. Ideoque Dominus qui venit docere, ut fieret nobis Deus portio, ait: Venit enim hujus mundi princeps, et in me invenit nihil (Joan. XIV, 30). Meritoque imitatores sui esse volens, ait: Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam (Matth. X, 9). Unde Petrus ostendens in Deo portionem sibi esse, non in saeculo, ait: Argentum et aurum non habeo, sed quod habeo, hoc tibi do: in nomine Jesu Christi Nazareni surge, et ambula (Act. III, 6); hoc est, haec est portio mea, portio mea Christus est: In nomine igitur Christi Jesu surge, et ambula (Ibid). Hoc est, in portione mea dives sum, in portione mea potens sum. Merito tales praesumo fructus istius portionis, ut salus et vita donetur; quia hoc est istius patrimonium portionis quam elegi mihi: Dilectus meus mihi, et ego illi.

I do not seek tithes from this one, nor fruits, nor gifts, nor rewards; he himself is for me instead of a reward, he himself is instead of a tribute. Not munificent to me in his possession, but he himself is my possession, he himself is my fruit, he himself is my sense. Assumed by me, or assumed for me, this cannot be without divine grace. For just as a possession cannot be mine unless I have bought it, so he cannot be Levi unless he has been assumed by the Lord; for when he has been assumed, it is rightly said: "He himself is mine." Finally, when it had been said to Moses that he should divide the settlements to the people of the Jews through individual tribes, and distribute a portion to the individual tribes: God excepted the Levitical tribe, saying to the sons of Levi: "He shall not have a portion, nor a lot in the midst of his brothers; because the Lord God is their part" (Deut. 10:9): and elsewhere: "I the Lord am their portion" (Num. 18:20).

65. Earthly division is denied to these, so that while they do not claim a secular portion for themselves, they may become a heavenly possession: or let them know to possess this alone, that is, the service of faith and devotion, much richer than those who spread out the ample spaces of their possessions. For however much they extend their borders, both the earth fails, and the sea shuts in their insane desires, and they pay tributes greater than the fruits are. But truly this one, possessing nothing, serves as a soldier to none but God; his portion is above the earth, it does not fail with the earth, nor is it closed in by the sea. He whose portion is God, is the possessor of the whole of nature. Instead of fields, therefore, he himself is enough for himself, having good fruit, which can never perish. Instead of houses he is enough for himself, so that he may be a habitation of the Lord, and a temple of God, than which nothing can be more precious. For what is more precious than God? Or what is lacking to this man who can say: "May it not happen to me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14)?

66. The prince of this world cannot claim a partnership for himself in this one, in whom he finds nothing of his own. And therefore the Lord who came to teach, so that God might become our portion, says: "For the prince of this world comes, and in me he finds nothing" (John 14:30). And deservedly, wishing [them] to be imitators of himself, he says: "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money" (Matt. 10:9). Whence Peter, showing that his portion was in God, not in the world, says: "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have, this I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, arise and walk" (Acts 3:6); that is, this is my portion, my portion is Christ: "In the name of Christ Jesus, therefore, arise and walk." That is, in my portion I am rich, in my portion I am powerful. Deservedly I presume such fruits of that portion, that health and life may be given; because this is the patrimony of that portion which I have chosen for myself: "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

67. Qui pascitur inter lilia. Liliū castitatem significat. Scit itaque bonus pastor, ubi pascat gregem suum, quae pabula ovibus suis expediant. Quae sunt pascua nostra, hoc est, fidelium, nisi Christus? In cuius pascuis se locatum Propheta laetatus est, dicens: In loco pascuae, ibi me collocavit (Psal. XXII, 2); ibi enim nos pascit et reficit. Bona pascua, sacramenta divina sunt. Carpis illic novum florem, qui bonum odorem dedit resurrectionis: carpis liliū, in quo sit splendor aeternitatis: carpis rosam, hoc est, Dominici corporis sanguinem. Bona etiam pascua, libri sunt Scripturarum coelestium, in quibus quotidiana lectione pascimur, in quibus recreamur ac reficimur; cum ea quae scripta sunt degustamus, vel summo ore libata frequentius ruminamus. His pascuis grex Domini saginatur. Bona Christi pascua montes convallium; nam et in his pascit Christus sicut capreolus aut hinnulus cervorum, hoc est, in splendoribus sanctorum.

68. (Vers. 17.) Donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae. Zachaeus in arborem sycomori ascendit, ut Christum videret: nobis quoque expandit manus suas Jesus, ut totum mundum obumbraret. Quomodo non sumus in umbra, qui crucis ejus protegimur velamento? Quomodo non sumus in umbra, quos crucifixus a malignitate saeculi et corporis ardore defendit? An nescimus, quoniam Verbum Dei veniens in hunc mundum, non sicut Verbum advenit. Quale erat in principio, quale erat apud Deum: sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens (Philip. II, 7). Venit in nube levi, et cum esset virtus Altissimi, obumbravit Mariae; ut transfiguraret corpus humilitatis nostrae, conforme fieri corpori gloriae suae. Sicut ille ergo formam mutavit, cum ex Virgine nasceretur: ita et nobis sermones Dei transfigurari videntur, cum leguntur in Evangelio, cum species eorum videtur in Scripturis quasi per speculum; quia tota veritas hic non potest comprehendere, cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, non jam per discussionem, non per speciem ut transfigurati, sed integra atque expressa veritate resplendent.

69. Flectat ergo animam iugo Verbi, et habenis suis regat, ut voluntate Dei abducatur a vitiis, et vitae odorem capiat aeternae; non enim haec vita perfecta est, sed haec vita in umbra. Ideo ut homo Christus Jesus ex Virgine nasceretur, obumbravit virtus Altissimi matrem futuram; quia in umbra descendit, ab umbra incipiens operari salutem hominis, et consummaturus claritate solis aeterni. Umbra est ergo vita haec. Festina ad solem, ut te defendat ab umbrae huius frigore, et calorem tibi perfundat aestivum.

67. "Who feeds among the lilies." The lily signifies chastity. The good shepherd knows, therefore, where he may feed his flock, what pastures are expedient for his sheep. What are our pastures, that is, of the faithful, if not Christ? In whose pastures the Prophet rejoiced that he was placed, saying: "In a place of pasture, there he has placed me" (Psalm 23:2); for there he feeds and refreshes us. The good pastures are the divine sacraments. You pluck there the new flower, which gave the good odor of the resurrection: you pluck the lily, in which there is the splendor of eternity: you pluck the rose, that is, the blood of the Lord's body. The good pastures are also the books of the heavenly Scriptures, in which we are fed by daily reading, in which we are recreated and refreshed; when we taste those things which are written, or quite frequently ruminate on them having been sipped with the tip of the mouth. By these pastures the Lord's flock is fattened. The good pastures of Christ are also the mountains of the valleys; for in these also Christ feeds like a roe or a fawn of harts, that is, in the splendors of the saints.

68. (Verse 17.) "Until the day breathes, and the shadows incline." Zacchaeus climbed into a sycamore tree so that he might see Christ: for us also Jesus expanded his hands, so that he might overshadow the whole world. How are we not in the shadow, who are protected by the veil of his cross? How are we not in the shadow, whom the Crucified defends from the malignancy of the world and the heat of the body? Or do we not know that the Word of God, coming into this world, did not arrive as the Word — such as it was in the beginning, such as it was with God—but "he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7)? He came in a light cloud, and when he was the power of the Most High, he overshadowed Mary; so that he might transfigure the body of our humility, to become conformed to the body of his glory. Just as he therefore changed his form when he was born of the Virgin: so also the words of God seem to us to be transfigured, when they are read in the Gospel, when their species is seen in the Scriptures as if through a mirror; because the whole truth cannot be comprehended here, but when that which is perfect has come, it will no longer [be seen] through discussion, nor through a species as transfigured, but they shine with an entire and express truth.

69. Let him therefore bend his soul to the yoke of the Word, and let him rule with his reins, so that by the will of God he may be led away from vices, and may receive the odor of eternal life; for this life is not perfect, but this life is in shadow. Therefore, so that the man Christ Jesus might be born of the Virgin, the power of the Most High overshadowed the mother-to-be; because he descended into shadow, beginning to work the salvation of man from the shadow, and destined to complete it by the brightness of the eternal sun. This life is therefore a shadow. Hasten to the sun, so that it may defend you from the cold of this shadow, and pour over you the summer heat.

Et ideo suadet orandum, ne fiat fuga nostra hieme aut sabbato, non tempus diemque significans, sed frigere nos meritis prohibens, et bonorum operum esse jejunos.

CAPUT TERTIUM.

1. (Vers. 1.) In cubili meo, in nocte quaesivi quem dilexit anima mea: quaesivi eum et non inveni. Exsurgam itaque, et quaeram in civitate, in foro, in plateis, quem dilexit anima mea. Acceperat jam haec anima bona pignora charitatis, sed quia semper solliciti esse debemus, semper intenti, et quia Verbum Dei sicut capreola exsilit, aut sicut hinnulus cervorum; semper vigilet anima, et praetendat eum quem quaerit, et quem tenere desiderat. Ideo quasi sublapsus sibi deplorans, In cubili, inquit, meo, in noctibus quaesivi quem dilexit anima mea. Qui bene quaerit, in cubili quaerat, in noctibus quaerat: nec dies feriat, neque noctes sint: nullum tempus vacet a pietatis officio; etsi non invenerit primo, perseveret in requirendo. Ideoque dicit:

2. (Vers. 2.) Exsurgam itaque, et quaeram in civitate, in foro, in plateis. Et fortasse ideo non invenit adhuc, quia in foro quaesivit, ubi lites sunt: in plateis, ubi nundinae rerum venalium; non enim Christus pecunia comparatur. Nullum tempus praedicandi vacuum sinat sancta devotio praeterire. Si studentes doctrinis saecularibus perparum somno indulgent; quanto magis qui Deum cupiunt cognoscere, non debent somno corporis impediri, nisi quantum naturae satis est? David per singulas noctes lectum suum lacrymis diluebat, surgebat etiam noctis medio, ut Domino confiteretur: et tu totam noctem sopori existimas deputandam? Tunc magis tibi orandus est Dominus, tunc praesidia postulanda, culpa cavenda, quando videtur habere secretum. Tunc maxime quando tenebrae in circuitu meo, et parietes me operiunt, considerandum quod Deus omnia intuetur abscondita. Ne dixeris ergo circumfusus tenebris, quis me videt? Et quem vereor septus parietibus et inclusus? Quia Vultus Domini super facientes mala (Psalm. XXXIII, 17). Denique si arbitrum non vides, te ipsum non vides? Tuae conscientiae testimonium non vereris? Nescis illam caliginem noctis non opertorium, sed incentivum esse peccati? Cum somno et cibo fervent corpora, tunc etiam mentis vigor sopore laxatur, somno resolvitur. Tunc irrepit impuri libido concubitus, tunc perturbatur cor squalore immunditiae, non videtur castitas, puritas non consideratur, pudicitiae gloria non recensetur.

And therefore he persuades [us] that we should pray, lest our flight happen in winter or on the Sabbath, not signifying the time and the day, but prohibiting us from being cold in merits, and being fasting of good works.

CHAPTER THREE.

1. (Verse 1.) "In my bed, in the night I sought him whom my soul loved: I sought him and I did not find him. I will arise, therefore, and I will seek in the city, in the forum, in the streets, him whom my soul loved." This soul had already received good pledges of charity, but because we ought always to be solicitous, always intent, and because the Word of God leaps out like a roe, or like a fawn of harts; let the soul always keep watch, and hold out for him whom she seeks, and whom she desires to hold. Therefore, as if deploring his having slipped away from her, "In my bed," she says, "in the nights I sought him whom my soul loved." He who seeks well, let him seek in the bed, let him seek in the nights: let there be neither holiday by day, nor nights: let no time be vacant from the office of piety; and even if he has not found him at first, let him persevere in seeking. And for that reason she says:

2. (Verse 2.) "I will arise, therefore, and I will seek in the city, in the forum, in the streets." And perhaps for this reason she has not found him yet, because she sought in the forum, where there are litigations: in the streets, where there are markets of things for sale; for Christ is not purchased with money. Let holy devotion allow no time for preaching to pass by vacant. If those studying secular doctrines indulge very little in sleep; how much more those who desire to know God ought not to be hindered by the sleep of the body, except as much as is sufficient for nature? David every single night washed his bed with tears, he even rose in the middle of the night so that he might confess to the Lord: and do you think that the whole night is to be deputed to slumber? Then more especially must the Lord be prayed to by you, then protection must be asked for, fault must be avoided, when there seems to be a secret place. Then especially when there are darknesses in my circuit, and walls cover me, it must be considered that God beholds all hidden things. Do not say therefore, surrounded by darkness: who sees me? And whom do I fear, enclosed by walls and shut in? Because "The face of the Lord is over those doing evil things" (Psalm 34:16). Finally, if you do not see the judge, do you not see yourself? Do you not fear the testimony of your conscience? Do not know that that gloom of night is not a covering, but an incentive to sin? When bodies are fervent with sleep and food, then also the vigor of the mind is loosened by slumber, resolved by sleep. Then the lust of impure coitus creeps in, then the heart is disturbed by the squalor of immundicity, chastity is not seen, purity is not considered, the glory of modesty is not reviewed.

3. Nox erat, quando Judas prodidit, quando Petrus negavit. Illo igitur praecipue tempore justificationes Dei animo retexendae sunt, relegenda mandata hortatoria: illa de castitate praecepta non absint, ut his occupata mens, flagrantiam libidinis, carnis restinguat ardorem. Tene illud animo: Lavabo per singulas noctes lectum meum (Psal. VI, 7). Quis enim stupris deditus, flagitiis involutus, lavat per singulas noctes lectum suum? Nescit flere, qui flenda committit; et cum sit ipse lacrymabilis, non habet poenae lacrymas suae. At ille qui castigat corpus suum, et sui sollicitus gubernator est, atque ingemiscens et dolens lapsus superioris offensam, quaerit quomodo abluat eam fletibus poenitentiae, hic lavat per singulas noctes lectum suum. Non dormiamus igitur totis noctibus, sed maximam partem earum lectioni et orationibus deputemus. Audi Ecclesiae vocem quaerentis etiam in noctibus Christum: In cubili, inquit, meo in noctibus quaesivi quem dilexit anima mea.

4. Accipe secundum litteram, quia quaesivit in noctibus orando, deprecando, etiam lacrymis deplorando. Quaesivit in noctibus; quia Posuit tenebras latibulum suum (Psal. XVII, 12), ut quaerere eum sollicitius disceremus. Quaesivit igitur in prophetis Ecclesia ex gentibus congregata, et ideo credidit. Denique adventus Dominici testimonia de prophetis, Evangelistae Paulusque posuerunt, unde scriptum est: Quia nox nocti indicat scientiam (Psal. XVIII, 3). Quaesivit in noctibus, in persecutionibus et adversis, in tribulationibus et doloribus duris. Nox est omnibus, quibus non est perfecta securitas; unde ait Dominus: Veniet nox quando nemo potest operari. Cum in hoc mundo sum, lux hujus mundi sum (Joan. IX, 4). Non ergo operemur in tenebris; si enim lucent opera nostra, non operamur in tenebris, sed in lumine.

5. Dies est quibus adest Christus, nox est quibus se denegat. Non magnum tibi si tunc Domino gratias agas, quando in prosperis et secundis es: sed si tunc adhaereas Christo, quando te persecutor exagitat, quando aliqua procella perturbat. Amisisti filium? In illo dolore, in illa nocte, in illa destitutione, memento Domini Dei tui; ne quasi non exauditus, ingratus sis, et in tua praevariceris aerumna. Pulsus es in exilium? Memento Domini Dei tui, ne patriae interdictae charitatem Deo praeferas. Alicujus divitis oppressus potentia, amisisti proprias facultates, indiges sumptu? Memento Domini Dei tui, ne nox te egestatis abducat a devotionis affectu. Hoc est enim mandatum Legis, ut in nocte magis quaeras, quando magis exaudiaris a Domino, et possis dicere: In tribulatione invocavi Dominum, et exaudivit me in latitudine Dominus (Psal. CXVII, 5).

3. It was night when Judas betrayed, when Peter denied. At that time, therefore, especially the justifications of God are to be rewoven in the mind, the hortatory mandates are to be reread: let those precepts concerning chastity not be absent, so that the mind occupied by these may extinguish the fragrance of lust, the heat of the flesh. Hold this in the mind: "I will wash my bed every single night" (Psalm 6:6). For who, given over to debaucheries, involved in shames, washes his bed every single night? He does not know how to weep who commits things to be wept for; and when he is himself lamentable, he does not have tears for his punishment. But he who chastises his body, and is a solicitous governor of himself, and—groaning and grieving for the offense of a former lapse—seeks how he may wash it away with the weepings of penitence, this one washes his bed every single night. Let us not sleep, therefore, all through the nights, but let us depute the greatest part of them to reading and to prayers. Hear the voice of the Church seeking Christ even in the nights: "In my bed," she says, "in the nights I sought him whom my soul loved."

4. Accept [this] according to the letter, because she sought in the nights by praying, by deprecating, even by deploring with tears. She sought in the nights; because "He has set darknesses as his hiding place" (Psalm 18:12), so that we might learn to seek him more solicitously. The Church gathered from the nations, therefore, sought him in the prophets, and for that reason she believed. Finally, the Evangelists and Paul placed the testimonies of the Lord's coming from the prophets, whence it is written: "Because night shows knowledge to night" (Psalm 19:3). She sought in the nights, in persecutions and adversities, in tribulations and hard sorrows. It is night for all for whom there is not perfect security; whence the Lord says: "The night will come when no one can work. While I am in this world, I am the light of this world" (John 9:4). Let us not, therefore, work in darknesses; for if our works shine, we do not work in darknesses, but in light.

5. It is day for those to whom Christ is present; it is night for those to whom he denies himself. It is no great thing for you if you then give thanks to the Lord, when you are in prosperous and favorable things: but [it is] if you then adhere to Christ, when a persecutor drives you, when some storm disturbs you. Have you lost a son? In that sorrow, in that night, in that destitution, remember the Lord your God; lest as if not heard, you be ungrateful, and you prevaricate in your affliction. Have you been driven into exile? Remember the Lord your God, lest you prefer the charity of the interdicted fatherland to God. Oppressed by the power of some rich man, have you lost your own faculties, do you lack sustenance? Remember the Lord your God, lest the night of poverty lead you away from the affection of devotion. For this is the mandate of the Law, that you seek more in the night, when you may be more heard by the Lord, and you can say: "In tribulation I invoked the Lord, and the Lord heard me in latitude" (Psalm 118:5).

6. Sed nec quaerere perfunctorie abundat ad gratiam, sed ut insistas et intendas muneri. Denique ista vel Ecclesia vel anima, quae requisivit in cubili, quaesivit in noctibus, primo non invenit; quia fortasse in cubili quaesivit. Sed postea quam surrexit, et abiit in civitatem (vide ne in illam civitatem in qua Dominus celebraturus pascha, discipulos destinavit dicens (Matth. XXVI, 18): Ite in civitatem ad quemdam) postea quam in foro, ut dixi, quaesivit, ubi oleum venditur, quod expectantes Sponsum emere consuerunt; ubi jus, ubi leges. Si enim lex spiritualis, et forum utique spirituale, ubi disputant periti legis aeternae. Quod forum non litibus tumultuosum est, sed Christi tribunalibus gloriosum. Ubi quaesivit, inquam? In foro, et post quaesivit in plateis, de quibus hi qui ad patrisfamilias Evangelici prandium convenirent, colligebantur: qui vocati excusandum se ab huiusmodi epulis non putarunt. Postea quam in foro, inquam, et plateis quaesivit, incidit in eos qui circumeunt civitatem, et tunc demum potuit invenire quod quaereret; fortasse quod in tribulatione et metu posita magis inveniat gratiam. Denique posterius ait:

7. (Vers. 3.) Invenerunt me qui circumeunt civitatem, tulerunt mihi pallium. Habuit ergo certamen: sed qua ratione hic ei non tulerint pallium, haereo reperire; nisi forte quia ibi interrogasse se dixit: Num quem dilexit anima mea, vidistis? Quae Christum loquebatur, nex exuta est pallio, et quem quaerebat, invenit. Disce quemadmodum quaeratur Christus: ab his utique qui non perfunctorie quaerunt, sed violenter retinent, sicut ista quae ait: Tenui eum nec dimittam, cum fide invenit, meditatione constrinxit.

8. Si bonos custodes accipimus, utique angeli sunt. Qui vero angelos transivit. Verbum invenit; ideoque non multum intervalli fuit, cum transivit ab his, et invenit Jesum. Quomodo ergo infra tulerunt pallium, nisi forte quia processu offensae fidei, Ecclesia dum nudatur, a Domino plus amatur, exspolians se veterem hominem ut novum induat, quem non operiunt peccata, sed mentis secreta clarificant, aut quia amictum sapientiae saecularis ad Christum ventura deposuit? et non exutus est pallio, postea quam coepit esse perfectior.

6. But neither is seeking perfunctorily enough for grace, but that you should insist and intend upon the gift. Finally, that Church or soul, which sought in the bed, sought in the nights, at first did not find; because perhaps she sought in the bed. But after she arose, and went into the city (see whether into that city into which the Lord, about to celebrate the Passover, destined the disciples, saying: "Go into the city to a certain man"), after she sought in the forum, as I said, where oil is sold, which those expecting the Bridegroom were accustomed to buy; where there is right, where there are laws. For if the law is spiritual, the forum is surely also spiritual, where the experts of the eternal law dispute. Which forum is not tumultuous with litigations, but glorious with the tribunals of Christ. Where did she seek, I say? In the forum, and afterward she sought in the streets, from which those who would come to the dinner of the Evangelical father of the family were gathered: who, having been called, did not think they should excuse themselves from such banquets. After she sought in the forum, I say, and the streets, she fell upon those who go about the city, and then at last she was able to find what she was seeking; perhaps because, placed in tribulation and fear, she finds grace more. Finally, she says afterward:

7. (Verse 3.) "The watchmen who go about the city found me, they took my cloak." She had, therefore, a contest: but by what reason they here did not take her cloak, I am at a loss to find; unless perhaps because she said that she asked there: "Him whom my soul loved, have you seen?" She who was speaking of Christ was not stripped of her cloak, and him whom she was seeking, she found. Learn in what manner Christ may be sought: by those surely who do not seek perfunctorily, but retain him violently, just as she who says: "I held him and I will not let him go," when she found with faith, she bound him with meditation.

8. If we accept [them as] good guardians, surely they are angels. But he who has passed the angels, found the Word; and therefore there was not much of an interval when she passed from these and found Jesus. How, therefore, below did they take the cloak, unless perhaps because in the process of the offense of faith, while the Church is stripped, she is loved more by the Lord—stripping off the old man from herself so that she may put on the new—whom sins do not cover, but the secrets of the mind make clear; or because she laid down the garment of secular wisdom as she was about to come to Christ? And she was not stripped of the cloak after she began to be more perfect.

9. Simus ergo memores justificationum coelestium; ut dum eas secreta mentis voce cantamus, memores simus in nocte nominis Domini, et dicamus ut scriptum est: Haec facta est mihi, quia justificationes tuas exquisivi (Psal. CXVIII, 56); hoc est, haec memoria facta est mihi, ut memor essem et in nocte nominis tui, non ebrietate sopitus, non epulis resolutus in somnum, non curis saecularibus occupatus, ne obliviam mihi tuae venerationis irreperent: sed quotidiana meditatione membra castigans, et intentionem mentis exercens; ut assiduitate fiat nobis cursus iste sollemnis, ut Dominum Jesum etiam in noctibus toto veneremur affectu.

10. In cubiculo meo, in noctibus quaesivi quem dilexit anima mea. Possumus et sic intelligere. In cubili quaerit Christum, qui quaerit eum cum tranquillitate, cum pace. In noctibus quaerit, quoniam per parabolas loquebatur; Posuit enim tenebras latibulum suum, et nox nocti indicat scientiam (Psal. XVII, 12). Deinde, quoniam quae dicimus in corde nostro, ea nos compungere debent in cubilibus.

11. Sed tamen nec sic invenit, et ideo dicit: Exsurgam, id est, erigam et attollam intentionem meam, ut quaeram impigre, quaeram sollicite: introibo in civitatem. Est et anima quae dicit: Ego civitas munita, ego civitas obsessa (Esai. XXVII, 3). Est civitas munita per Christum, est civitas illa Hierusalem in coelo, in qua abundant divinae legis interpretes et disciplinarum periti, per quos Verbum Dei quaeritur. Quaeram, inquit, in foro illius civitatis, in illo foro ubi tractant jura consulti, ubi oleum venditur, quod Evangelicae virgines emunt, ut semper faces suae luceant, nec eas fumus iniquitatis exstinguat. Quaeram, inquit, in plateis in quibus superfluunt aquae de illis fontibus prorumpentes, de quibus Salomon dicit esse potandum.

12. Invenerunt me, inquit, custodes qui circumeunt civitatem. Dum quaerit igitur Christum; invenit custodes qui in ministerio sunt; ab his requirit: Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis? Sed anima quae Deum quaerit, etiam custodes transit. Sunt enim mysteria quae etiam angeli concupiscunt videre, unde Petrus ait: Nuntiata sunt, inquit, vobis per eos quibus evangelizaverunt, Spiritu santo misso de coelo, in quem concupiscunt angeli prospicere (I Pet. I, 12).

9. Let us, therefore, be mindful of the celestial justifications; so that while we sing them with the secret voice of the mind, we may be mindful in the night of the name of the Lord, and let us say as it is written: "This was done to me, because I sought out your justifications" (Psalm 119:56); that is, this memory was made to me, that I might be mindful even in the night of your name—not numbed by drunkenness, not loosened into sleep by banquets, not occupied by secular cares, lest forgetfulness of your veneration should creep upon me: but chastising the limbs with daily meditation, and exercising the intention of the mind; so that by assiduity this solemn course may be made for us, that we may venerate the Lord Jesus even in the nights with all [our] affection.

10. "In my chamber, in the nights I sought him whom my soul loved." We can also understand [it] thus. In the bed he seeks Christ, who seeks him with tranquility, with peace. In the nights she seeks, since he spoke through parables; for "He set darkness as his hiding place, and night shows knowledge to night" (Psalm 18:12). Then, since those things which we say in our heart, those things ought to prick us in our beds.

11. But nevertheless she did not find him even thus, and therefore she says: "I will arise," that is, I will erect and lift up my intention, so that I may seek unweariedly, seek solicitously: I will enter into the city. It is also the soul that says: "I [am] a fortified city, I [am] a besieged city" (Isaiah 27:3). It is a city fortified through Christ; it is that city Jerusalem in heaven, in which there abound interpreters of the divine law and those skilled in disciplines, through whom the Word of God is sought. I will seek, she says, in the forum of that city, in that forum where the consultants of laws treat, where oil is sold, which the Evangelical virgins buy, so that their torches may always shine, and the smoke of iniquity may not extinguish them. I will seek, she says, in the streets in which waters overflow, breaking forth from those fountains from which Solomon says one must drink.

12. "The watchmen who go about the city found me," she says. While she seeks Christ, therefore, she finds the watchmen who are in ministry; from these she requires: "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" But the soul that seeks God also passes the watchmen. For there are mysteries which even angels desire to see, whence Peter says: "[These things] have been announced to you," he says, "through those who have evangelized to you, the Holy Spirit being sent from heaven, into whom the angels desire to look" (1 Peter 1:12).

13. (Vers. 4.) Quam modicum cum transivi ab eis, inveni eum, tenui eum, et non dimisi eum. Ergo qui transierit custodes, Verbum invenit. Transivit Joannes, qui Verbum apud Patrem invenit. Multi quoque alii sunt qui in otio quaerunt Christum, et non inveniunt: et quaerunt eum in persecutionibus, et inveniunt. Et ideo quasi post tentationes, quia in periculis fidelium suorum adest: Quam modicum, inquit, cum transivi ab eis, inveni eum, et tenui eum, et non dimisi eum. Omnis enim qui quaerit, invenit; et qui invenerit, adhaerere debet, ne possit amittere.

14. Et quoniam per Evangelium in terris videmus coelestia mysteria figurata, veniamus ad Magdalenam, veniamus ad alteram Mariam. Consideremus quemadmodum Christum in cubili corporis sui, in quo defunctus jacebat, in noctibus quaesiverint, quando dixit illis angelus: Jesum qui crucifixus est quaeritis: non est hic, surrexit enim: quid igitur quaeritis viventem cum mortuis (Matth. XXVIII, 5 et seq.)? Quid quaeritis in sepulcro eum, qui jam in coelo sit? Quid quaeritis in vinculis sepulturae, universorum vincula solventem? Non sepulcrum huic sedes, sed coelum est; ideo dixit una ex his: Quaesivi eum, et non inveni (Cant. III, 1). Tamen dum vadunt apostolis renuntiare, misertus quaerentes, occurrit eis Jesus dicens: Avete. Illae autem accesserunt, et tenuerunt pedes ejus, et adoraverunt eum.

15. Tenetur ergo Jesus, et delectatur sic teneri, quia fide tenetur. Denique delectavit eum et illa mulier, quae tetigit eum, et curata est a sanguinis fluxu, de qua dixit: Tetigit me aliquis; nam sentio virtutem de me exisse (Luc. VIII, 46). Tange ergo, et fide tene eum, et constringe fideliter pedes ejus; ut virtus de eo exeat, ut sanet animam tuam. Et si dicat: Noli me tangere; tu tene. Nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem meum, dixit (Joan. XX, 17). Semel dixit: Noli me tangere, quando resurrexit: aut forte illi dixit, quae putabat furto esse sublatum, et non virtute propria resuscitatum. Denique in alio libro habes, quia tenentibus pedes et adorantibus dixit: Nolite timere (Matth. XXVIII, 10).

16. Tene ergo et tu, anima, sicut tenebat et Maria, et dic: Tenui eum, et non dimittam: cui dicebant ambae, tenemus te. Vade ad patrem, sed non derelinquas me, ne iterum labar; et cum Maria non errante, sed arborem vitae tenente, tecum rape tuis pedibus inhaerentem. Tecum ascendam, noli me dimittere, ne iterum serpens venena sua fundat, ne iterum queat femineum mordere vestigium, ut supplantet Adam. Dicat ergo anima tua: Teneo te, et inducam te in domum matris meae, et in secretum ejus quae concepit me (Cant. III, 4); ut cognoscam mysteria tua, ut hauriam sacramenta tua.

13. (Verse 4.) "When I had passed from them but a little, I found him, I held him, and I did not let him go." Therefore, he who shall have passed the watchmen, found the Word. John passed [them], who found the Word with the Father. There are also many others who seek Christ in leisure and do not find [him]: and they seek him in persecutions, and find [him]. And therefore as if after temptations, because he is present in the dangers of his faithful ones: "When I had passed from them but a little," she says, "I found him, and I held him, and I did not let him go." For everyone who seeks, finds; and he who shall have found [him], ought to adhere [to him], lest he be able to lose [him].

14. And since through the Gospel we see celestial mysteries figured on earth, let us come to Magdalene, let us come to the other Mary. Let us consider in what manner they sought Christ in the bed of his body, in which he lay dead, in the nights, when the angel said to them: "You seek Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, for he has risen: why therefore do you seek the living with the dead?" (Matthew 28:5 et seq.). Why do you seek him in the sepulcher, who may already be in heaven? Why do you seek him in the bonds of burial, who looses the bonds of all? Not the sepulcher is the seat for this [man], but heaven; therefore one of these said: "I sought him, and I found him not" (Song 3:1). Nevertheless, while they go to announce [this] to the apostles, having pitied [them] seeking [him], Jesus met them, saying: "Hail." But they approached, and held his feet, and adored him.

15. Jesus is therefore held, and he is delighted to be thus held, because he is held by faith. Finally, that woman also delighted him, who touched him, and was cured of the flow of blood, of whom he said: "Someone touched me; for I feel virtue has gone out from me" (Luke 8:46). Touch, therefore, and hold him by faith, and faithfully bind his feet; so that virtue may go out from him, that he may heal your soul. And if he should say: "Do not touch me"; you hold [him]. "For I have not yet ascended to my Father," he said (John 20:17). He said "Do not touch me" once, when he rose: or perhaps he said [it] to her, who thought he had been taken away by theft, and not raised by his own virtue. Finally, you have in another book, that he said to [them] holding [his] feet and adoring: "Do not be afraid" (Matthew 28:10).

16. Hold, therefore, you also, O soul, just as Mary also was holding, and say: "I held him, and I will not let him go": to whom both were saying, we hold you. Go to the father, but do not desert me, lest I fall again; and with Mary not wandering, but holding the tree of life, snatch [him] with you, clinging to your feet. I will ascend with you, do not let me go, lest again the serpent pour out his poisons, lest again he be able to bite the female heel, so that he may supplant Adam. Let your soul say, therefore: "I hold you, and I will lead you into the house of my mother, and into the secret place of her who conceived me" (Song 3:4); so that I may know your mysteries, so that I may draw your sacraments.

17. Tenui eum, nec relinquam eum, donec introducam eum in domum matris meae, et in cubiculum ejus quae me concepit. Quae est domus matris meae et cubiculum ejus, nisi internum tuae secretumque naturae? Hanc domum serva, hujus domus mundato penetralia, ut cum immaculata domus fuerit, nec ullius adulterinae conscientiae sordibus inquinata, spiritalis domus in sacerdotium sanctum lapide angulari coagmentata consurgat, et Spiritus sanctus habitet in ea. Quae sic Christum requirit, quae sic Christum obsecrat, non relinquitur ab eo: immo etiam frequenter revisitur.

18. Vel domus matris, fortasse domus est, in qua praefulget moralium disciplina: secretum autem illud est, in quo sunt altiora mysteria, in quibus divinae gratiae mella redolent. An non omni melle dulcior peccatorum remissio? Nonne omni floregrior resurrectio mortuorum? Suscipe igitur Evam, non jam ficulneae foliis coopertam, sed sancto amictam Spiritu, et nova gratia gloriosam; quia jam non tamquam nudata absconditur, sed tamquam circumdata vestimenti splendore fulgentis occurrit, quia vestit eam gratia: sed nec Adam primo nudus erat, quando eum innocentia vestiebat. Videntes itaque eam filiae Hierusalem Christo inhaerentem, et adhuc ascendentem cum eo (dignatur enim quaerentibus frequenter occurrere, et condescendere, ut eos elevet) dicunt:

19. (Vers. 6.) Quae est haec quae ascendit a deserto? Sis sicut illa anima, quae Christi in se charitatem excitat, quam mirantur ascendentem virtutes coelorum; quod sine offensione ascendat, et ex hoc mundo ascendat cum laetitia et jucunditate, sicut vitis propago, et sicut fumus se ad superna subrigat, fragrans odorem resurrectionis piaie, et suavitatem fidei, sicut habes scriptum: Quae est haec quae ascendit a deserto, sicut vitis propago, fumo incensi odorificata, myrrha et thure ab omnibus pulveribus unguenti. Pulchre subtilitatem ejus expressit, pulveris comparatione, et unguenti commemoratione; quia in Exodo subtile legimus, et ex multis compositum thymiana, illud esse incensum propheticum, quod est sanctorum oratio, ut dirigatur in conspectu Domini, sicut et David dicit: Dirigatur oratio mea, sicut incensum in conspectu tuo (Psalm. CXL, 2).

20. Quae est ista quae ascendit a deserto? Desertus hic terrae locus et incultus videtur, sentibus et spinis nostrorum obsitus delictorum. Mirantur videlicet quomodo anima quae ante in inferno relinquebatur, inhaereat Dei Verbo, et ascenderit sicut vitis propago, in superiora subrigens se, velut fumus natus ex igne, atque alta petens, tum praeterea bonis odoribus fragret. Odor autem ille orationis piaie redolet suavitatem, quae dirigatur sicut incensum in conspectu Domini (Psal. CXL, 2).

17. "I held him, nor will I leave him, until I lead him into the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me." What is the house of my mother and her chamber, but the internal and secret [part] of your nature? Keep this house, cleanse the secret places of this house, so that when the house shall have been immaculate, nor defiled by the filth of any adulterous conscience, a spiritual house may rise up, joined together by the cornerstone into a holy priesthood, and the Holy Spirit may dwell in it. [She] who thus seeks Christ, who thus beseeches Christ, is not left by him: nay, even she is frequently revisited.

18. Or the house of the mother, perhaps, is the house in which the discipline of morals shines forth: but that secret [place] is [the one] in which there are deeper mysteries, in which the honeys of divine grace are fragrant. Is not the remission of sins sweeter than all honey? Is not the resurrection of the dead more pleasing than every flower? Receive Eve, therefore, not already covered with fig leaves, but clothed with the Holy Spirit, and glorious with new grace; because now she is not hidden as if stripped, but she meets [you] as if surrounded by the splendor of a shining garment, because grace clothes her: but neither was Adam stripped at first, when innocence was clothing him. Therefore, the daughters of Jerusalem seeing her clinging to Christ, and still ascending with him (for he deigns to meet those seeking [him] frequently, and to condescend, so that he may elevate them), they say:

19. (Verse 6.) "Who is this that ascends from the desert?" Be as that soul, which excites the charity of Christ in itself, whom the virtues of the heavens admire ascending; that she ascends without offense, and ascends from this world with joy and pleasantness, like a shoot of a vine, and like smoke raises itself to the heights, fragrant with the odor of a pious resurrection, and the sweetness of faith, just as you have written: "Who is this that ascends from the desert, like a shoot of a vine, perfumed with the smoke of incense, with myrrh and frankincense from all the powders of the ointment." Beautifully he expressed her subtlety, by the comparison of powder, and by the commemoration of ointment; because in Exodus we read of subtle incense composed of many [things], that that is the prophetic incense, which is the prayer of the saints, that it may be directed in the sight of the Lord, just as David also says: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight" (Psalm 141:2).

20. "Who is this that ascends from the desert?" This place of the earth seems deserted and uncultivated, overgrown with the briars and thorns of our delights. They wonder, obviously, how the soul which before was left in hell, clings to the Word of God, and has ascended like a shoot of a vine, raising itself into the higher [regions], like smoke born from fire, and seeking the heights, then besides being fragrant with good odors. But that odor of pious prayer redounds with sweetness, which is directed "as incense in the sight of the Lord" (Psalm 141:2).

Et in Apocalypsi legimus, quod Ascendit fumus incensorum de orationibus sanctorum (Apoc. VIII, 4). quae incensa referuntur per angelorum suorum orationes, scilicet super altare illud aureum quod est ante sedem Dei. Et tamquam suave piae precationis fragrat unguentum; quia de aeternorum et invisibilium, non de corporali petitione compositum est: praecipue tamen myrrham redolet et thus, eo quod peccato mortuus sit, et Deo vivat. Unde et in posterioribus: Ibo, inquit, mihi ad montem myrrhae, et ad collem thuris. Sequitur:

21. (Vers. 7.) En sexaginta potentes in circuitu propaginis ejus, strictis armatis, et eruditi praeliaribus disciplinis. Qui sunt isti fortes et eruditi praeliaribus disciplinis, adverte. Fortis et ecclesiastici est viri non dissimulare cum aliquid imminet, sed praetendere et tamquam explorare de specula quadam mentis, et obviare cogitatione provida rebus profuturis; ne forte dicat postea: Ideo in ista incidi, quia non arbitrabar posse evenire. Denique nisi explorentur adversa, cito occupant. Ut in bello improvisus hostis vix sustinetur, et si imparatos inveniatur, facile opprimit: ita animum mala inexplorata plus frangunt. In his ergo duobus illa est animi excellentia, ut primum animus tuus bonis exercitatus cogitationibus, mundo corde quod verum et honestum est, videat: Beati enim mundo corde, quia ipsi etiam Deum videbunt: atque id quod honestum est, solum bonum judicet. Deinde nullis perturbetur occupationibus, nullis cupiditatibus fluctuet.

Neque vero id quisquam facile facit: quid enim tam difficile quam dispicere tamquam ex arce aliqua sapientiae, opes aliaeque omnia, quae plerisque videntur magna et praecelsa? Deinde ut iudicium tuum stabili ratione confirmes, et quae judicaveris levia, tamquam nihil profutura contemnas? Deinde ut si quid acciderit adversi, idque grave et acerbum putetur, ita feras, ut nihil praeter naturam accidisse putes, cum legeris: Nudus sum natus, nudus exibo: quae Dominus dedit, Dominus et abstulit (Job. I, 21); et utique et filios amiserat et facultates: servesque in omnibus personam sapientis et iusti, sicut ille servavit, qui ait: Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est, sit nomen Domini benedictum (Ibid.). Et infra, Sicut una insipientium mulierum locuta es: si bona suscepimus de manu Domini, quae mala sunt non sustinebimus (Ibid., 2)?

And in the Apocalypse we read, that "The smoke of the incenses ascended from the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 8:4), which incenses are carried back through the prayers of their angels, namely upon that golden altar which is before the seat of God. And it is fragrant like a sweet ointment of pious prayer; because it is composed of the petition of eternal and invisible [things], not of corporal [things]: especially, however, it is fragrant with myrrh and frankincense, because it is dead to sin, and lives to God. Whence also in later [verses]: "I will go," he says, "for myself to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." There follows:

21. (Verse 7.) "Behold sixty mighty men in the circuit of its shoot, armed with drawn swords, and learned in warlike disciplines." Who are these strong and learned [ones] in warlike disciplines, take notice. It is [the mark] of a strong and ecclesiastical man not to dissemble when something is imminent, but to stretch forward and as if to explore from a certain watchtower of the mind, and to meet with provident thought the things that will be profitable; lest perhaps he say afterward: For this reason I fell into those [things], because I did not think it could happen. Finally, unless adversities are explored, they quickly occupy. As in war an unforeseen enemy is scarcely sustained, and if he should find [them] unprepared, he easily oppresses: so unobserved evils break the mind more. In these two [things], therefore, is that excellence of the mind, so that first your mind, exercised by good thoughts, may see with a clean heart what is true and honest: for "Blessed are the clean of heart, because they shall see God even themselves": and that which is honest, let him judge the only good. Then let him be disturbed by no occupations, let him fluctuate with no desires.

Nor, indeed, does anyone do that easily: for what is so difficult as to look down as if from some citadel of wisdom, upon riches and all other things, which to most seem great and lofty? Then so that you may confirm your judgment with stable reason, and those things which you shall have judged light, you may condemn as about to profit nothing? Then so that if anything of adversity should happen, and that should be thought grave and bitter, you may so bear it, that you think nothing besides nature has happened, when you read: "Naked was I born, naked shall I go out: what the Lord gave, the Lord has also taken away" (Job 1:21); and certainly he had lost both sons and faculties: and you may keep in all [things] the person of the wise and just [man], just as he kept [it], who says: "As it pleased the Lord, so it was done, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Ibid.). And below, "You have spoken as one of the foolish women: if we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, shall we not sustain those which are evil?" (Ibid. 2:10).

23. Non est igitur mediocris nec discreta a caeteris animi fortitudo, quae bellum cum virtutibus gerat; sed quae sola defendat ornamenta virtutum omnium, et iudicia custodiat, et quae inexpiabili praelio adversus omnia vitia decernat, invicta ad labores, fortis ad pericula, rigidior adversus voluptates, dura adversus illecebras, quibus aurem deferre nesciat, nec (ut dicitur) ave dicat, pecuniam negligat, avaritiam fugiat tamquam labem quamdam, quae virtutem effeminet; nihil enim tam contrarium fortitudini, quam lucro vinci. Frequenter pulsus hostibus, inclinata in fugam adversariorum acie, dum exuviis caesorum capitur praeliator, inter ipsos quos stravit, miserandus occubuit: et triumphis suis dejectae legiones dum spoliis occupantur, hostem in se revocarunt, qui fugerat.

24. Fortitudo igitur tam immanem pestem repellat et proterat, nec tentetur cupiditibus, nec frangatur metu; quia virtus sibi constat, ut fortiter omnia persequatur vitia, tamquam virtutis venena. Iracundiam velut quibusdam propulset armis, quae tollit consilium, et tamquam aegritudinem vitet. Gloriam quoque caveat appetentiam, quae frequenter nocuit immoderatus appetita, semper autem usurpata. Emolliri enim adulatione non solum fortitudinis non esse, sed etiam ignaviae videtur. Horum fortium castra Jacob videns in spiritu, Castra, inquit, Dei sunt haec (Gen. XXXII, 2).

25. Quid autem sunt sexaginta? Scimus hebdomadam veteris, ogdoaden autem novi esse Testamenti, scilicet quando Christus resurrexit, et dies omnibus novae salutis illuxit: quo die se fulgor plenae atque perfectae circumcisionis humanis pectoribus infudit. Septem autem et octo, quindecim faciunt. Isti ergo sunt septem et octo, id est, quindecim, quibus conduxit Osee meretricem, quam conducendam Dominus ei praeceperat. Hebdomada itaque et octava significant duorum Testamentorum consummationem, et fidei plenitudinem: quindenarius vero numerus quater ductus, qui sunt sexaginta, Evangelii perfectionem.

26. Quae est autem propago in cuius circuitu potentes isti sunt? Nephtholim, inquit, vitis remissa, porrigens in germine decorem. Sarmentum vitis aliud amputatur quod videtur inutile, ne cassa vitis sarmentorum exultatione luxuriet, et aliud paulisper reciditur et remittitur, ut fructum afferat, cuius decus in generatione porrigitur; quia dum ad superna se subrigit, vitem amplectitur, et ad verticem ascendens, jugi quaedam colla vitium pretiosi palmitis vestit monili. Est et ille decorus in generatione, quia plenis palmitibus multos fructus exundat.

23. It is not, therefore, a mediocre fortitude of mind, nor discrete from the rest, which carries on war with the virtues; but that which alone defends the ornaments of all virtues, and keeps the judgments, and which decrees with inexorable battle against all vices—invincible to labors, strong to dangers, more rigid against pleasures, hard against enticements, to which it may not know how to give ear, nor (as it is said) say "hail," let it neglect money, let it flee avarice as a certain stain, which may emasculate virtue; for nothing is so contrary to fortitude, as to be conquered by lucre. Frequently, the enemies being driven away, the battle line of the adversaries being inclined into flight, while the warrior is captured by the spoils of the slain, among those whom he laid low, he lay dead to be pitied: and the legions cast down by their own triumphs while they are occupied with spoils, called back against themselves the enemy, who had fled.

24. Let fortitude, therefore, repel and tread upon so great a pestilence, nor let it be tempted by desires, nor broken by fear; because virtue is consistent with itself, so that it may bravely persecute all vices, as if they were poisons of virtue. Let it drive back wrath as if with certain arms, which takes away counsel, and let it avoid [it] like a sickness. Let it also beware of the desire for glory, which has frequently harmed [when] more immoderately desired, but always [when] usurped. For to be softened by adulation seems not only not to be [of] fortitude, but even to be [of] sloth. Jacob, seeing the camps of these strong [ones] in spirit, said: "These are the camps of God" (Genesis 32:2).

25. But what are the sixty? We know that the week belongs to the Old, but the octave to the New Testament, namely when Christ rose, and the day of new salvation shone for all: on which day the splendor of full and perfect circumcision infused itself into human breasts. But seven and eight make fifteen. These, therefore, are seven and eight, that is, fifteen, with which Hosea hired the harlot, whom the Lord had commanded him to hire. The week and the eighth, therefore, signify the consummation of the two Testaments, and the fullness of faith: but the number fifteen being led four times, which are sixty, [signifies] the perfection of the Gospel.

26. But what is the shoot in whose circuit these mighty [ones] are? "Naphtali," he says, "is a loose vine, reaching out beauty in the bud." One shoot of a vine is cut off which seems useless, lest the vine should be wanton with a vain exultation of shoots, and another is pruned a little and left, that it may bring forth fruit, whose beauty is reached out in the generation; because while it raises itself to the heights, it embraces the vine, and ascending to the top, it clothes the necks of the vines with a certain yoke of a precious branch as with a necklace. He also is beautiful in generation, because he overflows with many fruits with full branches.

Decorum hoc, sed multo illud pulchrius, quod haerentem palmitem viti significat spiritali, cujus nos sarmentum sumus, et fructum afferre possumus, si maneamus in vite; sin autem, praecidimur. Sanctus patriarcha Nephthalim erat palmes abundans, unde et Moyses dicit: Nephthalim satietas accipientium, replebitur benedictione a Domino: mare et Africum possidebit (Deut. XXXIII, 23); exponens hoc quod Jacob dixerat, quid sit vitis remissa, hoc est, per fidei gratiam vinculis mortis exutus: in quo significatur populus Dei ad libertatem fidei et ubertatem vocatus gratiae, toto orbe diffusus, qui jugum Christi bono fructu vestiat, et ligna verae illius vitis, hoc est, mysteria Dominicae crucis ambiat, nec timeat confessionis ejus periculum: sed magis etiam in persecutionibus positus, Christi nomine gloriatur.

27. Tenent autem fortes isti gladios in manibus, quos pro Christi nomine non refutent, vel quibus corporalia a spiritualibus, umbram a veritate distinguant. Vivus est enim Dei sermo et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae ac spiritus; compagum quoque ac medullarum, et discretor cogitationum, et intentionum cordis: et non est ulla creatura invisibilis in conspectu ejus, sed omnia nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus (Hebr. IV, 12 et 13). Est enim verbum Dei gladius bis acutus. Sunt et alii duo gladii in Ecclesia de quibus dicitur: Domine, ecce duo gladii hic, ecclesiasticae scilicet potestatis et mundanae, quibus falsa repugnat misericordia.

28. Est justa misericordia: sed est etiam injusta misericordia. Denique in Lege scriptum est de quodam: Non misereberis illius (Deut. XIX, 13). Et in libris Regnorum legis quia Saul propterea contraxit offensam, quia miseratus est Agag hostium regem, quem prohibuerat sententia divina servari (I Reg. XV, 9). Ut si quis latronem filiis deprecantibus motus, et lacrymis conjugis ejus inflexus, absolvendum putet, cui adhuc latrocinandi aspiret affectus: nonne innocentes tradet exitio, qui liberat multorum exitia cogitantem?

This [is] beautiful, but that [is] much more beautiful, which signifies the branch clinging to the spiritual vine, of which we are the shoot, and we can bring forth fruit, if we remain in the vine; but if not, we are cut off. The holy patriarch Naphtali was an abundant branch, whence Moses also says: "Naphtali [is] the satiety of those receiving, he shall be filled with blessing from the Lord: he shall possess the sea and the South" (Deuteronomy 33:23); explaining this that Jacob had said, what it may be, "a loose vine," that is, through the grace of faith stripped of the bonds of death: in which is signified the people of God called to the liberty of faith and the abundance of grace, diffused through the whole world, who may clothe the yoke of Christ with good fruit, and may go around the woods of that true vine, that is, the mysteries of the Lord's cross, nor fear the danger of his confession: but rather even placed in persecutions, he may glory in the name of Christ.

But these strong [ones] hold swords in [their] hands, which they do not refuse for the name of Christ, or by which they may distinguish corporal [things] from spiritual, the shadow from the truth. For "The word of God is living and efficacious, and more penetrating than every two-edged sword, and reaching even to the division of the soul and spirit; also of the joints and marrows, and a discernor of thoughts, and of the intentions of the heart: and there is no invisible creature in its sight, but all [things] are naked and open to its eyes" (Hebrews 4:12 and 13). For the word of God is a two-edged sword. There are also two other swords in the Church of which it is said: "Lord, behold two swords here," namely of ecclesiastical and worldly power, by which false mercy is fought.

28. There is a just mercy: but there is also an unjust mercy. Finally, it is written in the Law concerning a certain man: "You shall not have mercy on him" (Deuteronomy 19:13). And in the books of the Kingdoms [it is] of the law because Saul for that reason contracted an offense, because he had mercy on Agag the king of the enemies, whom the divine sentence had prohibited from being saved (1 Samuel 15:9). As if someone, moved by the sons deprecating [for him], and bent by the tears of his wife, should think that a robber ought to be acquitted, in whom the desire of robbing still breathes: will he not deliver the innocent to destruction, who liberates the one thinking of the destruction of many?

Certe si gladium reprimat, vincula dissolvit, laxat exsilium; car latrocinandi qua potest clementiore via non eripit facultatem, qui voluntatem extorquere non potuit? Deinde inter duos, hoc est, accusatorem et reum pari periculo de capite decernentes, alterum si non probasset, alterum si non esset ab accusatore convictus, non id quod iustitiae est, iudex sequatur; sed dum miseretur rei, damnet probantem: aut dum accusatori favet qui probare non possit, abdicat innoxium. Non potest igitur haec dici justa misericordia.

29. In ipsa Ecclesia ubi maxime misereri decet, teneri quam maxime debet forma iustitiae, ne quis a consortio communionis abstentus, brevi lacrymula, atque ad tempus parata, vel etiam uberioribus fletibus communionem quam plurimis debet postulare temporibus, facilitate sacerdotis extorqueat. Nonne cum uni indulget indigno, plurimos facit ad prolapsionis contagium provocari? Facilitas enim veniae, incentivum tribuit delinquendi. Hoc eo dictum est, ut sciamus secundum verbum Dei, secundum rationem dispensandam esse misericordiam debitoribus: alias autem gladius quod suum est, exsequatur.

30. (Vers. 9, 10.) Lectum fecit sibi Salomon rex ex lignis Libani, columnas ejus fecit argenteas, acclinatorium aureum, ascensum ejus purpureum, dorsum ejus gemmis stratum. Quis est iste lectus, nisi corporis nostri species? Namque in gemmis aer specie fulgoris ostenditur, in auro ignis, aqua in argento, terra per lignum; ex quibus corpus humanum quatuor constat elementis, in quo nostra recubat anima, si non aspero montium, non humi arido expers quietis existat; sed sublimis a vitiis ligno fulta requiescat. Unde et David dicit: Dominus opem ferat illi super lectum doloris ejus (Psal. XL, 4); nam lectus doloris esse qui potest, cum dolere non possit, qui non habet sensum? Corpus autem doloris, sicut corpus est mortis: Infelix ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis ejus (Rom. VII, 24)?

31. Et quoniam versiculum induximus, in quo Dominici corporis fecimus mentionem, ne quem forte perturbet legentem, quod Dominus corpus suscepit doloris, recordetur quia Lazari mortem et doluit et flevit, et in passione est vulneratus, atque ex vulnere sanguis et aqua exivit, spiritumque exhalavit (Joan. XI, 35). Aqua ad lavacrum, sanguis ad potum, spiritus ad resurrectionem. Unus enim est Christus nobis spes, fides, charitas: spes in resurrectione, fides in lavacro, charitas in sacramento.

Certainly if he restrains the sword, he dissolves the bonds, he looses the exile; why, by what more clement way he can, does he not take away the faculty of robbing from the one from whom he could not extort the will? Then between two, that is, the accuser and the defendant, decreeing concerning life with equal danger—one if he should not have proven [his case], the other if he should not have been convicted by the accuser—let the judge not follow that which belongs to justice; but while he has mercy on the defendant, let him condemn the one proving; or while he favors the accuser who cannot prove, he abdicates the innocent. This, therefore, cannot be called just mercy.

29. In the Church itself where it most befits to have mercy, the form of justice ought to be kept as much as possible, lest someone excluded from the fellowship of communion, by a short tear and prepared for the time, or even with more abundant weepings, should extort communion by the facility of the priest, which he ought to ask for for very many times. Does he not, when he indulges one unworthy man, provoke very many to the contagion of falling? For facility of pardon gives an incentive for delinquent behavior. This was said to this end, so that we may know that according to the word of God, according to reason, mercy is to be dispensed to debtors: but otherwise let the sword execute what is its own.

30. (Verse 9, 10.) "King Solomon made for himself a litter from the woods of Lebanon, its columns he made of silver, the reclining place of gold, its ascent of purple, its back strewn with gems." What is this litter, but the appearance of our body? For in the gems the air is shown by the appearance of splendor, fire in gold, water in silver, earth through wood; from which the human body consists of four elements, in which our soul reclines, if it does not exist in the rough [part] of the mountains, not in the arid ground without rest; but sublime from vices, let it rest supported by the wood. Whence David also says: "The Lord bring aid to him upon the bed of his sorrow" (Psalm 41:4); for what can be a bed of sorrow, since he cannot sorrow, who does not have sense? But the body of sorrow, just as it is the body of death: "Unhappy man [that] I [am]! who will liberate me from the body of this death" (Romans 7:24)?

31. And since we have introduced the little verse in which we made mention of the Lord's body, lest perhaps it should disturb anyone reading, that the Lord took up a body of sorrow, let him remember that he both sorrowed and wept for the death of Lazarus, and in the passion he was wounded, and from the wound blood and water went out, and he breathed out [his] spirit (John 11:35). Water for the washing, blood for the drink, spirit for the resurrection. For Christ is one for us: hope, faith, charity: hope in the resurrection, faith in the washing, charity in the sacrament.

Tamen ut corpus suscepit doloris, ita etiam stratum in infirmitate versavit; quia convertit in commodum carnis humanae: nam passione infirmitas est soluta, mors resurrectione. Et tamen moerere pro saeculo, gaudere debetis in Domino: tristes ad poenitentiam, alacres ad gratiam, licet et flere cum flentibus, et gaudere cum gauden- tibus oportere gentium Doctor salutari praeceptione praescripserit (Rom. XII, 15).

32. Media charitate constravit, propter filias Hierusalem. Quae sunt istae filiae? Non debet esse occultum, quod superiores videantur qui ante generali sunt, infir- miores qui postea. Comparantur enim utero mulieris partus saeculi huius; quoniam fortiores sunt qui in virtute juventutis nati sunt, infirmiores qui tempore senectutis. Defecit enim multitudine generationis hoc saeculum sicut vulva generantis, et tam- quam senescens creatura robur juventutis suae, velut marcenti jam virium suarum vigore deponit. Istae ergo sunt filiae Hierusalem, id est, teneriores et infirmiores animae: istis se exhibet ut luceat imago ejus in confessione earum, luceat in dilectione, luceat in operibus; et si fieri potest, tota ejus species exprimitur in ipsis.

33. Hae igitur filiae Hierusalem sponsam ascendentem, et non resistentem viden- tes, et meritorum ejus odoribus delectatae, agnoscentes quoque Salomonis illius esse pacifici sponsam, etiam comitatu sedulo persequuntur usque ad lectum Salomonis: eo quod ei vera in Christo requies debeat. Lectus enim sanctorum Christus est, in quo universorum fessa saecularibus praeliis corda requiescunt. In hoc lecto requievit Isaac, et benedixit filium juniorem, dicens: Major serviet minori: in hoc lecto recubans Jacob, benedixit duodecim patriarchas: in hoc lecto recubans archisynagogi filia, surrexit a morte: in hoc lecto jacens unicus viduae defunctus filius, mortis vincula Christi voce vocatus dissolvit. Perducta igitur sponsa usque ad sponsi requiem, nuptiale canunt carmen, dicentes filiabus Hierusalem:

34. (Vers. 11.) Egredimini et videte in rege Salomone coronam, qua coronavit eum mater ejus, in die sponsalium ejus. Canunt epithalamium, et vocant caeteras potesta- tes coelorum vel animas, ut videant charitatem, quam circa filias Hierusalem habet Christus. Unde et meruit coronari a matre quasi filius charitatis, sicut Paulus ostendit dicens: Quia Deus eripuit nos de potestate tenebrarum, et transtulit in regnum filii charitatis suae (Coloss. I, 13). Charitatis itaque filius et ipse charitas est: non ex accidentibus habens charitatem, sed habens eam substantia sua, sicut regnum de quo dicit: Ego in hoc natus sum (Joan. XVIII, 17).

Nevertheless, as he took up a body of sorrow, so also he turned the bed in infirmity; because he converted [it] to the benefit of human flesh: for by the passion infirmity was dissolved, death by the resurrection. And nevertheless you ought to mourn for the world, [but] rejoice in the Lord: sad for penance, cheerful for grace, although the Doctor of the nations prescribed by salutary precept that it behooves to weep with those weeping, and to rejoice with those rejoicing (Romans 12:15).

32. "He paved the middle with charity, on account of the daughters of Jerusalem." Who are these daughters? It ought not to be hidden, that those who are before seem superior [and] general, [and] those who [are] afterward seem weaker. For the births of this world are compared to the womb of a woman; since those who were born in the virtue of youth are stronger, those who [were born] in the time of old age are weaker. For this world has failed in the multitude of generation like the womb of one giving birth, and as if a senescing creature, it lays down the strength of its youth, as if with the vigor of its powers already withering. These, therefore, are the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, the more tender and weaker souls: to these he exhibits himself so that his image may shine in their confession, shine in [their] love, shine in [their] works; and if it can be done, that his whole appearance may be expressed in them.

These daughters of Jerusalem, therefore, seeing the bride ascending, and not resisting, and delighted by the odors of her merits, recognizing also that she is the bride of that peaceful Solomon, they also follow with a zealous company even to the bed of Solomon: for the reason that true rest in Christ is owed to her. For the bed of the saints is Christ, in which the hearts of all, weary from secular battles, rest. In this bed Isaac rested, and blessed [his] younger son, saying: "The elder shall serve the younger": in this bed Jacob, reclining, blessed the twelve patriarchs: in this bed the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, reclining, rose from death: in this bed the only dead son of the widow, lying, dissolved the bonds of death, called by the voice of Christ. The bride being led, therefore, even to the rest of the bridegroom, they sing a nuptial song, saying to the daughters of Jerusalem:

34. (Verse 11.) "Go forth and see in King Solomon the crown, with which his mother crowned him, on the day of his espousals." They sing an epithalamium, and they call the other powers of the heavens or souls, so that they may see the charity which Christ has toward the daughters of Jerusalem. Whence also he merited to be crowned by [his] mother as the son of charity, just as Paul shows, saying: "Because God rescued us from the power of darkness, and translated [us] into the kingdom of the son of his charity" (Colossians 1:13). The son of charity, therefore, is himself also charity: not having charity from accidents, but having it by his substance, just as the kingdom concerning which he says: "I was born for this" (John 18:37).

35. Ideoque dicit, Egredimini, id est, exite de sollicitudinibus et cogitationibus saeculi: exite de angustiis corporalibus: exite de vanitatibus mundi, et videte quam rex pacificus in die sponsalium suorum habeat charitatem: quam gloriosus sit, quia corporibus resurrectionem dedit, et animas sibi junxit. Haec magni est corona certaminis, hoc praeclarum munus sponsalium Christi, sanguis ejus et passio. Quis enim plus potuit dare, qui sibi etiam non pepercit, et pro nobis in mortem animam suam posuit?

36. Quae autem corona gloriae nisi Ecclesia quae caput suum Christum coronat? Quae jucunditas universae terrae, nisi domus populi Christiani, aula sanctorum, de quibus scriptum est: In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum (Psal. XVIII, 5)? Ergo quia corona gloriae est Ecclesia, ideo dicitur: Egredimini, filiae Sion, et videte regem Salomonem, in corona qua coronavit eum mater ejus, in die sponsalium ejus, et in die jucunditatis cordis ejus.

37. Ad animas dicitur ut e gurgustiiis et claustris exeant corporalibus, extra corporis cogitationes exeant, egrediantur a cupiditatibus, et a curis, et a caeteris carnis istius et affectus lubrici passionibus: supra mundum ascendant, de hoc mundo exeant, Christo occurrant, paratae adsint facibus ardentibus relucentes, quasi angeli Christi haec loquuntur: Non potestis videre claritatem ejus, gloriam ejus, nisi egrediamini humanae fragilitatis curas, filiae Hierusalem. Quasi dicant: Quid viventem inter mortuos quaeritis (Luc. XXIV, 5)? Non intra hunc mundum quaeritur Christus, qui supra mundum suos esse voluit discipulos.

38. Quae est corona qua coronatur Christus, nisi corona gloriae? Joseph coronam habuit castitatis, Paulus justitiae, Petrus fidei. Singularum virtutum coronae sunt. Solus Christus habet coronam gloriae, qua eum Ecclesia coronavit. In hac corona omnes coronae sunt; quia gloria non portio unius coronae, sed praemium omnium coronarum est.

CAPUT QUARTUM.

1. (Vers. 1.) Jam vero conversus Sponsus in laudem sponsae dicit: Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra es! oculi tui sicut columbae, extra taciturnitatem. Pulchra in praedicatione, pulchra in conversatione. Oculi quoque ejus, inquit, sicut columbae. Oculi sunt viri, videlicet spiritualibus ornati sensibus qui ad videnda mysteria sint acuti, et parati ad penetranda Scripturae secreta divinae, rationabili lacte fulgentes, in quibus non sit aliqua doli maculosa confusio, sed simplicis affectus pura et immaculata simplicitas.

35. And therefore she says, "Go forth," that is, go out from the solitudes and thoughts of the world: go out from corporal anguishes: go out from the vanities of the world, and see what charity the peaceful king has on the day of his espousals: how glorious he is, because he gave resurrection to bodies, and joined souls to himself. This is the crown of the great contest, this the illustrious gift of the espousals of Christ: his blood and passion. For who was able to give more, who also did not spare himself, and for us placed his soul unto death?

36. But what is the crown of glory but the Church which crowns its head, Christ? What is the joy of the whole earth, but the house of the Christian people, the hall of the saints, of whom it is written: "Their sound has gone out into all the earth" (Psalm 18:5)? Therefore because the Church is the crown of glory, for that reason it is said: "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon, in the crown with which his mother crowned him, on the day of his espousals, and on the day of the joy of his heart."

It is said to souls that they should go out from the hovels and corporal cloisters, they should go out beyond the thoughts of the body, they should go forth from desires, and from cares, and from the rest of the passions of this flesh and slippery affection: they should ascend above the world, they should go out from this world, they should meet Christ, let them be present prepared, reluctant with burning torches, as if the angels of Christ speak these [things]: You cannot see his clarity, his glory, unless you go out [from] the cares of human fragility, daughters of Jerusalem. As if they should say: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). Christ is not sought within this world, who willed his disciples to be above the world.

38. What is the crown with which Christ is crowned, but the crown of glory? Joseph had the crown of chastity, Paul [that] of justice, Peter [that] of faith. There are crowns for individual virtues. Christ alone has the crown of glory, with which the Church crowned him. In this crown are all crowns; because glory is not a portion of one crown, but the reward of all crowns.

CHAPTER FOUR.

1. (Verse 1.) Now indeed, the Bridegroom, having turned to the praise of the bride, says: "How beautiful you are, my friend, how beautiful you are! your eyes [are] as of doves, beyond silence." Beautiful in preaching, beautiful in conversation. Her eyes also, he says, [are] as of doves. The eyes are of the man, obviously adorned with spiritual senses which are sharp for seeing mysteries, and prepared for penetrating the secrets of the divine Scripture, shining with rational milk, in which there is not some maculate confusion of deceit, but the pure and immaculate simplicity of a simple affection.

Ideo in aquarum abundantia lotas has columbas in lacte postea memoravit.

2. Jam caetera dentes et genas, et sicut coccineum resticulum labia sponsae intelligimus animae esse virtutes doctorumque diversitates: qui vel spiritalem menti alimoniam dispensatione sedula subministrent, vel praedicatione Dominicae crucis, sicut Verbi quadam linea, alligent audientem: vel modestia verecundi, et juventutis flore gratissimi. Etsi a tactu pudore revocentur, redoleat tamen in his odor Christi: et sicut in genas, quasi a capite sacerdotali descendat unguentum, sic et in his eluceat pulchritudo doctrinae.

3. Oculi tui sicut columbae extra taciturnitatem tuam; quod et spiritualiter videat, et noverit tempus tacendi esse et tempus loquendi; ut in tempore sermonem suum proferat, ne importunitate loquendi peccatum possit incurrere.

4. Oculi tui sicut columbae. Hic columbae, id est, Ecclesiae simplicitas revelatur et gratia. Vide itaque simplicitatem oculi, qui enim justum videt et gaudet etiam ipse vult justus esse: pulchrum est enim ut eo in aliis delectetur, quod vult ipse in se servare, si possit: est enim insitum bonis, ut castum pudicus, prudentem sapiens affectu pio diligit, misericors liberalem, virtutes suas in aliis amet. Plerisque etiam justus aspectus admonitio correctionis est, perfectioribus vero laetitia. Nam si tanta vis in naturalibus est, ut animal visum prosit ictericis, ita ut mortui quoque corpus ejus animantis prodesse dicatur, si fuerit demonstratum iis, qui hujusmodi inciderint passionem, dubitare possumus quod justus sanet aspectus, cujus sunt oculi sicut columbae, simplices et pudici? Ergo vile animal irrationabile tantam virtutem habet, ut sanare hominem possit momento exiguo, quo videtur: homo justus, si tamen cum fide ab eo conspiciatur, qui utilitatem ab eo percipere desiderat, nihil conferet? Quam pulchrum igitur ut videaris et prosis!

5. Bonum ergo vir justus. Propterea denique apostolus Paulus ascendit Hierosolymam, ut justos videret: et cum Petro mansit diebus quindecim, ut ex ejus aliquid cohabitatione proficeret (Gal. I, 18). Propterea ipse Paulus et Barnabas cum Hierosolymam ingrederentur, magnifice excipiebantur ab Ecclesia, et apostolis, et majoribus natu: cum autem abire vellent, ne discederent rogabantur, et ut postea de Paulo legimus, quod cum lacrymis deducebatur. Nonne vel ipsi oculorum radii virtutem quamdam videntere infundere, iis qui fideliter eum videre desiderant?

For that reason he afterward mentioned these doves washed in the abundance of waters in milk.

2. Now we understand the rest—teeth and cheeks, and like a scarlet little cord the lips of the bride—to be the virtues of the soul and the diversities of teachers: who either may subminister spiritual nourishment to the mind with zealous dispensation, or by the preaching of the Lord's cross, as by a certain line of the Word, may bind the listener: or [are] most pleasing with the modesty of the reverent [one], and with the flower of youth. Even if they are recalled from touch by shame, nevertheless let the odor of Christ be fragrant in them: and as if upon the cheeks, just as from the priestly head ointment may descend, so also in these let the beauty of doctrine shine forth.

3. "Your eyes [are] like doves beyond your silence"; because she both sees spiritually, and knows that there is a time of being silent and a time of speaking; so that in time she may bring forth her sermon, lest by the importunity of speaking she be able to incur sin.

4. "Your eyes [are] as of doves." Here the simplicity and grace of the dove, that is, of the Church, is revealed. See therefore the simplicity of the eye; for he who sees a just [man] and rejoices, also himself wills to be just: for it is beautiful that he should be delighted by that in others, which he himself wills to keep in himself, if he can: for it is insate in good [men], that the modest [man] love the chaste, the wise love the prudent with pious affection, the merciful [love] the liberal, he may love his own virtues in others. For most, even the sight of a just [man] is an admonition of correction; for the more perfect, indeed, a joy. For if so great force is in natural [things], that a seen animal profits those with jaundice, so that even the body of that dead living thing is said to profit, if it shall have been shown to those who have fallen into a passion of this kind, can we doubt that the sight of a just [man] heals, whose eyes are as of doves, simple and modest? Therefore a vile, irrational animal has so great virtue, that it can heal a man in a tiny moment in which it is seen: shall a just man, if nevertheless he be beheld with faith by him who desires to perceive utility from him, confer nothing? How beautiful, therefore, that you should be seen and profit!

5. A just man [is], therefore, a good [thing]. On that account, finally, the apostle Paul ascended to Jerusalem, so that he might see the just [ones]: and he remained with Peter for fifteen days, so that he might profit something from his cohabitation (Galatians 1:18). On that account Paul himself and Barnabas, when they were entering Jerusalem, were magnificently received by the Church, and the apostles, and the elders: but when they willed to depart, they were asked lest they should depart, and as we read afterward concerning Paul, that he was led away with tears. Do not even the rays of the eyes themselves seem to infuse a certain virtue into those who faithfully desire to see him?

6. Sed quemadmodum justus laetificat cor innocentum, cum videtur, ita improbi justorum cognitione torquentur, quia vel tacitis sanctorum moribus arguuntur. Torquet castitas incontinentem, avaritiam liberalitas, impietatem fides. De hoc quoque parile vilis animantis sumamus exemplum. Nam sicut prodesse diximus mutum animal cum videtur, ita obesse percipimus lupum, si aliquem videndo praevenit; vocem enim feruntur amittere, quos prius lupus viderit. Basiliscus quoque (hic est noxius serpens) si quodcumque viderit prior animal, fertur occidere: et allegatur statim necari, qui potuerit a serpente hujusmodi praevideri. Ipse quoque serpens mori dicitur, si fuerit hominis praeventus aspectu. Ergo si tanta virtus vel in oculis serpentis, vel in oculis est hominis, ut si alterum alter prior viderit, possit occidere: non est virtus in oculis justi, qui repletus virtutis est gratia, cum praesertim tantum operetur fides; ut et illa quae fimbriam Domini tetigit, sanaretur: et ille cui intendit Dominus Jesus, statim ex ejus oculis gratiam sanitatis hauriret (Matth. IX, 22)?

7. Sed qui videt justum, debet scire quid videat. Non illum videt in corpore, non in vestimento, non in patrimonio, non in vultu: sed intus videt. Non, inquam, illum videt, nisi ejus viderit mentem, nisi ejus sermonem intenderit, nisi sensum illius potuerit comprehendere, sapientiam de tractatu ejus potuerit assumere. Tunc igitur laetabitur cum ista perspexerit, cum ista cognoverit. Ita ergo et nos sicubi justum audimus, festinemus videre, sicut illa mulier quae audivit in domo pharisaei discumbere Dominum Jesum, et ingressa est, et ejus pedes perfudit unguento (Luc. VII, 37 et 38). Illius imitatores simus, quia Ecclesiae in illa muliere figuram esse quis dubitet? Sicubi ergo justus sedeat, sicubi accumbat, festinemus videre eum. Pretiosum est videre virum justum, ut videas eum secundum imaginem Dei. Quod foris est, nihil prodest: quod intus est, sanat. Sane et in eo qui foris est, illum qui intus est, frequenter aspiciamus: ut si viderimus pauperem, illum ad cujus similitudinem factus est, honoremus in paupere, de quo ait: Dedistis mihi manducare, quia quod uni eorum dedistis, mihi dedistis (Matth. XXV, 35 et 40).

8. Capillamentum tuum ut grex tonsarum, quae revelatae sunt a monte Galaad. Ideo capillamentum, quia virtus omnium sensuum in capite est: Oculi enim sapientis in capite ejus (Eccl. II). Profunda igitur doctorum prudentia, quae potest ea quae obscura sunt revelare, et alta aperire sensuum.

6. But just as the just [man] gladdens the heart of the innocent when he is seen, so the wicked are tormented by the knowledge of the just, because they are rebuked even by the silent morals of the saints. Chastity torments the incontinent, liberality avarice, faith impiety. Of this also let us take a parallel example from a vile living thing. For just as we said a mute animal profits when it is seen, so we perceive a wolf harms if it shall have preceded someone in seeing [him]; for those whom the wolf saw first are said to lose [their] voice. The basilisk also (this is a noxious serpent) if it shall have any animal first, is said to kill [it]: and he is alleged to be killed immediately who could have been foreseen by a serpent of this kind. The serpent itself also is said to die, if it shall have been preceded by the sight of a man. Therefore if so great virtue is either in the eyes of a serpent, or in the eyes of a man, that if the one should have seen the other first, it can kill: is there not virtue in the eyes of a just [man], who is filled with the grace of virtue, especially since faith works so much; so that even she who touched the fringe of the Lord was healed: and he upon whom the Lord Jesus intended [his gaze], immediately drew the grace of health from his eyes (Matthew 9:22)?

But he who sees a just [man] ought to know what he sees. He does not see him in the body, not in garment, not in patrimony, not in countenance: but he sees [him] within. He does not, I say, see him, unless he shall have seen his mind, unless he shall have intended his sermon, unless he shall have been able to comprehend his sense, to assume wisdom from his treatise. Then, therefore, he will be gladdened when he shall have looked upon these [things], when he shall have known these [things]. Thus therefore let us also, if anywhere we hear of a just [man], hasten to see [him], just as that woman who heard that the Lord Jesus reclined in the house of the Pharisee, and entered, and poured ointment upon his feet (Luke 7:37 and 38). Let us be imitators of her, because who would doubt that the figure of the Church is in that woman? If anywhere, therefore, a just [man] should sit, if anywhere he should recline, let us hasten to see him. It is precious to see a just man, so that you may see him according to the image of God. What is outside profits nothing: what is within heals. Certainly even in him who is outside, we frequently behold him who is within: as if we shall have seen a poor man, let us honor in the poor man him to whose likeness he was made, concerning whom he says: "You gave me to eat, because what you gave to one of these, you gave to me" (Matthew 25:35 and 40).

8. "Your hair [is] like a flock of shorn [goats], which have been revealed from Mount Gilead." For that reason hair, because the virtue of all the senses is in the head: "For the eyes of the wise [man are] in his head" (Ecclesiastes 2:14). Profound, therefore, is the prudence of teachers, which can reveal those things which are obscure, and open the depths of the senses.

9. (Vers. 2.) Dentes tui sicut grex tonsarum, quae ascenderunt a lavacro, quae omnes geminos creant, et infecunda non est in eis. Quod specie de capris dicitur, mystice de Ecclesiae grege sentiendum. Nec vilia tibi videantur ista animalia, vides quod in altis grex iste pascitur, audax in monte. Itaque ubi aliis praecipitia, ibi capris nullum periculum: ubi aliis periculum, ibi gregis illius alimentum, ibi cibus dulcior, ibi fructus electior. Speculantur a pastoribus suis, dumosa de rupe pendentes, ubi luporum incursus esse non possunt, ibi fecundae arbores fructum integrum subministrant. Cernere licet uberi lacte distentas, super teneram sobolem materna pietate sollicitas. Ideo elegit eas Spiritus sanctus, quibus coitum venerabilis Ecclesiae compararet.

10. Et ut mystice audias, capillamentum Verbi est altitudo, et eminentia quaedam justarum animasum; quoniam sensus sapientis in capite ejus. In altitudine enim cogitationis humanae certum est esse sapientiam. Et quemadmodum tondentur caprae, ut superflua deponant: ita etiam tonsarum animarum gregem, hoc est, multarum animarum virtutes habet sancta Ecclesia, in quo grege nihil possis insensibile reperire, nihil superfluum; quoniam fides sapientes fecit, spiritalis autem gratia ab omni superfluum labe mundavit.

11. Merito igitur revelatae sunt animae justorum, et revelatae a monte Galaad, hoc est, a transmigratione testimonii, eo quod a Synagoga ad Ecclesiam testimonium coeleste migravit. In hoc itaque monte nascitur thymiana, resina, et caeteri odores quos negotiatores illi Ismaelitae, ut habes in libro primo Testamenti veteris, deferebant (Gen. XXXVII, 25). Itaque sicut caprae bonis refectione cibis, et solis calore vernantes, lavantur in flumine, et exsultantes munda surgunt de flumine: ita animae justorum ascendunt ab spiritali lavacro.

12. Istae sunt vere qui geminos creant, in quibus non est infecunditas aliqua virtutum, sterilitas ulla meritorum. Bene geminos creant, quia congregant sensus suos; unde habes in Proverbiis scriptum: Et tu scribe haec tibi tripliciter, in consilium, et in cognitionem (Prov. XXII, 20). Triplicem praemisit scriptionem, et duo subdidit, consilium et cognitionem. Sed cognitio gemina est, una incorporalium, altera corporalium; unde etiam in posterioribus habes: Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnuli capreae gemelli, qui pascuntur in liliis, donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae (Vers. 5).

9. (Verse 2.) "Your teeth [are] like a flock of shorn [sheep], which have ascended from the washing, which all create twins, and there is not a barren one among them." What is said in appearance concerning goats, is to be understood mystically concerning the flock of the Church. Nor let those animals seem vile to you; you see that this flock is pastured in high places, bold on the mountain. Thus where for others [there are] precipices, there for the goats [there is] no danger: where for others [there is] danger, there [is] the nourishment of that flock, there sweeter food, there more choice fruit. They are observed by their shepherds, hanging from the bushy rock, where the incursions of wolves cannot be, there the fruitful trees subminister whole fruit. It is possible to see [them] distended with abundant milk, solicitous over [their] tender offspring with maternal piety. Therefore the Holy Spirit chose them, to which he might compare the assembly of the venerable Church.

10. And so that you may hear mystically, the hair of the Word is the height and a certain eminence of just souls; since the sense of the wise [man is] in his head. For in the height of human thought it is certain that wisdom exists. And just as goats are shorn, so that they may lay down superfluous [things]: so also the holy Church has a flock of shorn souls, that is, the virtues of many souls, in which flock you could find nothing insensible, nothing superfluous; since faith made [them] wise, but spiritual grace cleansed [them] from every stain of superfluous [things].

Meritedly, therefore, the souls of the just have been revealed, and revealed from Mount Gilead, that is, from the transmigration of the testimony, because the celestial testimony migrated from the Synagogue to the Church. In this mountain, therefore, is born the incense, resin, and the rest of the odors which those Ismaelite merchants, as you have in the first book of the Old Testament, were carrying (Genesis 37:25). Therefore just as goats refreshed with good foods, and flourishing with the heat of the sun, are washed in the river, and exulting rise clean from the river: so the souls of the just ascend from the spiritual washing.

12. These are truly those who create twins, in whom there is not some infecundity of virtues, any sterility of merits. Well they create twins, because they redouble their senses; whence you have it written in Proverbs: "And you write these things for yourself triply, in counsel, and in knowledge" (Proverbs 22:20). He sent before a triple writing, and subjoined two, counsel and knowledge. But knowledge is twofold, one of incorporeal [things], the other of corporeal [things]; whence also in later [verses] you have: "Your two breasts [are] like two twin fawns of a roe, which are pastured among the lilies, until the day breathes, and the shadows incline" (Song 4:5).

13. Diximus de fecunditate, dicamus de dentibus. Nam et navigantes plerique, et properantes itinere terreno, ubi viderint speciosum aliquem locum, delectationis gratia demorantur, pascunt oculos animumque allevant. Nec mora ulla putatur commendi, sed gratia. Ita et nobis pulcherrimos dentes justarum animarum considerare cordi est; docuit enim Scriptura pulcherrimos dentes esse justorum dicens secundum litteram quidem de patriarcha Juda, spiritualiter autem de Christo; Hilares oculi ejus a vino, et dentes sicut lac (Genes. XLIX, 12). In quo non utique carnis humanae officia, sed divinae gratiae munera praedicavit. Docet igitur exemplum, dentes non esse praetereundos, ubi de oculis disseruimus.

14. Qui sunt igitur justarum dentes animarum nisi qui informem ac durum accipientes cibum, vel frigidum plerumque, vel supra modum calentem nunc comminuunt, nunc foveant, nunc temperant, prout qualitas fuerit alimentorum? Dura comminuunt, ne asperitas litterae in veteri Testamento et saecularis intellectus rigor, nisi fuerit spiritali dente resolutus, vitalia ipsa interclusis librorum salutarium comaeatibus, et gulam quamdam animae incuriosa edacitate suffocet. Par est igitur ut dividas primum, si solida tibi videtur esca quae sumitur, et distinguas eam; atque emollitam sine noxa aliqua animae in omnia ejus membra naturali divisione transfundas; ut vitalem succum omne ejus corpus epuletur, nihil cadaverosum, nihil mortuum ore tuo sumas, ne dicatur: Sepulcrum patens est guttur eorum (Psalm. XIII, 3). Sed vivum haurias verbum, ut in tuae mentis visceribus possit operari. Hi dentes super lac candidiores; quia dentes justorum.

15. Denique cum omnes in Moyse baptizati in nube et in mari patres nostri fuerint, non otiose tamen scriptum est: Quia omnes eandem escam spiritalem manducaverunt, et omnes eundem potum spiritalem biberunt (I Cor. X, 3 et 4); ut istis sanctorum dentibus major quidam fulgor accederet, quos post transitum maris rubri, myrrhae fontis amaritudine per ligni gratiam temperata (Exodi XV, 25), cognoscemus esse mundatos: deinde duodecim fontium potu, postremo petrae spiritalem undam vomantis irriguo; Petra erat enim Christus (I Cor. X, 3 et 4). Ideo et manna manducaverunt (Num. XX, 11), ut toties abluti manducarent panem, ut scriptum est, angelorum (Psalm. LXXVII, 25). Nunc quoque in Evangelii misteriis recognoscis baptizatos, licet toto corpore, postea tamen esca spiritali potuque mundari; ille enim est verus dentium fulgor, ubi bene consciae mentis resonat canora confessio. Ille mundus oculus, quem peccatorum gravium trabes nulla depresserit, quem purgamentorum levium festuca nulla turbaverit.

13. We have spoken concerning fecundity, let us speak concerning teeth. For most also sailing, and hastening on a terrestrial journey, when they shall have seen some beautiful place, tarry for the sake of delight, they pasture [their] eyes and lift up the mind. Nor is any delay of traveling thought [to be], but grace. Thus it is at heart for us also to consider the most beautiful teeth of just souls; for the Scripture taught that the teeth of the just are most beautiful saying according to the letter indeed concerning the patriarch Judah, but spiritually concerning Christ: "His eyes [are] cheerful from wine, and [his] teeth like milk" (Genesis 49:12). In which he preached not surely the offices of human flesh, but the gifts of divine grace. The example teaches, therefore, that teeth are not to be passed over, where we have discussed eyes.

14. Who are therefore the teeth of just souls but those who, receiving formless and hard food, either cold for the most part, or warm beyond measure, now comminute, now cherish, now temper [it], as the quality of the nourishments shall have been? They comminute hard [things], lest the roughness of the letter in the Old Testament and the rigor of secular intellect, unless it shall have been dissolved by a spiritual tooth, should suffocate the vitals themselves, the passages of the salutary books being closed off, and a certain gullet of the soul by incurious edacity. It is equal, therefore, that you divide first, if the food which is taken seems solid to you, and distinguish it; and being softened without any harm to the soul, you may transfuse [it] into all its members by natural division; so that its whole body may feast upon the vital juice, you should take nothing cadaverous, nothing dead into your mouth, lest it be said: "Their throat is an open sepulcher" (Psalm 14:3). But you should draw the living word, so that it can work in the viscera of your mind. These teeth [are] whiter than milk; because [they are] the teeth of the just.

15. Finally, since all our fathers were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, nevertheless it was not written in vain: "Because all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink" (1 Corinthians 10:3 and 4); so that a certain greater splendor might reach these teeth of the saints, which after the passage of the Red Sea, the bitterness of the fountain of myrrh being tempered through the grace of the wood (Exodus 15:25), we recognize to have been cleansed: then by the drink of twelve fountains, finally by the irrigation of the rock vomiting a spiritual wave; "For the rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:3 and 4). For that reason they also ate manna (Numbers 20:11), so that washed so many times they might eat the bread of angels, as it is written (Psalm 78:25). Now also in the mysteries of the Gospel you recognize [those] baptized, although in the whole body, nevertheless afterward to be cleansed by spiritual food and drink; for that is the true splendor of the teeth, where the canorous confession of a well-conscious mind resounds. That clean eye, which no beam of grave sins shall have depressed, which no straw of light purgaments shall have disturbed.

16. Dentes tui sicut grex tonsarum, quae ascenderunt de lavacro, quae omnes geminos creant, et infecunda non est in eis. Non mediocris ista laudatio, primum apta comparatione tonsarum; capras enim et in altis pasci sine periculo novimus, et in praeruptis securas cibum sumere, deinde cum tondentur, deonerari superfluis. Harum gregi comparatur Ecclesia, multas in se habens animarum virtutes, quae per lavacrum superflua peccata deponant, quae mysticam fidem et moralem gratiam deferant Christo, quae crucem Domini Jesu loquantur. In his formosa est Ecclesia, unde ad eam Deus Verbum dicit: Ecce formosa es, proxima mea: ecce es formosa; oculi tui sicut columbae. Tota formosa es, proxima mea, et reprehensio non est in te; quia culpa demersa est. Ades huc a Libano, sponsa, ades huc a Libano, et pertransibis a principio fidei; eo quod renuntians mundo, transierit saeculum, pertransierit ad Christum.

17. (Vers. 3.) Sicut resticula coccinea labia tua. In cocco enim species ignis, et crucis Dominicae sanguis irrutilat. Coccinea labia Domini, quae passionem propriam loquebatur. Denique in Exodo coccum pro igne collocatum est (Exod. XXV, 4). Non enim ex cocco mundus, sed ex quatuor constat elementis. Sed in cocco figura ignis expressa est, cujus vapor nisi coelum atque aerem, maria terrasque penetraret, omnia tamquam effetis viribus solverentur. Per resticulam igitur vinculum persuasionis agnoscimus, per coccum vel cupiditatis ardorem qui scintillat in animis audientium, vel indicium passionis.

18. (Vers. 4.) Sicut turris David cervix tua, quae aedificata est in Thalphioth, mille clypei pendent in ea, omnia jacula potentium. Erecta enim ad Deum cervix, et jugo Christi habilis, quae nulla in terras illecebrarum inflexione curvetur; sicut Christi regalis est turris, cui jugum suum Nabuchodonosor non possit imponere. Condidit enim turrim illam David ille manu fortis, et supra murorum aedificavit excelsa; ut subsidio pariter et decori sit: subsidio, quia hostem praevidet et expellit: decori, quia non solum inter humilia, sed etiam inter excelsa supereminet. Ita tamen subsidio vel decori, si habeat in se verbi dogmata velut quaedam phalerarum monilia: habeat etiam jacula potentium prophetarum, quae adversus omnem extollentem se altitudinem, lacertis quibusdam fidei diriguntur.

16. "Your teeth [are] like a flock of shorn [sheep], which have ascended from the washing, which all create twins, and there is not a barren one among them." This is no mediocre praise, first by the apt comparison of shorn [sheep]; for we know that goats both pasture in high places without danger, and take food secure in precipitous places, then when they are shorn, they are de-burdened of superfluities. To a flock of these the Church is compared, having in herself many virtues of souls, which through the washing (lavacrum) lay down superfluous sins, which carry mystic faith and moral grace to Christ, which speak the cross of the Lord Jesus. In these the Church is beautiful, whence God the Word says to her: "Behold you are beautiful, my neighbor: behold you are beautiful; your eyes [are] like doves." You are all beautiful, my neighbor, and there is no reproach in you"; because guilt has been submerged. Come here from Lebanon, bride (sponsa), come here from Lebanon, and you shall pass through from the beginning of faith; for the reason that renouncing the world, she has passed over the age, has passed over to Christ.

17. (Verse 3.) "Like a scarlet thread [are] your lips." For in the scarlet [is] the appearance of fire, and the blood of the Lord's cross grows red. Scarlet [were] the lips of the Lord, which spoke his own passion. Finally in Exodus scarlet was placed for fire (Exodus 25:4). For the world [is] not [made] from scarlet, but consists of four elements. But in the scarlet the figure of fire is expressed, whose vapor unless it should penetrate heaven and air, seas and lands, all things would be dissolved as if with exhausted strengths. Through the little cord (resticula), therefore, we recognize the bond of persuasion, through the scarlet either the ardor of cupidity which sparkles in the minds of the listeners, or the indication of the passion.

18. (Verse 4.) "Like the tower of David [is] your neck, which has been built in Thalphioth, a thousand shields hang upon it, all the darts of the powerful." For the neck [is] erect toward God, and fit for the yoke (jugum) of Christ, which may be curved by no inflection of allurements toward the lands; just as Christ's royal tower, upon which Nebuchadnezzar could not impose his yoke. For that David, strong of hand, founded that tower, and built [it] above the heights of the walls; so that it may be for both subsidy and ornament: for subsidy, because it foresees and expels the enemy: for ornament, because it towers above not only among humble [things], but also among lofty [things]. Yet so for subsidy or ornament, if it should have in itself the dogmas of the word like certain necklaces of ornaments: let it have also the darts of the powerful prophets, which are directed by certain arms of faith against every height extolling itself.

19. Noli igitur in pulverem mortis deducere animam tuam, cui etiam Dominus naturalem altitudinem tribuit et vigorem, quo se excitet et assurgat. Unde etiam de hac conjunctione animae et corporis dictum opportune accipitur, eo quod in naturali vitae nostrae mysterio, connexa anima corpori velut humi reptet, et pavimento adhaereat, partim propter hoc terrenum habitaculum, partim quia corpus istud de terra est. Et regionis igitur diversorium, et materia ipsa corporis nostri huic concurret sententiae. Ideoque pulchre Apostolus de mortis hujus corpore liberari cupit; quia carcere quodam claudimur, et in quodam luxuriae gurgustio siti tenebris involvimur delictorum.

20. Ergo secundum voluntatem Dei ambulemus, ut adhaerere dicamur Deo. Nam secundum corporis appetentiam qui vivit, caro est: qui secundum praecepta Dei, spiritus est. Non ergo fiat anima nostra caro, hoc est, ut dicamur caro; sicut et illi qui in diluvio perierunt, de quibus dictum est: Quia caro sunt (Genes. VI, 3). Sed magis caro nostra obediens animae gubernaculo, fiat anima, et hoc appellari mereatur nomine; sicut appellata est familia patriarchae Jacob, et generationis ejus sancta posteritas; sic enim scriptum est: Hi filii Balae quam dedit Laban Rachel filiae suae: peperit haec Jacob animas septem. Et ibidem: Omnes autem animae quae intraverunt cum Jacob in Aegyptum, quae exierunt de femoribus ejus, praeter uxores filiorum, sexaginta sex (Genes. XLVI, 25 et 26). Et in principio Exodi legimus: Erant autem omnes animae de Jacob, quinque et septuaginta (Exod. I, 5).

21. Ergo illi qui habitabant cum Joseph, et de Aegypto exierunt, animae sunt: qui autem cum essent angeli Dei, hoc est vitae probitate angelorum imitantes gratiam (Qui enim (Matth. XXII, 30) non ducunt uxores, et qui non nubunt, erunt sicut angeli Dei in coelo); qui ergo cum angeli viderentur, capti sunt decore femineo, hi caro sunt, sicut Dominus Deus dixit: Non permanebit spiritus meus in hominibus in aeternum, propter quod caro sunt (Genes. VI, 3). Et merito expertes libidinis, angelis comparantur, caro enim non sunt, quia non sunt in carne, sed in spiritu: quales erant illi qui doctorem Apostolum sequebantur, quibus ait: Vos autem non estis in carne, sed in Spiritu (Rom. VIII, 9). Qui autem corporea feminarum capiuntur libidine, caro sunt: atque utinam caro tantum, et non etiam equi adhinnientes! Quia, inquit, in uxorem proximi sui adhinniebant (Jerem. V, 8).

19. Do not therefore lead down your soul (anima) into the dust of death, to which the Lord also has attributed a natural height and vigor, by which it may excite itself and rise up. Whence also the saying concerning this conjunction of soul and body is opportunely received, for the reason that in the natural mystery of our life, the soul connected to the body as if creeps on the ground, and adheres to the pavement, partly because of this earthly habitation, partly because that body is from the earth. Both the lodging of the region, therefore, and the very matter of our body concurs with this sentence. And therefore beautifully the Apostle desires to be liberated from the body of this death; because we are closed in a certain prison, and situated in a certain hovel of luxury, we are involved in the darkness of transgressions.

20. Therefore let us walk according to the will of God, so that we may be said to adhere to God. For he who lives according to the appetite of the body, is flesh (caro): he who [lives] according to the precepts of God, is spirit. Therefore let our soul not become flesh, that is, that we should be called flesh; as also those who perished in the flood, concerning whom it was said: "Because they are flesh" (Genesis 6:3). But rather let our flesh, obedient to the helm of the soul, become soul, and merit to be called by this name; just as the family of the patriarch Jacob was called, and the holy posterity of his generation; for thus it is written: "These [are] the sons of Bilhah whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter: she bore to Jacob seven souls." And in the same place: "But all the souls which entered with Jacob into Egypt, which went out from his thighs, besides the wives of the sons, [were] sixty-six" (Genesis 46:25 and 26). And in the beginning of Exodus we read: "But all the souls from Jacob were seventy-five" (Exodus 1:5).

21. Therefore those who were dwelling with Joseph, and went out from Egypt, are souls (animae): but those who, although they were angels of God, that is, imitating the grace of angels by the probity of life (For those who (Matthew 22:30) do not take wives, and those who do not marry, shall be like the angels of God in heaven); those therefore who, although they seemed [to be] angels, were captured by feminine beauty, these are flesh (caro), just as the Lord God said: "My spirit shall not remain in men forever, because they are flesh" (Genesis 6:3). And meritedly [those] expertless of lust are compared to angels, for they are not flesh, because they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit: of such kind were those who were following the teacher Apostle, to whom he says: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9). But those who are captured by the corporeal lust of women, are flesh: and would that [they were] only flesh, and not also whinnying horses! Because, he says, "they were whinnying for the wife of their neighbor" (Jeremiah 5:8).

22. (Vers. 7.) Tota es formosa, proxima mea, et reprehensio non est in te. Pulchritudinem vero quis potest majorem existimare decore ejus, quae amatur a rege, probatur a iudice, dedicatur Domino, consecratur Deo. Semper sponsa, semper innupta; ut nec amor finem habeat, nec damnum pudor. Haec profecto vera pulchritudo est, cui nihil deest, quae sola meretur audire a Domino: Tota es formosa, proxima mea, et reprehensio non est in te.

23. (Vers. 8.) Veni huc a Libano, veni huc a Libano: transibis et pertransibis a principio fidei, a capite Sanir et Hermon, a latibulis leonum, a montibus pardorum. Quibus indiciis ostenditur perfecta et irreprehensibilis virginalis animae pulchritudo, altaribus consecrata divinis, inter occursum et latibula spiritualium bestiarum non inflexa mortalibus, sed intenta mysteriis Dei, meruisse dilectum, cujus ubera plena laetitiae; Vinum enim laetificat cor hominis.

24. Et odor, inquit, vestimentorum tuorum, sicut odor Libani. Veni a Libano, sponsa, veni a Libano: transibis et pertransibis a principio fidei: transibis in saeculum certatura, pertransieris ad Christum triumphatura de saeculo. Audisti quia te a leonum et pardorum, id est, a spiritualium nequitiarum incursionibus separavit: audisti quia placet ei tuarum pulchritudo virtutum.

25. Ades huc a Libano, sponsa, ades huc a Libano: transibis, et pertransibis a principio fidei, a capite Sanir, et Hermoniim, a speluncis leonum, a montibus pardorum; hoc est, egredere de corpore, et totam te exne. Non potes enim mihi adesse, nisi ante peregrineris a corpore; quoniam qui in carne sunt, peregrinantur a Dei regno. Ades, inquit, ades. Bene repetivit, quia sive praesens, sive absens, adesse et placere Domino Deo tuo debes: adesto praesens, adesto absens, etsi adhuc in corpore es; mihi enim omnes praesentes sunt, quorum fides mecum est. Adest mihi qui exiit de saeculo: adest mihi qui me cogitat, me intuetur, de me sperat, cui ego portio sum: adest mihi qui abfuerit sibi: ille mecum est, qui intra se non est; quoniam qui in carne est, non est in spiritu: ille mecum est, qui ex seipso egreditur: ille juxta me est qui extra se fuerit: ille mihi integer, qui propter me perdiderit animam suam; et ideo, Ades, ades, sponsa; transibis et pertransibis a principio fidei.

22. (Verse 7.) "You are all beautiful, my neighbor, and there is no reproach in you." Truly who can estimate a greater beauty than the decorum of her who is loved by the king, approved by the judge, dedicated to the Lord, consecrated to God? Always a bride (*sponsa*), always unwed; so that neither love may have an end, nor modesty [have] loss. This surely is true beauty, to which nothing is lacking, which alone merits to hear from the Lord: "You are all beautiful, my neighbor, and there is no reproach in you."

23. (Verse 8.) "Come here from Lebanon, come here from Lebanon: you shall pass through and you shall pass through from the beginning of faith, from the head of Sanir and Hermon, from the lairs of lions, from the mountains of leopards." By which indications is shown the perfect and irreproachable beauty of the virginal soul, consecrated to the divine altars, not inflected toward mortals among the encounters and lairs of spiritual beasts, but intent upon the mysteries (*mysteriis*) of God, to have merited the beloved, whose breasts [are] full of joy; "For wine gladdens the heart of man."

"And the odor," he says, "of your garments, [is] like the odor of Lebanon. Come from Lebanon, bride, come from Lebanon: you shall pass through and you shall pass through from the beginning of faith": you shall pass through into the age to fight, you shall pass through to Christ to triumph over the age. You have heard that he separated you from lions and leopards, that is, from the incursions of spiritual wickednesses: you have heard that the beauty of your virtues pleases him.

25. "Come here from Lebanon, bride, come here from Lebanon: you shall pass through, and you shall pass through from the beginning of faith, from the head of Sanir, and Hermon, from the caves of lions, from the mountains of leopards"; that is, go out from the body, and strip yourself of the whole. For you cannot be present to me, unless first you travel from the body; since those who are in the flesh, travel from the kingdom of God. "Come," he says, "come." Well he repeated [it], because whether present or absent, you ought to be present to and please the Lord your God: be present [as] present, be present [as] absent, even if you are still in the body; for to me all are present whose faith is with me. He is present to me who has gone out from the age: he is present to me who thinks of me, gazes upon me, hopes in me, to whom I am a portion: he is present to me who shall have been absent to himself: he is with me who is not within himself; since he who is in the flesh is not in the spirit: he is with me who goes out from himself: he is near me who shall have been outside of himself: he [is] whole to me who shall have lost his soul for my sake; and therefore, "Come, come, bride; you shall pass through and you shall pass through from the beginning of faith."

Transit et pertransit caeteros, quae ad Christum pervenit: transit fidei merito, et operum claritate, quae lucet sicut Sanir et Hermon, hoc est, via lucernae: transit devictis tentationibus saeculi, et superatis nequitiis spiritalibus, legitimi petens coronam certaminis.

26. (Vers. 9.) Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui. Oculi enim mentis isti sunt oculi, scilicet interioris hominis, non hi oculi qui ministerio funguntur obtutus. Est enim oculus et mentis et carnis, sed ille caecus est oculus qui non videt quae divina sunt, qui frustra mente carnis inflatus est. Est et alius oculus sensus Christi, quo Ecclesia videt Christum, sicut ipse dicit ad Sponsam: Corde nos cepisti ab uno oculorum tuorum. Merito uno oculo videtur Christus, quia non videtur oculo carnali, aut quia duos oculos habens Ecclesia, moralem et mysticum, fidei oculo plus videt Christum; mysticus enim oculus acutior est, moralis dulcior.

27. Et fortasse isti oculi sunt, quibus Paulus videbat aeterna, ubi coepit temporalia non videre. Denique qui Christum non videbat, priusquam oculos amitteret, vidit eum posteaquam amisit visum oculorum; vidit enim qui dixit: Quis es, Domine (Act. IX, 5)? Videbat utique Christum, quem etiam Dominum fatebatur. Et infra, Domine, inquit, quid me vis facere? Non ergo videbat eum, cuius exspectabat imperium? Quibus igitur oculis videre Paulus plus coepit, nisi iis quos nobis ipse monstravit, dicens: Orabo spiritu, orabo et mente (I Cor. XIV, 15)? Denique ut scias quia vidit orando: Factum est, inquit, revertente me in Hierusalem, cum orarem in templo, pavorem habui, vidi illum dicentem mihi: Festina, exi citius de Hierusalem; non enim recipient testimonium tuum de me (Act. XXII, 17 et 18).

28. Isti ergo oculi in verbum Dei deficiunt, et dicunt: Quando consolaberis me? Istis oculis prophetae dicebantur videntes, quia per revelationem ea quae erant abscondita, mente cernebant. Sed quia oculus mentis et oculus carnis unus oculus sunt, et tunc homo consolatione fulcitur, cum caro et mens diversa non cupiunt, sed unum desiderant, et unum requirunt; ideo intenti ad eum qui ait: Ego et pater unum sumus (Joan. X, 30). Isti quoque oculi unum esse se confitentur; quia uno atque eodem desiderio officioque funguntur.

She passes through and passes over the rest, she who reaches Christ: she passes through by the merit of faith and the clarity of works, which shines like Sanir and Hermon, that is, the way of the lamp: she passes through the temptations of the age being conquered, and the spiritual wickednesses being overcome, seeking the crown of the legitimate contest.

26. (Verse 9.) "You have wounded my heart, my sister, bride (*sponsa*), you have wounded my heart in one of your eyes, and in one hair of your neck." For these eyes are the eyes of the mind, namely of the interior man, not these eyes which perform the ministry of sight. For there is an eye both of the mind and of the flesh, but that eye is blind which does not see the [things] which are divine, which has been puffed up in vain by the mind of the flesh. There is also another eye of the sense of Christ, by which the Church sees Christ, just as he himself says to the Bride: "You have captured us by the heart from one of your eyes." Meritedly Christ is seen by one eye, because he is not seen by the carnal eye, or because the Church, having two eyes, the moral and the mystic, sees Christ more by the eye of faith; for the mystic eye is sharper, the moral sweeter.

27. And perhaps these are the eyes with which Paul was seeing eternal [things], where he began not to see temporal [things]. Finally, he who was not seeing Christ before he lost [his] eyes, saw him after he lost the sight of [his] eyes; for he saw [him] who said: "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). Surely he was seeing Christ, whom he also confessed [as] Lord. And below, "Lord," he says, "what do you wish me to do?" Was he not therefore seeing him whose command he was expecting? With what eyes, therefore, did Paul begin to see more, unless with those which he himself showed to us, saying: "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind" (1 Corinthians 14:15)? Finally that you may know that he saw by praying: "It happened," he says, "when I was returning to Jerusalem, while I was praying in the temple, I had a trembling, I saw him saying to me: 'Hasten, go out more quickly from Jerusalem; for they will not receive your testimony concerning me'" (Acts 22:17 and 18).

These eyes, therefore, fail for the word of God (*Verbum Dei*), and say: "When will you console me?" With these eyes the prophets were called seers, because through revelation they discerned with the mind those [things] which were hidden. But because the eye of the mind and the eye of the flesh are one eye, and then a man is supported by consolation when flesh and mind do not desire diverse [things], but desire one [thing], and seek one [thing]; therefore [they are] intent upon him who says: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). These eyes also confess themselves to be one; because they perform [their] duty with one and the same desire.

29. (Vers. 10.) Pulchriora sunt ubera tua vino, et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata. Et infra: Odor vestimentorum tuorum sicut Libani. Vide quem nobis tribuas, virgo, processum! Primus enim odor tuus super omnia aromata, quae in Salvatoris missa sunt sepultura, et mortuos corporis motus membrorumque redolet obiisse delicias. Secundus odor tuus, sicut odor Libani, Dominici corporis integritatem, virgineae florem castitatis exhalat. Favum itaque mellis tua opera componant. Odor etiam vestimentorum est odor actuum nostrorum. Admove igitur manus naribus tuis, et odorem actuum tuorum indefessa ac pervigili alacritate mentis explora. Mulcebit te odor dexteræ tuæ, et flagrantiam resurrectionis tua membra redolebunt, myrrham digiti tui sudabunt, hoc est, verae fidei gratiam spiritalia gesta flagrabunt. Capis ergo, virgo, ex interiore tuo corpore voluptatem, et ipsa tibi dulcis, ipsa tibi suavis es, ipsa tibi (quod peccantibus saepe contingit) non incipis displicere.

30. (Vers. 11.) Favus distillans, labia tua, sponsa. Favum itaque mellis tua opera componant; digna enim virginitas quae apibus comparetur, sic laboriosa, sic pudica, sic continens: rore pascitur apibus, nescit concubitus, mella componit. Ros quoque virgini est sermo divinus; quia sicut ros Dei verba descendunt. Pudor virginis est intermerata natura, partus virginis est fetus labiorum, expers amaritudinis, fertile suavitatis: in commune labor, communis est fructus. Quam te velim, filia, imitatricem esse hujus apiculae, cujus cibus flos est, ore soboles legitur, ore componitur. Hanc imitare tu, filia; verba tua nullum doli velamen obtendant, nullum habeant fraudis involucrium; ut et puritatem habeant, et plena gravitatis sint. Meritorum quoque tuorum tibi aeterna posteritas tuo ore pariat, nec soli tibi, sed etiam pluribus congreges quid scis enim quando a te tua anima reposcatur; ne receptacula horreorum frumentis coacervata dimittens, nec vitae tuae usui futura nec meritis, rapiaris eo, quo thesaurum tuum ferre non possis. Dives igitur esto, sed pauperi, ut naturae participes tuae, participes sint etiam facultatum.

31. Favus distillans labia tua sponsa. Quis sit favus, doce nos, Salomon. Tu enim dixisti: Favus mellis sermones boni (Prov. XVI, 24). Et vere bonus favus, quem manducat Ecclesia, multorum prophetarum velut apum spirituali ubertate congesta mella redolentem. Hoc est mel de quo ait: Manducavi panem meum cum melle meo (Cant. V, 1). Stillant mel labia praedicantis, quando collisa duris casibus vel ruinis, lapsae animae membra refoventur.

29. (Verse 10.) "More beautiful are your breasts (*ubera*) than wine, and the odor of your ointments (*unguentorum*) [is] above all aromatics (*aromata*)." And below: "The odor of your garments [is] like Lebanon." See what progress you bestow upon us, O virgin! For your first odor [is] above all aromatics, which were sent into the burial of the Savior, and it smells that the dead motions of the body and the delights of the members have died. Your second odor, like the odor of Lebanon, exhales the integrity (*integritatem*) of the Lord's body, the flower of virginal chastity. Therefore let your works compose a honeycomb of honey. The odor also of garments is the odor of our acts. Move, therefore, [your] hands to your nostrils, and explore the odor of your acts with the untired and ever-vigilant alacrity of the mind. The odor of your right hand will soothe you, and your members will smell of the fragrance of the resurrection, your fingers will sweat myrrh, that is, the spiritual deeds will be fragrant with the grace of true faith. You take, therefore, O virgin, pleasure from your interior body, and you are sweet to yourself, you are pleasant to yourself, you (which often happens to sinners) do not begin to displease yourself.

30. (Verse 11.) "A dripping honeycomb [are] your lips, bride (*sponsa*)." Therefore let your works compose a honeycomb of honey; for virginity is worthy which may be compared to bees, so laborious, so modest, so continent: the bee is pastured by dew, knows no coitus, composes honey. Dew also to the virgin is the divine discourse; because as dew the words of God descend. The modesty of the virgin is unviolated nature, the offspring of the virgin is the fruit of the lips, expertless of bitterness, fertile with sweetness: the labor [is] in common, the fruit is common. How I would wish you, daughter, to be an imitatrix of this little bee, whose food is a flower, whose offspring is gathered by the mouth, composed by the mouth. Imitate this, you, daughter; let your words present no veil of guile, let them have no wrapping of fraud; so that they may have both purity, and be full of gravity. Let also the eternal posterity of your merits be borne by your mouth, nor should you gather for yourself alone, but also for many; for what do you know when your soul (*anima*) may be required back from you? Lest, leaving the receptacles of the granaries heaped with grains, to be neither for the use of your life nor for merits, you should be snatched there, where you cannot carry your treasure. Be rich therefore, but for the poor, so that the participants of your nature may be participants also of [your] faculties.

31. "A dripping honeycomb [are] your lips, bride." Who the honeycomb may be, teach us, Solomon. For you said: "Good discourses [are] a honeycomb of honey" (Proverbs 16:24). And truly a good honeycomb, which the Church eats, fragrant with the honey of many prophets gathered as if by a spiritual abundance of bees. This is the honey concerning which he says: "I have eaten my bread with my honey" (Song 5:1). The lips of the preacher drip honey, when the members of a fallen soul are cherished, having been dashed by hard accidents or ruins.

Favum distillant labia tua, sponsa, mel et lac sub lingua tua; os enim iusti distillat sapientiam: de ore iusti suavitatis et misericordiae mella procedunt: in ore iusti nullus dolus, nulla fallacia, nulla est amaritudo peccati. Audit Ecclesia verba iusti, audit plebs Dei verba sapientis, delectatur alloqui suavitate, moralis disputationis jucunditate mulcetur, dicens: Quam dulcia faucibus meis verba tua, super mel et favum ori meo (Psalm. CXVIII, 103)! Quia mel apum ad horam delectat, sed cito sapor ejus evanescit, et plerumque viscera vitiosa laeduntur: verborum autem moralium etsi pungunt mella, non laedunt.

32. Cognosce tamen cui illa credantur; scriptum est enim: In aurem insipientis nihil dicas; ne quando irrideat prudentes sermones tuos (Prov. XXIII, 9). Evomet enim et rejiciet sermonem tuum stultus, qui ejus sentire non potest suavitatem. Quomodo possunt verba Dei dulcia esse in faucibus tuis, in quibus est amaritudo nequitiae? Quomodo mel et lac sub lingua tua, cum dolum lingua tua componat; ut aliud pectore concipias, aliud forensi sermone praetendas, ut decipias incautum? Cum tibi Petrus apostolus dicat, ut deponas omnem malitiam, et fucum simulationis abjicias, dicens: Sicut dudum geniti infantes, rationabiles et sine dolo, lac concupiscite (I Pet. II, 2). Ostendens enim nobis quid sit mel et lac habere sub lingua, docet ut non maledicere maledicentibus, sed benedictionem referre noverimus: nesciamus odisse nisi viam iniquitatis, ut facere quod exsecramur, reluctanti caveamus affectu.

33. (Vers. 12.) Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus. Emissiones tuae, etc. Eo quod in hortis ejusmodi impressam signaculis imaginem Dei, sinceri fontis unda resplendeat, nec volutabris spiritualium bestiarum sparsa coeno fluentia turbentur. Hinc ille murali septus spiritu pudor clauditur, ne pateat ad rapinam. Itaque sicut hortus furibus inaccessus, vitem redolet, flagrat oleam, rosam renidet; ut in vite religio, in olea pax, in rosa pudor sacratae virginitatis inoleat.

"Your lips drip a honeycomb, bride, honey and milk [are] under your tongue"; for the mouth of the just drips wisdom (*sapientiam*): from the mouth of the just proceed the honey of sweetness and mercy (*misericordia*): in the mouth of the just [there is] no guile, no fallacy, no bitterness of sin. The Church hears the words of the just, the people of God hear the words of the wise [man], it is delighted by the sweetness of the address, it is soothed by the pleasantness of moral disputation, saying: "How sweet [are] your words to my jaws, above honey and honeycomb to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103)! Because the honey of bees delights for the hour, but quickly its flavor vanishes, and for the most part vicious viscera are harmed: but even if the honey of moral words sting, they do not harm.

32. Know however to whom those [things] are entrusted; for it is written: "Say nothing in the ear of the insincere; lest at some time he should mock your prudent discourses" (Proverbs 23:9). For the fool will vomit and reject your discourse, he who cannot sense its sweetness. How can the words of God (*Verbum Dei*) be sweet in your jaws, in which is the bitterness of wickedness? How [can there be] honey and milk under your tongue, when your tongue composes guile; so that you may conceive one [thing] in the breast, pretend another in forensic discourse, so that you may deceive the incautious? Since Peter the apostle says to you, that you should lay down all malice, and cast away the dye of simulation, saying: "As infants recently born, rational and without guile, desire the milk" (1 Peter 2:2). For showing to us what it is to have honey and milk under the tongue, he teaches that we should know how not to curse those cursing, but to return a blessing; that we should not know how to hate except the way of iniquity, so that we may beware with a reluctant affection to do that which we execrate.

33. (Verse 12.) "An enclosed garden (*hortus conclusus*) [is] my sister bride (*sponsa*), an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain (*fons signatus*). Your shoots," etc. For the reason that in gardens of this kind the image of God impressed with seals, the wave of a sincere fountain may shine forth, nor may the flowing [waters] scattered with mud be disturbed by the wallowings of spiritual beasts. Hence that modesty hedged with a mural spirit is closed, lest it lie open to rapine. And so just as a garden inaccessible to thieves, it smells of the vine, is fragrant with the olive, shines with the rose; so that in the vine religion, in the olive peace, in the rose the modesty of sacred virginity may grow.

Hic est odor quem Jacob patriarcha flagravit, quando meruit audire: Ecce odor filii mei, sicut odor agri pleni (Genes. XXVII, 27). Nam licet plenus omnibus fere fructibus patriarchae sancti fuerit ager, ille tamen fruges majori virtutis labore generavit, hic flores. Accingere itaque, virgo, et si vis hujusmodi tibi ut hortus aspiret, propheticus eum claude praeceptis: Pone custodiam ori tuo, et ostium circumstantiae labiis tuis (Psal. CXL, 3).

34. Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus; emissiones tuae paradisi malorum puniceorum, cum fructu pomorum Cypri. Laudatur Sponsa eo quod hortus sit, habens in se odorem agri illius pleni, de quo dicit Isaac: Odor filii mei, tamquam odor agri pleni (Genes. XXVII, 27). Bona ergo anima flagrat odores justitiae. Et fortasse ager est patriarcha, hortus est anima inferioris alicujus, quasi agri portio: et Hortus conclusus, ne incursetur a bestiis: et Fons signatus, quae integritate signaculi, perseverantiaque fidei propria peccata diluerit. Nam qui de Ecclesia acceperit; habet quod ad virginis gratiam referat; eo quod in paradiso delectationis posita sine labore fructus capiat spirituales, ut ei patriarcharum animae rurali quodam animae suae labore fructus suos conferant, quo ista capere possit perpetuam suavitatem: quae merito fons signatus dicitur, eo quod imago in illa Dei invisibilis exprimat.

35. Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus. Omnes doctores congruunt in paradiso, et lignum vitae radicum et lignum scientiae, quo discernat bonum et malum: caeteraque ligna plena vigoris, plena vivificationis, spirantia et rationabilia. Ex quibus colligitur paradisi ipsum terrenum videri posse, non in solo aliquo, sed in nostro principali, quo animatur et vivificatur anima virtutibus et infusione Spiritus sancti. Denique Salomon in spiritu paradisi in homine esse evidenter declaravit. Et quia mysteria exprimit vel animae et Verbi, vel Christi et Ecclesiae; ideo ait de virgine anima vel Ecclesia, quam volebat virginem castam assignare Christo: Paradisi clausus, soror mea sponsa, paradisi clausus, fons signatus. Paradisi Graece, Latine hortus dicitur. Denique Susanna in paradiso erat, et sic legitur latine: et Adam in paradiso erat, et sic legimus. Ergo non te moveat quod alii codices latini hortum habent, alii paradisi.

This is the odor which the patriarch Jacob was fragrant with, when he merited to hear: "Behold the odor of my son, like the odor of a full field" (Genesis 27:27). For although the field of the holy patriarch was full of almost all fruits, he however generated fruits with a greater labor of virtue, this one [the garden] flowers. Gird yourself therefore, O virgin, and if you wish such [a garden] to breathe for you as a garden, close it with prophetic precepts: "Set a guard for your mouth, and a door of circumstance for your lips" (Psalm 141:3).

34. "An enclosed garden [is] my sister bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain; your shoots [are] a paradise of pomegranates, with the fruit of Cyprus apples." The Bride is praised for the reason that she is a garden, having in herself the odor of that full field, concerning which Isaac says: "The odor of my son, as the odor of a full field" (Genesis 27:27). A good soul (anima), therefore, is fragrant with the odors of justice. And perhaps the patriarch is the field, the soul of someone inferior is the garden, as if a portion of the field: and "an enclosed garden," lest it be invaded by beasts: and "a sealed fountain," which by the integrity of the seal and the perseverance of faith shall have washed away its own sins. For he who shall have received from the Church has that which he may refer to the grace of virginity; for the reason that being placed in the paradise of delight, she may take spiritual fruits without labor, so that for her the souls of the patriarchs may bestow their fruits by a certain rural labor of their soul, by which she may be able to take perpetual sweetness: she who is meritedly called a sealed fountain, for the reason that the image of the invisible God is expressed in her.

35. "An enclosed garden [is] my sister bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain." All teachers agree that in paradise [are] both the tree of life rooted and the tree of knowledge, by which one may discern good and evil: and the rest of the trees full of vigor, full of vivification, breathing and rational. From which it is gathered that paradise itself can be seen [to be] terrestrial, not in some soil, but in our principal [part] (principali), by which the soul is animated and vivified by virtues and the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Finally Solomon in the spirit evidently declared that paradise is in man. And because it expresses mysteries (mysteria) either of the soul and the Word, or of Christ and the Church; therefore he says concerning the virginal soul or the Church, whom he was wishing to assign [as] a chaste virgin to Christ: "A closed paradise, my sister bride, a closed paradise, a sealed fountain." Paradise in Greek is called a garden (hortus) in Latin. Finally Susanna was in the paradise, and thus it is read in Latin: and Adam was in the paradise, and thus we read. Therefore let it not move you that some Latin codices have garden, others paradise.

Ibi ergo est casta uxor, ubi et virgo. Licet virgo excepta habeat claustra sua et signacula, sed utraque in paradiso; ut adversum aestus corporis et carnis flagrantiam refrigeretur virtutum umbraculis.

36. Ergo paradisu in principali nostro est, silvens plurimarum opinionum plantariis, in quo principaliter lignum vitae constituit Deus, id est, pietatis radicem. Ea est enim vitae nostrae substantia, si Domino et Deo nostro debitos cultus deferamus. Constituit etiam scientiae boni et mali seminarium; homo enim solus in caeteris animantibus terrenis, habet scientiam boni et mali. Alia quoque illic plantaria diversa, quorum fructus virtutes sunt. Sed quia scientiae capax hominis affectus cognitus est a Deo, quod citius ad astutiam inclinaretur, quam ad summum prudentiae; neque eum iudicem qui fines certos in anima nostra constituit, operis sui qualitas latere poterat: eliminare voluit astutiam de paradiso, quasi providus auctor nostrae salutis, et vitae studium et disciplinam pietatis infundere. Ideoque praecepit homini, ab omni ligno quod est in paradiso gustandum, de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali non esse gustandum. Sed quia creatura omnis passioni obnoxia est, ideo delectatio sicut serpentino illapsu humanis irrepsit affectibus.

37. Itaque non immerito sanctus Moyses delectationem serpentis figuravit similitudine; prona est enim in ventrem sicut serpens, non pedibus incedens, aut ullis elevata cruribus: sed sinuoso flexu totius velut corporis sui lubrica. Ei terra cibus est sicut serpenti, quoniam escam nescit coelestem; corporalibus enim pascitur, atque in varias mutatur species cupiditatum, et tortuosus angulatur anfractibus. Venenum in dentibus habet, quibus unusquisque se eviscerat luxuriosus, helluo internecat, abliguritor perimit. Quantos ruperunt vina, dissolvit ebrietas, distendit cruditas! Nunc intelligo qua causa Dominus Deus insufflavit in faciem hominis; ibi enim sensus omnes, ibi sedes atque illecebra delectationis, in oculis, auribus, naribus, atque in ore; ut sensus nostros adversus delectationem fortiores faceret. Haec ergo nobis sicut serpens astutiam infudit; non enim delectatio, sed labor et diuturna meditatio cum Dei gratia dat perfectam prudentiam. Tamen quia serpentis fraudibus involuta est humani generis haereditas, in eo astutiam serpentis sequamur, ut caput nostrum non projiciamus in pericula, sed prae caeteris integrum custodiamus; caput autem nostrum Christus est. Hoc maneat incolume, ut serpentis venena nobis non possint nocere: bona enim est sapientia cum haereditate, id est, cum fide; quoniam est haereditas credentium in Domino.

There therefore is the chaste wife, where also the virgin [is]. Although the excepted virgin may have her enclosures and seals, yet both [are] in paradise; so that against the heats of the body and the fragrance of the flesh she may be cooled by the coverings of virtues.

36. Therefore paradise is in our principal [part] (principali), growing wild with the nurseries of many opinions, in which principally God constituted the tree of life, that is, the root of piety. For that is the substance of our life, if we should defer due worships to our Lord and God. He constituted also the nursery of the knowledge of good and evil; for man alone among the rest of the terrestrial animals has the knowledge of good and evil. Other diverse nurseries [are] also there, whose fruits are virtues. But because the affect of man, capable of knowledge, was known by God, that he would be inclined more quickly to astuteness than to the summit of prudence (prudential); nor could the quality of his own work be hidden from him the judge who constituted certain boundaries in our soul (anima): he wished to eliminate astuteness from paradise, as a provident author of our salvation, and to infuse the study of life and the discipline of piety. And therefore he commanded man, to be tasted from every tree which is in paradise, but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil it was not to be tasted. But because every creature is obnoxious to passion, therefore delight like a serpentine gliding crept into human affects.

37. And so not unmeritedly holy Moses figured delight by the similitude of a serpent; for it is prone toward the belly like a serpent, not walking on feet, or elevated by any legs: but slippery with the sinuous flex of its whole as if body. To it earth is food like to a serpent, since it knows no celestial nourishment; for it is pastured by corporeal [things], and is changed into various species of cupidities, and is angled with tortuous windings. It has poison in [its] teeth, with which each luxurious [man] eviscerates himself, the glutton slaughters [himself], the gourmand destroys [himself]. How many the wines have burst, drunkenness has dissolved, indigestion has distended! Now I understand for what cause the Lord God breathed into the face of man; for there [are] all the senses, there the seat and allurements of delight, in the eyes, ears, nostrils, and in the mouth; so that he might make our senses stronger against delight. This therefore infused astuteness into us like a serpent; for not delight, but labor and daily meditation with God's grace (gratia) gives perfect prudence. Yet because the inheritance of the human race is involved in the frauds of the serpent, let us follow in him the astuteness of the serpent, so that we may not cast our head into dangers, but preserve [it] whole before the rest; but our head is Christ. Let this remain unharmed, so that the poisons of the serpent cannot harm us: for good is wisdom (sapientia) with inheritance, that is, with faith; since it is the inheritance of those believing in the Lord.

38. Quod si primus homo, qui cum Deo loquebatur in paradiso positus, labi tam facile potuit, ex terra creatus virgine, quae ad verbum Dei formata et creata recenti fuerat exortu, nondum ea parricidali caeterorumque concreta sanguine, flagitiis et dedecore polluta, nondum carne nostra damnata maledicto obnoxiae haereditatis: quanto facilius postea, lubrica ad peccandum via, majus advexit humano generi praecipitium, cum deterior tolerabiliori per vices generationis successerit! Etenim si magnetes lapis tantam naturae vim habet, ut ferrum ad se trahat, et transfundat se in illius speciem; ita ut plerisque experiri volentibus, cum plures annulos ferreos ad eum lapidem admoverint, omnes pari teneat modo: deinde si ei annulo cui adhaeserit lapis, alium admoveas annulum, et rursum per ordinem singulis substituas; licet in omnes penetret per ordinem ex illo lapide vis naturae, tamen priores nexu vehementiore constringit, posteriores remissiore: quanto magis humani generis conditio atque natura, ex puriore statu in deteriorem lapsa est, quanto nequiores attigit! Nam si per eas species imminuitur natura, quae non sunt culpae capaces: quanto magis per animos atque artus labe pollutos scelerum, virtus ejus hebetatur! Unde quia vincente malitia, abolita innocentia fuerat, non erat qui faceret bonitatem, non erat usque ad unum. Venit ergo Dominus, qui reformaret naturae gratiam, immo auget; ut ubi superabundavit peccatum, superabundaret gratia.

39. Ergo liquet quia auctor hominis Deus, et quod unus Deus, non multi dii, sed unus qui mundum operatus est, et unum, non multos mundos, ut dicunt philosophi. Primum ergo mundum creavit, deinde habitatorem mundi, cui totus mundus patria foret: nam si hodie quocumque accesserit sapiens, ubique civis est, ubique sua intelligit, nusquam se peregrinum, nusquam hospitem judicat: quanto magis ille primus homo, totius mundi erat incola, et ut Graece dicitur, cosmopolites, Dei recens confabulator, assiduus civis sanctorum! complantatus virtutibus, praepositus omnibus terrenis animantibus, marinis, volatilibus, totum mundum suam possessionem putabat, quem Dominus tuebatur ut opus suum, neque ut bonus parens atque auctor deserebat. Denique eousque creatum fovit, ut abdicatum redimeret, eliminatum reciperet, mortuum passione filii sui unigeniti resuscitaret. Est ergo hominis auctor Deus, et diligit opus suum operator bonus, nec derelinquit bonus pater, quem etiam sicut dives paterfamilias censu propriae haereditatis redemit.

38. But if the first man, who was speaking with God, being placed in paradise, could slip so easily, created from the virgin earth, which had been formed and created at the word of God (*Verbum Dei*) by a recent arising, that [earth] not yet thickened with the parricidal blood of the rest, polluted by shames and disgrace, our flesh not yet condemned by the curse of the obnoxious inheritance: how much more easily afterward, by a slippery way for sinning, did it bring a greater precipice to the human race, when the worse succeeded the more tolerable through the turns of generation! For if the magnet stone has so much force of nature, that it draws iron to itself, and transfuses itself into the appearance of that [iron]; so that to many wishing to experience [it], when they have moved several iron rings to that stone, it holds all in an equal manner: then if to that ring to which the stone has adhered, you move another ring, and again substitute each in order; although the force of nature from that stone penetrates into all in order, yet it constrains the earlier ones with a more vehement bond, the later ones with a more remiss one: how much more the condition and nature of the human race, having fallen from a purer state into a worse one, how much more wicked a one has it touched! For if nature is diminished through those species which are not capable of fault: how much more is its virtue blunted through minds and limbs polluted by the stain of crimes! Whence because, malice winning, innocence had been abolished, there was none who would do goodness, there was not even unto one. Therefore the Lord came, who might reform the grace of nature, nay rather increase [it]; so that where sin abounded, grace might superabound.

39. Therefore it is clear that God is the author of man, and that [he is] one God, not many gods, but one who worked the world, and one, not many worlds, as the philosophers say. First, therefore, he created the world, then the inhabitant of the world, for whom the whole world would be a fatherland: for if today a wise man should access anywhere, he is a citizen everywhere, everywhere he understands his own [things], nowhere does he judge himself a stranger, nowhere a guest: how much more that first man was an inhabitant of the whole world, and as it is said in Greek, a cosmopolite (*cosmopolites*), a recent confabulator of God, an assiduous citizen of the saints! Planted with virtues, placed before all terrestrial living things, marine, volatile, he thought the whole world his possession, which the Lord protected as his work, nor as a good parent and author did he desert [it]. Finally, he cherished the created [thing] to such an extent, that he might redeem the abdicated, receive the eliminated, resuscitate the dead by the passion of his only-begotten son. Therefore God is the author of man, and the good operator loves his work, nor does the good father abandon [him], whom even like a rich father of a family he redeemed by the census of his own inheritance.

40. Caveamus ergo ne hominem istum, id est νοῦν, mulier illa, id est, passio sensuum nostrorum delectatione et ipsa decepta atque illusa effeminet, et circumscriptum in leges suas et sententiam trahat. Fugiamus delectationem sicut serpentem, multas artes habet et maxime in homine. Nam alia animantia cibi aviditate capiuntur; homo quando plures sensus oculorum auriumque habet, tanto majora pericula. Itaque cave ne vigor mentis tuae, coitu quodam corporeae voluptatis inflexus emolliatur, atque in ejus omnes amplexus resolvatur, et fontem ejus aperiat, qui debet esse clausus et septus intentionis studio et consideratione rationis: Hortus enim clausus, fons signatus. Namque resolutio mentis sensu, se corporales delectationes effundunt perniciosae nimis, et in appetentiam plenam gravis periculi profluentes; quas si mentis vividae considerata mansisset custodia, refrenasset.

41. (Vers. 3, 4.) Emissiones, inquit, tuae paradisus malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructu, Cypri cum nardo, nardus et crocus, fistula et cinnamomum cum universis lignis Libani, mirrha et aloe cum omnibus primis unguentis. Laudantur munera animae quae missa sunt a Sponso, quibus dotata veniebat (Deo autem piaie animae boni odores sunt), myrrha, aloe, crocus et alia, quibus spirat hortorum gratia, et peccatorum fetor aboletur. Itaque tanto secura praeconio, conquiescere aquilonem gravem ventum petit, ne flores discutiat: spirare austrum, hoc est, velut hyemem praeterire, et mollioris flatus vernare temperiem. Invitat Sponsus in hortum suum, descendit sponsus, et fructuum ejus diversitate delectatus, laetatur quod invenerit fortiorem cibum, invenerit etiam dulciorem. Est enim velut panis quidam Verbi et mel, alius vehementior, alius suasorius sermo. Est et fides alia ferventior, ut vinum; alia lucidior, ut succus est lactis. Hunc cibum Christus epulatur in nobis, hoc poculum bibit, et ejus potus ebrietate nos provocat, ut ad meliora et optima ab inferioribus faciamus excessum.

42. Audiens haec anima hausit mysteriorum ebrietatem coelestium, et velut soporata a vino, et quasi in excessu vel stupore posita, dicit: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat (Cant. V, 2). Tum Verbi praesentis lumine percussa, excitatur a Verbo. Quartus autem hic processus est animae. Primum etenim charitatis impatiens, et Verbi moras non ferens, rogabat ut oscula mereretur, et meruit desideratum videre.

40. Let us beware, therefore, lest that woman, that is, the passion of our senses, deceived and deluded by delight, effeminate that man, that is, the mind (νοῦν), and draw [him] circumscribed into her laws and opinion. Let us flee delight as a serpent; it has many arts and especially in man. For other living things are caught by the greediness for food; when man has more senses of eyes and ears, so much the greater [are] the dangers. Therefore beware lest the vigor of your mind, bent by a certain coitus of corporeal pleasure, be softened, and be resolved into all her embraces, and open its fountain, which ought to be closed and hedged by the study of intention and the consideration of reason: "For an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain." For the sense of the mind being resolved, corporeal delights pour themselves out, too ruinous, and flowing into a full appetite of grave danger; which if the considered custody of a vivid mind had remained, it would have refrained.

41. (Verse 3, 4.) "Your shoots," he says, "[are] a paradise of pomegranates with the fruit of apples, of Cyprus with nard, nard and saffron, reed and cinnamon with all the woods of Lebanon, myrrh and aloes with all the first ointments." The gifts of the soul which were sent by the Bridegroom are praised, with which she came endowed (for to God the good odors of a pious soul are [pleasing]), myrrh, aloes, saffron and others, with which the grace of gardens breathes, and the stench of sins is abolished. And so secure with such a proclamation, she seeks that the north wind, a grave wind, should rest, lest it scatter the flowers: that the south wind should breathe, that is, as if the winter having passed, and the temperateness of a softer blast should become spring. She invites the Bridegroom into her garden, the Bridegroom descends, and delighted by the diversity of its fruits, he rejoices that he has found a stronger food, he has found also a sweeter one. For there is as if a certain bread of the Word and honey, one a more vehement discourse, the other a persuasive one. There is also another faith more fervent, like wine; another more lucid, like the juice of milk. Christ feasts on this food in us, he drinks this cup, and by the ebriety of his drink he provokes us, so that to better and best [things] we may make an excess from inferior ones.

42. Hearing these [things] the soul has drawn the ebriety of celestial mysteries, and as if put to sleep by wine, and placed as if in an excess or stupor, she says: "I sleep, and my heart watches" (Song 5:2). Then being struck by the light of the present Word, she is excited by the Word. Moreover, this is the fourth process of the soul. For first, impatient of charity, and not bearing the delays of the Word, she was asking that she might merit kisses, and she merited to see the desired [one].

Secundo introducta in cubiculum regis, cum mutua misceret alloquia, in umbra ejus requievit, et subito ei Verbum medio sermone discessit; quaerenti tamen non diu abfuit, sed saliens supra montes et transiliens super colles advenit. Nec multo post quasi capreolus aut cervorum hinniculus dum affatur dilectam, exsilivit et reliquit. Tertio cum in cubili et noctibus, in civitate et foro, in plateis quaesitum non reperit, et aliquando orationibus suis gratia quaerentem revocavit, adeo etiam ut propius vocaretur a sponso. Quarto ipsa jam dormiens ab ipso excitatur, quamvis corde vigilaret; ut continuo vocem pulsantis audiret: sed moram passa, dum surgit (quia velocitatem Verbi non potuit comprehendere), dum aperit ostium, transivit Verbum, et ipsa exivit in Verbo ejus: et per vulnera requisitum, sed vulnera charitatis, vix tandem invenit, et tenuit, ut postea non amitteret. Ad summam haec compendioso sermone perstrinxi, nunc discutiamus singula.

43. (Vers. 15.) Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, quae fluunt impetu de Libano. Habes haec in Salomone, quia Proverbia ejus moralia, Ecclesiastes naturalis, in quo quasi vanitates istius despicit mundi: mystica sunt ejus Cantica Canticorum. Habes et in propheta: Seminate vobis ad justitiam, vindemiate ad fructum vitae, illuminare vobis lumen cognitionis (Ose. X, 12); hoc est enim lumen cognitionis, habere charitatis perfectionem. Ideoque dictum est: Ne timeas (Joan. XII, 15); charitas enim timorem excludit foras.

44. Ut cognoscamus autem quia Salomon ita hos interpretatus est tres puteos, quos fodit Jacob; ut ad moralem doctrinam et naturalem referret et mysticam, in singulis libris suis, quos de moralibus et naturalibus vel mysticis scripsit, posuit hos puteos. Nam et in Proverbiis, cum declinandam speciem diceret saecularis illecebrae, ait: Bibe aquam de tuis vasis, et de puteorum tuorum fontibus, et superfluant tibi aquae de tuo fonte (Prov. V, 15). Et infra: Fons aquae tuae sit tibi proprius, et jucundare cum uxore quae ab adolescentia tua (Ibid., 18); eo quod adversus tentamenta mundi remedium nobis vera sapientia sit. Moralis quoque doctrina quae imaginem mundanae voluptatis meretriciis quibusdam illitam fucis irriguo suo diluat, et fluento sui fontis abstergat.

Second, being introduced into the chamber of the king, when she would mix mutual addresses, she rested in his shadow, and suddenly the Word departed from her in the middle of the discourse; yet he was not absent for long from [her] seeking, but leaping over the mountains and overleaping over the hills he arrived. Nor much after, like a roe or a fawn of hinds while he addresses the beloved, he leaped out and left. Third, when in the bed and at nights, in the city and the forum, in the streets she did not find [him] having been sought, and sometimes by her prayers grace (*gratia*) recalled [him] seeking, so much even that he might be called nearer by the bridegroom. Fourth, she now sleeping is excited by him, although she watched in heart; so that she might continuously hear the voice of the one knocking: but having suffered delay, while she rises (because she could not comprehend the velocity of the Word), while she opens the door, the Word passed, and she herself went out in his Word: and having been sought through wounds, but wounds of charity, at length she found [him] with difficulty, and held [him], so that she might not lose [him] afterward. In sum I have touched upon these [things] in a compendious discourse, now let us discuss each.

43. (Verse 15.) "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, which flow with impetus from Lebanon." You have these [things] in Solomon, because his Proverbs [are] moral, Ecclesiastes natural, in which as if he despises the vanities of this world (*mundi*): mystical are his Song of Songs (*Cantica Canticorum*). You have [them] also in the prophet: "Sow for yourselves unto justice, harvest unto the fruit of life, illuminate for yourselves the light of knowledge" (Hosea 10:12); for this is the light of knowledge, to have the perfection of charity. And therefore it was said: "Fear not" (John 12:15); for charity excludes fear outside.

44. That we may know however that Solomon thus interpreted these three wells, which Jacob dug; so that he might refer [them] to moral and natural and mystical doctrine, in his individual books, which he wrote concerning moral and natural or mystical [things], he placed these wells. For also in Proverbs, when he would say that the appearance of secular allurements is to be declined, he says: "Drink water from your own vessels, and from the fountains of your wells, and let waters superabound for you from your own fountain" (Proverbs 5:15). And below: "Let the fountain of your water be proper to you, and rejoice with the wife who [is] from your youth" (*Ibid.*, 18); for the reason that against the temptations of the world true wisdom (*sapientia*) is a remedy for us. Also moral doctrine which may dilute the image of worldly pleasure smeared with certain meretricious dyes by its own irrigation, and may wipe [it] away with the flow of its own fountain.

45. De naturalibus quoque habes in Ecclesiaste ipsum: Feci mihi piscinas aquarum ad irrigandum ex his saltum germinantem (Eccles. II, 6). Neque te moveat quod pro puteo piscinas posuit, quia et Moyses puteum latitudinis dixit; eo quod a sollicitudine omni et angustiis solvitur, qui mundum hunc pia mente transcendit. Non immerito ergo piscinas habet Ecclesiastes, qui vidit nullam abundantiam esse sub sole: sed si quis abundare velit, in Christo abundet.

46. De mysticis et puteus superest nobis, quem etiam ipsum reperimus in Canticis Canticorum, dicente Scriptura: Fons hortorum, puteus aquae vivae, et impetu descendens a Libano. Etenim si mysteriorum altitudinem persequaris, puteus tibi videtur tamquam in profundo sita mystica esse sapientia: si vero haurire velis affluentiam charitatis, quae major et uberius est, quam fides et spes, tunc tibi fons est. Exuberat enim charitas, ut et haurire eam cominus, et rigare ejus affluentia hortum tuum possis, spiritualium fructibus redundantem. Et quia ipse puteus latitudinis est, qui charitatem habet; ideo dixit, quia ubi charitas est, ibi impetus magnus descendit a Libano.

47. Ne quid autem moveat, quod et puteum, et fontem eundem dixit; etiam Evangelium te instruat, in quo scriptum est: Quia venit Jesus in civitatem Samariae, quae dicitur Sichar, juxta praedium quod dedit Jacob Joseph filio suo (Joan. IV, 5 et 6). Erat autem ibi fons Jacob: Et fatigatus, inquit, sedebat sic super puteum. Unde ad mysticam doctrinam hunc referri puteum etiam ibi cognoscimus, quia ibi Samaritana illa, id est, custos (custos autem coelestium praeceptorum) hausit de puteo illo divina mysteria, cognoscens quia Deus spiritus est, et non in loco adoratur, sed in spiritu: et quia Messias venit, qui Christus est. Quibus auditis mulier illa quae speciem Ecclesiae gerit, Legis sacramenta cognovit et credidit.

48. Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium, et impetus descendens a Libano. Hos impetus Ecclesia deduxit a Libano, hoc impetu diluuntur peccata, hoc impetu puri fontis Spiritus sancti adfuit a Libano Sponsa, et a principio fidei transivit saeculum, et pertransivit ad regnum. Aliis fons est, aliis puteus pro captu nostro gratia spiritalis: aliis hortus clausus, fons signatus, aliis hortorum fons, qui in Ecclesiae dote numeratur: aliis impetus descendens a Libano, et magnus impetus qui numquam deficit. Non enim deficiunt de petra ubera, neque nix a Libano, neque aqua quae fertur valido vento virgini Hierusalem.

45. Concerning natural [things] also you have in Ecclesiastes itself: "I made for myself pools of waters for irrigating from these the budding forest" (Ecclesiastes 2:6). Nor should it move you that he placed pools for a well, because also Moses said a well of breadth; for the reason that he is solved from all solicitude and anguishes, who shall have transcended this world with a pious mind. Not unmeritedly therefore Ecclesiastes has pools, who saw that there is no abundance under the sun: but if anyone should wish to abound, let him abound in Christ.

46. Concerning mystical [things] also a well remains for us, which also we find in the Song of Songs, Scripture saying: "A fountain of gardens, a well of living water, and descending with impetus from Lebanon." For if you should pursue the altitude of mysteries (*mysteriorum*), mystical wisdom (*sapientia*) seems to you as if situated in the deep: if however you should wish to draw the abundance of charity, which is greater and richer than faith and hope, then for you [it] is a fountain. For charity exuberates, so that you may both draw it near at hand, and be able to irrigate your garden with its abundance, redundant with spiritual fruits. And because the well itself is of breadth, which has charity; therefore he said, that where charity is, there a great impetus descends from Lebanon.

47. Nor should it move [anyone], that he said the same [thing to be] both a well and a fountain; let also the Gospel instruct you, in which it is written: "That Jesus came into a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near the farm which Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (John 4:5 and 6). Moreover, the fountain of Jacob was there: "And being fatigued," he says, "he was sitting thus over the well." Whence we know that this well is referred also there to mystical doctrine, because there that Samaritan woman, that is, a guardian (moreover, a guardian of celestial precepts) drew from that well divine mysteries, knowing that God is a spirit, and is not adored in a place, but in spirit: and that the Messiah comes, who is Christ. Which [things] being heard, that woman who bears the appearance of the Church, knew and believed the sacraments of the Law.

48. "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and an impetus descending from Lebanon." The Church led down these impetuses from Lebanon, by this impetus sins are diluted, by this impetus of the pure fountain of the Holy Spirit the Bride was present from Lebanon, and from the beginning of faith she passed over the world, and passed through to the kingdom. To some [it] is a fountain, to others a well according to our capacity [of] spiritual grace (*gratia*): to some an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain, to others a fountain of gardens, which is numbered in the dowry of the Church: to others an impetus descending from Lebanon, and a great impetus which never fails. For the breasts do not fail from the rock, nor the snow from Lebanon, nor the water which is borne by a strong wind to the virgin Jerusalem.

49. Descendit impetus a Libano, quando collectis in unum apostolis et pluribus credentibus, factus est subito de coelo sonus, tamquam vi magna spiritus ferretur, et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto diversitates donante linguarum (Act. II, 1, 3). Bonus impetus qui laedere nesciat, norit implere. Si quis igitur hunc impetum supervenientis e coelo gratiae vult mereri, descendat etiam ipse oculis in decursus aquarum. Qui hunc primum impetum fuderit, illum merebitur. Descendit oculis suis in hos ductus aquarum, quae lacrymis in Evangelio rigavit Domini pedes (Luc. VII, 38), et ideo fidei suae pretio emit animae suae et corpori sanitatem, jam non sanguinis proflua, sed gratiae spiritalis.

50. Descendit ergo David propheta, ideo de peccato gratiam retulit. Descendit in aquarum ductus, hoc est, replevit eos, et decurrentium aquarum lacrymis suis fluenta cumulavit, aut inanes et vacuos ductus solis replevit fletibus. Aut quod elocutionis moralis quosdam sensus ostendit, descendit in aquarum ductus, transivit eos. Et possemus dicere, transcendit eos, et supergressus est: sed minuitur vis eloquii, quo vis major affluentiae descendentis, quam ascendentis exprimitur. Vide, rogo, quid de usu verba habeant, impetum suum sermo propheticus non amittat, licet usque ipse scriptorum sensui servire, majore decore consueverit.

51. Puteus aquarum viventium; puteus enim si nihil haurias, inertis otio et degeneri situ facile corrumpitur: exercitatus autem nitescit ad speciem, dulcescit ad potum. Ita bureau acervus divitiarum, cumulo arenosus, speciosus est usu, otio autem inutilis habetur. Derivato igitur aliquid de puteo hoc: Ignem enim ardentem restinguit aqua, et eleemosyna resistit peccatis (Eccli. III, 33). Aqua autem stativa cito vermes facit: non stet thesaurus tuus, ne ignis tuus stet. Stabit in te, nisi eum operibus tuae miserationis averteris.

52. (Vers. 16.) Exsurge, aquilo, et veni, auster, aspira hortum meum, et perfluunt aromata mea. Audisti, Christi sponsa, quia placet ei tuarum pulchritudo virtutum; audisti quia vestimentorum tuorum aromata, hoc est, bonum odorem integritatis omnibus odoribus praetulit. Audisti, quia hortus es clausus, suavium pomiferarum refertus frugibus. Pete igitur ut aspiret tibi Spiritus sanctus, aspiret supra cubile tuum, atque odorem piaie mentis, et gratiae spiritalis accumulet. Excita Spiritum sanctum dicens: Exsurge, aquilo, et veni, auster; aspira hortum meum, et perfluant aromata mea.

49. An impetus descended from Lebanon, when, the apostles and several believers having been collected into one, suddenly there was made a sound from heaven, as if a spirit were borne with great force, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit giving diversities of tongues (Acts 2:1, 3). A good impetus which may not know [how] to harm, [but] may know [how] to fill. If anyone therefore wishes to merit this impetus of grace supervening from heaven, let him also himself descend with eyes into the decourses of waters. He who shall have poured this first impetus, shall merit that one. She descended with her eyes into these ducts of waters, who irrigated the feet of the Lord with tears in the Gospel (Luke 7:38), and therefore by the price of her faith she bought health for her soul and body, now not flowing with blood, but with spiritual grace.

50. Therefore the prophet David descended, and therefore from sin he brought back grace. He descended into the ducts of waters, that is, he filled them, and with his tears he heaped up the flows of the decurrent waters, or he filled the empty and void ducts of the sun with weepings. Or because he showed certain senses of moral elocution, he descended into the ducts of waters, he passed through them. And we could say, he transcended them, and stepped over [them]: but the force of the discourse is diminished, by which a greater force of the descending abundance is expressed than of the ascending. See, I ask, what the words have of use, lest the prophetic discourse lose its impetus, although use itself is accustomed to serve the sense of writers with greater decorum.

51. "A well of living waters"; for a well if you should draw nothing, is easily corrupted by inert leisure and degenerate situation: moreover, being exercised it shines for appearance, becomes sweet for drink. So also a heap of riches, sandy with a pile, is beautiful by use, but by leisure is held useless. Therefore derive something from this well: "For water extinguishes a burning fire, and almsgiving resists sins" (Ecclesiasticus 3:33). Moreover, stagnant water quickly makes worms: let not your treasure stand, lest your fire stand. It will stand in you, unless you should avert it by the works of your miseration.

52. (Verse 16.) "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let my aromatics flow." You have heard, bride of Christ, that the beauty of your virtues pleases him; you have heard that he preferred the aromatics (aromata) of your garments, that is, the good odor of integrity, to all odors. You have heard, that you are an enclosed garden, filled with the fruits of sweet fruit-bearing [trees]. Ask therefore that the Holy Spirit may blow upon you, blow over your bed, and may heap up the odor of a pious mind and of spiritual grace (gratia). Excite the Holy Spirit saying: "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind; blow through my garden, and let my aromatics flow."

Descendat fraternus meus in hortum suum, et manducet fructum pomiferarum suarum. Hortus Verbi animae vernantis affectus est, et in pomiferis virtutis est fructus. Venit ergo, et sive manduces, sive bibas, si Christum invocas, adest dicens: Venite, manducate panes meos, et bibite vinum meum (Prov. IX, 5).

53. Exsurge, inquit, aquilo, et veni, auster; aspira hortum meum, et perfluant aromata mea. Ex omnibus enim partibus mundi odor sacrae religionis adolevit, quo dilectae virginis membra fragrarunt. Unde et Ecclesia altitudinem servans mysteriorum coelestium, rejicit a se graviores venti procellas, et invitat vernantis gratiae suavitatem; et sciens quod ortus suus Christo displicere non possit, advocat Sponsum suum: Exsurge, inquit, aquilo, et veni, auster. Plerique haec ita accipiunt, quasi projiciatur aquilo, et invitetur auster. Quod si ita accipiunt, exturbatur ab Ecclesia perfidiae glacialis asperitas, ne fiat fuga nostra hyeme vel sabbato, et invitatur australis verna temperies.

54. Aut certe: Exsurge, aquilo, hoc est, surge, qui dormis, et exsurge a mortuis (Ephes. V, 14). Populus nationum qui diu ante dormisti, evigila aliquando, et illucescet tibi Christus. Postremo omnes invitantur ad Ecclesiam, et Synagogae populus et gentilium: sed prius Synagogae, quia priores ex Judaeis apostoli crediderunt et per ipsos postea nationum populi congregati sunt. Vide ergo venientem solem nostrum ad austrum, postea gyranthem ad aquilonem. Hierusalem, Hierusalem: venit utique ad eam, quam etiam vocare dignatus est: sed haec Hierusalem terrena est, quae eccidit prophetas, hoc est, Synagoga Judaeorum: Quoties, inquit, volui congregare filios tuos, sicut gallina pullos suos, et noluisti? Ecce relinquetur domus vestra deserta (Matth. XXIII, 37 et 38). Gyrauit igitur ad gentes: gyrando autem gyravit Spiritus Dei, et in gyros suos conversus est, ut fieret Deus omnia in omnibus.

CAPUT QUINTUM.

Let my brother descend into his garden, and eat the fruit of his fruit-bearing [trees]." The garden of the Word is the affect of the soul flourishing, and in the fruit-bearing [trees] is the fruit of virtue. He comes therefore, and whether you eat, or whether you drink, if you invoke Christ, he is present saying: "Come, eat my breads, and drink my wine" (Proverbs 9:5).

53. "Arise," he says, "O north wind, and come, O south wind; blow through my garden, and let my aromatics flow." For from all parts of the world the odor of sacred religion has become fragrant, with which the members of the beloved virgin were fragrant. Whence also the Church, serving the altitude of celestial mysteries (*mysterium*), rejects from herself the graver tempests of the wind, and invites the sweetness of flourishing grace (*gratia*); and knowing that her arising cannot displease Christ, she calls her Bridegroom: "Arise," she says, "O north wind, and come, O south wind." Most [people] receive these [things] thus, as if the north wind were projected, and the south wind invited. Which if they receive thus, the icy asperity of perfidy is extruded from the Church, lest our flight become in winter or on the Sabbath, and the southern spring temperateness is invited.

54. Or certainly: "Arise, O north wind," that is, "rise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead" (Ephesians 5:14). People of the nations who for a long time before have slept, wake up at some time, and Christ will shine upon you. Finally all are invited to the Church, both the people of the Synagogue (*Synagoga*) and of the gentiles: but first of the Synagogue, because the earlier apostles from the Jews believed, and through them afterward the people of the nations were gathered. See therefore our sun coming to the south, afterward turning to the north. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem": he came certainly to her, whom even he deigned to call: but this Jerusalem is terrestrial, which kills the prophets, that is, the Synagogue of the Jews: "How often," he says, "did I wish to gather your sons, as a hen [gathers] her chicks, and you were unwilling? Behold your house shall be left deserted" (Matthew 23:37 and 38). He turned therefore to the nations: moreover, in turning the Spirit of God has turned, and is converted into his own turnings, so that God might become all in all.

CHAPTER FIVE.

1. (Vers. 1.) Veniat dilectus meus in hortum meum, et comedat fructum pomorum suorum. Hinc hortum illum sibi Plato composuit, quem Jovis hortum alibi, alibi hortum mentis appellavit; Jovem enim et Deum et mentem dixit. In hunc introivisse animam, quam Venerem nuncupat, ut se abundantia et divitiis horti repleret, in quo repletus potu jaceret, potu qui nectar effunderet. Hoc igitur ex libro Canticorum composuit; eo quod anima Deo adhaerens in hortum mentis ingressa sit, in quo esset abundantia diversarum virtutum, floresque sermonum. Quis autem ignorat quod ex paradiso illo quem legimus in Genesi habere lignum vitae et lignum scientiae boni et mali (Gen. II, 8), et ligna caetera, abundantiam virtutum putaverit transferendam, et in hortum mentis esse plantandam?

2. Quem in Canticis Canticorum hortum animae significat, vel ipsam animam; sic enim scriptum est: Hortus clausus sponsa, soror mea, hortus clausus, fons signatus. Et infra ait anima: Exsurge, aquilo, et veni, auster; perfla hortum meum, et defluant unguenta tua, descendat frater meus in hortum suum (Cant. IV, 12 et 13). Quanto hoc pulchrius, quod anima ornata virtutum floribus, hortus sit; vel habeat in se paradisum germinantem, in quem hortum invitat Verbum Dei descendere; ut anima illa Verbi imbre coelestis, et ejus copiis irrigata fructificet! Verbum autem Dei pascitur animae virtutibus, quoties animam obedientem sibi et opimam invenerit: et carpit fructus ejus, et his delectatur. Cum autem descenderit in eam Dei Verbum, defluunt ex ea salubrium unguenta verborum, et diversarum flagrant longe lateque redolentia gratiarum spiramina. Unde ait Sponsus (Sponsus autem animae Deus Verbum est, cui anima legitimo quodam connubii foedere copulatur):

3. (Vers. 2.) Ingressus sum in hortum meum, soror mea sponsa; vindemiavi myrrham meam cum unguentis meis, manducavi panem meum cum melle meo, bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo. Edite, proximi mei, et bibite et inebriamini, fratres mei. Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Cognoscamus quos fructus vel cibos epuletur Deus, vel quibus delectetur. Delectatur eo, si quis mortificet peccatum suum, obliteret culpam suam, sepeliat atque abolefaciat iniquitates suas; myrrha enim est sepultura mortuorum, mortua autem peccata sunt, quae vitae suavitatem habere non possunt.

1. (Verse 1.) "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apples." From here Plato composed for himself that garden which he called in one place the garden of Jove, and in another the garden of the mind; for he called Jove both God and mind. [He said] that the soul, which he names Venus, entered into this [garden] to fill itself with the abundance and riches of the garden, in which, filled with drink, it might lie, with a drink that would pour forth nectar. He composed this, therefore, from the book of Songs; because the soul adhering to God entered into the garden of the mind, in which there was an abundance of various virtues and the flowers of sermons. But who is ignorant that from that paradise which we read in Genesis to have the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:8), and other trees, he thought the abundance of virtues should be transferred and planted in the garden of the mind?

Which in the Song of Songs signifies the garden of the soul, or the soul itself; for thus it is written: "An enclosed garden is my bride, my sister, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain." And below the soul says: "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind; blow through my garden, and let your ointments flow down, let my brother descend into his garden" (Cant. 4:12 and 13). How much more beautiful is this, that the soul adorned with the flowers of virtues is a garden; or has in itself a germinating paradise, into which garden she invites the Word of God to descend; so that that soul, irrigated by the celestial rain of the Word and by its supplies, may bear fruit! Moreover, the Word of God feeds upon the virtues of the soul, whenever he finds a soul obedient to him and rich: and he plucks its fruits and is delighted by them. But when the Word of God descends into her, the ointments of salutary words flow out of her, and the breathings of various graces, redolent far and wide, are fragrant. Whence the Bridegroom (Sponsus) says (for the Bridegroom of the soul is God the Word, to whom the soul is joined by a certain legitimate bond of marriage):

3. (Verse 2.) "I have entered into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my ointments, I have eaten my bread with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, my neighbors, and drink and be inebriated, my brothers. I sleep, and my heart watches." Let us recognize what fruits or foods God feasts upon, or in which things he is delighted. He is delighted by this, if anyone mortifies his sin, blurs out his fault, buries and abolishes his iniquities; for myrrh is the burial of the dead, but dead are the sins which cannot have the sweetness of life.

Perfunduntur autem divini sermonis unguentis, et fortiori cibo verbi velut pane, et suaviori sermone velut melle curantur quaedam vulnera delictorum. Sermones autem cibos esse docet et alibi Salomon, dicens: Favi mellis sermones boni (Prov. XVI, 24). In illo ergo horto sermones boni sunt, alius qui culpam coerceat, alius qui iniquitatem corripiat, alius qui mori faciat insolentiam, et velut sepeliat eam, quando correptus aliquis erroribus suis renuntiat.

4. Est etiam sermo fortior, qui confirmat cor hominis validioribus Scripturae coelestis alimentis. Comedi favum cum melle meo, bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo. Est enim sermo suasorius dulcis ut mel, et tamen peccatoris conscientiam in ipsa suavitate compungens. Est etiam ferventioris spiritus sermo, qui inebriat sicut vinum, et cor hominis laetificat. Est denique lacteus sermo, purus et candidus. Hos cibos dulcium utiliumque sermonum epulandos Sponsus proximis suis dicit: Edite, proximi mei, et bibite, et inebriamini, fratres mei. Proximi autem sunt qui eum sequuntur, et ejus nuptiis intersunt. Quo cibo et potu (bibit enim unusquisque (Prov. V, 15) aquam de suis vasis, et de puteorum suorum fontibus) repleta anima, atque inebriata, saeculo dormiebat, vigilabat Deo. Et ideo sicut posteriora docent, aperiri sibi Deus Verbum ejus januam postulabat, ut eam suo repletet ingressu.

5. Hinc ergo epulatores illi Platonici, hinc nectar illud ex vino et melle prophetico, hinc somnus ille translatus est, hinc vita illa perpetua quam deos suos dixit epulari, quia Christus vita est. Ideoque talium sermonum seminibus, animae ejus repletus est venter, atque ipsa exivit in Verbo: quae autem exit anima a servitio isto, et elevat se a corpore, Verbum sequitur. Aliter, ut superius (Sup., cap. 4) aliquantulum repetamus: Hortus conclusus soror mea, sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus. Quo significat signatum debere apud te manere mysterium, ne violetur operibus malae vitae, atque adulterio castitatis: ne divulgetur quibus non convenit, ne garrula loquacitate dispergatur in perfidos.

6. Bona debet ergo fidei tuae esse custodia, ut intemerata vitae ac silentii integritas perseveret. Unde et Ecclesia altitudinem servans mysteriorum coelestium, rejicit a se graviores venti procellas, et invitat vernantis gratiae suavitatem.

Moreover, they are drenched with the ointments of divine discourse, and certain wounds of sins are cured by the stronger food of the word as if by bread, and by the sweeter discourse as if by honey. Moreover, Solomon teaches in another place that discourses are foods, saying: "Good discourses are a honeycomb of honey" (Prov. 16:24). In that garden, therefore, there are good discourses: one which restrains fault, another which corrects iniquity, another which causes insolence to die and as if buries it, when someone corrected renounces his errors.

4. There is also a stronger discourse, which confirms the heart of man with the stronger nourishments of celestial Scripture. "I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk." For there is a persuasive discourse sweet as honey, and yet pricking the conscience of the sinner in that very sweetness. There is also a discourse of a more fervent spirit, which inebriates like wine and gladdens the heart of man. Finally, there is a milky discourse, pure and white. The Bridegroom says to his neighbors that these foods of sweet and useful discourses are to be feasted upon: "Eat, my neighbors, and drink, and be inebriated, my brothers." Moreover, the neighbors are those who follow him and are present at his nuptials. With which food and drink (for each one drinks (Prov. 5:15) water from his own vessels and from the fountains of his own wells) the soul, filled and inebriated, was sleeping to the world and was watching for God. And therefore, as later things teach, God the Word was asking for her door to be opened to him, so that he might fill her by his entrance.

5. Hence, therefore, [came] those Platonic feasters, hence that nectar from prophetic wine and honey, hence that sleep was transferred, hence that perpetual life which he said his gods feast upon, because Christ is life. And therefore, with the seeds of such discourses, the belly of his soul was filled, and she herself went out in the Word: moreover, the soul which goes out from that service, and elevates herself from the body, follows the Word. Otherwise, to repeat somewhat from above (Above, Chap. 4): "An enclosed garden is my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain." By which he signifies that the mystery (*mysterium*) ought to remain sealed with you, lest it be violated by the works of an evil life and by the adultery of chastity; lest it be divulged to those to whom it is not fitting, lest it be dispersed among the perfidious by talkative loquacity.

There ought to be, therefore, a good custody of your faith, so that the undefiled integrity of life and silence may persevere. Whence also the Church, serving the altitude of celestial mysteries (*mysteriorum*), rejects from herself the graver tempests of the wind, and invites the sweetness of flourishing grace (*gratia*).

Et sciens quod hortus suus Christo displicere non possit, advocat ipsum sponsum dicens: Exsurge, aquilo, et veni, auster: perfla hortum meum, et fluant unguenta mea (Cant. IV, 10): descendat frater meus in hortum suum, et edat fructum pomiferarum suarum (Cant. V, 1); bonas enim arbores et fructiferas habet, radicesque suas quas tinxerat in sacri fontis irriguo, et in bonos fructus novae fecunditatis germine pullulaverint; ut non jam prophetica caedantur securi, sed evangelica ubertate fecundentur. Denique fertilitate earum Dominus delectatus respondet:

7. Ingressus sum in hortum meum, soror mea sponsa: vindemiavi myrrham cum unguentis meis, manducavi panem meum cum melle meo: bibi potum meum cum lacte meo. Quare panem et vinum dixerim, fideles intelligunt. Illud autem non dubium, quod nobis ipse manducat et bibit, sicut in nobis legisti, quia in carcere esse se dixit (Matth. XXV, 36). Unde et Ecclesia videns tantam gratiam, hortatur filios suos, hortatur proximos, ut ad sacramenta concurrant, dicens: Edite, proximi mei, et bibite, et inebriamini, fratres mei. Quid edamus, quid bibamus, alibi tibi per prophetam Spiritus sanctus expressit, dicens: Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus; beatus vir qui sperat in eo (Psalm. XXXIII, 9). In illo sacramento Christus est, quia corpus est Christi: non ergo corporalis esca, sed spiritalis est. Unde et Apostolus de typo ejus ait: Quia patres nostri escam spiritualem manducaverunt, et potum spiritalem biberunt (I Cor. X, 3). Corpus enim Dei corpus est spiritale, corpus Christi corpus est divini spiritus; quia spiritus est Christus, ut legimus: Spiritus ante faciem nostram Christus Dominus (Thren. IV, 20). Et in Petri epistola habemus: Christus pro nobis mortuus est (I Pet. II, 21). Denique cor nostrum esca ista confirmat, et potus iste laetificat cor hominis, ut propheta memoravit (Psal. CIII, 25).

8. Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus; ne facile aperiat os suum, nec vulgari resignet alloquio; neque enim de ipsis divinis decet, nisi verbo Dei interpellata respondeas. Quid tibi cum caeteris? Soli Christo loquere, soli fabulare Christo. Si enim ut mulieres taceant in Ecclesia scriptum est (I Cor. XIV, 34): quanto magis non decet patere virginis januam, non decet viduae patere fores! Cito insidiator pudoris obrepit, cito verbum excipit, quod revocare desideres. Si Evae clausa fuisset janua, nec Adam deceptus fuisset, nec respondisset interrogata serpenti.

And knowing that her garden cannot displease Christ, she calls the Bridegroom himself, saying: "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind: blow through my garden, and let my ointments flow" (Cant. 4:10): "let my brother descend into his garden, and let him eat the fruit of his fruit-bearing [trees]" (Cant. 5:1); for she has good and fruitful trees, and her roots which she had dipped in the irrigation of the sacred fountain, and they have budded into the good fruits of a new fecundity with a sprout; so that they may no longer be cut down by the prophetic axe, but may be made fruitful by evangelical abundance. Finally, the Lord, delighted by their fertility, responds:

7. "I have entered into my garden, my sister, my bride: I have gathered my myrrh with my ointments, I have eaten my bread with my honey: I have drunk my drink with my milk." Why I should say bread and wine, the faithful understand. Moreover, it is not doubtful that he himself eats and drinks in us, as you have read in us, because he said that he was in prison (Matth. 25:36). Whence also the Church, seeing such great grace (*gratiam*), exhorts her sons, exhorts her neighbors, to run together to the sacraments (*sacramenta*), saying: "Eat, my neighbors, and drink, and be inebriated, my brothers." What we should eat, what we should drink, the Holy Spirit has expressed to you elsewhere through the prophet, saying: "Taste, and see that the Lord is sweet; blessed is the man who hopes in him" (Psalm 33:9). In that sacrament (*sacramento*) Christ is, because it is the body of Christ: therefore it is not corporal food, but spiritual. Whence also the Apostle says concerning its type: "Because our fathers ate spiritual food, and drank spiritual drink" (1 Cor. 10:3). For the body of God is a spiritual body, the body of Christ is a body of the divine spirit; because Christ is spirit, as we read: "A spirit before our face is Christ the Lord" (Thren. 4:20). And in the epistle of Peter we have: "Christ died for us" (1 Pet. 2:21). Finally, this food confirms our heart, and this drink gladdens the heart of man, as the prophet mentioned (Psal. 103:25).

8. "An enclosed garden is my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain"; let her not easily open her mouth, nor resign herself to vulgar conversation; for it is not becoming concerning those divine things, unless you respond when called upon by the word of God. What [is it] to you with the rest? Speak to Christ alone, converse with Christ alone. For if it is written that women should be silent in the Church (1 Cor. 14:34): how much more is it not becoming for the door of a virgin to be open, it is not becoming for the gates of a widow to be open! Quickly the insidiator of modesty (*pudoris*) creeps in, quickly he catches a word which you may desire to call back. If the door had been closed to Eve, neither would Adam have been deceived, nor would she have responded to the serpent when questioned.

Introivit mors per fenestram, hoc est, per Evae ostium. Ingitur mors per ostium tuum, si falsum loquaris, si turpiter, si procaciter, postremo si ubi non oportet, loquaris. Clausae sint igitur labiorum tuorum fores, et obseratum maneat vocis vestibulum, tunc fortasse reserandum, cum audieris Dei vocem, cum audieris Dei verbum. Tunc tibi myrrha sudabit, tunc tibi baptismatis aspirabit gratia, ut ab elementis mundi commoriare cum Christo, et cum Christo resurgas. Quid adhuc, inquit, velut viventes, de hoc mundo decernitis? Ne tetigeritis, ne attaminaveritis, ne gustaveritis, quae sunt ad corruptionem ipso usu (Coloss. II, 20 et seq.).

9. Descendat frater meus in hortum suum, ut comedat fructum pomiferarum suarum. Quae sunt istae pomiferae? Lignum aridum factus es in Adam, sed nunc per gratiam Christi pomifera arbor pullulasti. Libenter accepit Dominus Jesus, et dignatione coelesti respondit Ecclesiae suae: Descendi, inquit, in hortum meum, vindemiavi myrrham cum unguentis meis, manducavi panem meum cum melle meo, et bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo.

10. Edite, inquit, fratres mei, et inebriamini: Vindemiavi myrrham cum unguentis meis (Psalm. LXXIX, 9). Quae est ista vindemia? Cognoscite vineam, et agnoscetis vindemiam. Vineam, inquit, ex Aegypto transtulisti, hoc est, populum Dei. Vos estis vinea, vos estis vindemia: quasi vinea plantati, quasi vindemia fructum dedistis. Vindemiavi myrrham cum unguentis meis, hoc est, in odorem quem accepistis.

11. Manducavi panem meum cum melle meo. Vides quod in hoc pane nulla sit amaritudo, sed omnis suavitas sit. Bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo, vides huiusmodi esse laetitiam, quae nullius peccati sordibus polluitur? Quotiescumque enim bibis, remissionem accipis peccatorum, et inebriaris spiritu. Unde et Apostolus ait: Nolite inebriari vino . . . sed implemini Spiritu sancto (Ephes. V, 18). Vino enim qui inebriatur, vacillat et titubat: spiritu qui inebriatur, radicans in Christo est, et ideo praeclara ebrietas, quae sobrietatem mentis operatur.

12. Edite, inquit, amici mei, et bibite, et inebriamini. Bona ebrietas quae ad meliora atque jucunda facit quemdam mentis excessum, ut immemor sollicitudinum animus noster, vino jucunditatis hilaretur. Bona mensae spiritalis ebrietas; denique poculum inebrians quam praeclarum (Psalm. XXII, 5)! Et alibi habes: Rivos ejus inebria, multiplica generationes ejus (Psalm. LXIV, 11); eo quod ebrietas terrae cum infusa fuerit imbre coelesti, suscitare semina, fructus multiplicare consueverit.

Death entered through the window, that is, through the door of Eve. Death enters through your door if you speak falsely, if basely, if petulantly, finally if you speak where it is not appropriate. Let the doors of your lips be closed, therefore, and let the vestibule of the voice remain barred, then perhaps to be unlocked when you hear the voice of God, when you hear the word of God. Then myrrh will sweat for you, then the grace (*gratia*) of baptism will breathe upon you, so that you may die with Christ to the elements of the world and rise again with Christ. "Why still," he says, "as if living, do you decree concerning this world? Do not touch, do not handle, do not taste, which things are unto corruption by the very use" (Coloss. 2:20 et seq.).

9. "Let my brother descend into his garden, that he may eat the fruit of his fruit-bearing [trees]." What are those fruit-bearing [trees]? You were made dry wood in Adam, but now through the grace (*gratiam*) of Christ you have budded as a fruit-bearing tree. The Lord Jesus received [this] gladly, and with celestial deigning responded to his Church: "I have descended," he says, "into my garden, I have gathered my myrrh with my ointments, I have eaten my bread with my honey, and I have drunk my wine with my milk."

10. "Eat," he says, "my brothers, and be inebriated: I have gathered my myrrh with my ointments" (Psalm 79:9). What is that vintage (*vindemia*)? Know the vineyard, and you will recognize the vintage. "You have transferred the vineyard," he says, "from Egypt," that is, the people of God. You are the vineyard, you are the vintage: planted as a vineyard, as a vintage you have given fruit. "I have gathered my myrrh with my ointments," that is, in the odor which you have received.

11. "I have eaten my bread with my honey." You see that in this bread there is no bitterness, but there is all sweetness. "I have drunk my wine with my milk," you see that there is joy (*laetitia*) of this kind, which is polluted by the filth of no sin? For as often as you drink, you receive the remission of sins, and you are inebriated by the spirit. Whence also the Apostle says: "Do not be inebriated with wine... but be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephes. 5:18). For he who is inebriated with wine wavers and totters: he who is inebriated by the spirit is rooted in Christ, and therefore it is a noble inebriation (*ebrietas*), which works the sobriety (*sobrietatem*) of the mind.

12. "Eat," he says, "my friends, and drink, and be inebriated." A good inebriation (*ebrietas*) which causes a certain mental excess (*excessum*) towards better and pleasant things, so that our mind, unmindful of solitudes, may be gladdened by the wine of pleasantness. A good inebriation of the spiritual table; finally, "how noble is the inebriating cup" (Psalm 22:5)! And elsewhere you have: "Inebriate its furrows, multiply its generations" (Psalm 64:11); because when the inebriation (*ebrietas*) of the earth has been infused with celestial rain, it is accustomed to raise seeds and to multiply fruits.

Itaque ubi Verbum quod sicut pluvia descendit de coelo, venas terrae nostrae, id est, animae ac mentis inebriavit praedicatione divina, excitantur virtutum studia diversarum, fructusque fidei, et castae devotionis adolescit, meritoque ei dicitur: Visitasti terram, et inebriasti eam (Psalm. LXIV, 10). Susceptione etenim corporis visitavit, ut sanaret infirmos: inebriavit gratia spiritali, ut anxios jucunditate mulceret.

13. Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Est sanctorum somnus etiam operarius, secundum quod scriptum est: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Et secundum quod Jacob sanctus divina dormiens videbat mysteria, quae vigilans non viderat; de coelo ad terras aerem praeivium sanctis, respicientem Dominum, et pollicentem terrae ejus possessionem. Itaque brevi somno dormiens, impetravit quod magno labore postea acquisivit, haereditas enim ejus est somnus sanctorum, feriatu ab omnibus corporis voluptatibus ab omni animi perturbatione, tranquillitatem menti invehens, placiditatem animae; ut tamquam soluta nexu corporis se ablevet, et Christo adhaereat. Hic est somnus vitae sanctorum.

14. Vox dilecti mei pulsantis, aperi mihi, soror mea. Et si dormias, et si modo devotionem animae tuae noverit Christus, venit, et pulsat ejus januam, et dicit: Aperi mihi, soror mea. Bene soror, quia nuptiae spiritales sunt Verbi atque animae; neque enim animae norunt conjugiorum foedera, et usus copulae corporalis, sed sunt sicut angeli Dei in coelo. Aperi, inquit, mihi, sed extraneis claude. Claude saeculo, claude mundo. Neque ipsa foras ad illa materialia prodeas, neque tuum relinquens lumen, alienum requiras; quia materiale lumen tenebrosam infundit caliginem, ut non videatur lumen verae gloriae. Aperi ergo mihi, noli coarctari, sed dilata te, et adimplebo te. Et quia decurso orbe terrarum, plus molestiarum et offensionis reperi, nec facile habui ubi requiescerem; ideo tu aperi, ut in te filius hominis reclinet caput, cui non est requies nisi super humilem et mansuetum.

15. Aperi mihi, soror mea, surge, proxima mea, columba mea, perfecta mea. Charitate proxima, columba simplicitate, virtute perfecta. Quia caput meum plenum est rore; sicut enim ros coeli nocturnas amovet siccitates, ita ros Domini nostri Jesu Christi nocturnis et saecularibus tenebris aeternae vitae stillavit humorem. Hoc est caput quod aestu mundi nescivit arescere, unde ait: Quia si in humido haec faciunt, in arido quid facient (Luc. XXIII, 31)?

And so where the Word, which descends like rain from heaven, has inebriated the veins of our earth, that is, of the soul (*animae*) and mind, by divine preaching, the studies of various virtues are excited, and the fruits of faith and of chaste devotion grow up, and deservedly it is said to him: "You have visited the earth, and you have inebriated it" (Psalm 64:10). For by the reception of the body he visited, that he might heal the sick: he inebriated with spiritual grace (*gratia*), that he might soothe the anxious with pleasantness.

13. "I sleep, and my heart watches." The sleep of the saints is also industrious, according to what is written: "I sleep, and my heart watches." And according to what the holy Jacob, while sleeping, saw divine mysteries which he had not seen while watching; from heaven to earth [a ladder], with the air going before the saints, looking back at the Lord, and promising the possession of his land. And so, sleeping in a brief sleep, he obtained what he afterward acquired with great labor, for his inheritance is the sleep of the saints, holidayed from all pleasures of the body, from all perturbation of the mind, bringing tranquility to the mind, placidity to the soul; so that as if loosed from the bond of the body she may elevate herself and adhere to Christ. This is the sleep of the life of the saints.

14. "The voice of my beloved knocking: open to me, my sister." Even if you sleep, and if only Christ has known the devotion of your soul, he comes and knocks at her door, and says: "Open to me, my sister." Well [he says] "sister," because the spiritual nuptials are of the Word and the soul; for souls do not know the bonds of marriages and the use of corporal joining, but are as the angels of God in heaven. "Open," he says, "to me," but close to strangers. Close to the age, close to the world. Do not go out yourself to those material things, nor, relinquishing your own light, seek another's; because material light infuses dark mist, so that the light of true glory is not seen. "Open therefore to me," do not be narrowed, but dilate yourself, and I will fill you. And because, having traversed the orb of lands, I found more of molestations and of offense, nor did I easily have where I might rest; therefore you open, that in you the Son of Man may recline his head, for whom there is no rest except upon the humble and the meek.

15. "Open to me, my sister, rise, my neighbor, my dove, my perfect one." Neighbor in charity, dove in simplicity, perfect in virtue. Because my head is full of dew; for just as the dew of heaven removes nocturnal droughts, so the dew of our Lord Jesus Christ has distilled the moisture of eternal life into nocturnal and secular darkness. This is the head which did not know how to become dry in the heat of the world, whence he says: "Because if they do these things in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?" (Luke 23:31).

Hoc igitur caput rorat aliis, sibi abundat. Et bene abundat caput Christi; quia caput tuum Christus est, qui plenus est semper, nec liberalitatibus hauritur suis, aut diutina deficit largitate. In hoc caput ferrum non ascendit, quod est instrumentum belli, insigne discordiae. Nunc specta, et vide ros ille qualis sit, scilicet non vulgaris humoris.

16. Cincinni autem mei guttarum noctis. Noli, proxima mea, accipere cincinnos corporalium capillorum: non illa ornamenta, sed crimina sunt: lenocinia formae, non praecepta virtutis. Alios cincinnos Nazaraeus habet, in quibus ferrum non ascendit, quos nemo praecidit: qui non calamistris compositi aut arte digesti, sed multiplici crispantes virtutum nitentium gratia refulserunt. Disce in historia quales Nazaraeus cincinnos habeat, quos quamdiu Samson habuit intactos, numquam vinci potuit. Cincinnos perdidit, et meritum virtutis amisit (Jud. XVI, 17).

17. (Vers. 3.) Audita igitur voce Verbi, quam exueras tunicam nocte, ne quaesieris quemadmodum induas eam; ostenditur enim, et frequenter offertur per nequitiam spiritalem quemadmodum, inquam, induas eam, obliviscaris et nescias; quasi jam Dominus assistat, exsors corporalium vinculorum turbata consurgas, internam orationibus praepares mentem, dum surgis; ut ex humilibus ad superna contendas, et studeas fores tui cordis aperire. Dum manus tuas tendis ad Christum, fidelem tua gesta spirabunt odorem.

18. Aperi mihi, soror mea. Nonne cum aliquem de primariis viris desideras convenire, primo ad ejus domum appropinquo: postea quaeris informari atque instrui, ut cognoscas mentem patris familias: deinde ut ejus domum ingrediaris, imploras, ne quis te abiciat et excludat. Pulsa ergo et tu regiam illam coelestem, pulsa non manu corporis, sed quadam orationis tuae dextera. Non sola manus corporis pulsat, pulsat et vox; scriptum est enim: Vox fratris mei pulsat ad januam. Pulsamus et digito. Denique et Thomas digito meruit januam resurrectionis aperire: et tibi dicit Jesus: Infer digitum tuum huc, et mitte in manus meas et latus meum, et noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis (Joan. XX, 27). Pulsa ergo digito, si non potes tota manu, pulsa januam. Christus est janua qui ait: Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur (Joan. X, 9).

This head, therefore, dewes upon others and abounds for itself. And well does the head of Christ abound; because your head is Christ, who is always full, nor is he exhausted by his liberalities, or fails by long-lasting largess. Upon this head iron has not ascended, which is the instrument of war, the sign of discord. Now look, and see what kind of dew that is, namely, not of vulgar moisture.

16. "Moreover, my curls are of the drops of the night." Do not, my neighbor, receive the curls of corporal hairs: those are not ornaments, but crimes: enticements of form, not precepts of virtue. The Nazirite (Nazaraeus) has other curls, upon which iron has not ascended, which no one has cut off: which [were] not composed with curling-irons or digested by art, but refortified by the multiple grace (*gratia*) of shining virtues. Learn in history what kind of curls the Nazirite has, which as long as Samson had them intact, he could never be conquered. He lost the curls, and he lost the merit of virtue (Judges 16:17).

17. (Verse 3.) Therefore, the voice of the Word having been heard, the tunic which you had put off at night, do not seek how you may put it on; for it is shown, and frequently offered through spiritual wickedness how, I say, you may put it on, [that] you may forget and not know [it]; as if now the Lord were present, loosed from corporal chains you should rise up troubled, you should prepare the internal mind with prayers while you rise; so that from humble things you may contend to supernal things, and study to open the doors of your heart. While you stretch your hands to Christ, your deeds will breathe a faithful odor.

18. "Open to me, my sister." Do you not, when you desire to meet someone of the primary men, first approach his house: afterward you seek to be informed and instructed, so that you may know the mind of the father of the family: then, so that you may enter his house, you implore, lest anyone cast you away and exclude you. Knock, therefore, you also at that celestial palace, knock not with the hand of the body, but with a certain right hand of your prayer. Not only the hand of the body knocks, the voice also knocks; for it is written: "The voice of my brother knocks at the door." We also knock with a finger. Finally, Thomas even deserved to open the door of the resurrection with a finger: and Jesus says to you: "Bring your finger here, and put it into my hands and my side, and do not be incredulous, but faithful" (John 20:27). Knock, therefore, with a finger, if you cannot with the whole hand, knock at the door. Christ is the door who says: "If anyone enters through me, he shall be saved" (John 10:9).

19. Cum hanc igitur januam pulsaveris, vide quomodo ingrediaris; ne forte etiam ingressus, extra conspectum regis sis. Multi ingrediuntur palatia, et non statim regem istum terrae vident, sed frequenter observant, ut aliquando videre mereantur. Nec praesumunt videndi copiam, sed jussu repraesentantur, et precem fundunt; ut cum benevolentia suscipiantur, caventes primos sui sermonis ingressus; ne quid titubet, ne quid offendant: quanto magis rogandus est Deus, ut ostium misericordiae suae nostra ingrediatur oratio!

20. Vox fratris mei pulsat ad januam. Januam quoque tuam disce, o sponsa Christi, temporibus obserare nocturnis; ne facile quisquam patentem reperiatur. Sponsus ipse vult clausam esse, cum pulsat. Janua nostra os nostrum est, Christo propemodum soli debet aperiri, nec aperiatur nisi ante pulsarit Dei Verbum. Vox fratris mei pulsat ad januam. Audi pulsantem, audi introire cupientem.

21. (Vers. 2.) Aperi mihi, soror mea, sponsa, columba mea, perfecta mea; quia caput meum plenum est rore, et crines mei guttis noctis. Considera quando maxime pulsat januam tuam Deus Verbum, cum repletum est caput ejus rore nocturno. In tribulatione enim et tentationibus positos visitare dignatur; ne quis forte succumbat victus aerumnis. Repletur ergo caput ejus rore vel guttis, quando corpus ejus laborat. Then, therefore, one must watch, lest when the Bridegroom has come, he should recede excluded. Si enim dormias, et cor tuum non vigilet, discedit antequam pulset: si cor tuum vigilet, pulsat, et aperiri sibi januam poscit.

22. Habemus ergo animae nostrae januam, habemus et portas de quibus dictum est: Tollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit Rex gloriae (Psal. XXIII, 7). Est ergo et coelum in his in quibus sunt portae aeternales. Si has fidei tuae portas velis attollere, intrabit ad te Rex gloriae, triumphum portans propriae passionis. Habet enim justitia portas, nam etiam de his legimus scriptum, dicente Domino Jesu per prophetam suum: Aperite mihi portas justitiae (Psal. CXVII, 19). Et infra ait propheta David: Lauda, Hierusalem, Dominum, lauda Deum tuum, Sion; quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum (Psal. CXLVII, 12).

23. Est ergo anima quae habet januam, est quae habet portas. Ad hanc januam venit Christus, et pulsat: pulsat et portas. Aperi ergo illi, vult introire, vult Sponsam invenire vigilantem. Noli ergo bono amatori facere moras, cito recedit: et tu somno corporis tui videris exclusisse pulsantem. Excludis enim, cum desidiosus es, cum piger, cum somnolentus. His repagulis Christus excluditur: si castus et si sobrius sis, cave ne negligens sis. Majorem Christo facit injuriam, qui advenientem repellit.

When you have knocked at this door, therefore, see how you may enter; lest perhaps even having entered, you be outside the sight of the king. Many enter palaces and do not immediately see that king of the earth, but frequently observe, so that at some time they may deserve to see. Nor do they presume an abundance of seeing, but are represented by command and pour out a prayer; so that they may be received with benevolence, guarding the first entrances of their discourse; lest anything should falter, lest anything should offend: how much more is God to be asked, so that our prayer may enter the door of his mercy!

20. "The voice of my brother knocks at the door." Learn also to bar your door, O bride of Christ, in nocturnal times; lest anyone easily find it open. The Bridegroom himself wishes it to be closed when he knocks. Our door is our mouth; it ought to be opened almost to Christ alone, nor should it be opened unless the Word of God has knocked before. "The voice of my brother knocks at the door." Hear the one knocking, hear the one desiring to enter.

21. (Verse 2.) "Open to me, my sister, my bride, my dove, my perfect one; because my head is full of dew, and my hairs with the drops of the night." Consider when God the Word especially knocks at your door, [it is] when his head is filled with nocturnal dew. For he deigns to visit those placed in tribulation and temptations; lest anyone perhaps should succumb, conquered by hardships. His head is filled, therefore, with dew or drops, when his body labors. Then, therefore, one must watch, lest when the Bridegroom has come, he should recede excluded. For if you sleep, and your heart does not watch, he departs before he knocks: if your heart watches, he knocks and asks for the door opened to him.

22. We have, therefore, a door of our soul, we also have gates concerning which it is said: "Lift up your gates, you princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates, and the King of Glory shall enter" (Psalm 23:7). There is, therefore, also heaven in those in whom are the eternal gates. If you wish to lift up these gates of your faith, the King of Glory will enter to you, carrying the triumph of his own passion. For justice has gates, for we also read written concerning these, the Lord Jesus saying through his prophet: "Open to me the gates of justice" (Psalm 117:19). And below the prophet David says: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise your God, O Sion; because he has strengthened the bars of your gates" (Psalm 147:12).

23. There is, therefore, a soul which has a door, there is one which has gates. To this door Christ comes and knocks: he knocks also at the gates. Open, therefore, to him; he wishes to enter, he wishes to find the Bride watching. Do not, therefore, make delays for the Good Lover, he quickly recedes: and you, by the sleep of your body, are seen to have excluded the one knocking. For you exclude, when you are slothful, when lazy, when sleepy. By these bars Christ is excluded: if you be chaste and if you be sober, take care lest you be negligent. He who repels the one arriving does a greater injury to Christ.

Aperi mihi, soror mea, proxima mea: pulsat ad januam etiam quando tu dormis: si tamen vel excitatus evigiles, vel vocatus januam tui pectoris aperias, introibit. Quod si fugias lectionem propheticam, si domi non legas, in Ecclesia audire nolis, nonne sicut ille qui averso connivet obtutu, ne videat quod possit videre, claudit oculos ne aspiciat, cui potestas videndi est: aut sicut in furore plerique injecere manus oculis suis; ita et tu primo averteris conniventi magis dissimulatione, quam refragatione praeupta. Nam cum ad Ecclesiam venis et te Christianum esse asseris, sanus videris, aperis oculos quibus possis videre: sed dum audire dissimulas quae leguntur, claudis ne videas tibi, et si aliis videre videaris. Injicis etiam quasdam perfidiae et intemperantiae manus oculis animae tuae, et caecitatem infers cordi tuo (quod est gravius) voluntariam; ut videns non videas, audiens non audias.

Putas te solum esse cum fornicaris, et non recordaris, quia oculi Domini vident orbem terrarum? Non audis dicentem: Ecce venit hora ut dispergamini unusquisque in sua, et me solum relinquantis: sed non sum solus; quia Pater mecum est (Joan. XVI, 32). Adest ergo Pater, adest et Filius Dei, adsunt ministri, adsunt Cherubim et Seraphim, qui dicunt. Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, plena est terra majestatis tuae (Esai. VI). Plenus est enim mundus virtutum, quia plenus est nequitiarum: plenus est orbis terrarum remediis, quia plenus est laqueis.

(Vers. 3.) Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam illam? Etenim in hac saeculi nocte prius tibi corporalis vitae amictus est exuendus; exuit enim se carnem Dominus, ut pro te de dominationibus et potestatibus mundi hujus triumpharet. Quomodo induam illam? Vide, anima Deo devota, quid dicat. Sic se actus corporis, et terrenos exuit mores, ut nesciat quomodo etiamsi velit, rursus induere possit. Quomodo induam illam? Hoc est qua verecundia, quo pudore, qua postremo memoria? Consuetudo enim boni, usum veteris pravitatis amisit.

Audiens anima, Aperi mihi, caput roris plenum habens, hoc est, tentationibus saecularibus, subito turbata, et quasi surrectura quae surgere jubebatur, ait cum aloem redoleret et myrrham insigne sepulturae: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam illam: lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo illos? Veretur enim ne iterum in tentationes resurgat, ne iterum in culpam redeat atque peccatum, et egressus suos virtutumque profectus terrenis incipiat vestigiis inquinare.

"Open to me, my sister, my nearest one": he knocks at the door even when you sleep: if however, either being excited you wake up, or being called you open the door of your breast, he will enter. But if you flee the prophetic reading, if you do not read at home, if you are unwilling to hear in the Church, are you not like him who, with averted gaze, connives lest he see what he can see, closes his eyes lest he behold, though he has the power of seeing: or like many who in fury have cast their hands upon their own eyes; so also you are first turned away by a conniving dissimulation rather than by an abrupt refusal. For when you come to the Church and assert that you are a Christian, you seem healthy, you open the eyes with which you can see: but while you pretend not to hear what is read, you close them lest you see for yourself, even if you seem to see to others. You even cast certain hands of perfidy and intemperance upon the eyes of your soul, and you bring upon your heart a blindness (which is more serious) that is voluntary; so that seeing you do not see, and hearing you do not hear.

Do you think you are alone when you fornicate, and do you not remember that the eyes of the Lord see the whole world? Do you not hear him saying: "Behold, the hour comes that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: but I am not alone; because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). The Father is present, therefore, the Son of God is present, the ministers are present, the Cherubim and Seraphim are present, who say. "Holy, holy, holy, the earth is full of your majesty" (Isaiah 6). For the world is full of virtues, because it is full of wickednesses: the whole world is full of remedies, because it is full of snares.

(Verse 3.) "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on?" For indeed in this night of the world the garment of corporal life is first to be put off by you; for the Lord put off the flesh, so that he might triumph for you over the dominations and powers of this world. "How shall I put it on?" See, soul devoted to God, what he says. Thus he puts off the acts of the body and earthly manners, so that he knows not how, even if he wished, he could put them on again. "How shall I put it on?" That is, with what shame, with what modesty, finally with what memory? For the custom of good has lost the use of the old depravity.

The soul hearing, "Open to me," having his head full of dew, that is, with secular temptations, suddenly troubled, and as if about to rise who was commanded to rise, says, when she was redolent of aloe and myrrh, the mark of burial: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on: I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" For she fears lest she rise again into temptations, lest she return again into fault and sin, and begin to defile her exits and the progress of virtues with earthly footsteps.

Certe hoc modo etiam perfectionem virtutis suae indicat, quae tantam Christi meruerit charitatem; ut ad eam veniat, et pulset januam ejus, et veniat cum Patre, et coenet cum eadem anima, et ipsa cum eo, sicut in Apocalypsi dixit Joannes apostolus (Apoc. III, 20). Etenim cum in superioribus audisset: Ades huc a Libano; et cum adverteret in carne se Christo adesse non posse, sed tunc adesse si adesset in spiritu, conformans se ad ejus voluntatem, ut esset et ipsa conformis imagini Christi; jam non sentit carnis exuvias, jam quasi spiritus exuens se corporis conjunctione, jam quasi oblita, et quae si velit, copulae illius meminisse non possit, ait: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam eam? Exui enim tunicam illam pelliceam, quam acceperunt Adam et Eva post culpam, tunicam corruptelae, tunicam passionum; Quomodo induam illam? Non requirit ut induat: sed ita significat abjectam, ut jam indumento sibi esse non posset.

(Vers. 3.) Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo illos? Hoc est, vestigia mea lavi, dum egrederer, ac me elevarem de corporis contubernio, de illa connexionione et familiaritate carnalis amplexus: quomodo inquinabo ea, ut in corporis claustrum, et illum tenebrosam passionum ejus carcerem revertar? Sic passiones sepelimus, si crucem hujus corporis non resolvamus; si chirographum peccati quod deletum est, in cruce Christi non rescribamus, si veteris hominis amictum quem exuimus, non induamus. Scriptum est enim in Canticis: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam eam? lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo eos? Mortificata igitur sunt corporis membra, cur ejus pullulant vitia? Ideo non praevaluit lex, quia carnem non mortificavit: ideo quasi umbra praeteriit, quia non decoloravit: ideoque obumbravit nos a sole justitiae, quia coacervavit crimina.

Aliquando nudam esse, virtutis indicium est, quia scriptum est: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam eam? lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo eos? Quam igitur tunicam exuerit, et non invenerit quemadmodum induat eam, de Scripturis si possumus, revelemus. Est enim quaedam tunica corporalis, sunt cupiditatum quaedam intexta velamina; et ideo interdum melius est nudum esse corpore, quam corde velatum. Unde etiam Paulus nos admonet, exspoliari multo melius esse quam supervestiri, dicens alibi: Exspoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis, induite novum qui renovatur in agnitionem, secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit eum. Ergo quae exspoliata est, et pedes lotos habet, nescit quemadmodum inquinari non possit; obliviscitur enim per gratiam, quod hauserat per naturam.

Certainly in this way he also indicates the perfection of his virtue, which has merited such great charity of Christ; that he comes to her, and knocks at her door, and comes with the Father, and sups with the same soul, and she with him, as the apostle John said in the Apocalypse (Apoc. 3:20). For when in the things above she had heard: "Come hither from Lebanon"; and when she perceived that she could not be present to Christ in the flesh, but then would be present if she were present in the spirit, conforming herself to his will, so that she herself might be conformable to the image of Christ; now she does not feel the spoils of the flesh, now as if a spirit putting off the conjunction of the body, now as if having forgotten, and who if she wished, could not remember that union, she says: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on?" For I have put off that skin tunic, which Adam and Eva received after the fault, the tunic of corruption, the tunic of passions; "How shall I put it on?" She does not ask to put it on: but thus signifies it cast aside, so that now it could not be a garment for her.

(Verse 3.) "I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" That is, I have washed my footsteps while I was going out and elevating myself from the companionship of the body, from that connection and familiarity of the carnal embrace: how shall I defile them, so that I return into the enclosure of the body, and that dark prison of its passions? Thus we bury the passions, if we do not dissolve the cross of this body; if we do not rewrite on the cross of Christ the handwriting of sin which was deleted, if we do not put on the garment of the old man which we put off. For it is written in the Canticles: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Therefore the members of the body are mortified, why do its vices sprout? Therefore the law did not prevail, because it did not mortify the flesh: therefore it passed away as a shadow, because it did not discolor: and therefore it overshadowed us from the sun of justice, because it accumulated crimes.

Sometimes to be naked is a sign of virtue, because it is written: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" What tunic, therefore, she put off, and found not how she might put it on, let us reveal from the Scriptures if we can. For there is a certain corporal tunic, there are certain woven veils of desires; and therefore sometimes it is better to be naked in body, than veiled in heart. Whence also Paul admonishes us, that it is much better to be despoiled than to be overclothed, saying elsewhere: "Despoiling yourselves of the old man with his acts, put on the new who is renewed into knowledge, according to the image of him who created him." Therefore she who is despoiled, and has washed feet, knows not how she could not be defiled; for she forgets by grace what she had drawn in by nature.

Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo illos? Didicisti in Evangelio, quod pedes lavare fidei mysterium, humilitatis insigne sit, juxta quod scriptum est: Si ego lavi pedes vestros Dominus et magister, quanto magis vos debetis alter alterius pedes lavare (Joan. XIII, 14)! Sed hoc ad humilitatem pertinet. Quantum vero ad mysterium, pedes debet lavare suos, qui vult partem habere cum Christo: Si enim non laveris, inquit, tibi pedes, non habebis partem mecum (Ibid. 8). Cum hoc Petro dicitur, quid de nobis censetur? Qui lavit igitur pedes, non necesse habet iterum lavare; et ideo caveat ne inquinet eos.

Et bene sancta Ecclesia dicit: Lavi pedes meos; non dicit, quomodo iterum lavabo eos, sed quomodo iterum inquinabo eos? Quasi oblita maculae veteris, oblita contagii, admonet quomodo in ministerio corporali spirituale debeamus actuum nostrorum diluere vestigium. Itaque pedes cum semel laveris aeterni fontis irriguo, et mysterii mundaveris sacramento, cave iterum corporeae cupiditatis illuviem, ne lutulenti actus terrenis sordibus inquinentur. Isti sunt pedes quos David lavit in spiritu, qui te docet quemadmodum eos inquinare non possis, dicens: Stantes erant pedes nostri, in atriis tuis, Hierusalem (Psal. CXXI, 2). Utique hic non corporis, sed animi intellige pedes; quomodo enim terrenus homo in coelo haberet corporis pedes? Hierusalem, sicut Paulus te docuit, in coelo est: et idem te docuit quemadmodum in coelo stare possis, cum dicit: Nostra autem conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 20). Conversatio morum, conversatio factorum, conversatio fidei.

Feci judicium et justitiam, non tradas me calumniantibus me. Ubi justitia, ibi misericordia. Misericordia a peccato liberat. Quomodo ergo peccatoribus trador? Simile est illud in Canticis: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam eam? Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo eos? Exui tunicam peccatoris, velamenque terreni; cur quasi peccator atque terrenus adjudicor? Lavi pedes meos, ne qua peccati sors posset adhaerere vestigio; cur das in me delinquentibus potestatem?

Hieremias in suis Threnis ait: Defecit iniquitas tua, filia Sion, non adjiciet te expellere adhuc: visitavit iniquitates tuas, filia Edom, revelavit super peccata tua (Thren. IV, 21). Advertis quoniam iniquitas non potuit sine Dei visitatione deficere, nec plena esse correctio, nisi per gratiam Domini Salvatoris? Quomodo autem deficiat iniquitas, audi dicentem Ecclesiam: Exui tunicam meam, quomodo induam eam? Lavi pedes meos, quomodo inquinabo eos?

"I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" You have learned in the Gospel, that to wash the feet is a mystery of faith, a mark of humility, according to what is written: "If I, being Lord and master, have washed your feet, how much more ought you to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)! But this pertains to humility. As much as pertains to the mystery, he ought to wash his feet, who wishes to have part with Christ: "For if I do not wash your feet," he says, "you shall have no part with me" (Ibid. 8). Since this is said to Peter, what is judged concerning us? He who has washed his feet, therefore, has no need to wash again; and therefore let him beware lest he defile them.

And well the holy Church says: "I have washed my feet"; she does not say, how shall I wash them again, but "how shall I defile them again?" As if having forgotten the old stain, having forgotten the contagion, she admonishes how in the corporal ministry we ought to dilute the spiritual footstep of our acts. Therefore when you have once washed your feet with the irrigation of the eternal fountain, and have cleansed them with the sacrament of the mystery, beware again of the filth of corporal desire, lest muddy acts be defiled with earthly sordes. These are the feet which David washed in spirit, who teaches you how you cannot defile them, saying: "Our feet were standing in your courts, O Jerusalem" (Psalm 121:2). Certainly understand here the feet not of the body, but of the soul; for how should an earthly man have feet of the body in heaven? Jerusalem, as Paul taught you, is in heaven: and the same taught you how you can stand in heaven, when he says: "But our conversation is in heavens" (Philippians 3:20). Conversation of manners, conversation of deeds, conversation of faith.

"I have done judgment and justice, do not deliver me to those who calumniate me." Where there is justice, there is mercy. Mercy delivers from sin. How therefore am I delivered to sinners? Similar is that in the Canticles: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" I have put off the tunic of the sinner, and the veil of the earthly; why am I adjudged as if a sinner and earthly? I have washed my feet, lest any lot of sin could adhere to the footstep; why do you give power over me to those who offend?

Jeremiah in his Lamentations says: "Your iniquity has failed, O daughter of Sion, he will not add to expel you still: he has visited your iniquities, O daughter of Edom, he has revealed over your sins" (Lam. 4:21). Do you perceive that iniquity could not fail without the visitation of God, nor could the correction be full, except through the grace of the Lord the Savior? How however iniquity fails, hear the Church saying: "I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"

Veteris igitur hominis vestimentum vitiis erroris intextum, in lavacri regeneratione depositum, nescit quomodo possit induere; studio enim correctionis inoleverat obli-vio peccatorum. Tanta vis consummatae emendationis est, ut in quamdam pueritiae redeat spiritalis aetatem, quae vias erroris ignoret; crimen etiamsi velit, non possit admittere; quia desueverit usus nosse peccandi.

(Vers. 4.) Frater meus misit manum suam de prospectu, et venter meus conturbatus est super eum. Exsurrexi ego aperire fratri meo. Manus meae distillaverunt myrrham, digiti mei myrrha pleni. Primum ergo tamquam a prospectu mittit manum suam, quando Deus ex operibus aestimatur, unde ait: Si mihi non creditis, operibus credite (Joan. X, 38). Deinde augetur amor, et intimis visceribus conceptus inolescitur. Inde intelligibili utero, in quo est receptaculum Verbi, seminibus ejus infusis, plenitudinem ejus corporaliter inhabitantem haurire anima nostra desiderat; non enim turbatur uterus feminarum, nisi quae fuerint alvo graves. Surgit igitur anima ut aperiat Dei Verbo, sed dum se expandit atque aperit, ut opera mundi istius Verbi receptione mortificet, sicut ille qui ait: Mortificationem Domini Jesu in corpore nostro circumferimus (II Cor. IV, 19). Ergo dum aperit, transit Sponsus; vult enim semper quaeri, frequentius inveniri. Et si clausam invenerit januam, pulsatur; et si per moram fuerit exclusus, recedit; sed cito redit, ei iterum pulsatur, ut vel postea Sponsam suam inveniat praeparatam.

Potest quidem et sic accipi, Frater meus transivit: sicut legimus quod penetravit dilectae intima medullarum, quemadmodum ad Mariam dictum est: Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius, ut revelentur multorum cordium cogitationes (Luc. II, 35). Denique addidit Sponsa, animam suam exisse in verbo ejus, quod fit quando anima peregrinatur a corpore, et Deo praesens est. Audiens haec Sponsus misit operationem suam Verbum, tamquam per cavernam, non adhuc facie ad faciem: misit tamquam manum, Et venter, inquit, meus conturbatus est super eum. Quisquis sic vivit, potest dicere:

Frater meus misit manum suam per prospectum, et venter meus conturbatus est ad illum: surrexi aperire fratri meo. Bonum est ut ad adventum Domini interiora turbentur. Si ad angeli adventum Maria turbata est, quanto magis ad Christi nos turbamur adventum! Influentibus quippe divinis, corporeus peregrinatur affectus, et usus ille exterioris hominis exolescit. Et tu turbare, tu festina. Festinantes illi agnum manducare praecipuntur. Surge, aperi, ad januam Christus est, vestibula domus tuae pulsatur: si aperueris, introibit, et introibit cum Patre.

Therefore the garment of the old man, woven with the vices of error, laid aside in the washing of regeneration, knows not how it can put it on; for by the study of correction, a forgetfulness of sins had grown in. So great is the force of consummated emendation, that she returns into a certain age of spiritual childhood, which knows not the ways of error; even if she wished, she could not admit a crime; because she has ceased the custom of knowing how to sin.

(Verse 4.) "My brother sent his hand from the lookout, and my belly was troubled over him. I rose to open to my brother. My hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers full of myrrh." First therefore as if from a lookout he sends his hand, when God is estimated from works, whence he says: "If you do not believe me, believe the works" (John 10:38). Then love is increased, and conceived in the innermost viscera it grows. Then in the intelligible womb, in which is the receptacle of the Word, his seeds being infused, our soul desires to draw in his fullness inhabiting corporally; for the womb of women is not troubled, except those who have been heavy in the belly. Therefore the soul rises that she may open to the Word of God, but while she expands herself and opens, that she may mortify the works of this world by the reception of the Word, like he who says: "We carry about the mortification of the Lord Jesus in our body" (2 Cor. 4:19). Therefore while she opens, the Bridegroom passes; for he wishes always to be sought, more frequently to be found. And if he finds the door closed, he knocks; and if by delay he has been excluded, he recedes; but quickly returns, and again knocks, so that at least afterwards he may find his Bride prepared.

It can indeed also be understood thus, "My brother passed through": as we read that he penetrated the innermost marrow of the beloved, just as it was said to Mary: "And a sword shall pass through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35). Finally the Bride added, that her soul went out in his word, which happens when the soul is a pilgrim from the body, and is present to God. Hearing these things the Bridegroom sent his operation the Word, as if through a cavern, not yet face to face: he sent as if a hand, "And my belly," she says, "was troubled over him." Whoever thus lives, can say:

"My brother sent his hand through the lookout, and my belly was troubled at him: I rose to open to my brother." It is good that at the advent of the Lord the interior parts be troubled. If at the advent of the angel Mary was troubled, how much more at the advent of Christ are we troubled! For when the divine things flow in, the corporal affection is a pilgrim, and that use of the exterior man wears away. And you, be troubled, you, make haste. Those making haste to eat the lamb are commanded. Rise, open, Christ is at the door, he knocks at the vestibules of your house: if you open, he will enter, and he will enter with the Father.

Nec solum cum ingressus fuerit, mercedem relinquit: sed etiam priusquam ingrediat, mercedem praemittit. Adhuc anima turbatur, adhuc parietes domus suae palpat, adhuc ostium quaerit ubi Christus est, adhuc solvit vinculum carnis et corporis claustrum, adhuc Christus foris pulsatur.

Quae est fenestra nostra, nisi per quam opera Christi videmus, oculus scilicet animi et mentis obtutus? Et ideo, virgo, per fenestram tuam Christus introeat, Christus manum suam mittat: per fenestram tibi Verbi veniat, non corporis amor. Si igitur per fenestram tuam manum mittit Dei Verbum, vide quemadmodum fenestras tuas praepares, vide quemadmodum ab omni pulvere delictorum detergere debeas. Nihil tetrum habeant, nihil adulterinum fenestrae virginis. Procul stibium et caeteras affectati nugas decoris, procul adulterini amoris illecebras. Similis aurium clausura est, quibus non suspendenda onera, non figenda vulnera, sed unus ornatus est, audire quod prosit.

Aperui, inquit, fratri meo; frater meus transivit. Quomodo transivit, id est, mentis interna penetravit, sicut dictum est Mariae: Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius. Vivum enim Dei verbum, sicut gladius acutus, penetrans corporalium repagula cogitationum, cordis interna rimatur. In cubili ergo tuo et nocturno in tempore constituta, semper meditare Christum, et ejus adventum omnibus sperato momentis. Si tardare tibi videtur, exsurge. Tardare videtur, cum diu dormis: tardare videtur, cum ab oratione vacas: tardare videtur, cum vocem non excitas psalmis. Primitias vigiliarum tuarum Christo dicato, primitias actuum tuorum Christo immola.

Surrexi ego aperire fratri meo; manus meae distillaverunt myrrham, digiti mei myrrha pleni sunt super manus clausurae. Quid hoc significet, consideremus. Primum operibus suis videtur, ut dixi, Deus verbum tamquam per cavernam, non plene atque perfecte: deinde augetur amor et conceptus adolescit, atque ex seminibus ejus quae quodam utero intelligibili suscepit anima, totam plenitudinem divinitatis ejus habitantem in eo corporaliter, ut legimus, videre desiderat. Surrexit ut propius illud Dei Verbum videret, et in hoc ipso processus ejus significatur, quod surrexit per vigorem atque virtutem; praesentia enim Verbi hausit animae virtutem, sicut praesentia Mariae cum utero gravis esset, eruditur Joannem in utero constitutum: adeo ut exsiliret ex utero et exsultaret, Domini praesentiam recognoscens.

Nor only when he has entered does he leave a reward: but even before he enters, he sends ahead a reward. Still the soul is troubled, still she feels the walls of her house, still she seeks the door where Christ is, still she looses the bond of the flesh and the enclosure of the body, still Christ knocks outside.

What is our window, except that through which we see the works of Christ, namely the eye of the soul and the gaze of the mind? And therefore, O virgin, let Christ enter through your window, let Christ send his hand: let the love of the Word come to you through the window, not the love of the body. If therefore through your window the Word of God sends his hand, see how you should prepare your windows, see how you ought to wipe away from all the dust of sins. Let the windows of the virgin have nothing foul, nothing adulterous. Far be antimony (stibium) and the other trifles of affected beauty, far be the allurements of adulterous love. Similar is the enclosure of the ears, on which weights are not to be suspended, nor wounds to be fixed, but there is one ornament: to hear what is beneficial.

"I opened," she says, "to my brother; my brother passed by." How did he pass by, that is, he penetrated the internal parts of the mind, just as was said to Mary: "And a sword shall pass through your own soul." For the living Word of God, like a sharp sword, penetrating the bars of corporal thoughts, searches the internal parts of the heart. Therefore, being established in your bed and in the nocturnal time, always meditate on Christ, and hope for his advent at all moments. If he seems to delay for you, rise up. He seems to delay, when you sleep for a long time: he seems to delay, when you are vacant from prayer: he seems to delay, when you do not excite your voice with psalms. Dedicate the first-fruits of your vigils to Christ, immolate the first-fruits of your acts to Christ.

(Verse 5.) "I rose to open to my brother; my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers are full of myrrh upon the hands of the bolt." What this signifies, let us consider. First he is seen in his works, as I said, God the Word as if through a cavern, not fully and perfectly: then love is increased and the conception grows, and from his seeds which the soul has received in a certain intelligible womb, she desires to see all the fullness of his divinity dwelling in him corporally, as we read. She rose that she might see that Word of God more closely, and in this very thing her progress is signified, because she rose by vigor and virtue; for she drew virtue from the presence of the Word, just as the presence of Mary, when she was heavy in the womb, instructed John established in the womb: so that he leaped from the womb and exulted, recognizing the presence of the Lord.

Surrexit aperire, et opera ejus et facta mortificata sunt mundo. Talis enim debet esse anima, quae Verbum est receptura, ut moriatur mundo, et consepeliatur in Christo; sic enim Christus invenitur, et tale sibi quaerit hospitium. Deinde ipsa ministeria operationum, id est, manus et digiti, quibus comprehenditur Christus, mortificantur: quos digitos velut eminentia factorum nostrorum opera possumus aestimare. Itaque velut e complexu suo cum jam extenderet intelligibiles manus suas et digitos, ut comprehenderet Verbum, transisse sibi illud, non tamen adhuc pertransisse anima pia dicit. Et hunc processum habet, quando transit et pertransit animam Verbum Dei, quia scriptum est: Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius, ut revelentur multorum cordium cogitationes (Luc. II, 35). Hinc adhuc transitur, non pertransitur; ut in Maria in posterioribus forte pertransitur, ubi tamquam signaculum ponitur in medio ejus Dominus Jesus.

Denique statim alius profectus Verbi pertranseuntis, quia exivit anima in Verbo ejus; hoc est, Verbum ejus secuta exivit de corpore, elevans se de ejus habitaculo, et peregrinam se faciens ei, ut adesset Deo, et esset civis sanctorum. Simul enim et carnis domestici et Dei esse non possumus. Ergo in hoc loco exire significatur, ut dixi, anima, quando abducit se a corporis voluptatibus. Denique scriptum est: Exi de Babylone, fugiens a Chaldaeis (Esai. XLVIII, 20). Non utique ut regiones Babylonis Hebraeus fugiat, sed mores, ut prophetico admonetur alloquio: siquidem sint qui in Babylone sunt Hebraei, et de Babylone exisse moribus doceant. Nam et illi de quibus dicit propheta, quod sedebant super flumina Babylonis (Ps. CXXXVI, 1), sedebant quidem in regione Babylonis, sed in ejus non erant vitiis et confusione. Nam quomodo erant in illa confusione vitiorum, qui flebant gerentes poenitentiam, quod de arca devotionis ac fidei, et virtutis paternae meritis excidissent? Quae autem in verbo exit anima, Verbum requirit; unde et ista dum quaereret, incidit in custodes qui circumeunt civitatem.

(Vers. 7.) Invenerunt me custodes qui circumeunt civitatem, percusserunt me, et vulneraverunt me, et tulerunt pallium meum a me custodes murorum. Bene quidem quasi sponsa veniebat cum pallio, quo obnuberet caput suum, cum sponsus occurreret; sicut Rebecca, quae cognito quod Isaac sibi veniret obvius, descendit de camelo, et pallio se operuit: ita et haec anima, nuptialis vestis praemittebat insignia, ne forte rejiceretur quasi vestem non habens nuptialem; vel ut caput velaret propter angelos. Sed illi percusserunt eam, ut amplius probaretur; exercentur enim animae tentationibus.

She rose to open, and her works and deeds were mortified to the world. For such ought the soul to be, which is to receive the Word, that she may die to the world, and be buried together in Christ; for thus Christ is found, and such a lodging he seeks for himself. Then the very ministries of operations, that is, the hands and fingers, by which Christ is comprehended, are mortified: which fingers we can estimate as the works of our eminent deeds. Therefore, as if from her embrace when she already extended her intelligible hands and fingers, that she might comprehend the Word, the pious soul says that it passed by her, yet not yet passed through. And he has this process, when the Word of God passes by and passes through the soul, because it is written: "And a sword shall pass through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35). From here it is still passed by, not passed through; as in Mary afterwards perhaps it is passed through, where the Lord Jesus is placed as a seal in the midst of her.

Finally there is immediately another progress of the Word passing through, because the soul went out in his Word; that is, following his Word she went out from the body, elevating herself from its habitation, and making herself a pilgrim to it, that she might be present to God, and might be a citizen of the saints. For at once we cannot be both domestics of the flesh and of God. Therefore in this place to go out signifies, as I said, the soul, when she draws herself away from the pleasures of the body. Finally it is written: "Go out from Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans" (Isaiah 48:20). Not indeed that the Hebrew should flee the regions of Babylon, but the manners, as he is admonished by the prophetic address: since there are those who are in Babylon and are Hebrews, and by their manners show that they have gone out from Babylon. For even those of whom the prophet says, that they "sat upon the rivers of Babylon" (Ps. 136:1), sat indeed in the region of Babylon, but were not in its vices and confusion. For how were they in that confusion of vices, who wept doing penance, because they had fallen from the ark of devotion and faith, and from the merits of their paternal virtue? But the soul which goes out in the Word, seeks the Word; whence even she while seeking, fell upon the watchmen who go about the city.

(Verse 7.) "The watchmen who go about the city found me, they struck me, and they wounded me, and the watchmen of the walls took my cloak from me." Well indeed she was coming as a bride with a cloak, with which she might veil her head, when the bridegroom should meet her; like Rebecca, who having known that Isaac was coming to meet her, descended from the camel, and covered herself with a cloak: so also this soul, was sending ahead the marks of the nuptial dress, lest perhaps she be rejected as if not having a nuptial garment; or that she might veil her head on account of the angels. But they struck her, so that she might be further proved; for souls are exercised by temptations.

Tulerunt ei pallium, quaerentes si verum decorem nudae virtutis afferret, vel quia sine integumento quis in illam coelestem civitatem debeat introire, nulla deferens secum operimenta fucorum. Sunt etiam qui requirant, ne qua anima exuvias secum vehat carnalis illecebrae, et concupiscentiam corporalem. Nudatur pallio, cum ejus conscientia manifestatur. Sed est quae bene nudatur, cui licet imitari dicentem: Venit enim princeps hujus mundi, et in me invenit nihil (Joan. XIV, 30); quia certe in illo solo nihil invenit, qui peccatum non fecit.

Beata et illa est in qua non gravia aut multa invenit, sed invenit in ea amictum fidei et sapientiae disciplinam. Itaque sine dispendio sui (quia et si volet quis, non potest auferre veram sapientiam) etsi adversarius obstrepat; ubi tamen vera innoxiae conversationis elucet integritas, transivit custodes, et filiabus illius coelestis civitatis admixta, Verbum requirit; et quaerendo ejus in se excitat charitatem, et ubi Verbum quaerat, agnoscit. Non injuria tantummodo est non invenisse quem quaeras, sed etiam plerumque ubi non oportet, quaesisse vulnus est: quaesisse in domibus virorum qui sibi falso nomen doctorum assumunt, quaesisse procacius quam verecundius. Ergo caveamus exemplo illius, ne nos custodes inveniant qui circumeunt civitatem.

Invenerunt, inquit, me custodes qui circumeunt civitatem: perculserunt et vulneraverunt me, et tulerunt pallium meum a me custodes murorum. Non in se, filiae, sed in nobis vulneratur Ecclesia. Caveamus igitur ne lapsus noster, vulnus Ecclesiae fiat, ne quis a nobis pallium auferat, hoc est, amictum prudentiae, insigne patientiae, quo mollioris ambitio vestis exuitur: Qui enim mollioribus vestibus induuntur, in domibus regum sunt (Matth. XI, 8). Nobis autem pallium dedit Christus, quo apostolos suos et corpus suum ipse vestivit, quod denique jubet te dare, si quis a te tunicam petit, ut dimittas ei et pallium (Matth. V, 40); id est, insigne philosophiae tuae tradas, et quasi amictu prudentiae tuae eum qui ante nudus fuerat, circumvestias.

Ibi igitur, filiae, Christum quaeramus, ubi quaerit Ecclesia, in montibus boni odoris, qui excelsorum sublimitate factorum, suavam vitae odorem pro meritorum verticibus exhalant. Ea quae Christum requirit, non debet esse vulgaris, non debet esse in foro, non in plateis, voce querula, gressu lubrica, facilis aditu, vilis aspectu. Terrenum tibi Apostolus consortium negat, et ultra naturae propemodum terminos, alis ad coelum docet spiritalibus evolandum. Quae sursum sunt, inquit, sapite, non quae super terram (Colos. III, 2).

They took from her the cloak, seeking if she brought the true beauty of naked virtue, or because without a covering one ought to enter into that celestial city, carrying with oneself no coverings of dyes (*fucorum*). There are also those who require, lest any soul carry with herself the spoils of carnal allurements, and corporal concupiscence. She is stripped of the cloak, when her conscience is manifested. But there is she who is well stripped, who is allowed to imitate the one saying: "For the prince of this world comes, and in me he finds nothing" (John 14:30); because certainly in him alone he found nothing, who did not commit sin.

Blessed also is she in whom he finds not grave or many things, but finds in her the garment of faith and the discipline of wisdom. Therefore without loss of herself (because even if one wishes, he cannot take away true wisdom) even if the adversary clamors; where however the true integrity of an innocent conversation shines forth, she passed the watchmen, and being mixed with the daughters of that celestial city, she seeks the Word; and by seeking she excites his charity in herself, and she recognizes where she should seek the Word. Not an injury only is it not to have found him whom you seek, but even for the most part to have sought where it is not appropriate is a wound: to have sought in the houses of men who falsely assume for themselves the name of teachers, to have sought more procaciously than modestly. Therefore let us beware by her example, lest the watchmen who go about the city find us.

"The watchmen who go about the city found me," she says: "they struck and wounded me, and the watchmen of the walls took my cloak from me." Not in herself, daughters, but in us the Church is wounded. Let us beware therefore lest our fall become a wound of the Church, lest anyone take from us the cloak, that is, the garment of prudence, the mark of patience, by which the ambition of a softer dress is put off: "For they who are clothed in softer garments, are in the houses of kings" (Matt. 11:8). But to us Christ gave a cloak, with which he himself clothed his apostles and his body, which finally he commands you to give, if anyone asks a tunic from you, that you let go to him also the cloak (Matt. 5:40); that is, that you deliver the mark of your philosophy, and as if with the garment of your prudence you circumvest him who before had been naked.

There therefore, daughters, let us seek Christ, where the Church seeks him, in the mountains of good odor, which by the loftiness of high deeds, exhale a sweet odor of life from the peaks of their merits. She who seeks Christ ought not to be common, she ought not to be in the forum, not in the streets, with a querulous voice, with a slippery step, easy of access, vile in aspect. The Apostle denies to you earthly companionship, and almost beyond the boundaries of nature, teaches that one must fly to heaven with spiritual wings. "Mind the things that are above," he says, "not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2).

Sed quia hoc impossibile erat in hoc corporis velut claustro reclusis, et quia defunctis corporibus, anima fertur ad superiora revolare, alligata dum vivimus, quadam nostrae lege naturae, ideo addidit: Mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo (Ibid., 3). Si abscondita est cum Christo in Deo, non appareat mundo, Christus enim mortuus est mundo, vivit Deo. Vide nunc quemadmodum desiderari amet Christus, confabulationes non amet. Aperuit virgo illa suas fores Dei Verbo: sed transivit, inquit, et exivit anima mea in verbo ejus (Vers. 6). Exivit a mundo, exivit a saeculo, remansit in Christo. Quaesivi, inquit, eum et non inveni eum. Amat enim Christus diu requiri.

Invenerunt illam custodes murorum. Fortasse sunt et alii custodes, quos magis intelligere debeamus. Est enim civitas quae portas murorum clausas non habet, de qua dictum est: Et portae ejus non claudentur per diem (Apoc. XXI, 25); nox enim non erit amplius in ea, afferent gloriam et honorem gentes in illam. Illa est ergo civitas Hierusalem quae in coelo est, intra quam jam quasi perfecta et immaculata servaris; non enim intrat in eam omne commune. Communis castitas non est, communis pudicitia non est, quae in libro vitae scribitur.

Si igitur invenimus civitatem, ingrediamur in eam, videamus lumen ejus, videamus muros, videamus fundamenta muralia, videamus etiam custodes murorum. Sed quomodo ingrediamur in eam? In hac civitate vita est, et una est via quae ducit ad vitam. Via ergo Christus est, ergo Christum sequamur. Sed ipsa in coelo est civitas; quomodo igitur ascendamus ad coelum? Docet Evangelista, qui dicit: Et eduxit me in spiritu in montem magnum et altum, et ostendit mihi civitatem sanctam Hierusalem descendentem de coelo (Apoc. 21, 10). Ascendamus ergo spiritu, quia caro ascendere ad eam non potest. Ascendamus nos interim in coelum, ut ad nos postea de coelo illa descendat, in qua lumen est simile lapidis pretiosissimi, ut lapidis jaspidis et crystalli habet murum magnum et altum.

Didicisti lumen, didicisti murum; disce portas, disce custodes. Habet, inquit, portas duodecim, et in portis angelos duodecim, in quibus duodecim tribuum filiorum Israel superscripta sunt nomina (Ibid., 12). In portis patriarcharum nomina continentur, in muro apostolorum; fundamenta enim civitatis, apostoli, et lapis angularis est Christus, in quo omnis structura consurgit. Deus extra, Deus intus, Deus ubique est: Habet enim, inquit, civitas majestatem Dei (Ibid., 11).

But because this was impossible for those enclosed in this like enclosure of the body, and because when bodies are dead, the soul is carried to fly back to the things above, though bound while we live by a certain law of our nature, therefore he added: "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Ibid., 3). If it is hidden with Christ in God, let it not appear to the world, for Christ is dead to the world, he lives to God. See now how Christ loves to be desired, but does not love confabulations. That virgin opened her doors to the Word of God: but "he passed by," she says, "and my soul went out in his word" (Verse 6). She went out from the world, she went out from the age, she remained in Christ. "I sought him," she says, "and I did not find him." For Christ loves to be sought for a long time.

The watchmen of the walls found her. Perhaps there are also other watchmen, whom we ought rather to understand. For there is a city which does not have the gates of the walls closed, concerning which it is said: "And its gates shall not be closed by day" (Apoc. 21:25); for night shall not be any more in it, the nations shall bring glory and honor into it. That therefore is the city of Jerusalem which is in heaven, within which you are already kept as if perfect and immaculate; for there enters not into it anything common. There is no common chastity, there is no common modesty, which is written in the book of life.

If therefore we have found the city, let us enter into it, let us see its light, let us see the walls, let us see the mural foundations, let us see also the watchmen of the walls. But how shall we enter into it? In this city is life, and there is one way which leads to life. Therefore Christ is the way, therefore let us follow Christ. But the city itself is in heaven; how therefore shall we ascend to heaven? The Evangelist teaches, who says: "And he led me out in spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem descending from heaven" (Apoc. 21:10). Let us ascend therefore in spirit, because the flesh cannot ascend to it. Let us ascend meanwhile into heaven, so that afterwards that city may descend to us from heaven, in which the light is like to a most precious stone, as a stone of jasper and crystal; it has a wall great and high.

You have learned of the light, you have learned of the wall; learn of the gates, learn of the watchmen. "It has," he says, "twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angels, in which are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Ibid., 12). In the gates are contained the names of the patriarchs, in the wall those of the apostles; for the foundations of the city are the apostles, and the cornerstone is Christ, in whom the whole structure rises. God is outside, God is inside, God is everywhere: "For the city," he says, "has the majesty of God" (Ibid., 11).

Ergo et vos, sanctae virgines, et quicumque justi estis, et immaculatam animae geritis castitatem, cives sanctorum estis et domestici Dei. Sed tunc nobilitatem istam patriae possidebitis, si Christum intra civitatis istius septa quaeratis, ingressi per fidem actusque pretiosos, patriarcharum clarificati lumine, fundati super apostolos, versantes inter angelos.

Quomodo igitur isti custodes angeli sunt, qui castae animae pallium tollunt? Aliud pallium virginum est, aliud adolescentulae circumforaneae. Illa quae in foro Christum requirit, pallium etiam quod habebat, amisit. Prudentia enim non in foro, non in plateis, sed in Ecclesia possidetur. Et fortasse ut cum ipsis quoque veniamus in gratiam, atque omnium misericordem Deum esse doceamus; quia et illi Christum aliquando reperiunt, si tamen jugiter quaerant, pallium hoc amictus est corporis. Ergo qui quaesivit Christum in cubili, si tamen sic quaesivit, sicut ille qui dixit: Sic memor fui tui super stratum meum (Ps. LXII, 7); si quaesivit in noctibus, juxta quod scriptum est: In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta (Ps. CXXXII, 2): si quaesivit in civitate, in foro et in plateis, in civitate Dei nostri: in foro fortasse, in quo iudex ille divini juris sedet, in plateis unde collecti sunt qui ad coenam Dominicam convenerunt; potest custodientibus civitatem Dei angelis, dum diu quaerit, occurrere. Quin etiam ex coelesti custodum natura, coelestem intelligere possumus civitatem, coeleste forum iustitiae sempiternae, non viles plateas, sed fortasse in quibus superfluere fons ille consuevit, de quo scriptum est: Superfluant tibi aquae de tuo fonte, et in plateis tuis diffundantur tuae aquae (Prov. V, 16). Qui sic ergo Christum requirit, ad angelos pervenit.

Sed si bonis ad angelos meritis pervenitur: cur qui pervenerit, vulneratur? Est et gladius bonus, cujus gladii bonum vulnus. Vulnerat Dei verbum, sed non ulcerat. Est vulnus boni amoris, sunt vulnera charitatis; ideoque dixit: Vulneratae charitatis ego sum (Cant. II, 5). Quae perfecta est, vulnerata charitate est. Bona sunt igitur Verbi vulnera, bona sunt amantis vulnera: Utiliora enim vulnera amici, quam voluntaria oscula inimici (Prov. XXVII, 6). Vulneratae charitatis Rebecca est, quae relictis parentibus, migravit ad sponsum. Vulneratae charitatis Rachel, quae zelavit sororem, amavit maritum; sorori enim quod abundaret filiis, ipsa sterilis adhuc invidebat, quia typum gerebat Ecclesiae, cui dicitur: Laetare sterilis quae non paris, erumpe et clama quae non parturis (Esai. 54, 1).

Therefore also you, holy virgins, and whoever are just, and carry an immaculate chastity of the soul, are citizens of the saints and domestics of God. But then you will possess this nobility of the fatherland, if you seek Christ within the enclosures of this city, having entered through faith and precious acts, clarified by the light of the patriarchs, founded upon the apostles, conversing among the angels.

How therefore are these watchmen angels, who take the cloak of the chaste soul? There is one cloak of virgins, another of the wandering young maiden. She who seeks Christ in the forum has even lost the cloak which she had. For prudence is not possessed in the forum, not in the streets, but in the Church. And perhaps so that we may also come into favor with them, and may teach that God is merciful to all; because even they sometimes find Christ, if however they seek continually, this cloak is the garment of the body. Therefore he who sought Christ in his chamber, if however he sought thus, as he who said: "So was I mindful of you upon my bed" (Ps. 62:7); if he sought in the nights, according to what is written: "In the nights lift up your hands in the holy places" (Ps. 132:2): if he sought in the city, in the forum and in the streets, in the city of our God: in the forum perhaps, in which that judge of divine law sits, in the streets whence are collected those who have convened at the Lord's supper; he can meet the angels guarding the city of God while he seeks for a long time. Nay even from the celestial nature of the watchmen, we can understand the celestial city, the celestial forum of eternal justice, not vile streets, but perhaps those in which that fountain was accustomed to overflow, concerning which it is written: "Let your waters overflow from your fountain, and let your waters be diffused in your streets" (Prov. 5:16). He who thus therefore seeks Christ, arrives at the angels.

But if by good merits one arrives at the angels: why is he who has arrived wounded? There is also a good sword, of which sword there is a good wound. The Word of God wounds, but does not ulcerate. There is a wound of good love, there are wounds of charity; and therefore she said: "I am of wounded charity" (Cant. 2:5). She who is perfect, is wounded by charity. Good therefore are the wounds of the Word, good are the wounds of the lover: "For more useful are the wounds of a friend, than the voluntary kisses of an enemy" (Prov. 27:6). Of wounded charity is Rebecca, who having left her parents, migrated to her bridegroom. Of wounded charity is Rachel, who was zealous for her sister, and loved her husband; for she was envious of her sister because she abounded in children, being herself still sterile, because she bore the type of the Church, to which it is said: "Rejoice, O sterile one who do not bear, break forth and cry who do not travail" (Isaiah 54:1).

Invenerunt ergo custodes et vulneraverunt eam, et tulerunt ei pallium, hoc est, actus corporalis involucrum sustulerunt, ut nuda mentis simplicitas quaereret Christum; quia nemo potest amictu vestitus philosophiae, in habitu scilicet sapientiae saecularis Christum videre. Et bene tollitur ei amictus philosophiae, ne quis eam per philosophiam depraedetur. Bene tollitur ei pallium, quae ad Christum propinquat, ut Deum visura, mundo corde gradiatur: Beati enim mundo corde, quia ipsi Deum videbunt (Matth. V, 8). Denique ubi mundavit cor, Verbum reperit, Deum vidit. Quaere ergo illum, virgo, immo quaeramus omnes; anima enim sexum non habet. Sed ideo fortasse femineum nomen accepit, quod eam violentior aestus corporis agit: ipsa autem impetum carnis et amoris sui molli quadam et blanda ratione demulcet. Ergo orationibus et obsecrationibus Deum invitare debemus, ut quasi bonus auster afflare dignetur. Verbique nobis auram coelestis aspiret: quae fructiferas arbores non turbare vento gravi, sed leni spiramine flatuque molli consuevit agitare.

Tulerunt mihi pallium meum. Bonus amictus aeternitae vitae, hoc pallium Sponsae voluerunt auferre custodes murorum, quo primus homo fuerat exutus; sed anima Deo devota quaesitum diu tenendo, et non dimittendo dilectum, pretioso charitatis divinae se vestivit involucro. Beati ergo qui tali pallio vestiuntur, et amictum ejusmodi legis observatione meruerunt; quia non sunt legis obliti, sed quae erant legis operati sunt.

54. (Vers. 8.) Adjuro vos, filiae Hierusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut annuntietis ei, quia amore languo. Quis est autem hic animae languor? Morale historiae veteris facit nos meminisse debere, quae est de sancto Moyse qui rogavit Deum ut se demonstraret ei, et facie ad faciem eum videret. Noverat utique sanctus vates Domini, quod invisibilem Deum facie ad faciem videre non posset. Sed devotio sancta mensuram supergreditur, et putavit Deo etiam hoc esse possibile, ut corporeis oculis faceret id quod est incorporeum comprehendere. Non reprehensibilis hic error, sed etiam grata cupiditas atque inexplibilis, quod Dominum suum velut manu tenere, et obtutu oculorum videre cupiebat. Sciebat enim ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei factum esse hominem; quando enim electus a Domino Deo ad populum liberandum, repletus est spiritu sapientiae, viderat angelum illum, et faciem ejus in gloria, denique fulgente ejus lumine pavefactus est, et vidit rubum uri et non exuri. Visu coepit fulgorem, quem miratus accessit; cupiditate et gratia provocatus, ut diligentius fulgorem illum in rubo consideraret.

The watchmen found her, therefore, and wounded her, and took from her the cloak, that is, they took away the wrapping of corporal act, so that the naked simplicity of the mind might seek Christ; because no one clothed with the garment of philosophy, namely in the habit of secular wisdom, can see Christ. And well is taken from her the garment of philosophy, lest anyone should despoil her through philosophy. Well is the cloak taken from her, who approaches Christ, that being about to see God, she may walk with a pure heart: "For blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Finally when she cleansed her heart, she found the Word, she saw God. Seek him therefore, O virgin, nay let us all seek; for the soul has no sex. But therefore perhaps it received a feminine name, because a more violent heat of the body moves it: but it itself soothes the impetus of the flesh and of its love with a certain soft and bland reason. Therefore by prayers and obsecrations we ought to invite God, that he may deign to blow as a good south wind. And let the breeze of the celestial Word inspire us: which is accustomed to agitate the fruitful trees not by a heavy wind, but by a gentle breath and a soft blowing.

"They took from me my cloak." A good garment is the eternity of life, this cloak of the Bride the watchmen of the walls wished to take away, of which the first man had been despoiled; but the soul devoted to God by holding him long sought, and not letting go of the beloved, clothed herself with the precious wrapping of divine charity. Blessed therefore are they who are clothed with such a cloak, and have merited a garment of this kind by the observation of the law; because they have not forgotten the law, but have wrought the things that were of the law.

54. (Vers. 8.) "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him, because I languish with love." But what is this languor of the soul? The moral of the ancient history makes us remember that we ought to be mindful of holy Moses, who asked God that he might show himself to him, and see him face to face. For the holy prophet of the Lord knew well that he could not see the invisible God face to face. But holy devotion exceeds measure, and he thought that even this was possible for God, to cause that which is incorporeal to be comprehended by corporal eyes. This error is not reprehensible, but is even a grateful and insatiable desire, because he desired to hold his Lord as if by the hand, and to see him by the gaze of the eyes. For he knew that man was made to the image and likeness of God; for when he was chosen by the Lord God to deliver the people, he was filled with the spirit of wisdom, he had seen that angel, and his face in glory, finally he was terrified by his shining light, and he saw the bush burning and not being consumed. By sight he began to perceive the brightness, which he wondered at and approached; provoked by desire and grace, that he might more diligently consider that brightness in the bush.

Itaque si tantum accepit ardorem, tantam subiit cupiditatem, cum angelum vidisset in flamma ignis de rubo, ut licet pavore apprehensus considerare non auderet, considerare tamen vellet: quanto magis vultum Domini corporaliter videre desiderabat, dicens intra se: Vultum illum plenum lucis, plenum gratiae, plenum virtutis, plenum divinitatis, quem esse dicam? Non possum plus dicere vel sentire de Deo; cum enim consummaverit homo, tunc incipit; et cum finierit, tunc aporiabitur, ut scriptum est, quia incomprehensibilis est Dei aeterna majestas (Eccles. XVIII, 6).

55. Irritus quidem erat postulationis effectus, sed affectus probabilis servi; quia ultra naturam suam devotione progressus de Domini angelis aestimabat, quantum de Domini vultu plus desideraret, quo cupiditatem suam gestiret explere. Noverat in ipso homine aliam post mortem futuram gloriam, aliam claritatem: Sicut enim stella a stella differt in claritate, sic et resurrectio mortuorum; quae et si seminatur in corruptione, surget tamen in incorruptione, surget in gloria, surget in virtute, surget corpus spiritale (I Cor. XV, 41-44). Qui ergo haec scire poterat, merito praesumebat ut vultum Domini videre cuperet, cum esset obita corporis morte visurus. Talen certe etiam formam ceperat, talem Dominus jam probabat, ut non distaret ab angelis coelestis minister et exsecutor oraculi. Et ideo cum sciret, Quia angeli pusillorum quotidie vident faciem Patris qui in coelis est (Matth. XVIII, 10), putavit quod jam eam videre posset et deberet, tamquam oblitus corporis, et carne deposita; sicut ille qui in corpore adhuc positus, cum raperetur in paradysum, ultra in corpore, sive extra corpus raptus esset ad tertium coelum se nescire dixit (II Cor. XII, 3). Sancti enim etiam cum gerunt corpus, non sunt tamen in carne, sed in spiritu; quoniam qui in cupiditate et conversatione carnali sunt, Deo placere non possunt. Sancti autem conversatione in carne non sunt, sed in coelo.

56. Ex his ergo Sponsae languentis comprehendamus affectum. Videre Dei vultum quasi innocens, velut quodam vultu conscientiae desiderabat, aperire ei faciem mentis internae, et cognosci plenius gestiebat. Amor impatiens, diu noctuque meretricias fores pulsans, si diutius potiendi desideria differuntur, ipsa deficit exspectatione, dum sperat: in quo utique non finis amoris, sed incrementum est.

Therefore if he received so much ardor, underwent so much desire, when he had seen the angel in the flame of fire from the bush, so that although seized by fear he did not dare to consider, yet he wished to consider: how much more did he desire to see the face of the Lord corporally, saying within himself: That face full of light, full of grace, full of virtue, full of divinity, whom shall I say it is? I cannot say or feel more concerning God; for when man has finished, then he begins; and when he has ended, then he shall be in doubt, as it is written, because "the eternal majesty of God is incomprehensible" (Ecclus. 18:6).

55. The effect of the petition was indeed void, but the affection of the servant was probable; because having progressed in devotion beyond his nature, he estimated from the angels of the Lord, how much more he might desire concerning the face of the Lord, wherewith he might yearn to fulfill his desire. He knew in man himself another glory to be after death, another brightness: "For as star differs from star in brightness, so also is the resurrection of the dead; which even if it is sown in corruption, yet shall rise in incorruption, shall rise in glory, shall rise in virtue, shall rise a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:41-44). He therefore who could know these things, rightly presumed that he might desire to see the face of the Lord, being about to see it when the death of the body had been passed. Such a form indeed he had also received, such the Lord already approved, that the celestial minister and executor of the oracle did not differ from the angels. And therefore since he knew, "That the angels of the little ones daily see the face of the Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10), he thought that he could and ought to see it already, as if having forgotten the body, and the flesh having been laid aside; like him who, still placed in the body, when he was caught up into paradise, said he knew not whether he had been caught up in the body, or out of the body, to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:3). For the saints, even when they bear the body, are not however in the flesh, but in the spirit; since they who are in carnal desire and conversation, cannot please God. But the saints are not in conversation in the flesh, but in heaven.

56. From these things therefore let us comprehend the affection of the languishing Bride. She desired to see the face of God as if innocent, as by a certain face of conscience, she yearned to open the face of the internal mind to him, and to be more fully known. Impatient love, knocking day and night at the doors of harlots, if the desires of possessing are deferred for a long time, fails from expectation while it hopes: in which indeed there is not an end of love, but an increase.

Et quidquid est desiderabile, si non contingat desideranti, deficit in illud, et quasi ipsam deponit animam qui desiderat; si tamen spes prior assurgat, dat vires spes proxima; si autem absentia sit dilecti, eo ipso quo absentem desiderat, quae concupivit, animae suae patitur defectionem. Itaque quanto longius est illud quod desideratur, tanto magis deficit qui desiderat. Id ergo deficere est, in id unumquemque totis studiis migrare, quod diligit; illud cogitat, illi adhaeret, illud personat, quod receperit diligendum, in id quadam animae defectione transfunditur. Ut si mater filii exspectet praesentiam, quemadmodum exspectabat Tobiae uxor filium peregrinantem; deficiens a desiderio, et in angustiis constituta, et tamquam resoluta videbatur (Tob. X, 3 et seq.). Quid enim aliud nisi defectum quemdam ejus verba significant? Sed quo magis lassatur affectus, eo amplius amor crescit; et quo diutius abest qui desiderat, eo expectantis desideria majore quadam vi amoris ignescunt. Caro deficit, sed cupiditas alitur et augetur.

57. Itaque sancta anima nescit aliud desiderare quam Sponsum, qui est Christus Jesus: illum concupiscit, illum desiderat, in illum totis intendit viribus, illum gremio mentis fovet, illi se aperit et effundit, et hoc solum veretur, ne illum possit amittere. Itaque quanto majore desiderio excitata fuerit anima, cupiens adhaerere Deo salutari suo, tanto magis deficit. Ergo ista defectio imminutionem quidem fragilitatis, sed assumptionem virtutis operatur. Concupiscebat, desiderabat, deficiebat, toto dissolvebatur affectu, ut totus illius fieret quem desiderabat, sicut etiam David ipse dicit: Effundo in conspectu ejus orationem meam, et tribulationem meam ante ipsum pronuntio, in deficiendo ex me spiritum meum (Ps. CXLI, 3 et 4). Defecit enim ejus spiritus; immo ab eo defecit spiritus, qui seipsum negat, ut adhaereat Christo. Itaque quasi amoris impatiens, circumcursabat, et quaerebat ubique Dei Verbum, quia vulnerata, quia nuda; et quaerebat adminiculum alicujus a quo Christus rogaretur ut veniret. Vide aestuantem, vide desiderantem: Adjuro, inquit, vos, filiae Hierusalem, etc.; deinde filiabus coelestis illius civitatis admixta, Verbum requirit, et quaerendo, et speciem ejus contemplando, ejus in se excitat charitatem.

58. (Vers. 10.) Frater, inquit, meus candidus et rubeus, electus ex millibus. Decet enim, virgo, ut plene noveris quem diligis, atque omne in eo et ingenitae divinitatis et assumptae mysterium incorporationis agnoscas. Candidus ergo est merito, quia patris splendor: rubeus, quia partus est virginis. Color in eo fulget et rutilat utriusque naturae. Memento tamen antiquiora in eo divinitatis insignia, quam corporis sacramenta; quia non coepit a Virgine, sed qui erat venit in Virginem.

And whatever is desirable, if it does not happen to the one desiring, he fails in that, and he who desires as it were lays down his soul itself; if however a nearer hope arises, the next hope gives strength; but if there be absence of the beloved, by that very fact that she desires the absent one, she suffers the failure of her soul in what she has concupisced. Therefore the further off that is which is desired, the more he who desires fails. That therefore is to fail, for each one to migrate with all his studies into that one thing which he loves; he thinks of that, he adheres to that, he sounds that which he has received to be loved, into that he is transfused by a certain failure of the soul. As if a mother should expect the presence of a son, just as the wife of Tobias expected her son wandering; failing from desire, and placed in straits, and she seemed as it were dissolved (Tobit 10:3 et seq.). For what else do her words signify but a certain failure? But by how much more the affection is wearied, by so much the more love grows; and by how much longer he who is desired is absent, by so much the desires of the one expecting are set on fire by a certain greater force of love. The flesh fails, but the desire is nourished and increased.

57. Therefore the holy soul knows not how to desire anything else than the Bridegroom, who is Christ Jesus: her he concupisces, him she desires, into him she intends with all her strength, him she cherishes in the bosom of the mind, to him she opens and pours herself out, and this alone she fears, lest she should be able to lose him. Therefore by how much a greater desire the soul shall have been excited, desiring to adhere to God her salvation, by so much the more she fails. Therefore this failure works indeed a diminution of fragility, but an assumption of virtue. She concupisced, she desired, she failed, she was dissolved in all her affection, that she might become all his whom she desired, as even David himself says: "I pour out my prayer in his sight, and my tribulation I pronounce before him, in my spirit failing from me" (Ps. 141:3-4). For his spirit failed; nay from him failed the spirit, who denies himself, that he may adhere to Christ. Therefore as if impatient of love, she ran about, and sought the Word of God everywhere, because wounded, because naked; and she sought the support of someone by whom Christ might be asked that he should come. See her seething, see her desiring: "I adjure you," she says, "O daughters of Jerusalem," etc.; then being mixed with the daughters of that celestial city, she seeks the Word, and by seeking, and by contemplating his beauty, she excites his charity in herself.

58. (Vers. 10.) "My brother," she says, "is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands." For it becomes you, O virgin, that you fully know him whom you love, and acknowledge in him all the mystery both of his innate divinity and of his assumed incorporation. He is white therefore rightly, because he is the brightness of the Father: ruddy, because he is the offspring of a virgin. The color in him shines and glows of both natures. Remember however in him the more ancient insignia of divinity, than the sacraments of the body; because he did not begin from the Virgin, but he who was came into the Virgin.

59. Frater meus candidus et rubeus. Candidus claritate aeterna, rubeus specie coloris humani, quem sacramento incarnationis assumpsit. Meritoque et ipsum quod est rubeum, bene olet; quia caro Christi sine peccato est, quam perfidi contrectantes, manus suas inquinaverunt: sancti venerantes, pietatis odore flagrarunt.

60. Electus ex millibus. Decem millia, inquit Jacob, Ephraem et millia Manasse; id est, et Judaeorum et gentium dominetur, et ex utroque populo acquirat sibi Ecclesiae plenitudinem. Ideoque dexteram suam super Ephraem posuit sanctus Jacob; eo quod legis, dicente Ecclesia in Canticis canticorum: Frater meus candidus et rubeus, electus ex decem millibus. Denique etiam David juvenculae Mariae auctorem ex cujus successionem Christus est natus per Virginis partum, in decem millibus praedicabant: Saul autem in millibus, cum reverentiae gratiam circa regem magis praeponere debuissent.

61. (Vers. 11.) Caput ejus aurum Cephias. Quod significat stabilem eminentemque sapientiam. Corpus Christi Ecclesia est, hujus caput ut aurum, quia sapientia pretiosa sanctorum est, hoc est, viri justi atque prudentes.

62. Crines ejus ut abietes, nigrae sicut corax. De hoc alibi dixit, Capillamentum tuum, ut grex tonsarum. Ideo capillamentum, quia virtus omnium sensuum in capite est: Oculi enim sapientis in capite ejus (Eccle. II, 14). Profunda igitur doctorum prudentia, quae potest ea quae obscura sunt revelare, et alta aperire sensuum. Et hujusmodi disputatores crines Ecclesiae sunt, sicut pulli corvorum quibus Dominus escam dat: sicut dedit sancto Jacob, et eum pavit a juventute sua. Hos alios ac profundos ubertate doctrinae pascit Dominus coelestibus sacramentis.

63. (Vers. 12.) Oculi quoque ejus sicut columbae. Oculi sunt viri videlicet spiritualibus ornati sensibus, qui ad videnda mysteria sunt acuti, et parati ad penetranda Scripturae secreta divinae, rationali lacte fulgentes, in quibus non sit aliqua doli maculosa confusio, sed simplicis affectus immaculata sinceritas. Ideo in aquarum abundantia lotas has columbas in lacte memoravit, dicens:

64. Oculi ejus sicut columbae super abundantiam aquarum, lotae in lacte, sedentis super plenitudinem, Baptizat in lacte Dominus, id est, in sinceritate. Et isti sunt qui vere baptizantur in lacte, qui sine dolo credunt, et puram fidem deferunt, ut immaculatam induant gratiam. Ideo candida Sponsa ascendit ad Christum, quia in lacte baptizata est; ideo mirantur eam virtutes, dicentes: Quae est haec quae ascendit dealbata (Cant. VIII, 7)? Ante paululum dicebat, Nigra sum (Cant. I,): nunc dealbata cernitur, et ascendit ad coelum, et innixa Dei Verbo, alta jam penetrat.

59. "My brother is white and ruddy." White with eternal clarity, ruddy with the appearance of human color, which he assumed by the sacrament of the incarnation. And rightly even that which is ruddy, smells well; because the flesh of Christ is without sin, which the perfidious touching, defiled their hands: the saints venerating, were fragrant with the odor of piety.

60. "Chosen out of thousands." "Ten thousand," says Jacob, "Ephraim, and thousands Manasseh"; that is, that he should rule both over the Jews and over the gentiles, and from both peoples acquire for himself the plenitude of the Church. And therefore holy Jacob placed his right hand upon Ephraim; for that reason of the law, the Church saying in the Song of Songs: "My brother is white and ruddy, chosen out of ten thousands." Finally even David they preached in ten thousands, the author of the young maiden Mary from whose succession Christ was born through the birth of the Virgin: but Saul in thousands, when they ought rather to have preferred the grace of reverence toward the king.

61. (Vers. 11.) "His head is gold Cephas." Which signifies a stable and eminent wisdom. The body of Christ is the Church, its head is as gold, because wisdom is the precious thing of the saints, that is, just and prudent men.

62. "His curls as fir trees, black as a raven." Concerning this he said elsewhere, "Your hair, as a flock of shorn sheep." Therefore hair, because the virtue of all the senses is in the head: "For the eyes of the wise man are in his head" (Eccles. 2:14). Deep therefore is the prudence of the doctors, which can reveal those things which are obscure, and open the high things of the senses. And disputants of this kind are the hair of the Church, as the young of ravens to whom the Lord gives food: as he gave to holy Jacob, and fed him from his youth. These others and deep ones by the abundance of doctrine the Lord feeds with celestial sacraments.

63. (Vers. 12.) "His eyes also as of doves." The eyes are men, namely adorned with spiritual senses, who are sharp for seeing mysteries, and ready for penetrating the secrets of the divine Scripture, shining with rational milk, in whom there is not any spotted confusion of deceit, but the immaculate sincerity of simple affection. Therefore he mentioned these doves washed in milk in the abundance of waters, saying:

64. "His eyes as doves upon the abundance of waters, washed in milk, sitting upon the fullness." The Lord baptizes in milk, that is, in sincerity. And these are they who are truly baptized in milk, who believe without deceit, and bring pure faith, that they may put on immaculate grace. Therefore the white Bride ascends to Christ, because she was baptized in milk; therefore the virtues wonder at her, saying: "Who is she that ascends whitened" (Cant. 8:7)? A little before she was saying, "I am black" (Cant. 1:4): now she is discerned whitened, and she ascends to heaven, and leaning upon the Word of God, she now penetrates high things.

65. Nec immerito illic aquarum abundantia, ubi Christus, unde mens humana repleri cupiat. Has sitit aquas cervus, quas cum biberit, sitire non possit. Has aquas sitivit Propheta cum dixit: Sitivit in te anima mea (Psalm. XLI, 3). Sedet ergo Christus super abundantiam aquarum, et super plenitudinem, et ideo qui baptizat in aqua dicit: Et nos omnes de plenitudine ejus accepimus (Joan I, 16). Unde et oculus suppliciorum non alienus est ab Ecclesia; quia etsi baptizabat Joannes in Enon, baptizabat juxta Salim, ubi erat aquarum abundantia, et duodecim fontes, et septuaginta palmarum arbores. Hos fontes habet Ecclesia, hoc est, in veteri Testamento duodecim patriarchas, in novo duodecim apostolos; ideoque dictum est: In Ecclesiis benedicite Dominum Deum de fontibus Israel (Psalm. LXVII, 27). His fontibus ante perfunditur, quicumque mysteria sacrosancta consequitur; isti enim fontes ex aeterno fonte manantes, toto orbe fluxerunt. Ubi isti fontes, ibi ascensio animarum. Denique Salim interpretati sunt, ipsum ascendentem; ille enim vere ascendit, qui propria peccata deponit. Hoc igitur verbo purificatoriae sanctificationis usus exprimitur.

66. (Vers. 13.) Genae ejus sicut phialae aromatis, gignentis unguentaria. Jam genas et caetera intelligimus animae esse virtutes, doctorumque diversitates: qui vel spiritalem menti alimoniam dispensatione sedula subministrent, vel praedicatione crucis Dominicae sicut Verbi quadam linea alligent audientem, vel modestia verecundi et juventutis flore gratissimi. Etsi a tactu pudore revocentur, redoleat tamen in his odor Christi: et sicut in genis quasi de capite sacerdotali descendit unguentum, sic et in his eluceat pulchritudo doctrinae.

67. Labia ejus distillantia myrrham plenam. Per myrrham enim passionis unguentum et resurrectionis gratia declaratur, quae redivivum vitae odorem suscitatis mortuorum visceribus infundit. Clausae sint igitur labiorum fores tuorum, et obse-ratum maneat vocis vestibulum, tunc fortasse reserandum, cum audieris Verbum Dei. Tunc tibi myrrha sudabit, tunc tibi baptismatis aspirabit gratia; ut ab elementis mundi commoriare, et cum Christo resurgas.

68. Labia ejus distillantia myrrham plenam. Nos autem otiosos nos putamus, si verbo tantummodo studere videamur: et pluris aestimamus eos qui operantur, quam eos qui studium cognoscendae veritatis exercent; dicunt enim plerique: Ecce homo et opera ejus: quasi qui verbo studeat, non operatur; cum magis opus istud quam caetera sint. Si enim opus justitia est, si opus temperantia, si opus fortitudo: utique opus est etiam sapientia; istae enim quatuor principales virtutes habentur. Nam si operatur Christus secundum quod justitia est, utique operatur secundum quod Verbum est.

65. Nor undeservedly is there an abundance of waters where Christ is, whence the human mind may desire to be filled. For these waters the stag thirsts, which when he has drunk, he cannot thirst. For these waters the Prophet thirsted when he said: "My soul has thirsted for you" (Ps. 41:3). Christ sits therefore upon the abundance of waters, and upon the fullness, and therefore he who baptizes in water says: "And we have all received of his fullness" (John 1:16). Whence also the eye of supplications is not foreign to the Church; because although John baptized in Enon, he baptized near Salim, where there was an abundance of waters, and twelve fountains, and seventy palm trees. These fountains the Church has, that is, in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs, in the New the twelve apostles; and therefore it was said: "In the churches bless the Lord God from the fountains of Israel" (Ps. 67:27). With these fountains he is first drenched, whoever follows the sacrosanct mysteries; for these fountains flowing from the eternal fountain, have flowed into the whole world. Where these fountains are, there is the ascension of souls. Finally they have interpreted Salim as him who is ascending; for he truly ascends, who lays aside his own sins. This word therefore is used to express the work of purificatory sanctification.

66. (Vers. 13.) "His cheeks as vials of aromatic, producing ointment." Now we understand the cheeks and the rest to be the virtues of the soul, and the diversities of the doctors: who either subminister spiritual nourishment to the mind by diligent dispensation, or bind the listener like a certain line of the Word by the preaching of the Lord's cross, or by the modesty of the shamefaced and the most grateful flower of youth. Even if they be recalled from touch by shame, yet let the odor of Christ be fragrant in them: and as in the cheeks the ointment descends as if from the priestly head, so also in these let the beauty of doctrine shine forth.

67. "His lips distilling full myrrh." For through myrrh the ointment of the passion and the grace of the resurrection is declared, which pours the revived odor of life into the raised bowels of the dead. Let the doors of your lips therefore be closed, and let the vestibule of the voice remain barred, then perhaps to be unlocked, when you shall have heard the Word of God. Then myrrh shall sweat for you, then the grace of baptism shall inspire you; that you may die from the elements of the world, and rise with Christ.

68. "His lips distilling full myrrh." But we think ourselves idle, if we seem to study the word only: and we estimate those more who work, than those who exercise the study of knowing the truth; for many say: Behold the man and his works: as if he who studies the word, does not work; when this work is more than the rest. For if work is justice, if work is temperance, if work is fortitude: certainly work is also wisdom; for these four are held as the principal virtues. For if Christ works according to that which is justice, certainly he works according to that which he is the Word.

Et operabatur cum esset in principio apud Patrem. Denique per ipsum omnia facta sunt, ut scias operatorem omnium esse, et opus nostrum esse Christum Jesum. Etenim secundum quod Verbum est, Verbum inquiringibus, grande opus Verbum est. Unde cum Martha festinaret circa ministerium, Maria autem Verbum Domini audiret, ea quae audiebat ei quae ministrabat meruit anteferri; dicenti enim Marthae: Domine, non est tibi curae, quod soror mea reliquit me solam ministrare? Dic ergo illi ut me adjuvet; respondens dixit Dominus: Martha, Martha, Maria bonam partem elegit, quae non auferetur illi (Luc. VII, 40-42). Ita Verbum cognoscere majus opus esse quam ministrare, divinae auctoritate sententiae definitur.

69. Sed fortasse dicat aliquis dictum esse ab Apostolo: Non in sermone esse regnum Dei, sed in virtute (I Cor. IV, 20). Scriptum non nego, sed in quo sermone, cognosco; nempe quem inflatus effuderit, qui audientibus sermo prodesse non possit, qui sine ostensione sit spiritus atque virtutis. Hunc sermonem Paulus non dignatur cognoscere; vult enim magis virtutem sermonis commendare. Denique volebat talem suum esse Apostolus sermonem, qui in infirmitate veniebat, ut alios faceret fortiores: in timore et tremore, ut timentes nihil metuerent, nisi Dominum Jesum; trementes, pacem ejus tranquillitatemque servarent. Audi ergo qualem Apostolus sermonem habebat: Et sermo, inquit, meus, et praedicatio mea non in persuasionem humanae sapientiae verborum, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis (II Cor. II, 4); quia fides non in forensi sermone sapientiae, sed in ostensione spiritus, sed in Dei virtute firmatur.

70. Ergo in sermone sanctorum virtus est, in sermone autem forensi isto et philosophico vanitas mundi. Virtutem autem esse in sermone sanctorum, etiam iste propheta te edoceat, qui ait: Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus virtute multa (Psal. LXVII, 12); hoc est, ut multa possint virtute Evangelium praedicare. Probatum est ergo quod in Evangelii praedicatione sit virtus, praedicatio autem Evangelii sermo sanctorum est; ita dubium non residet quin in sermone sancto sit virtus. Et haec myrrha distillans ex labiis Sponsi, scilicet per quam vitia mortificantur.

71. (Vers. 14.) Manus illius tornatiles, aureae, plenae hyacinthis. Vide quae manus fecerint hominem, et quem hominem fecerint! Illum utique Quem secundum Christum induimus, exspoliantes veterem hominem cum actibus suis, et induentes novum qui renovatur ad agnitionem secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit eum: ubi non est servus, et liber, sed omnia et in omnibus Christus (Colloss., III, 9-11). Christum ergo induimus, sicut et alibi dictum est: Christum induistis (Galat. III, 27).

And he worked when he was in the beginning with the Father. Finally through him all things were made, that you may know him to be the operator of all, and our work to be Christ Jesus. For according to that which he is the Word, the Word to those inquiring, the Word is a great work. Whence when Martha hastened about the ministry, but Mary heard the Word of the Lord, she who heard deserved to be preferred to her who ministered; for to Martha saying: "Lord, is it not a care to you, that my sister has left me alone to minister? Tell her therefore that she may help me"; responding the Lord said: "Martha, Martha, Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:40-42). Thus to know the Word is defined by the authority of the divine sentence to be a greater work than to minister.

69. But perhaps someone may say it was said by the Apostle: "That the kingdom of God is not in speech, but in virtue" (1 Cor. 4:20). I do not deny it is written, but in what speech, I recognize; namely that which one puffed up has poured out, which speech cannot profit the listeners, which is without the showing of the spirit and of virtue. This speech Paul does not deign to know; for he wishes rather to commend the virtue of the speech. Finally the Apostle wished his speech to be such, which came in infirmity, that it might make others stronger: in fear and trembling, that fearing they might fear nothing, except the Lord Jesus; trembling, they might keep his peace and tranquility. Hear therefore what kind of speech the Apostle had: "And my speech," he says, "and my preaching was not in the persuasion of human wisdom of words, but in the showing of the spirit and of virtue" (2 Cor. 2:4); because faith is not confirmed in the forensic speech of wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit, but in the virtue of God.

70. Therefore in the speech of the saints is virtue, but in this forensic and philosophical speech is the vanity of the world. But that there is virtue in the speech of the saints, let even that prophet teach you, who says: "The Lord shall give the word to those evangelizing with much virtue" (Ps. 67:12); that is, that they may be able to preach the Gospel with much virtue. It has been proved therefore that in the preaching of the Gospel there is virtue, but the preaching of the Gospel is the speech of the saints; thus no doubt remains but that in holy speech there is virtue. And this myrrh distilling from the lips of the Bridegroom, namely through which vices are mortified.

71. (Vers. 14.) "His hands are turned, golden, full of hyacinths." See what hands have made man, and what man they have made! Namely him "Whom according to Christ we have put on, stripping off the old man with his acts, and putting on the new who is renewed to knowledge according to the image of him who created him: where there is not servant, and free, but all and in all Christ" (Col. 3:9-11). We have put on Christ therefore, as it was said elsewhere also: "You have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

Accepimus Spiritum sanctum, qui non solum nostra peccata dimittit; sed etiam nos facit sacerdotes suos aliis peccata dimittere. Ideo ait Propheta: Tu finxisti me et posuisti super me manum tuam (Psal. CXXXVIII, 5): finxit per lutum, posuit manum per gratiam spiritalem; licet plerique hunc psalmum ex persona dictum Salvatoris accipiant. Audi quia manus Domini etiam spiritus dicitur, clamat Job: Spiritus divinus qui fecit me (Job. XXXIII, 4). Iste sunt ergo manus quae hominem paraverunt, Christus et Spiritus.

72. Ergo Dominus Jesus et corporis auctor est nostri, qui primum fecit hominem ad imaginem; et postea de luto finxit, et voluit salvare quod fecerat, salvare quod plasmaverat, ut totum hominem salvum faceret. Iste sunt manus Dei tornatiles, id est, perfectae: aureae propter sapientiam qui est Christus, plenae hyacinthis propter Spiritum sanctum, et plenitudinem charismatum ejus.

73. (Vers. 14.) Venter ejus eburneus, distinctus saphiris. Apostolus, Et si, inquit, crucifixus est ex infirmitate; ecce venter, id est, carnis infirmitas: Vivit tamen ex virtute Dei (II Cor. XIII, 4); ecce distinctio saphiri. Saphirus enim eo quod coeli sereni speciem gerat, quae sunt divinitatis opera significat. Onir autem propter castitatem et nitorem et perpetuitatem, carnem illam significat Salvatoris, de qua idem Apostolus dicit: Quia etsi Christum secundum carnem novimus, sed nunc jam non novimus (II Cor. V, 16).

74. (Vers. 15.) Crura illius columnae marmoreae, fundatae super bases aureas. Significant columnas esse Ecclesiae Apostolos, qui fundati sunt in timore sancto. Nam sicut Petrus, Jacobus, Joannes et Barnabas columnae esse videbantur Ecclesiae, sic et quicumque vicerit hoc saeculum, fit columna Dei, quam confirmat qui dicit: Ego confirmavi columnas ejus (Psal. LXXIV, 4). Ita et basis aurea timor plenus disciplinae, quia initium sapientiae est. In timore ergo sapientium apostolica praedicatio tamquam super basim auream columna firmatur Christi. Igitur eloquio et apostolico sermoni tribunal est timor justi, et basis aurea plena prudentiae: simulacrum autem bonum tamquam effigies veritatis, sermo sanctorum.

75. Et vide tamquam basim auream esse sanctorum timorem. Lege Esaiam: vide quantis subjecerit timorem, ut faceret irreprehensibilem et bonum timorem: Spiritus, inquit, sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii atque virtutis, spiritus cognitionis atque pietatis, spiritus timoris Domini (Esai. XI, 2); quantis timorem subjecit, ut haberet quod sequi possit! Informatur per sapientiam, instruitur per intellectum, consilio dirigitur, virtute firmatur, cognitione regitur, pietate decoratur. Tolle timori Domini ista, et est irrationabilis et insipiens timor, unus ex illis: Foris pugnae, intus timores (II Cor. VII, 5); quibus afflicto esset et Paulus, nisi habuisset Dominum consolantem.

We have received the Holy Spirit, who not only remits our sins; but also makes us his priests to remit sins to others. Therefore says the Prophet: "You have formed me and have placed upon me your hand" (Ps. 138:5): he formed through clay, he placed the hand through spiritual grace; although many take this psalm as being said from the person of the Savior. Hear that the hand of the Lord is also called the spirit, Job cries out: "The divine Spirit who made me" (Job 33:4). These are therefore the hands which have prepared man, Christ and the Spirit.

72. Therefore the Lord Jesus is both the author of our body, who first made man to the image; and afterwards formed him from clay, and wished to save what he had made, to save what he had fashioned, that he might make the whole man safe. These are the hands of God turned, that is, perfect: golden because of wisdom who is Christ, full of hyacinths because of the Holy Spirit, and the plenitude of his charisms.

73. (Vers. 14.) "His belly is of ivory, distinct with sapphires." The Apostle says, "Even if he was crucified from infirmity"; behold the belly, that is, the infirmity of the flesh: "Yet he lives from the virtue of God" (2 Cor. 13:4); behold the distinction of the sapphire. For the sapphire, because it bears the appearance of the serene heavens, signifies those things which are works of divinity. Ivory however because of chastity and brightness and perpetuity, signifies that flesh of the Savior, concerning which the same Apostle says: "That although we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we no longer know him" (2 Cor. 5:16).

74. (Vers. 15.) "His legs are marble columns, founded upon golden bases." They signify that the columns of the Church are the Apostles, who are founded in holy fear. For just as Peter, James, John, and Barnabas seemed to be columns of the Church, so also whoever shall overcome this world, becomes a column of God, which he confirms who says: "I have confirmed its columns" (Ps. 74:4). So also the golden base is fear full of discipline, because it is the beginning of wisdom. In the fear therefore of the wise the apostolic preaching is confirmed as if upon a golden base of Christ. Therefore for the eloquence and apostolic speech the tribunal is the fear of the just, and the golden base full of prudence: but a good image as if an effigy of truth, the speech of the saints.

75. And see that as it were the golden base is the fear of the saints. Read Isaiah: see to how many he has subjected fear, that he might make irreprehensible and good fear: "The Spirit," he says, "of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of virtue, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2); to how many he subjected fear, that it might have what it could follow! It is informed through wisdom, instructed through understanding, directed by counsel, confirmed by virtue, ruled by knowledge, decorated by piety. Take those from the fear of the Lord, and it is an irrational and foolish fear, one of those: "Fights without, fears within" (2 Cor. 7:5); with which even Paul would have been afflicted, unless he had had the Lord consoling.

76. (Vers. 15.) Species ejus ut Libani, electus ut cedri. In altis habitat, et humilia respicit, quia species ejus sicut cedrus Libani, quae comam nubibus, radicem terris inserit; principium enim ejus e coelo, posteriora ejus in terris fructus coelo proximos ediderunt. Genus hoc arboris numquam amittit viriditatem suam, hyeme juxta ac aestate comam pascit, nec diverso colore mutatur: solam hanc arborem ventus suo numquam honore despoliat: sola numquam veteri exuitur amictu, aut novo flore vestitur. Sic apostolica quoque gratia nescit defectum, et perpetua venustate sui floret. Anima ergo corrumpi nescit, quae florentibus membris viget, semper justitiae caeterarumque virtutum culmina patienti magnanimitate sustentat; et ideo non defluit neque deficit, quia nihil in ea ruinosum est ac remissum, nihil mobile, nihil lubricum, nihil quod vitio sermonis ex ea possit effundi.

77. (Vers. 16.) Guttur illius suavissimum, et totus desiderium. Judicia Domini vera, justificata in semetipsa, desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum (Psal. XVIII, 10 et 11). Quod severum in aliis, in Christo dulce est, in Christo suave est; quia ipse suavis est: Denique gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus (Psal. XXIII, 9). Dulcia judicia confitenti, quia ipse dicit: Ego sum, ego sum, qui deleo iniquitates tuas, et memor non ero: tu autem memor esto, et judicemur. Dic iniquitates tuas, ut justificeris (Esai. XLIII, 25 et 26). Dulcia judicia agenti poenitentiam, quia ipse dixit: Gaudium erit super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente, quam in nonaginta et novem justis, qui non indigent poenitentia (Luc. XV, 7). Si dulcia sunt igitur judicia Domini, suavitatis fructus percipere elaboremus. Vis scire quam dulcia judicia Domini? Qui credit in ipso, non judicatur (Joan. III, 18). Dulcia ergo judicia credentibus: qui autem non credunt, non Christi judicio damnati sunt, qui venit non ut judicet mundum, sed ut salvet et redimat; sed impietatis suae subiere judicium, qui in remissionem peccatorum credere noluerunt. Non enim possunt ad ejus pertinere beneficium, quem cognoscere refutarunt. Ergo qui non crediderunt in eum, judicio ejus videntur indigni. Judicium enim ejus quid sit, agnosce, dicente ipso: Hoc autem judicium est, qua lux venit in hunc mundum (Ibid. 19). Dulce ergo, quod lux est, dulce judicium, quod praecedit misericordia; sic enim scriptum est, Misericordiam et judicium cantabo tibi, Domine (Psal. C, 1). Dulce etiam guttur et suavissimum, unde haec misericordia praecedit et hoc judicium.

76. (Vers. 15.) "His appearance is like Lebanon, chosen as the cedars." He dwells in the heights, and regards the lowly, because his appearance is like the cedar of Lebanon, which inserts its foliage into the clouds and its root into the lands; for its beginning is from heaven, and its later parts in the lands have brought forth fruits closest to heaven. This kind of tree never loses its greenness; in winter just as in summer it feeds its foliage, nor is it changed by a different color: the wind never despoils this tree alone of its honor: it alone is never stripped of its old garment, or clothed with a new flower. So also apostolic grace knows no defect, and flourishes with its own perpetual beauty. The soul therefore knows not how to be corrupted, which thrives with flourishing members, and always sustains the summits of justice and of the other virtues with patient magnanimity; and therefore it does not flow away nor fail, because there is nothing ruinous or remiss in it, nothing mobile, nothing slippery, nothing that could be poured out from it by a vice of speech.

77. (Vers. 16.) "His throat is most sweet, and he is all desire." "The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves, more desirable than gold and much precious stone" (Psalm 18:10-11). What is severe in others, in Christ is sweet, in Christ is pleasant; because he himself is pleasant: Finally "taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Psalm 23:9). Sweet are the judgments to the one confessing, because he himself says: "I am, I am he who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember them: but you be mindful, and let us be judged. Speak your iniquities, that you may be justified" (Isaiah 43:25-26). Sweet are the judgments to the one doing penance, because he himself said: "There will be joy over one sinner doing penance, more than over ninety-nine just who do not need penance" (Luke 15:7). If therefore the judgments of the Lord are sweet, let us labor to perceive the fruits of sweetness. Do you wish to know how sweet the judgments of the Lord are? "He who believes in him is not judged" (John 3:18). Sweet therefore are the judgments to those believing: but those who do not believe are not damned by the judgment of Christ, who came not that he might judge the world, but that he might save and redeem it; but they have undergone the judgment of their own impiety, who were unwilling to believe in the remission of sins. For they cannot pertain to his benefit, whom they have refused to know. Therefore those who have not believed in him seem unworthy of his judgment. For recognize what his judgment is, as he himself says: "But this is the judgment, because light came into this world" (ibid. 19). Sweet therefore is that which is light, sweet the judgment which mercy precedes; for thus it is written, "Mercy and judgment I will sing to you, O Lord" (Psalm 100:1). Sweet also and most pleasant is the throat, whence this mercy precedes and this judgment.

78. (Vers. 16.) Et totus desiderabilis. Speciosus forma prae filiis hominum (Psal. XLIV, 3). Homo quippe erat secundum carnem, sed ultra hominem, secundum divinam operationem. Denique cum leprosum tangeret, homo videbatur: sed ultra hominem, cum emundaret. Et cum Lazarum fleret mortuum, quasi homo flebat: sed supra hominem erat, cum mortuum vinctis jubet pedibus exire. Homo videbatur, cum penderet in cruce: sed supra hominem cum reseratis tumulis, mortuos resuscitaret. Nec sibi adblandiatur virus Apollinaris, quod ita legitur: Et specie inventus ut homo (Philip. II, 7); non enim negatus est homo Jesus, cum alibi ipse Paulus de eo dicat: Mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus (I Tim. II, 5); sed confirmatus est. Id enim est usus et moris Scripturae sic significare, sicut et in Evangelio legimus: Et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre (Joan. I). Sicut ergo quasi unigenitus dicitur, et non abnuitur unigenitus Dei Filius; ita et homo dicitur, et perfectio fuisse in eo hominis non negatur.

79. Cum esset igitur in forma servi, humiliatus usque ad mortem, erat tamen in Dei gloria. Quid ei igitur obfuit servitus? Servus autem factus legitur, quia legitur factus ex Virgine, et creatus in carne; omnis enim creatura servit, dicente propheta: Quia universa serviunt tibi. Haec est Christi gloria, quia servitutem suscepit in corpore suo, ut libertatem omnibus redderet: peccata nostra portavit, ut mundi peccatum tolleret: servus, peccatum, maledictum factus est, ut tu peccati servus esse desisteres, te divinae sententiae maledicto absolveret. Ille ergo maledictum suscepit tuum: Maledictus enim omnis qui pendet in ligno: ille maledictum in cruce factus est, ut tu benedictus esses in Dei regno: ille dehonestatus et depretiatus est, nec aliquid aestimatus: ille dicebat, In vacuum laboravi; per quem meruit Paulus dicere, Non in vacuum laboravi (Philip. II, 16); ut boni operis fructum, et evangelicae praedicationis gloriam suis conferret servulis, per quam universi sarcina laboris absolverentur.

80. (Vers. 17.) Talis est dilectus meus, et amicus meus, filiae Hierusalem. Sic Ecclesia vel anima sancta filiabus coelestis illius civitatis admixta Verbum requirit, et quaerendo illius in se excitat charitatem: illis vero requirentibus et dicentibus: Quo abiit dilectus tuus, o pulcherrima mulierum? Quo declinavit dilectus tuus, ut quaeramus eum tecum?

CAPUT SEXTUM.

78. (Vers. 16.) "And he is all desirable." "Beautiful in form beyond the sons of men" (Psalm 44:3). For he was man according to the flesh, but beyond man according to divine operation. Finally, when he touched the leper, he seemed a man: but beyond man when he cleansed him. And when he wept for the dead Lazarus, he wept as a man: but he was above man when he commands the dead one to go out with bound feet. He seemed a man when he hung on the cross: but above man when, with tombs opened, he raised the dead. Nor should the poison of Apollinaris flatter itself, because it is read: "And in appearance found as a man" (Phil. 2:7); for the man Jesus was not denied, since elsewhere Paul himself says of him: "The mediator of God and of men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5); but he was confirmed. For it is the use and custom of Scripture thus to signify, as we also read in the Gospel: "And we saw his glory, the glory as if of the only-begotten from the Father" (John 1). Just as therefore he is called "as if the only-begotten," and he is not denied to be the only-begotten Son of God; so also he is called man, and it is not denied that the perfection of man was in him.

79. Although he was therefore in the form of a servant, humbled even unto death, yet he was in the glory of God. What therefore did servitude hinder him? But he is read to have been made a servant, because he is read to have been made from the Virgin, and created in the flesh; for every creature serves, as the prophet says: "Because all things serve you." This is the glory of Christ, because he took up servitude in his own body, that he might restore liberty to all: he carried our sins, that he might take away the sin of the world: he was made a servant, sin, a curse, that you might cease to be a servant of sin, and he might absolve you from the curse of the divine sentence. He therefore took up your curse: for "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree": he was made a curse on the cross, that you might be blessed in the kingdom of God: he was dishonored and depreciated, and estimated as nothing: he said, "In vain have I labored"; through whom Paul earned to say, "Not in vain have I labored" (Phil. 2:16); that he might confer the fruit of good work, and the glory of evangelical preaching upon his own servants, through which the burden of the labor of all might be absolved.

80. (Vers. 17.) "Such is my beloved, and my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." Thus the Church or the holy soul, mixed with the daughters of that celestial city, seeks the Word, and by seeking excites his charity in herself: but to those seeking and saying: "Whither is your beloved gone, O most beautiful of women? Whither has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?"

CHAPTER SIX.

1. (Vers. 1.) Dilectus, inquit, meus descendit in hortum suum ad areolam aromatis, ut pascatur in hortis, et lilia colligat. Ubi Verbum quaerat, agnoscit: quod inter orationes sanctorum moretur, et quod ipsis inhaereat, novit, et quod Ecclesiam suam vel animas justorum suorum inter lilia pascat, intelligit. Hoc mysterium tibi in Evangelio demonstravit, cum in sabbato duceret per seminata discipulos. Moyses per desertum duxit populum Judaeorum, Christus per seminata ducit, Christus per lilia ducit; quia per passionem ejus desertum floret ut lilium. Sequamur ergo, ut in die sabbati illius magni, in quo requies magna est, fructus colligamus. Nec verearis ne Pharisei accusent seminata colligentes: etsi illi accusant, Christus excusat, et similes facit quas vult animas se sequentes David illius, qui supra Legem panem propositionis manducabat, novae gratiae sacramenta prophetica jam tum mente concipiens.

2. (Vers. 2.) Ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi, qui pascitur inter lilia. Facilis vox et communis videtur, sed paucorum est. Satis rarus est enim qui potest dicere: Ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi. Quid est dicere: Tuus sum? ille enim dicit qui adhaeret Deo totis sensibus, qui aliud cogitare non novit, ille hac voce utitur, qui potest dicere Domino: Ostende nobis Patrem, et sufficit nobis (Joan. XIV, 8). Numquid hac voce utitur avidus pecuniae, honoris, potestatis? Multis non est satis Deum scire, et quidem pluribus. Tanti populi, tantae nationes, tanti divites paupertatem putant Domino servire; et qui supra omnes est, illis exiguus et angustus est: illis non est satis Dei Filius, in quo sunt omnia. Denique ille dives in Evangelio cui dictum est: Si vis perfectus esse, vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus (Matth. XIX, 21); Deum sibi non sufficere judicavit. Denique et contristatus est, quasi quod pluris esset, relinquere juberetur, quod minus esset, eligere. Ille ergo dicit: Tuus sum, qui potest dicere: Ecce nos reliquimus omnia, et secuti sumus te (Ibid., 27).

3. Apostolorum vox ista est, nec omnium tamen apostolorum; nam et Judas apostolus fuit, et in convivio Christi inter apostolos recumbebat. Dicebat et ipse: Tuus sum; sed voce, non corde. Venit et introivit in eum Satan, et coepit dicere: Non est tuus, Jesus, sed meus est. Denique ea quae mea sunt, cogitat, quae mea sunt in pectore suo volvit: tecum epulatur, et mecum pascitur: a te panem accepit, a me pecuniam: tecum bibit, et mihi tuum sanguinem vendit: tuus est apostolus, et meus mercenarius. Non potest dicere saecularis: Tuus sum; plures enim dominos habet.

1. (Vers. 1.) "My beloved," she says, "is gone down into his garden to the bed of aromatics, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." She recognizes where she should seek the Word: she knows that he stays among the prayers of the saints, and that he inheres in them, and she understands that he feeds his Church or the souls of his just ones among the lilies. He showed this mystery to you in the Gospel, when on the sabbath he led his disciples through the sown fields. Moses led the people of the Jews through the desert, Christ leads through sown fields, Christ leads through lilies; because through his passion the desert flourishes as the lily. Let us follow therefore, that in the day of that great sabbath, in which there is great rest, we may gather fruits. Nor should you fear lest the Pharisees accuse those gathering from the sown fields: even if they accuse, Christ excuses, and makes similar the souls following him that he wishes of that David, who ate the bread of proposition above the Law, already then conceiving in his mind the sacraments of the new grace.

2. (Vers. 2.) "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, who feeds among the lilies." The voice seems easy and common, but it belongs to few. For he is rare enough who can say: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." What is it to say: I am yours? For he says it who adheres to God with all his senses, who knows not how to think of anything else; he uses this voice who can say to the Lord: "Show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (John 14:8). Does he use this voice who is greedy for money, honor, power? To many it is not enough to know God, and indeed to very many. So many peoples, so many nations, so many rich men think it poverty to serve the Lord; and he who is above all, to them is small and narrow: to them the Son of God is not enough, in whom are all things. Finally, that rich man in the Gospel to whom it was said: "If you wish to be perfect, sell all things that you have, and give to the poor" (Matth. 19:21); judged that God did not suffice for him. Finally he was also saddened, as if he were commanded to leave what was more, and to choose what was less. He therefore says: I am yours, who can say: "Behold we have left all things, and have followed you" (ibid. 27).

3. This is the voice of the apostles, yet not of all the apostles; for Judas also was an apostle, and reclined among the apostles at the banquet of Christ. He also said: I am yours; but with his voice, not with his heart. Satan came and entered into him, and began to say: He is not yours, Jesus, but he is mine. Finally he thinks those things which are mine, he revolves those things which are mine in his breast: he feasts with you, and feeds with me: from you he received bread, from me money: he drinks with you, and sells your blood to me: he is your apostle, and my mercenary. The secular man cannot say: I am yours; for he has many masters.

Venit libido, et dicit: Meus es; quia ea quae sum corporis, concupiscis: in illius adolescentulae amore te mihi vendidisti: in illius concubitu meretricis pretium pro te annumeravi. Venit avaritia, et dicit: Argentum et aurum quod habes, servitutis tuae pretium est: possessio quam tenes, juris tui emptio, venditio libertatis tuae est. Venit luxuria, et dicit: Meus es; unius diei convivium, pretium tuae vitae est: ille sumptus epularum, tui capitis licitatio, tui est summa contractus. Et quod pejus est, caro emptus es pretio, vilior cibo es tuo: pretiosior est unius diei mensa tua, quam totius temporis vita: inter calices te redemi, inter epulas acquisivi. Venit ambitio, et dicit tibi: Plane meus es. Nescis quod ideo imperare aliis te feci, ut mihi ipse servires? Nescis quod ideo potestatem in te contuli, ut meae te subjicerem potestati? An ignoras ipsi Domino salvatori dictum esse ab hujus mundi principe, cum ei ostendisset omnia regna mundi: Haec omnia tibi dabo, si procidens adoraveris me (Matth. IV, 9)? Ante ergo ipse subjicitur, qui alios vult habere subjectos. Veniunt omnia vitia, et singula dicunt: Meus es. Quem tanti competunt, quam vile mancipium est! Quomodo ergo tu qui hujusmodi es, potes Christo dicere: Tuus sum? Respondebit tibi ille: Non quicumque dicit mihi, Domine, Domine, intrabit in regnum coelorum (Matth. VII, 21): non quicumque dicit mihi: Tuus sum, meus est.

4. Meus plane es, si vocem non redarguat conscientia, si sermonem tuum animus aut opera non refutent. Ego non nego meum esse eum qui ipse se non neget, aut certe si pro me seipsum sibi abneget. Nolo habere servulum plurimis dominis servientem. Nam quomodo meus est, si mihi dicat verbo: Tuus sum; et operibus neget, et factis se diabolo adjudicet et obstringat? Non est meus quem libido succendit, quia mea est castitas: non est meus quem cura spoliandi minores exagitat, quia mea largitio est: non est meus, quem aura mobilitatis inquietat, quia tranquillitas mea est. Non est meus vini crapula temulentus, illuvie ambitionis impurus, gloriae saecularis cupidus, ebrius in periculum, qui non potest sobriae moderationis servare vestigium. Pax sum ego, litigare non novi: ut quid mihi eum de quo veniat diabolus et dicat. Meus est; nam mihi sua colla curvavit, mea in illo plura reperio: nomen sibi tuum vindicat, et meum munus. Non est ergo Christi, nisi qui est alienus a crimine: non est Christi, nisi qui potest semper se Christi servulum demonstrare.

Lust comes and says: You are mine; because you desire those things which are of the body: in the love of that young maiden you sold yourself to me: in the cohabitation of that harlot I counted out the price for you. Avarice comes and says: The silver and gold which you have is the price of your servitude: the possession which you hold is the purchase of your right, the sale of your liberty. Luxury comes and says: You are mine; the banquet of one day is the price of your life: that expense of feasts is the bidding for your head, the sum of your contract. And what is worse, you are bought for flesh at a price, you are viler than your food: the table of one day of yours is more precious than the life of all time: I redeemed you among the chalices, I acquired you among the feasts. Ambition comes and says to you: Plainly you are mine. Do you not know that I therefore made you to command others, that you might serve me yourself? Do you not know that I therefore conferred power on you, that I might subject you to my power? Or are you ignorant that it was said to the Lord Savior himself by the prince of this world, when he had shown him all the kingdoms of the world: "All these things I will give to you, if falling down you will adore me" (Matth. 4:9)? Before therefore he himself is subjected, who wishes to have others subjected. All vices come, and each one says: You are mine. Whom so many seek, what a vile slave he is! How therefore can you who are of this sort say to Christ: I am yours? He will answer you: "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matth. 7:21): not everyone who says to me: I am yours, is mine.

4. You are plainly mine, if your conscience does not refute your voice, if your mind or works do not reject your speech. I do not deny that he is mine who himself does not deny himself, or certainly if for me he denies himself to himself. I do not wish to have a little servant serving very many masters. For how is he mine, if he says to me in word: I am yours; and in works he denies it, and in deeds adjudges and binds himself to the devil? He is not mine whom lust inflames, because mine is chastity: he is not mine whom the care of despoiling the lesser ones agitates, because mine is largess: he is not mine, whom the aura of mobility disquiets, because my peace is tranquility. He is not mine who is inebriated with the surfeit of wine, impure with the filth of ambition, greedy for secular glory, drunk unto danger, who cannot keep the footstep of sober moderation. I am Peace, I know not how to litigate: for what should I have him from whom the devil comes and says. He is mine; for to me he has curved his neck, I find more of my things in him: he claims your name for himself, but my gift. He is not therefore Christ's, unless he who is alien to crime: he is not Christ's, unless he who can always demonstrate himself the little servant of Christ.

5. Ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi, qui pascitur inter lilia. Videtur inter dilecta dilecti dicere: Secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi. Quaedam enim in exstasi amoris sui occulta fidei intellexerat mysteria, quae nec ipsis filiabus Hierusalem propalanda censebat. Mysterium regis bonum est abscondere; peccat enim Deo, qui commissa sibi mysteria putaverit indignis esse vulganda. Periculum itaque est non solum falsa dicere, sed etiam vera, si quis ea insinuet quibus non oportet. Quod vitium quadripartitum est, vel adulationis, vel avaritiae, vel jactantiae, vel loquacitatis incautae; quia dum adulari vult aliquis, ei cui loquitur, effundit mysterium: nonnulli etiam studio lucri, mercedem proditionis sequuntur, ut tegenda silentio vendant loquendo: alii ut plura noscere videantur, et scientiam suam jactitent, aperiunt quod celare deberent: plerique dum sine iudicio loquuntur, verbum emittunt quod revocare non possunt. Ideo vir laudatur serius, et non otiosus. Erat homo abscondens sermones suos, ut apostolus Paulus, qui novit quid loquatur singulis, et quando quid loqui debeat.

6. (Vers. 3.) Beneplacita es, soror mea, speciosa sicut Hierusalem, admiratio sicut ordinata. Veritas amoris ex sui perpetuitate probatur. Laudatur itaque Sponsa a Sponso, quod tam bene et constanter requisierit eum. Ideoque jam non solum soror dicitur, sed etiam beneplacita nominatur, quasi ei complacita; quia complacuit Patri: et, speciosa sicut Hierusalem, admiratio sicut ordinata; quod civitatis aeternae universa habeat mysteria: et admirationi sit omnibus videntibus eam; quia plena ut aequitas, atque perfecta est: et fulgorem de Verbi lumine mutuata, dum id semper intendit, sit etiam terribilis ordine quodam ad summum propecta virtutum.

7. Pulchra es, inquit, amica mea, suavis et decora, etc. Et vera pulchra, quae intendit in illum de quo dicitur: Speciosus forma prae filiis hominum (Psal. XLIV, 3). Unde et nos intendamus quantum possumus animum in illo, et in illo simus. Illud animo teneamus, quod est pulchrum, decorum, bonum; ut fiat illuminatione ejus et fulgore speciosa anima nostra, et mens dilucida. Nam si oculi nostri cum aliqua obducuntur caligine, pascuntur agrorum viriditate, et specie nemoris vel collis umbrosi omnem inaequalitatem aegrescentis obtutus repellunt, et quadam salubri specie pupillae ipsae atque orbes colorari videntur: quanto magis hic mentis oculus, cum illud summum intuetur bonum, et in eo versatur, atque eo pascitur, splendet atque enitet. Pulchra ut Hierusalem.

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, who feeds among the lilies." She seems among the beloved things of the beloved to say: "My secret is to myself, my secret is to myself." For she had understood certain hidden mysteries of faith in the ecstasy of her love, which she did not think should be divulged even to the daughters of Jerusalem themselves. "It is good to hide the mystery of the king"; for he sins against God, who shall think that the mysteries committed to him are to be published to the unworthy. It is a danger therefore not only to speak false things, but even true things, if anyone suggests them to those whom he ought not. Which vice is fourfold, either of flattery, or of avarice, or of boasting, or of incautious talkativeness; because while someone wishes to flatter him to whom he speaks, he pours out the mystery: some also by the study of lucre follow the reward of betrayal, so that they sell by speaking what should be covered by silence: others that they may seem to know more things, and may boast of their knowledge, open what they ought to conceal: very many while they speak without judgment, emit a word which they cannot recall. Therefore a man is praised as serious, and not idle. There was a man hiding his speeches, like the apostle Paul, who knew what he should speak to individuals, and when he ought to speak anything.

6. (Vers. 3.) "You are well-pleasing, my sister, beautiful as Jerusalem, an admiration as an ordered [army]." The truth of love is proved from its perpetuity. The Bride therefore is praised by the Bridegroom, because she has sought him so well and constantly. And therefore already she is not only called "sister," but she is also named "well-pleasing," as if pleasing to him; because she has pleased the Father: and, "beautiful as Jerusalem, an admiration as an ordered [army]"; because she has all the mysteries of the eternal city: and she is an admiration to all seeing her; because she is full as equity, and perfect: and having borrowed splendor from the light of the Word, while she always intends that, she is even terrible, having been brought forward to the summit of virtues in a certain order.

7. "You are beautiful," he says, "my friend, sweet and decorous," etc. And truly beautiful is she who intends upon him of whom it is said: "Beautiful in form beyond the sons of men" (Psalm 44:3). Whence let us also intend our mind upon him as much as we can, and in him let us be. Let us hold that in our mind, which is beautiful, decorous, good; so that our soul may become beautiful by his illumination and splendor, and our mind clear. For if our eyes, when they are covered with some darkness, are fed by the greenness of the fields, and by the appearance of a grove or of a shady hill repel all inequality of a sickening gaze, and the pupils themselves and the orbs seem to be colored by a certain healthful appearance: how much more this eye of the mind, when it beholds that supreme good, and is occupied in it, and is fed by it, shines and glistens. "Beautiful as Jerusalem."

Non caduci itaque ista est corporis pulchritudo, vel morbo peritura vel senio, sed nullis obnoxia casibus, opinioni bonorum numquam moritura meritorum; quoniam non humanis jam, sed coelestibus, quorum vitam vivit in terris, digna est comparari. Ideoque Sponsus Sponsae jam quasi perfectae, dicit:

8. (Vers. 4.) Averte oculos tuos a me, quia me avolare fecerunt. Noli contra me intendere devotione nimia ac fide. Possibilitatem naturae et conditionis propriae supergressa es, quia lucem inaccessibilem e regione intueri est grave. Averte, inquit, oculos tuos a me: eo quod plenitudinem divinitatis ejus, et splendorem veri luminis sustinere non possit.

9. Possumus tamen et sic accipere: Averte oculos tuos a me; etsi tu perfecta es, aliae mihi adhuc redimendae sunt animae, aliae fulciendae. Elevas enim me videndo: ego autem ideo descendi, ut omnes elevem. Etsi surrexi, et habeo Patris sedem, tamen orphanos non relinquam vos, paterno quasi praesidio destitutos, sed praesentia mea vos confirmabo. Habes in Evangelio hoc scriptum: Ecce ego vobiscum sum usque ad consummationem mundi (Matth. XXVIII, 20). Averte ergo oculos a me, quia me elevas. Quanto enim quis ad Dominum intendit, tanto amplius Dominum elevat, et ipse elevatur. Unde et ille ait: Exaltabo te, Domine, quoniam suscepisti me (Psalm. XXIX, 1). Sanctus enim exaltat Dominum, peccator humiliat. Vult ergo avertere illam oculos, ne eam considerans, quod jam ad superiora sequi possit, elevetur et caeteras animas derelinquat. Ideo et in Evangelio non omnibus discipulis, sed perfectioribus suam gloriam demonstravit (Matth. XVII, 1). Constitue nunc aliquem doctorem, qui rem obscuram aperire velit audientibus, quemadmodum etsi ipse potens in sermone sit et scientia; condescendat tamen ad eorum inscitiam, qui non intelligunt, et simplici et planiore atque usitato sermone utatur, ut possit intelligi. Si quis igitur inter audientes vivacior sensu sit, qui facile sequi possit, elevat eum atque excutit. Hunc videns doctor revocat, ut patiatur magis doctorem humilioribus et planioribus immorari; quo et caeteri sequi possint.

10. (Vers. 5-7.) Laudatur etiam Sponsa quod fidelis, quod verbo potens, quod fructibus fecunda diversis, quod una sit columba, habens spiritus unitatem, in qua sit pax, quae facit utraque unum: et quae non sit composita ex diversis elementis discretarum compugnantisque naturarum. Quid enim tam diversum, quam ignis et aqua, aer et terra, ex quibus corporis nostri creatura consistit?

It is not therefore the beauty of a falling body, either to perish by disease or by old age, but subject to no casualties, never to die in the opinion of good merits; since she is worthy to be compared no longer with human things, but with heavenly things, whose life she lives on earth. Therefore the Bridegroom says to the Bride as if already perfect:

8. (Vers. 4.) "Turn away your eyes from me, because they have made me fly away." Do not intend against me with too much devotion and faith. You have overstepped the possibility of nature and of your own condition, because it is grave to look from the region at the inaccessible light. "Turn away," he says, "your eyes from me": for the reason that she cannot sustain the plenitude of his divinity, and the splendor of the true light.

9. We can however also accept it thus: "Turn away your eyes from me"; even if you are perfect, other souls are still to be redeemed by me, others to be supported. For you elevate me by seeing: but I therefore descended, that I might elevate all. Even if I have risen, and have the seat of the Father, yet I will not leave you orphans, as if destitute of paternal protection, but by my presence I will confirm you. You have this written in the Gospel: "Behold I am with you until the consummation of the world" (Matth. 28:20). Turn away therefore your eyes from me, because you elevate me. For as much as anyone intends toward the Lord, so much more he elevates the Lord, and he himself is elevated. Whence he also says: "I will exalt you, O Lord, because you have taken me up" (Psalm 29:1). For the saint exalts the Lord, the sinner humiliates him. He wishes therefore for her to turn away her eyes, lest considering her, because she can now follow to the higher things, he be elevated and abandon the other souls. Therefore also in the Gospel he showed his glory not to all the disciples, but to the more perfect ones (Matth. 17:1). Constitute now some teacher, who wishes to open an obscure matter to those hearing, how even if he himself be powerful in speech and knowledge; yet he condescends to their ignorance, who do not understand, and uses a simple and plainer and accustomed speech, so that he can be understood. If anyone therefore among those hearing be more vivacious in sense, who can easily follow, he elevates him and shakes him out. Seeing him, the teacher recalls him, so that he may suffer the teacher rather to dwell upon the more humble and plainer things; by which the others also can follow.

10. (Vers. 5-7.) The Bride is also praised because she is faithful, because she is powerful in word, because she is fecund with diverse fruits, because she is one dove, having the unity of the spirit, in which is peace, which makes both one: and which is not composed of diverse elements of a discrete and fighting nature. For what is so diverse as fire and water, air and earth, from which the creature of our body consists?

Anima autem benedicta omnis simplex, quae imitatur dicentem: Ut omnes unum sint, sicut et tu, Pater, in me, et ego in te, et ipsi in nobis unum sint (Joan. XVII, 21); haec enim est consummatio atque perfectio, unde et addidit: Ut sint unum, sicut et nos unum sumus: et ego in his, et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum (Ibid., 23). Haec est ergo una columba atque perfecta, quae simplex atque spiritualis, neque hujus turbatur corporis passionibus, in quo foris pugnae, intus timores sunt. Denique hoc verbo unitatis concordiam et pacem significari Scriptura nos docet, dicens: Multitudo autem credentium habebat cor unum et animam unam, et non erat separatio in eis ulla (Act. IV, 32).

11. Nec otiose fecunditatis laudatur anima, non solum quod sit fecunda virtutibus, sed etiam quod nihil habeat in se mali; illud enim decorum atque speciosum est, in quo nihil sit mali. For quod bonum; quod autem indecorum, hoc malum. Speciosa fecunditas est bonorum operum, contraria ergo speciositati sterilitas; quoniam qui privatur specie vel decore, in eo est omne malum: quod autem malum, hoc sterile et infecundum. Cujus rei quod evidentius indicium, quam terra est? Terra enim quae bona est, fertilis atque fecunda: quae autem mala, ea jejuna atque sterilis; quae vero fertilis, haec et decora. Quid enim pleno agro pulchrius, cum seges fluctuat, cum poma irrutilant, vel cum uvarum sarta dependent, aut baccis onusta olea curvescit, vel viridanti gramine montium vertices, vallium humilia vestiuntur?

12. Omnium enim bonorum auctor est Deus: et quae sunt ejus, profecto omnia bona sunt, et nusquam illic malum; et si in illo mens nostra maneat, malum nescit. Anima igitur quae in Deo non manet, ipsa sibi auctor malorum est, itaque peccat: Anima autem quae peccat, ipsa morietur; aureis enim vinculis soluta virtutum, prona fertur praecipitio, et labitur ad inferiora. Anima autem beata est, quam nulla adversa corporis praelia expugnant. Haec anima sicut passer laqueo contrito, evolat. Escae enim malorum sunt voluptates corporeae: his quisquis intendit, laqueo innectit animam suam. Qui autem ab escis ejus temperat, et de tenebris ejus exit, ejus anima fulget ut diluculum, de qua dicitur:

13. (Vers. 9.) Quenam est haec prospiciens tamquam diluculum, pulchra sicut luna? Prospicit enim tamquam de domo libera, nec dicit: Tenebrae cooperiunt me, et parietes circumdant me, et quis scit si videt Altissimus (Eccli. XXIII, 26)? Sed ipsa magis lucem expetit tamquam in superioribus domus suae, id est, corporis sui: et supra mundum posita, divina intuetur et ad aeterna se elevat, ut Deo adsit; jam lumen suorum operum sicut luna orbem suum toto orbe circumferens.

But every blessed soul is simple, which imitates him who says: "That all may be one, as you, Father, in me, and I in you, and they themselves may be one in us" (John 17:21); for this is the consummation and perfection, whence he also added: "That they may be one, as we are one: and I in them, and you in me, that they may be consummated into one" (ibid. 23). This is therefore the one and perfect dove, which is simple and spiritual, nor is she troubled by the passions of this body, in which "without are fights, within are fears." Finally the Scripture teaches us that by this word of unity concord and peace are signified, saying: "But the multitude of those believing had one heart and one soul, and there was not any separation in them" (Acts 4:32).

11. Nor is the soul praised for fecundity in vain, not only because she is fecund in virtues, but also because she has nothing of evil in her; for that is decorous and beautiful, in which there is nothing of evil. For that which is good is decorous; but that which is indecorous, this is evil. Fecundity in good works is beautiful, therefore sterility is contrary to beauty; since he who is deprived of beauty or decorum, in him is all evil: but that which is evil, this is sterile and infecund. Of which thing what more evident indication is there than the earth? For the earth which is good is fertile and fecund: but that which is evil, that is meager and sterile; but that which is fertile, this is also decorous. For what is more beautiful than a full field, when the crop fluctuates, when the fruits redden, or when the wreaths of grapes hang down, or the olive burdened with berries curves, or the vertices of the mountains, the humble parts of the valleys are clothed with green grass?

12. For God is the author of all good things: and those which are his, are all surely good, and nowhere there is evil; and if our mind should remain in him, it knows no evil. The soul therefore which does not remain in God, is itself the author of evils to itself, and so it sins: "But the soul that sins, it shall die"; for released from the golden chains of virtues, it is carried prone to the precipice, and slides to the lower things. But the soul is blessed, which no adverse battles of the body overcome. This soul, like a sparrow with the snare broken, flies away. For the baits of evils are corporeal pleasures: whoever intends upon these, weaves his soul into a snare. But he who tempers himself from its baits, and goes out from its darkness, his soul shines like the morning, concerning which it is said:

13. (Vers. 9.) "Who is she that looks forth as the morning, beautiful as the moon?" For she looks forth as if from a free house, nor does she say: "Darkness covers me, and walls surround me, and who knows if the Most High sees?" (Eccl. 23:26). But she rather seeks the light as if in the higher parts of her house, that is, of her body: and placed above the world, she beholds divine things and elevates herself to eternal things, so that she may be present to God; already circumfering the light of her works like the moon her orb in the whole world.

14. (Vers. 10.) In hortum nucis descendi, videre in nativitate torrentis, et inspicere si florisset vinea, et germinassent mala punica. Invitatur denique Dei Verbum in hortum nucis, in quo fructus propheticae lectionis, et sacerdotalis est gratia, quae amara in tentationibus, dura in laboribus, in virtutibus interioribus fructuosa est. Unde etiam virga Aaron nucea floruit, non jam natura sua, sed virtute secreta. Descendat ergo in hortum, ut vindemiet fidem, capiat odores, pabulum coeleste reperiat, suavitatem nostri mellis epuletur.

15. Dum enim laudatur a Sponso, verecunde refugiens coram laudari; deinde sponsi amore revocata, ait: In hortum nucis descendi videre in nativitate torrentis. Ubi enim est Ecclesia, nisi ubi virga et gratia floret sacerdotalis? Ibi est frequenter, ut in amaritudinibus et in tentationibus probetur. Per nucem amaritudines intelligimus, per torrentem tentationes, sed tamen tolerabiles, quia scriptum est: Torrentem pertravit anima nostra (Psalm. CXXIII, 5). Itaque descendit in locum amaritudinis, ubi floret vitis et malorum granatorum specie diversus et multiplex fructus, qui velut uno tegmine totius corporis fide et charitate munitur.

16. In illa ergo amaritudine non cognovit se anima, Corruptibile enim corpus gravat animam, et terrenum habitaculum cito inclinatur (Sap. IX). Se autem cognoscere semper debet. Sed tentatus est Petrus, et non se cognovit et Petrus; nam si cognovisset, non negasset auctorem. Sed cognovit eum Christus. Denique cognovit, quia et respexit; cognoscit enim Dominus qui sunt ejus: et tamquam suum misericordiae suae frenis ut bonus rector, revocavit a lapsu: rector ergo noster Christus est.

17. (Vers. 11.) Posuit me currus Aminadab: eo quod anima conjungatur corpori, et velut quidam equorum frementium currus, rectorem sui quaerat aurigam. Aminadab enim pater Naason fuit, sicut in Numeris legimus (Num. I, 7), qui erat princeps populi Juda, cujus figura refertur ad Christum, qui verus populi princeps animam justi velut currum agitator ascendens, Verbi habenis gubernat, ne violentorum equorum furore in praeceps et abrupta rapiatur. Sunt enim ejus velut quatuor equi quatuor affectiones, ira, cupiditas, voluptas, timor: quibus furentibus cum coeperit agi, nequaquam seipsam cognoscit. Corruptibile enim corpus animam gravat, et tamquam irrationabilium animalium currus invitam rapit, volventibus curis velut quodam impetu proruentem, donec memoratae corporis passiones Verbi virtute mitescant.

14. (Vers. 10.) "I went down into the garden of nuts, to see in the birth of the torrent, and to look if the vine had flowered, and the pomegranates had germinated." Finally the Word of God is invited into the garden of nuts, in which is the fruit of prophetic reading, and priestly grace, which is bitter in temptations, hard in labors, fruitful in interior virtues. Whence also the nut-tree rod of Aaron flowered, no longer by its own nature, but by a secret virtue. Let him descend therefore into the garden, that he may harvest faith, take scents, find celestial fodder, feast on the sweetness of our honey.

15. For while she is praised by the Bridegroom, modestly fleeing being praised face to face; then recalled by the love of the bridegroom, she says: "I went down into the garden of nuts to see in the birth of the torrent." For where is the Church, unless where the rod and priestly grace flourishes? There she is frequently, so that in bitternesses and in temptations she may be proved. By the nut we understand bitternesses, by the torrent temptations, but yet tolerable, because it is written: "Our soul has passed through the torrent" (Psalm 123:5). And so she descends into the place of bitterness, where the vine flourishes and the diverse and manifold fruit of the pomegranates, which is fortified as if by one cover of the faith and charity of the whole body.

16. In that bitterness therefore the soul did not know itself, "For the corruptible body burdens the soul, and the earthly tabernacle is quickly inclined" (Wisdom 9). But she ought always to know herself. But Peter was tempted, and even Peter did not know himself; for if he had known, he would not have denied the author. But Christ knew him. Finally he knew, because he even looked back; for the Lord knows who are his: and as his own he recalled him from the fall with the reins of his mercy like a good rector: our rector therefore is Christ.

17. (Vers. 11.) "The chariot of Aminadab set me": for the reason that the soul is joined to the body, and like a certain chariot of neighing horses, seeks a driver for itself. For Aminadab was the father of Naason, as we read in Numbers (Num. 1:7), who was the prince of the people of Judah, whose figure is referred to Christ, who as the true prince of the people, ascending the soul of the just as a chariot driver, governs it with the reins of the Word, lest it be snatched by the fury of violent horses into the precipice and abrupt places. For there are as it were his four horses, the four affections: anger, desire, pleasure, fear: which being furious when it has begun to be driven, it by no means knows itself. For the corruptible body burdens the soul, and like the chariot of irrational animals snatches it against its will, rushing forward with revolving cares like a certain impetus, until the mentioned passions of the body become mild by the virtue of the Word.

18. Haec Verbi tamquam boni agitatoris est providentia, ne illi animae quae in se non est morti obnoxia, corpus mortale conjunctum, agitationem sui faciat esse difficilem. Primo igitur hos veloces corporis motus domitet, et nexu rationis infrenet: deinde caveat ne dispari motu se velut equi implicent; ut bonum aut improbus decoloret, aut tardus impediatur, aut turbidus inquietetur. Fremit enim equus malitiae, seseque jactando currum laedit, gravat jugalem. Hunc bonus auriga demulcet, et in campum veritatis emittit, fraudis declinat anfractus. Tutus ad superiora cursus est, periculosus ad inferiora descensus. Inde quasi bene emeriti qui portaverunt jugum Verbi, usque ad Domini praesepe ducuntur, in quo non fenum est esca, sed panis qui descendit de coelo. Hujus currus rotae sunt, de quibus dixit Propheta: Et spiritus vitae erat in rotis (Ezech. I, 20); eo quod currus animae teres atque rotundus sine ulla offensione volvatur.

19. Posuit me currus Aminadab. Anima ergo currus, quae bonum rectorem sustinet. Si currus est anima, habet equos vel bonos vel malos. Boni equi virtutes animae: mali equi, passionibus corporis sunt. Bonus ergo rector malos equos restringit et revocat, bonos incitat. Boni equi sunt quatuor, prudentia, temperantia, fortitudo, justitia: mali equi iracundia, concupiscentia, timor, iniquitas. Interdum ipsi equi inter se dissident, et aut iracundia protendit, aut timor: et se invicem impediunt, et cursum retardant. At vero boni equi volant, et a terris ad superiora se subrigunt, animamque elevant; maxime si jugum habeant suave et onus leve dicentis: Tollite jugum meum super vos; jugum enim meum suave est, et onus meum leve (Matth. XI, 29).

20. Ipse rector est, qui novit equos proprios gubernare, ut aequalis omnium cursus sit: velociores prudentia tardat, justitia admonet flagello proprio segniores; temperantia mansuetiores, fortitudo duriores reddit. Novit copulare discordes, ne forte currum suum dissipent. Itaque licet intelligibili spectaculo videre unamquamque animam cum summo certamine ad coelum rapi, festinantes equos qui priores praeveniant ad bravium Christi, quorum prius imponatur palma cervicibus. Isti sunt equi subjecti fidei jugo, astricti vinculo charitatis, justitiae frenis, retinaculis sobrietatis.

18. This is the providence of the Word as a good driver, lest to that soul which in itself is not subject to death, the mortal body joined to it should make its driving to be difficult. First therefore let him tame these swift movements of the body, and refrain them with the nexus of reason: then let him beware lest they entangle themselves like horses by a disparate movement; so that the wicked might discolour the good, or the slow hinder, or the turbid disquiet. For the horse of malice neighs, and by tossing itself hurts the chariot, burdens the yoke-mate. This one the good driver soothes, and emits into the field of truth, declines the detours of fraud. Safe is the course to the higher things, dangerous the descent to the lower things. Thence as if well-merited who have carried the yoke of the Word, they are led even to the manger of the Lord, in which not hay is the food, but the bread which descended from heaven. The wheels of this chariot are those of which the Prophet said: "And the spirit of life was in the wheels" (Ezek. 1:20); for the reason that the chariot of the soul may be rolled round and smooth without any offense.

19. "The chariot of Aminadab set me." The soul therefore is the chariot, which sustains the good driver. If the soul is a chariot, it has horses either good or bad. The good horses are the virtues of the soul: the bad horses are the passions of the body. The good driver therefore restrains and recalls the bad horses, incites the good. The good horses are four: prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice: the bad horses are wrath, concupiscence, fear, iniquity. Sometimes the horses themselves disagree among themselves, and either wrath extends, or fear: and they hinder each other, and retard the course. But indeed the good horses fly, and raise themselves from the lands to the higher things, and elevate the soul; especially if they have the sweet yoke and light burden of him saying: "Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is sweet, and my burden is light" (Matth. 11:29).

He himself is the driver, who knows how to govern his own horses, so that the course of all may be equal: prudence slows the swifter, justice admonishes the more sluggish with its own whip; temperance makes them more mild, fortitude makes them harder. He knows how to couple the discordant ones, lest perhaps they dissipate his chariot. And so it is possible by an intelligible spectacle to see each soul being snatched to heaven with the highest contest, the horses hastening that they may come before the others to the prize of Christ, upon whose necks the palm may first be imposed. These are the horses subjected to the yoke of faith, bound by the bond of charity, by the reins of justice, by the restraints of sobriety.

21. Pulchre ergo ait: Posuit me currus Aminadab, hoc est, pater populi: ipse autem qui pater populi, idem pater Naason, id est, serpentum. Jam tu recole quis sicut serpens in cruce pependerit pro salute universorum, et intelligas illam animam esse pacificam, cui Pater Deus praesul sit, Christus agitator; quia scriptum est et hoc nomen in nostris: Pater, pater, agitator Israel (IV Reg. XI, 12). Hic ergo agitator dicit:

22. (Vers. 12.) Convertere, Sunamitis, convertere. Bene et quasi agitator dicit, et quasi ad currum dicit: Convertere, Sunamitis, hoc est, pacifica; quae enim pacifica est anima, cito se convertit et corrigit, etiamsi ante peccavit: et magis eam Christus ascendit, et regere dignatur, cui dicitur: Ascende in equos tuos, et equitatus tuus sanitas. Et alibi: Misisti equos tuos Tharsis (Habac. III, 8). Hi sunt equi Christi. Ascendit ergo equos suos Christus: ascendit Verbum Dei animas pias. Cum fuerit anima nostra pacifica, ut dicatur ei: Convertere; convertere Sunamitis, quod pacificam significat: tunc accipiet in se sicut signaculum Christum, hoc est, imaginem Dei, ut sit ad imaginem; quoniam Qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes, et oportet nos portare imaginem coelestis (I Cor. XV, 48), id est, pacem. Atque ut sciamus verum esse, habes in eisdem Canticis, in ultimo jam perfectae animae dici, quod et mihi dicat Dominus Jesus: Pone me ut signaculum in cor tuum, ut signaculum in brachium tuum (Cant. VIII, 6); ut luceat pax in corde meo, et in operibus meis Christus, formetur in me sapientia, et iustitia, et redemptio.

CAPUT SEPTIMUM. 1. (Vers. 1.) Quam speciosi facti sunt gressus tui in calceamentis, filia Aminadab! Moduli femorum tuorum similes torquibus, opere artificis. Non est dubium gressus hic quoque Ecclesiae, vel animae profectus significari. Quam speciosi sunt pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona (Esai. LII, 7)! Utique speciosos dicit evangelicae praedicationis et disputationis progressus, ut alibi dicitur: Transgredere flumina (Esai. XLVII, 2), hoc est, fluentia et lubrica istius mundi transcurrere stabili mentis incessu. Quod de animae incessu dici David evidenter ostendit, afferens quod torrentem iniquitatum anima sua transiret (Psal. CCXIII, 5).

2. Sed quid sibi vult quod ait, in calceamentis speciosos esse gressus Ecclesiae? Legimus dictum ad Moysen: Solve calceamentum pedum tuorum (Exodi III, 5): quo videtur admonitus, ne corporalibus vinculis teneretur astrictus. Ergo speciosam in Canticis significat animae pulchritudinem, quae carne tanquam calceamento utitur, et in ipso calceamento impedimentum non patitur, sed incessus decore praecellit. Calceat ergo se anima ecclesiasticam gratiam, ut cursum vitae hujus et transitum cum decore praetereat.

Beautifully therefore he says: "The chariot of Aminadab set me," that is, of the father of the people: but he himself who is the father of the people, the same is the father of Naason, that is, of serpents. Now you recall who like a serpent hung on the cross for the salvation of all, and you may understand that that soul is peaceful, over which God the Father is the protector, Christ the driver; because this name is also written in ours: "Father, father, driver of Israel" (4 Kings 11:12). This driver therefore says:

22. (Vers. 12.) "Return, O Shulammite, return." Well and as it were as a driver he says, and as it were to the chariot he says: "Return, O Shulammite," that is, peaceful one; for the soul which is peaceful quickly returns and corrects itself, even if it sinned before: and Christ more ascends it, and deigns to rule it, to whom it is said: "Ascend upon your horses, and your horsemanship is health." And elsewhere: "You have sent your horses to Tarshish" (Hab. 3:8). These are the horses of Christ. Christ therefore ascends his horses: the Word of God ascends pious souls. When our soul shall have been peaceful, so that it may be said to it: "Return; return O Shulammite," which signifies the peaceful one: then she will receive in herself like a seal Christ, that is, the image of God, so that she may be according to the image; since "As is the celestial, such also are the celestials, and it behooves us to bear the image of the celestial" (1 Cor. 15:48), that is, peace. And that we may know it to be true, you have in the same Canticles, in the very end of the already perfect soul being said, what the Lord Jesus says also to me: "Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm" (Cant. 8:6); so that peace may shine in my heart, and in my works Christ, and wisdom may be formed in me, and justice, and redemption.

CHAPTER SEVEN. 1. (Vers. 1.) "How beautiful have your steps become in shoes, O daughter of Aminadab! The joints of your thighs are like jewels, the work of an artist." There is no doubt that here also the steps of the Church, or the progress of the soul, are signified. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach peace, who preach good things" (Isai. 52:7)! Certainly, he calls the progress of evangelical preaching and disputation beautiful, as it is said elsewhere: "Cross the rivers" (Isai. 47:2), that is, run across the flowing and slippery things of this world with a stable gait of the mind. David evidently showed that this is said of the gait of the soul, stating that his soul would pass through the torrent of iniquities (Ps. 124:5).

2. But what does he mean when he says that the steps of the Church are beautiful in shoes? We read what was said to Moses: "Loose the shoe from your feet" (Exod. 3:5): by which he seems to be admonished not to be held bound by corporal ties. Therefore, in the Canticles, it signifies the beautiful beauty of the soul, which uses the flesh as a shoe, and in that very shoe does not suffer impediment, but excels in the grace of its gait. Let the soul, therefore, shoe itself with ecclesiastical grace, so that it may pass through the course and transition of this life with grace.

Quod fit si calceamentum suum non inquinet luto corporali, non in vitiorum mergat voragine: si castiget carnem suam, ne moretur ad cursum, et arvinae pinguis pondere praegravetur. Bonum calceamentum animae pudicitia est, bonus gressus est in vestigio castitatis. Sapientia autem amictus est animae, unde scriptum est: Honora eam, et amplectetur te (Prov. IV, 8). Utamur ergo corpore tanquam calceamento ad inferioris opera virtutis: ad ministerium, non praeceptum: ad obsequium, non delectationem: ad obedientiam, non dissensionem; et in via sapientiae vestigium colloceamus, ne gressus nostros vis torrentis aliqua concludat.

3. Ideo ad Moysen dictum est: Solve calceamentum (Exodi III, 5). Dictum est et ad Jesum Nave (Josue V, 16). De Christo autem dictum non est, sed magis scriptum est, dicente Baptista: Post me venit vir, cujus non sum dignus calceamenta portare (Matth. III, 11); quia illi bene admonentur, ut solvant calceamentum suum, qui sine peccato esse non poterant. Hic autem non solum calceamentum non solvit, sed etiam calceamenta aliorum absolvit; quia non solum corpus suum a peccatis immune servavit, sed etiam omnium dedit indulgentiam peccatorum.

4. Ergo Ecclesia ad imitationem Christi speciosa est, et in calceamentis omni abluta delicto. Et fortasse quando sapientiam inter perfectos loquitur, speciosa est in superioribus membris: quando autem etiam inferioris gradus aut doctrinae homines Verbum sequuntur, fidei seriem non obliviscuntur, sacerdotis praecepta custodiunt, speciosa est in calceamentis. Plerumque clerus erravit, sacerdos mutavit sententiam, divites cum saeculi istius terreno rege senserunt, populus fidem propriam reservavit.

5. Unde etiam de Domino Jesu bene possumus dicere, quia et in his quae corporalia sunt, speciosos gressus Verbum habeat, cum de moralibus disputatur. Et apostoli ideo fortasse nudis mittuntur pedibus, ne obumbretur eorum disputatio, sed eluceat. Itaque Ecclesia filia Aminadab, hoc est, voluntarii vel beneplaciti; quia voluntarius eam vel beneplacitus congregavit, et in calceamentis speciosa est. Meritoque additum est:

6. Moduli femorum tuorum similes torquibus, opere manuum artificis; ut posteritatis Ecclesiae ornamenta canerentur. Per femur enim insigne generationis agnoscimus, juxta illud: Accingere gladium tuum super femur, potentissime (Psal. XLIV, 4): quo significatur quod Filius Dei cum semetipsum exinanisset, Verbi accinctus divinitatem, et generationem calceatus humanam, prodiret ex Virgine omnibus daturus salutem. Moduli autem dicuntur ornamenta pretiosa, quae suspendi matronarum cervicibus solent.

This happens if it does not defile its shoe with corporal mud, nor merge into the abyss of vices: if it chastises its flesh, lest it delay the course and be weighed down by the weight of fat grease. The good shoe of the soul is modesty, the good step is in the footprint of chastity. Moreover, wisdom is the garment of the soul, whence it is written: "Honor her, and she shall embrace you" (Prov. 4:8). Let us therefore use the body as a shoe for the works of inferior virtue: for ministry, not command: for service, not delight: for obedience, not dissension; and let us place our footprint in the way of wisdom, lest some force of a torrent should shut in our steps.

3. Therefore it was said to Moses: "Loose the shoe" (Exod. 3:5). It was also said to Joshua son of Nun (Josh. 5:16). But concerning Christ it was not said, but rather it is written, the Baptist saying: "After me comes a man, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry" (Matth. 3:11); because those are well admonished to loose their shoe who could not be without sin. But He not only did not loose His shoe, but also absolved the shoes of others; because He not only kept His body immune from sins, but also gave indulgence for the sins of all.

4. Therefore the Church is beautiful in imitation of Christ, and in her shoes washed of every fault. And perhaps when she speaks wisdom among the perfect, she is beautiful in her superior members: but when even men of inferior rank or doctrine follow the Word, do not forget the series of faith, and keep the precepts of the priest, she is beautiful in her shoes. Frequently the clergy have erred, the priest has changed his opinion, the rich have felt with the earthly king of this world, but the people have reserved their own faith.

5. Whence also concerning the Lord Jesus we can well say, that even in those things which are corporal, the Word has beautiful steps when there is a dispute about morals. And the apostles are perhaps sent with bare feet for this reason, lest their disputation be overshadowed, but rather shine forth. And so the Church is the daughter of Aminadab, that is, of the voluntary or well-pleasing one; because the voluntary or well-pleasing one gathered her, and she is beautiful in her shoes. And deservedly it was added:

6. "The joints of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist"; so that the ornaments of the Church's posterity might be sung. For through the thigh we recognize the mark of generation, according to that: "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most powerful one" (Ps. 45:3): by which is signified that the Son of God, when He had emptied Himself, girded with the divinity of the Word, and shod with human generation, came forth from the Virgin to give salvation to all. Moreover, those precious ornaments which are accustomed to be suspended from the necks of matrons are called "moduli" (jewels).

Tantus ergo processus Ecclesiae significatur, ut ornamentis pretiosissimis comparatus sit, et torquibus triumphantium; haec enim ornamenta sunt bellatorum. Unde et Symmachus Epitrachelia dixit, hoc est, quae sint circa collum. Sive ergo generatio Christi ex Virgine, sive Ecclesiae propagatio, specie quidem tamquam manu artificis torquibus adornatis, verae autem virtutis insignis spiritualibus cervices fidelium adornavit. Denique tota ista descriptio membrorum Ecclesiae plena decoris et laudis est. Nam et:

7. (Vers. 2.) Umbilicus ejus tamquam crater tornatilis praedicatur, mixto non deficiens; eo quod in omni doctrina tornatus, plenitudine cognitionis, et potu non deficit spiritali. Et venter ejus non solum acervo tritici, id est, cibis fortioribus coelestis mysterii saginetur, verum etiam tamquam liliis quibusdam moralium suavitate repleatur. Unde et ipsa tamquam bene merita regina Christi sanguine coronatur, sicut scriptum est: Et ornatus capitis sui sicut purpura. Sanguis Christi purpura est, qui inficit sanctorum animas, non solum colore resplendens, sed etiam potestate; quia reges facit, et meliores reges quibus regnum dat aeternum.

8. Umbilicus tuus ut crater tornatilis, numquam indigens poculis. Umbilicus animae ac venter subtilis est illius quae ascendit ad Christum; ideoque laudatur voce Sponsi dicentis: Umbilicus tuus ut crater tornatilis, non deficiens mixto; venter tuus acervus tritici muniti inter lilia. Est enim in omni doctrina tornatus, et potus spiritalis non deficiens plenitudine, et coelestium secretorum cognitione. Venter quoque animae mysticus, sicut umbilicus, quo ventre non solum fortem cibum sumit quo corda firmanantur, sed etiam suave ac florulentum quo delectantur. 9. (Vers. 4.) Oculi tui stagna in Hesebon, in portis filiae multorum, Nares tuae sicut turris Libani. Stagna in Hesebon quid est, nisi in cogitationibus rationabilibus abundantia, quae est in portis Ecclesiae, cui merito defertur multitudo doctrinae? Filia enim multorum, plurimarum doctrinarum posteritas est et effectus, cujus nares odor est sacrificiorum, floribus omnibus praestans. 10. Nasus tuus sicut turris Libani: praecelsa supra modum, et ideo prospicit faciem Damasci, gentilem scilicet populum odorans, et fidem ejus cujus gratia delictorum suorum detergeret fetorem.

Therefore, such a great progress of the Church is signified, that it is compared to most precious ornaments, and to the collars of those triumphing; for these are the ornaments of warriors. Whence also Symmachus called them "Epitrachelia," that is, those things which are around the neck. Whether therefore the generation of Christ from the Virgin, or the propagation of the Church, distinguished in appearance as if with collars adorned by the hand of an artist, it has adorned the necks of the faithful with the spiritual insignia of true virtue. Finally, that entire description of the members of the Church is full of beauty and praise. For also:

7. (Vers. 2.) "Your navel is like a turned bowl," is proclaimed, "not lacking mixed wine"; for the reason that it is turned in all doctrine, with the fullness of knowledge, and does not lack spiritual drink. And "your belly" may be fattened not only with "a heap of wheat," that is, with the stronger foods of the celestial mystery, but even be filled with the sweetness of moral things as if with certain lilies. Whence also she herself, as a well-meriting queen, is crowned with the blood of Christ, as it is written: "And the ornament of her head is like purple." The blood of Christ is the purple, which stains the souls of the saints, not only resplendent in color, but also in power; because it makes kings, and better kings to whom it gives an eternal kingdom.

8. "Your navel is like a turned bowl, never needing cups." The navel of the soul and the belly are subtle in her who ascends to Christ; and therefore it is praised by the voice of the Bridegroom saying: "Your navel is like a turned bowl, not lacking mixed wine; your belly is a heap of wheat fenced with lilies." For it is turned in all doctrine, and not lacking the fullness of spiritual drink, and the knowledge of celestial secrets. The belly of the soul also is mystical, like the navel, by which belly she takes not only the strong food by which hearts are strengthened, but also the sweet and flowery food by which they are delighted. 9. (Vers. 4.) "Your eyes are the pools in Heshbon, in the gates of the daughter of many; your nose is like the tower of Lebanon." What are the "pools in Heshbon," if not the abundance in rational thoughts, which is in the gates of the Church, to which the multitude of doctrine is deservedly brought? For "the daughter of many" is the posterity and effect of very many doctrines, whose nostrils are the odor of sacrifices, surpassing all flowers. 10. "Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon": exceeding high beyond measure, and therefore it looks toward the face of Damascus, smelling the gentile people, and the faith of her by whose grace she might wipe away the stench of her crimes.

Facies igitur Damasci fides est gentium, nullo obumbrata amictu, nullo adoperta vestitu, nuda ac libera, coelo magis intenta quam terris. Hanc speculantur et prospiciunt nares Ecclesiae, quod suave est in ea et odorum aspirationis et gratiae colligentes.

11. Et bene, Nares ejus sicut turris Libani; quia in sacrificiis odor suavis Ecclesiae est, in quibus est boni odoris hostia remissio peccatorum. Sume igitur has nares, o homo, ut a graveolentibus florulenta secernas, et tunc vivificabit te Dominus. Cum enim adverterit quid de ipso petis, ut avertat oculos mentis tuae a vanitate, cooperatur animae tuae, ut si specie aliqua capitur, aut durtia aut infirmitate non flectitur, flectat eam jugo Verbi, et habenis suis regat, ut voluntate Dei abducatur a vitiis, et vitae odorem capiat aeternae.

12. (Vers. 8.) Ascendam in palmam, et apprehendam sublimitatem ejus. Unde cognosce quia et istam ascendit, et perduxit eam ad locum palmae, quando et dicit ad eam: Quam pulchra et suavis facta es, charitas, in deliciis tuis! Statura tua similis facta est palmae (Cant. VII, 6). Et ipsa ait: Dixi, ascendam ad palmam. Sed etiam ipsa charitas palma est, ipsa est enim plenitudo victoriae; plenitudo enim Legis charitas est. Curramus ergo ut comprehendamus, curramus ut vincamus: qui vicit, ascendit in palmam, et manducat fructus ejus: qui vicit, jam non currit, sed sedet, sicut scriptum est: Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in sede mea, sicut et ego vici, et sedi cum Patre meo in sede ipsius (Apoc. III, 21). Hinc philosophi currilia illa animarum in suis libris expressere certamina, nec tamen ad palmam pervenire potuerunt; quoniam suavitatem Verbi et altitudinem, illorum animae nescierunt. Ascendam, inquit, in palmam vincendo saeculum; ut teneam Verbi altitudinem, quam cognovit haec anima, in qua erat Verbi conversio; sic enim ait:

13. (Vers. 10.) Ego fratri meo, et super me conversio ejus. Hunc sensum tertio repetivit diverse in Canticis canticorum. In principio ait: Frater meus mihi, et ego ei: qui pascitur in liliis usque dum aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae (Cant. II, 16). Deinde ait: Ego fratri meo, et frater meus mihi, qui pascitur inter lilia (Cant. VI, 2). In fine ait: Ego fratri meo, et super me conversio ejus. Primum ad institutionem animae; ideo et praemisit: Frater meus mihi; illo enim demonstrante se etiam adhaerendi Deo sumpsit affectum. Quod sequitur secundum profectum: tertium secundum perfectionem?

The "face of Damascus" therefore is the faith of the nations, shadowed by no garment, covered by no clothing, naked and free, intent upon heaven more than upon the lands. These the nostrils of the Church watch and look out for, gathering what is sweet in her and the odors of aspiration and grace. 11. And well, "her nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon"; because in sacrifices there is the sweet odor of the Church, in which the remission of sins is a victim of good odor. Take therefore these nostrils, O man, so that you may separate the flowery things from the foul-smelling, and then the Lord will vivify you. For when He has noticed what you ask of Him, so that He may turn the eyes of your mind from vanity, He cooperates with your soul, so that if it is captured by some appearance, or is not bent by hardness or infirmity, He may bend it with the yoke of the Word, and rule it with His reins, so that by the will of God it may be led away from vices, and take the odor of eternal life.

12. (Vers. 8.) "I will ascend into the palm tree, and I will take hold of its height." Whence know that He both ascends this one, and led her to the place of the palm, when He also says to her: "How beautiful and sweet you have become, O charity, in your delights! Your stature has become like a palm tree" (Cant. 7:6). And she says: "I said, I will ascend to the palm tree." But even charity itself is a palm tree, for it is the fullness of victory; for the fullness of the Law is charity. Let us run therefore that we may comprehend, let us run that we may conquer: he who has conquered ascends into the palm tree, and eats its fruits: he who has conquered no longer runs, but sits, as it is written: "To him who conquers, I will give to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat with my Father on His throne" (Apoc. 3:21). Hence the philosophers expressed those contests of souls in their books, yet they were not able to reach the palm; since their souls did not know the sweetness and height of the Word. "I will ascend," he says, "into the palm tree" by conquering the world; so that I may hold the height of the Word, which this soul knew, in which was the conversion of the Word; for thus she says:

13. (Vers. 10.) "I am my brother's, and his turning is toward me." He repeated this sense three times differently in the Cantic of Canticles. In the beginning she said: "My brother is mine, and I am his: who feeds among the lilies until the day breathes, and the shadows incline" (Cant. 2:16). Then she said: "I am my brother's, and my brother is mine, who feeds among the lilies" (Cant. 6:2). In the end she said: "I am my brother's, and his turning is toward me." The first for the instruction of the soul; therefore she also premised: "My brother is mine"; for with him demonstrating himself, she also took the affection of adhering to God. That which follows is according to progress: the third according to perfection.

In primo quasi in institutione adhuc umbras videt anima, necdum Verbi appropinquantis revelatione commotas; et ideo adhuc ei dies Evangelii non refulgebat: in secundo sine umbrarum confusione odores pios carpit: in tertio jam perfecta requiem in se Verbo ministrat; ut convertatur super eam, et caput suum reclinet atque requiescat; et invitat ad agrum suum dicens:

14. (Vers. 11.) Veni, frater meus, exeamus in agrum, requiescamus in castellis. Supra ad hortum invitabat; hic ad agrum habentem non solum florum gratiam, sed etiam triticum et hordeum, hoc est, solidarum firmamentum virtutum, ut fructus ejus aspiciat. Requiescamus, inquit, in castellis, ad quae Adam cum de paradiso ejectus esset, fuerat relegatus: in his requiescebat, sed terram operabatur.

15. Qua autem ratione exire eum in agrum velit, intellectus manifestus est; ut quasi bonus pastor pascat gregem suum, lassos allevet, revocet errantes. Nam et si ista anima nova et vetera servavit, tamen sunt adhuc velut agni, qui lactis succo nutriendi sunt. Ergo quasi perfecta, non pro se, sed pro aliis intervenit; ut de sinu patris exeat, ut procedat foras tamquam sponsus de thalamo suo; egrediens currat viam, ut infirmos lucretur; non in illo secreto patris solio, et in illa luce immoretur, quo invalidi equi conscendere non queunt; sed ut assumatur et inducatur in domum Sponsae atque secretum. Sit foris sibi, ut nobis intus: sit medium nostrum, etsi non videatur a nobis. Unde ait: Quis dabit te, frater, lactantem ubera matris meae? Inveniens te foris, osculabor te (Cant. VIII, 1). Bona anima, quae foris est, ut Verbum intus sit: illa extra corpus, ut Verbum habitet in nobis.

16. Assumam te, inquit, et inducam te (Ibid., 2). Recte assumitur, et inducitur Verbum Dei; quia pulsat animam, ut aperiatur sibi ostium: et nisi apertum sibi ostium invenerit, non intrat. Si quis autem aperuerit januam, intrat et coenat. Sic Sponsa Verbum assumit, ut assumendo doceatur. Unde non immerito ascendit ad hanc, ad superiores mansiones, et semper processum accipit virtutis.

In the first, as if in instruction, the soul still sees shadows, not yet moved by the revelation of the approaching Word; and therefore as yet the day of the Gospel did not shine upon her: in the second, without the confusion of shadows, she plucks pious odors: in the third, already perfect, she ministers rest in herself to the Word; so that He may be turned toward her, and recline His head and rest; and she invites Him to her field saying:

14. (Vers. 11.) "Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the forts." Above she was inviting to the garden; here to the field having not only the grace of flowers, but also wheat and barley, that is, the firmament of solid virtues, so that He may look at her fruit. "Let us rest," she says, "in the forts," to which Adam, when he had been cast out of paradise, had been banished: in these he was resting, but he was working the earth.

15. Moreover, by what reason she wishes Him to go out into the field, the understanding is manifest; so that as a good shepherd He may feed His flock, alleviate the weary, recall the erring. For even if this soul has kept new and old things, yet there are still as it were lambs, who are to be nourished with the juice of milk. Therefore, as if perfect, she intervenes not for herself, but for others; so that He may come out from the bosom of the Father, so that He may proceed forth like a bridegroom from his chamber; going out let him run the way, so that he may gain the infirm; not to stay in that secret throne of the Father, and in that light where the invalid horses are unable to ascend; but so that He may be taken up and led into the house of the Bride and into the secret place. Let Him be outside for Himself, that He may be inside for us: let Him be our middle, even if He is not seen by us. Whence she says: "Who will give you, brother, sucking the breasts of my mother? Finding you outside, I will kiss you" (Cant. 8:1). Good is the soul which is outside, that the Word may be inside: she outside the body, that the Word may dwell in us.

16. "I will take you up," she says, "and I will lead you in" (Ibid. 2). Rightly the Word of God is taken up and led in; because He knocks at the soul, that the door may be opened to Him: and unless He finds the door opened to Him, He does not enter. But if anyone opens the gate, He enters and sups. Thus the Bride takes up the Word, so that by taking Him up she may be taught. Whence not undeservedly He ascends to her, to the higher mansions, and always receives the progress of virtue.

17. Veni, frater meus, exeamus in agrum, requiescamus in castellis, diluculo surgamus in vineis, videamus si floruit vitis. Multi agri fructus habent; sed ille melior est, qui et fructibus redundat et floribus. Est ergo Ecclesiae ager diversis fecundus copiis. Hic cernas germina virginitatis flore vernantia; illic tamquam in campis silvae, viduitatem gravitate pollentem; alibi tamquam uberem frugem Ecclesiae, segetem conjugii replentem mundi horrea, ac veluti maritatae vineae fetibus torcularia Domini Jesu redundantia, in quibus fidelis conjugii fructus exuberat.

18. Sponsa desiderii sui copiam adepta, loquitur ad Sponsum: Veni, frater meus, exeamus in agrum, requiescamus in castellis, diluculo surgamus ad vineas. Advertit quemadmodum Sponsa Verbum invitet Dei, ut veniat in terras et tollat peccata mundi. Ager hic erat ante desertus, sentibus nostrorum squalidus delictorum, horridus spinis. Castellum erat in quo religatus Adam perpetuo suae posteritatis haeredes stringebat exilio. Illo ergo ducit Ecclesia Christum, ut Adam liberet. Deinde exsilibus absolutis, coepit mundi istius ager idoneos habere cultores: et qui erat ante jejunos, factus est vitis aeternae plantatione fecundus. Nec sic tamen spiritalibus laeta palmitibus evagatur, sed ad has vineas vocat Christum, ubi psallentes sint et orantes, ubi noctibus ac diebus fructus innoxius perseveret.

19. (Vers. 12.) Ibi, inquit, dabo ubera mea, ibi mandragorae dederunt odorem. Plerumque discernunt quemdam inter mandragoras sexum; ut et mares et feminas putent esse, sed feminas gravis odoris. Significat ergo gentes, quae ante feteabant, cum essent infirmiores evirata quadam imbecillitate perfidiae, boni odoris fructus ferre coepisse, postquam in adventum Domini crediderunt. Legimus etiam quod mandragoras acceperit sancta Rachel a sorore sua Lia, ut concederet ei illa nocte dormire cum sancto Jacob. Mandragoras Ruben primogenitus attulerat matri suae Liae, quae lip-pientibus oculis, Synagogae figuram accepit; quia Christi gratiam videre non potuit, hebetato debilis mentis obtutu. Quo declaratur quod fructus quos ante Synagoga a primogenito Dei Filio susceperat, Ecclesiae concessit. Sed quia illius noctis petito concubitu concepit et genuit Lia suae posteritatis haerodem, implevit mysterium; quoniam credentibus apostolis, reliquiae Judaeorum per electionem gratiae salvae factae sunt, unde ait Ecclesia:

17. "Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the forts, let us rise early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine has flourished." Many fields have fruits; but that one is better which redounds with both fruits and flowers. Therefore the field of the Church is fertile with diverse riches. Here you may discern the buds of virginity blooming with flower; there as if in the fields of the forest, widowhood prevailing with gravity; elsewhere as if the fertile fruit of the Church, the crop of marriage filling the granaries of the world, and like the offspring of a married vine the winepresses of the Lord Jesus redounding, in which the fruit of faithful marriage overflows.

The Bride having obtained the abundance of her desire, speaks to the Bridegroom: "Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the forts, let us rise early to the vineyards." You notice how the Bride invites the Word of God, that He may come into the lands and take away the sins of the world. This field was before deserted, squalid with the briers of our crimes, horrid with thorns. It was a fort in which the bound Adam held the heirs of his posterity in perpetual exile. Thither therefore the Church leads Christ, so that He may free Adam. Then the exiles being absolved, the field of this world began to have suitable cultivators: and that which was before fasting, was made fertile by the plantation of the eternal vine. Nor yet thus does she wander happy with spiritual branches, but calls Christ to these vineyards, where they may be singing psalms and praying, where by nights and days the harmless fruit may persevere.

19. (Vers. 12.) "There," she says, "I will give you my breasts, there the mandrakes have given an odor." Many distinguish a certain sex among the mandrakes; so that they think there are both males and females, but the females of a heavy odor. Therefore it signifies the nations, which before stank, when they were weaker by a certain emasculated imbecility of perfidy, to have begun to bear fruits of good odor, after they believed in the coming of the Lord. We read also that holy Rachel received mandrakes from her sister Leah, that she might grant her to sleep that night with holy Jacob. Reuben the firstborn had brought mandrakes to his mother Leah, who with bleary eyes took the figure of the Synagogue; because she was not able to see the grace of Christ, with the sight of a weak mind dulled. By which it is declared that the fruits which the Synagogue had before received from the firstborn Son of God, she granted to the Church. But because Leah, having sought the intercourse of that night, conceived and brought forth the heir of her posterity, she fulfilled the mystery; since with the apostles believing, the remnants of the Jews were made safe through the election of grace, whence the Church says:

20. (Vers. 13.) Nova et vetera, frater meus, servavi tibi. Quis dabit te fratrem lactantem ubera matris meae? Inveniens te foris, osculabor te, et quidem non spernent me. Assumam te et inducam in domum matris meae, et in secretum ejus quae concepit me, ibi docebis me. Habens ergo informationem novarum et veterum Scripturarum, nec despicabilem se sentiens, non solum orationibus in secreto cordis Verbum tenet, verum etiam psallentis chori vocibus, velut quibusdam eum gratiae osculis osculatur.

21. Nova et vetera, frater meus, servavi tibi; hoc est dicere, teneo omnia mandata novi et veteris Testamenti. Sola hoc dicere Ecclesia potest: non dicit alia congregatio, non dicit Synagoga, nec secundum litteram nova tenens; nec secundum spiritum vetera. Non dicit haeresis Manichaea, Vetera servavi tibi, quae prophetas non suscipit. Merito dealbata dicitur, quae utriusque fulget gratia Testamenti. 22. Adjuravi vos, filiae Hierusalem, quod suscitetis et resuscitetis dilectionem usquequo voluerit. Adhuc quaerit suscitantem, et suscitari eam sibi poscit a filiabus Hierusalem, quarum gratia, hoc est, animarum fidelium Sponsus in amorem sui uberiores desiderat provocari. Dicunt itaque virtutes illae, quae portas custodiunt coeli.

CAPUT OCTAVUM.

1. (Vers. 5.) *Quae est quae haec ascendit candida, innitens super fratrem suum?*

Quomodo ea quae posuit caput suum super laevam sapientiae, ut aperiret manus pauperi ad subveniendum inopi; partitis aut derelictis sibi, non invasis atque direptis divitiis uteretur, quae gloriae cupida bonis etiam operibus acquisivit, non inani saecularis jactantia ambivit dignitatis, hoc est enim caput suum, et quoddam sensuum principale supra manum sapientiae constituere. Ea, inquam, anima meritis ascendit albens, ex isto vitae hujus ut plerique habent deserto, ad illum florentem semper locum jucunditatis aeternae.

2. Ista sunt virtutes, quae et in Esaiae libro dicunt: Quis est iste qui advenit de Edom, rubor vestimentorum ex Bosor, sic speciosus in stola (Esai. LXIII, 1)? Ista, inquam, sunt quae mirantur ex isto confragoso scopulosoque deserto aliquam ascendere animam posse, sine magnorum labe vitiorum; et ideo gratulantur repertam, quae vestimenta innocentiae naturalis non polluerit atramento insipientiae saecularis, sed magis sapientiae spiritalis et gratiae candore mundarit.

20. (Vers. 13.) "New and old things, my brother, I have kept for you." "Who will give you as a brother sucking the breasts of my mother? Finding you outside, I will kiss you, and indeed they will not despise me. I will take you up and lead you into the house of my mother, and into her secret place who conceived me; there you will teach me." Having therefore the information of the new and old Scriptures, and not feeling herself despicable, she not only holds the Word with prayers in the secret of the heart, but even with the voices of the singing choir, as if with certain kisses of grace she kisses Him.

21. "New and old things, my brother, I have kept for you"; this is to say, I hold all the commandments of the new and old Testament. Only the Church can say this: another congregation does not say it, the Synagogue does not say it, neither holding the new according to the letter, nor the old according to the spirit. The Manichaeian heresy does not say, "Old things I have kept for you," which does not receive the prophets. Deservedly she is called whitened, who shines with the grace of both Testaments. 22. "I adjured you, daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir up and rouse up love until she pleases." Still she seeks one rousing, and she asks that she be roused for herself by the daughters of Jerusalem, by whose grace, that is, of faithful souls, she desires the Bridegroom to be provoked into a more abundant love of her. Therefore those virtues speak, which guard the gates of heaven.

CHAPTER EIGHT.

1. (Vers. 5.) *"Who is this that comes up white, leaning upon her brother?"*

How she who placed her head upon the left hand of wisdom, so that she might open her hands to the poor to help the needy; with her riches divided or left behind, not invaded and plundered, used what she, greedy for glory, acquired even by good works, she did not go around with the empty secular boasting of dignity, for this is to establish her head and a certain principal of the senses above the hand of wisdom. That soul, I say, ascends with whitening merits from that desert, as many have it, of this life, to that always blooming place of eternal pleasantness.

2. These are the virtues, which also say in the book of Isaiah: "Who is this who arrives from Edom, the redness of garments from Bozrah, so beautiful in his robe" (Isai. 63:1)? These, I say, are they who wonder that any soul is able to ascend from this rough and rocky desert, without the lapse of great vices; and therefore they congratulate her having been found, who has not polluted the garments of natural innocence with the ink of secular foolishness, but rather has cleansed them with the whiteness of spiritual wisdom and grace.

Admirantur filiae Hierusalem, sanctae animae patriarcharum et prophetarum, veterumque justorum, vel coelestes potentiae dicentes: Quae est haec quae ascendit dealbata innitens super fratrem suum? Hoc est, talibus solemnitatibus fulget Ecclesia, et quae ante per diem fusca erat, jam splendet in noctibus, et reluceat. Ipse quoque Dominus tanto munere psallentium delectatus ait:

3. (Vers. 6.) Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut sigillum super brachium tuum; quia valida est ut mors charitas, durus sicut inferi, zelus tuus. Alae ejus, alae ignis, et flammae. Aqua multa excludere non poterit charitatem, et flumina non obruent eam. Quia vidit tantam devotionem Ecclesia, idoneos putat esse jam populos, qui in corde nostro et in brachio signaculum ejus portare possimus. Ipsum enim Pater signavit Deus, et qui testimonium ejus accepit, signavit quia Deus verax est; et ideo operantes cibum permanentem in vitam aeternam, signati sunt ad imaginem et similitudinem Christi, qui est imago invisibilis Dei. Sicut ergo Deus verax est; et tu signa in tuo sensu et opere veritatem; ut os tuum non loquatur mendacium, manus tuae non operentur opera hominum, quae sunt fallacis istius mundi: sed illa quae Dei sunt, ut pauperibus largiantur, debiles sublevent, mortuos honorent tumulis sepulturae. His operibus charitas quaeritur, ut nemo possit a Christo vel periculo mortis avelli; unde ille ait: Quis nos separabit a Christo? Tribulatio, an angustia, an persecutio (Rom. VIII, 35)? Et infra: Confido enim quia neque mors, neque vita, neque angeli (Ibid.).

4. Ea specie etiam zelus durus est charitatis, et alae ejus alae ignis. Habet alas sicut columba, sunt enim pennae columbae deargentatae, quibus evolat qui diligit, dicens: Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine (Psal. LIV, 8). Sed alae charitatis alae sunt ignis, quibus dilectionis inflammari ardorem. Hoc vapore fecit Dominus ferventes Angelos suos spiritus, et ministros suos ignem urentem, sed non exurentem. Legimus et alam templi, supra quam diabolus tentans, fecit ascendere Salvatorem, quae erat in templi culmine (Matth. IV, 13). Sunt ergo fastigia pietatis, sunt culmina charitatis, quae vaporem gratiae pectoribus humanis adolere consueverunt; ut multa aqua extinguere atque excludere non queat charitatem, et flumina eam saecularium tempestatum nulla concludant. Diximus quia charitas excludit timorem, non diximus quod excludit omnem perturbationem; etenim qui Deum diligit, profunda est ei confirmatae mentis tranquillitas.

5. (Vers. 7.) Aquae, inquit, multae non poterunt excludere charitatem, et flumina non inundabunt ipsam. Multa aqua diversarum est passionum, et flumina saecularium cupiditatum corporalibus motibus incitata, quae tamen murum charitatis subvertere non possunt. Ideoque charitate fundatus dicit: Torrentem pertransivit anima nostra (Psal. CXXIII, 5). Numquid aqua maris excludere Moysis potuit charitatem?

The daughters of Jerusalem, the holy souls of the patriarchs and prophets, and of the ancient just, or the celestial powers, wonder saying: "Who is this who ascends whitened leaning upon her brother?" That is, with such solemnities the Church shines, and she who before was dark through the day, now shines in the nights, and reflects. Also the Lord Himself, delighted with such a great gift of those singing psalms, says:

3. (Vers. 6.) "Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; because charity is strong as death, your zeal hard as the lower regions." Its wings are wings of fire, and flames. Much water will not be able to exclude charity, and the rivers will not overwhelm it. Because the Church saw such great devotion, she thinks the people are now suitable, who are able to carry His seal in our heart and in our arm. For God the Father Himself sealed Him, and he who received His testimony, sealed that God is true; and therefore those working for the food remaining unto eternal life, are sealed to the image and likeness of Christ, who is the invisible image of God. As therefore God is true; you also seal truth in your sense and work; so that your mouth may not speak a lie, your hands may not work the works of men, which are of this deceptive world: but those things which are of God, so that they may be given to the poor, they may lift up the weak, they may honor the dead with the mounds of burial. By these works charity is sought, so that no one can be plucked away from Christ even by the peril of death; whence he says: "Who will separate us from Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution" (Rom. 8:35)? And below: "For I am confident that neither death, nor life, nor angels" (Ibid.).

4. In that appearance also the zeal of charity is hard, and its wings are wings of fire. It has wings like a dove, for the feathers of the dove are silvered, with which he flies away who loves, saying: "Behold I have gone far away flying, and I remained in the solitude" (Ps. 55:8). But the wings of charity are wings of fire, with which it inflames the ardor of love. With this vapor the Lord made His Angels fervent spirits, and His ministers a burning fire, but not consuming. We read also of the wing of the temple, above which the devil tempting, made the Savior ascend, which was in the summit of the temple (Matth. 4:3). There are therefore the heights of piety, there are the summits of charity, which have been accustomed to burn the vapor of grace in human breasts; so that much water cannot extinguish and exclude charity, and no rivers of secular tempests may shut it in. We said that charity excludes fear, we did not say that it excludes all perturbation; for to him who loves God, there is a deep tranquility of a confirmed mind.

5. (Vers. 7.) "Many waters," he says, "will not be able to exclude charity, and the rivers will not inundate it." Much water is of various passions, and the rivers of secular desires incited by corporal movements, which yet are not able to subvert the wall of charity. And therefore founded in charity he says: "Our soul has passed through the torrent" (Ps. 124:5). Was the water of the sea able to exclude the charity of Moses?

Et ut secundum litteram tibi psalmorum series suffragetur, nempe diligens Deum, tutum sibi credidit iter esse per maria: qui autem non dilexerunt Deum, hi demersi fluctibus, dignum sacrilegii sui exitum pertulerunt.

6. (Vers. 5.) Quae est haec quae ascendit, innitens super fratrem suum? Superius dixerunt, Quenam est haec prospiciens tanquam diluculum, speciosa sicut luna, electa ut sol? Hic plus quod adjiceretur, inventum est, eo quod Verbo Dei innixa ascenderat; perfectiores enim supra Christum recumbunt, sicut et Joannes in Christi pectore recumbebat. Ita ergo et haec vel incumbebat in Christum, vel supra ipsum se reclinabat: aut certe quoniam de nuptiis loquimur, jam quasi tradita in Christi dextera, in thalamum ducebatur Sponso. Et quia jam copula charitatis est, blanditur ei sponsus, et dicit:

7. Sub arbore malo elevavi te, illic parturivit te mater tua, illic parturivit te quae peperit te. Bona anima quae requiescit sub arbore fructuosa, et maxime boni odoris. Nam si Nathanael bonus, in quo dolus nullus erat, sub arbore fici visus est; utique bona anima, quae sub arbore mali elevata est a Sponso suo. Plus est enim elevari, quam videri: plus etiam a sponso elevari. Nam etsi Nathanael videbatur sub arbore, tamen anima ejus sponsa non erat; quia occulte veniebat ad Christum, quia verebatur Judaeos. Non erat speciosa sicut luna, electa ut sol, quae erat in umbra; quia quae sponsa per diem nubit, publice confitetur. Ideo ista sub arbore mali, illa sub ficu; quia haec confessionis suae odorem diffundebat longius, illa habebat puritatis innocentiae suavitatem, flagrantiam spiritus non habebat. 8. Illic, inquit, parturivit te mater tua, illic parturivit te quae peperit te; ibi enim nascimur, ibi renascimur. Parturiuntur autem in quibus imago Christi formatur, unde et Paulus ait: Filioli quos ego parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis (Galat. IV, 19). Parturivit enim qui in utero accipit spiritum salutis, et aliis infundit. Unde quoniam jam formatus in hac erat Christus, ait: 9. (Vers. 6.) Pone me ut signaculum in cor tuum, ut sigillum in brachium tuum. Signaculum Christi in fronte est, signaculum in corde: in fronte, ut semper confiteamur: in corde, ut semper diligamus: signaculum in brachio, ut semper operemur. Luceat ergo imago ejus in confessione nostra, luceat in lectione, luceat in operibus et factis; ut si fieri potest, tota ejus species exprimatur in nobis.

And so that according to the letter the series of the psalms may support you, certainly he who loves God believed the way through the seas to be safe for him: but those who did not love God, these being submerged in the waves, endured a worthy end of their sacrilege.

6. (Vers. 5.) "Who is this that comes up, leaning upon her brother?" Above they said: "Who is this looking forth like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun?" Here more was found that might be added, for the reason that she had ascended leaning upon the Word of God; for the more perfect recline upon Christ, just as John also reclined on Christ's breast. Thus therefore she also either lay upon Christ, or reclined herself above Him: or certainly since we speak of nuptials, already as if handed over in the right hand of Christ, she was being led into the chamber by the Bridegroom. And because there is already a bond of charity, the Bridegroom flatters her, and says:

7. "Under the apple tree I raised you up, there your mother was in travail with you, there she was in travail who brought you forth." Good is the soul which rests under a fruitful tree, and especially one of good odor. For if Nathanael was good, in whom there was no guile, seen under a fig tree; certainly good is the soul which was raised up under an apple tree by her Bridegroom. For it is more to be raised up than to be seen: more also to be raised up by a bridegroom. For even if Nathanael was seen under the tree, yet his soul was not a bride; because he was coming secretly to Christ, because he was fearing the Jews. She was not beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun, who was in the shadow; because she who as a bride marries by day, publicly confesses. Therefore that one under the apple tree, the other under the fig; because this one was diffusing the odor of her confession further, that one had the sweetness of the innocence of purity, she did not have the fragrance of the spirit. 8. "There," he says, "your mother was in travail with you, there she was in travail who brought you forth; for there we are born, there we are reborn. But those are in travail in whom the image of Christ is formed, whence also Paul says: "My little children, for whom I am in travail, until Christ is formed in you" (Galat. 4:19). For he was in travail who receives the spirit of salvation in the womb, and pours it into others. Whence since Christ was already formed in her, he says: 9. (Vers. 6.) "Place me as a seal in your heart, as a seal in your arm." The seal of Christ is on the forehead, the seal in the heart: on the forehead, so that we may always confess: in the heart, so that we may always love: the seal on the arm, so that we may always work. Let His image therefore shine in our confession, let it shine in our reading, let it shine in our works and deeds; so that if it can be done, His entire appearance may be expressed in us.

Ipse sit caput nostrum, quia caput viri Christus: ipse oculus noster, ut per illum videamus Patrem: ipse vox nostra, per quam loquamur ad Patrem: ipse dextera, per quam Deo Patri sacrificium nostrum offeramus. Ipse quoque est signaculum nostrum, quod est charitatis et perfectionis insigne; quia diligens pater signavit Filium, sicut legimus: Quem Pater signavit Deus (Joan. VI, 27). Charitas itaque nostra Christus. Bona charitas, quando obtulit se morti pro dilectis: bona charitas quae peccatum remisit.

10. Et ideo anima nostra induat charitatem, et charitatem ejusmodi quae sit valida ut mors; quia sicut mors finis peccatorum est, ita et charitas; quoniam qui diligit Dominum, peccare desinit: Charitas enim non cogitat malum, neque gaudet super iniquitate, sed omnia sustinet (I Cor. XIII, 5). Nam qui quae sua sunt non quaerit, quomodo aliena quaeret? Est et mors illa valida per lavacrum, per quod peccatum omne sepelitur, et culpa dimittitur. Talis erat charitas quam deferebat Evangelica illa mulier, de qua Dominus ait: Remissa sunt peccata ejus multa, quoniam dilexit multum (Luc. VII, 47). Est et illa mors sanctorum martyrum valida, quae culpam abolet superiorem; et ideo valida, cujus non impar est charitas, quae adaequatur martyrum passioni, ut auferat meritum delictorum.

11. Zelus quoque ut inferi, quoniam qui Dei zelum habet, pro Christo nec suis parcit. Itaque et mortem habet charitas, et zelum habet charitas, et alas ignis habet charitas. Denique Christus diligens Moysen, in igne ei apparuit. Et Hieremias habens in se donum divinae charitatis, dicebat: Et erat ignis inflammans in ossibus meis, et dissolutus sum undique, et ferre non possum (Jerem. XX, 9). Bona igitur charitas alas habens ignis ardentis, quae volitat per pectora et corda sanctorum, et exurit quidquid materiale et terrenum est: quidquid vero sincerum est, probat; et quod contigerit, suo igne meliorat.

12. Hunc ignem in terram misit Dominus Jesus, et refulsit fides, accensa est devotio, illuminata est charitas, justitia resplenduit. Hoc igne inflammavit corda apostolorum suorum, sicut testatur Cleophas dicens: Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis, cum aperiret Scripturas (Luc. XXIV, 32)? Alae igitur ignis in flamma, Scripturae sunt divinae. Denique aperiebat Scripturas, et ignis exibat, atque audientium corda penetrabat. Et verae alae ignis, quia: Eloquentia Domini eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum (Psalm. XI, 7).

Let Him be our head, because the head of the man is Christ: let Him be our eye, so that through Him we may see the Father: let Him be our voice, through which we may speak to the Father: let Him be the right hand, through which we may offer our sacrifice to God the Father. He also is our seal, which is the mark of charity and perfection; because the loving Father sealed the Son, as we read: "Whom God the Father has sealed" (John 6:27). Our charity therefore is Christ. Good is charity, when He offered Himself to death for the beloved: good is charity which remitted sin.

10. And therefore let our soul put on charity, and charity of such a kind that it is strong as death; because just as death is the end of sins, so also is charity; since he who loves the Lord ceases to sin: "For charity thinks no evil, nor does it rejoice over iniquity, but sustains all things" (1 Cor. 13:5). For he who does not seek what is his own, how will he seek the things of others? There is also that death which is strong through the washing, through which every sin is buried and fault is dismissed. Such was the charity which that woman of the Gospel carried, of whom the Lord says: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much" (Luke 7:47). There is also that strong death of the holy martyrs, which abolishes the former fault; and therefore strong, whose charity is not unequal, which is equated to the passion of the martyrs, so that it may take away the merit of offenses.

11. Zeal also as hell, since he who has the zeal of God does not spare even his own for Christ. And so charity has both death, and charity has zeal, and charity has wings of fire. Finally, Christ, loving Moses, appeared to him in fire. And Jeremiah, having in himself the gift of divine charity, said: "And there was an inflaming fire in my bones, and I am dissolved on every side, and I cannot bear it" (Jer. 20:9). Good, therefore, is charity having wings of burning fire, which flies through the breasts and hearts of the saints, and burns away whatever is material and earthly: but whatever is sincere, it proves; and what it touches, it improves with its fire.

12. This fire the Lord Jesus sent into the earth, and faith shone forth, devotion was kindled, charity was enlightened, justice resplendent. With this fire He inflamed the hearts of His apostles, just as Cleophas testifies, saying: "Was not our heart burning within us, when He opened the Scriptures" (Luke 24:32)? The wings of fire in the flame, therefore, are the divine Scriptures. Finally, He was opening the Scriptures, and fire was going forth, and was penetrating the hearts of the listeners. And they are true wings of fire, because: "The words of the Lord are chaste words, silver examined by fire" (Psalm 12:6).

Cum Paulus quoque assumeretur a Christo, vidit circumfulsisse super se lucem, et super eos qui simul erant, cecidit a pavore, et probator resurrexit. Denique apostolus factus est, qui persecutor advenerat. Spiritus quoque sanctus descendit, et replevit totam domum in qua erant plurimi sedentes, et visae sunt dispersitae linguae tanquam ignis. Bonae alae, alae charitatis, vere alae quae volitabant per ora apostolorum: et alae ignis, quia purgatum sermonem loquebantur.

13. His alis evolavit Enoch, raptus ad coelum; his alis evolavit Elias, curru igneo et equis igneis ad superna translatus. His alis Dominus Deus per columnam ignis ducebat patrum plebem. Has alas habuit Seraphim, quando sumpsit carbones ignis de altari, et tetigit os prophetae, et iniquitates ejus abstulit, et peccata purgavit. Harum alarum igne purgati sunt filii Levi, et baptizabantur populi nationum, sicut testificatur Joannes, dicens de Domino Jesu: Ipse vos baptizabit in spiritu et igne (Matth. III, 11). Merito uri renes suos volebat et cor suum David, quia alas igneas charitatis sciebat non esse metuendas. Merito Hebraei pueri in fornace ardenti non sentiebant ignis incendia, quia charitatis eos flamma refrigerabat. And ut plenius cognoscamus quia alas habet perfecta charitas, audisti dudum dicentem: Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, sicut gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas suas (Matth. XXIII, 27).

14. Sumamus igitur has alas, quae sicut flammae ad superiora dirigunt. Exuat unusquisque animam suam involucris sordidioribus, et quasi aurum igne approbet deterfam luto. Sic enim purgatur anima, velut aurum optimum. Pulchritudo autem animae sincera virtus et decor, verior cognitio supernorum; ut videat illud bonum ex quo pendent omnia, ipsum autem ex nullo. Eo igitur vivit, atque intellectum accipit. Vitae enim fons est summum illud bonum, cujus in nobis accenditur desiderium, cui appropinquare et misceri voluptas est: quod ei qui non videt, desiderio est: et ei qui videt, vita est; ideoque universa alia despicit, hoc uno mulcetur, et delectatur. Hoc est quod subministrat universam substantiam: ipsum autem manens in semetipso, dat aliis; nihil autem in se ex aliis suscipit, de quo Propheta ait: Dixi Domino: Deus meus es tu; quoniam bonorum meorum non eges (Psal. XV, 2).

When Paul also was taken up by Christ, he saw a light shining around him, and upon those who were with him at the same time, he fell from fear, and rose again more proven. Finally, he who had come as a persecutor was made an apostle. The Holy Spirit also descended, and filled the whole house in which many were sitting, and there were seen divided tongues as if of fire. Good wings, wings of charity, truly wings which were flying through the mouths of the apostles: and wings of fire, because they were speaking a purged speech.

13. On these wings Enoch flew away, snatched to heaven; on these wings Elijah flew away, translated to the heights by a fiery chariot and fiery horses. On these wings the Lord God was leading the people of the fathers through a column of fire. These wings the Seraphim had, when he took coals of fire from the altar, and touched the mouth of the prophet, and took away his iniquities, and purged his sins. By the fire of these wings the sons of Levi were purged, and the peoples of the nations were baptized, as John testifies, saying of the Lord Jesus: "He will baptize you in the spirit and fire" (Matt. 3:11). Deservedly did David wish his reins and his heart to be burned, because he knew the fiery wings of charity were not to be feared. Deservedly did the Hebrew boys in the burning furnace not feel the fires of the furnace, because the flame of charity was cooling them. And that we may know more fully that perfect charity has wings, you heard Him saying a little while ago: "How often I wanted to gather your children, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings" (Matt. 23:37).

14. Let us therefore take up these wings, which like flames direct us to the things above. Let each one strip his soul of the more sordid coverings, and as gold by fire let him approve it after being wiped clean of mud. For thus is the soul purged, like the best gold. But the beauty of the soul is sincere virtue and decorum, the truer knowledge of things above; so that it may see that good from which all things depend, but itself from nothing. By that, therefore, it lives, and receives understanding. For the fountain of life is that supreme good, the desire for which is kindled in us, to approach and be mixed with which is a pleasure: which to him who does not see it, is a desire: and to him who sees it, is life; and therefore he despises all other things, and is soothed and delighted by this one thing. This is what supplies the entire substance: but itself remaining in itself, gives to others; but it receives nothing into itself from others, of which the Prophet says: "I said to the Lord: You are my God; because You have no need of my goods" (Psalm 16:2).

15. Alae ejus, alae ignis. Omnes oportet per ignem probari, quicumque ad paradysum redire desiderant; non enim otiose scriptum est quod, ejectis Adam et Eva de paradisi sede, posuit Deus in exitu paradisi gladium igneum versatilem. Omnes oportet transire per flammam, sive ille Joannes evangelista sit, quem ita dilexit Dominus, ut de eo diceret ad Petrum: Si eum volo manere, quid ad te? Tu me sequere (Joan. XXI, 22). De morte ejus aliqui dubitaverunt, de transitu per ignem dubitare non possumus; quia in paradiso est, nec separatur a Christo. Sive ille sit Petrus, qui claves accepit regni coelorum, qui supra mare ambulavit, oportet dicat: Transivimus per ignem et aquam, et eduxisti nos in refrigerium (Psalm. LXV, 12). Sed Joanni cito versabitur gladius igneus; quia non invenitur in eo iniquitas, quem dilexit aequitas. Si quid in eo vitii humani fuit, charitas divina decoxit: Alae enim ejus sicut alae ignis. Qui hic habuerit charitatis ignem, illic ignem gladii timere non poterit. Ipsi Petro qui toties mortem suam pro Christo obtulit, dicit: Transi, recumbe. Sed ille dicit: Igne nos examinavit, sicut ipse examinavit argentum.

16. Alae ejus, alae ignis. Ergo quia volandi nobis data est copia, excitet unusquisque in se gratiam Dei, ac posteriora obliviscens, priora appetens, ad destinata contendat. Procul a militiae honoribus, procul ab aestibus mundi; ne quod fabulae ferunt, aestu solis cera resoluta lcareos volatus penna relabente destituat. Nam licet gravitas dictorum obsit, poetico tamen sale declarare voluerunt prudentium maturitati tutos esse volatus per coelum; juvenilem vero levitatem obnoxiam cupiditatibus mundi, refluentibus pennis, et per obliviam veritatis meritorum compage resoluta, majore pernicie in terram relabi.

17. Haud facilis volatus omnibus, difficilis etiam discordantibus in terris animalibus vitae cursus humanae est. At si tibi actus nostri ordo conveniat, videbit et in nobis propheta rotam illam unam super terram, conjunctam animalibus quatuor. Videbit ergo rursus Ezechiel, videt enim adhuc et viget et vigebit (Ezech. I, 15 et 16): videbit, inquam, rotam in medio rotae, super terram sine offensione labentem. Rota enim super terram, vita est corporis ad animae aptata virtutem, et ad evangelicum cohaerenti cursu formata praeceptum.

15. "Its wings, wings of fire." All must be proved by fire, whoever desire to return to paradise; for it is not written in vain that, Adam and Eve being ejected from the seat of paradise, God placed at the exit of paradise a flaming sword, turning every way. All must pass through the flames, whether that one be John the evangelist, whom the Lord so loved that He said of him to Peter: "If I want him to remain, what is that to you? You follow me" (John 21:22). Concerning his death some have doubted, concerning the passage through fire we cannot doubt; because he is in paradise, nor is he separated from Christ. Whether it be Peter, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, who walked upon the sea, it is necessary that he say: "We have passed through fire and water, and You have led us out into a place of refreshment" (Psalm 66:12). But for John the flaming sword will quickly turn; because iniquity is not found in him, whom equity loved. If there was anything of human vice in him, divine charity burned it away: "For its wings are as wings of fire." He who has here the fire of charity, will not be able to fear there the fire of the sword. To Peter himself, who so many times offered his death for Christ, He says: Pass through, recline. But he says: He examined us with fire, just as He himself examined silver.

16. "Its wings, wings of fire." Therefore because a capacity for flying has been given to us, let each one excite in himself the grace of God, and forgetting the things that are behind, reaching forward to the things that are before, let him contend toward the destination. Far from the honors of warfare, far from the heats of the world; lest, as the fables tell, the wax being melted by the heat of the sun, the wing should fail and abandon the Icarean flights as the feather slips. For although the gravity of the words may stand in the way, yet with poetic wit they wanted to declare that flights through heaven are safe for the maturity of the prudent; but juvenile levity, obnoxious to the desires of the world, with flowing back feathers, and the joints of merits being dissolved through the oblivion of truth, falls back to the earth with greater destruction.

17. A flight is not easy for all, difficult even for animals discordant on the earth is the course of human life. But if the order of our acts should agree with you, the prophet will see in us also that one wheel upon the earth, joined to the four animals. Ezekiel, therefore, will see again, for he sees yet and thrives and will thrive (Ezek. 1:15 and 16): he will see, I say, a wheel in the midst of a wheel, gliding upon the earth without offense. For the wheel upon the earth is the life of the body adapted to the virtue of the soul, and formed to the evangelical precept with a coherent course.

Rota autem in medio rotae, velut vita intra vitam, quod sanctorum sibi vita non dissonet; sed qualis fuerit superioris aetatis, talis sit et sequentis: vel hoc in hac vita corporis vitae volvatur usus aeternae. Cum ista congruerint, tunc divina vox resultet, tunc super similitudinem throni similitudo sicut species hominis apparebit. Hic homo Verbum est, quia Verbum caro factum est (Joan. I, 14): hic homo nostrorum est agitator animalium, nostrorum rector est morum, qui pro nostrorum ratione meritorum, aut curram plerumque, aut montem ascendit, aut navim.

18. Pone me ut signaculum in cor tuum, ut sigillum in brachium tuum, quae nova et vetera servasti mihi. Signaculum meum es, ad imaginem meam es et similitudinem. Fulget in te imago iustitiae, imago sapientiae, imago virtutis. Et quia imago Dei in corde tuo est, sit et in operibus tuis: sit effigies Evangelii in tuis factis, ut in tuis moribus mea praecepta custodias. Effigies Evangelii erit in te, si percutienti maxillam, alteram praebeas, si diligas inimicum tuum, si crucem tuam tollas, et me sequaris. Ideo crucem ego pro te portavi; ne tu propter me portare dubitares. Audierunt hoc filiae Hierusalem, quod jam Dominus Deus Ecclesiam sibi copulabat: et quia considerantes magnitudinem Verbi, impares se tantis nuptiis aestimabant; ne forte tantae copulae pondus sustinere non possent, excusant dicentes:

19. (Vers. 8.) Soror nostra parvula, et ubera non habet. Sic enim qui volunt differre nuptias, excusare consueverunt, ut praetendant immaturae aetatis infirmitatem, et astruant quod ubera non habeant, quae nubilus significant tempus aetatis. Hoc solet symbolum commune omnibus virginibus esse nupturis; ut cum ubera coeperint eminare, tunc conjunctioni habiles judicentur. Turbatae igitur, quod studio dilectionis urgeat nuptias Sponsus, dicunt:

20. Quid faciemus sorori nostrae, in die qua loquetur in ea, vel ut Symmachus, qua loquetur ei? Hoc est, in sponsalium celebritate solet fieri collocutio, et confirmatio nuptiarum. Quid ergo faciemus, dicunt turbatae, quia urget conjunctio spiritalis? A tantis nuptiis excusare non possunt; nemo enim est qui copulam vel animae et spiritus, vel Christi et Ecclesiae non beatam putet. Sed quia plenitudo Verbi vel Spiritus sancti vibrat et fulget, et nihil est quod illis possit aequari; ideo differre desiderant, ut illa dilatione vel anima, vel Ecclesia possit esse perfectior. Dicunt ergo:

But the wheel in the midst of a wheel, as a life within a life, because the life of the saints does not disagree with itself; but of what kind it was in a former age, such let it be also in the following: or this use of eternal life may be revolved in this life of the body. When these things have agreed, then let the divine voice resound, then above the likeness of the throne a likeness like the appearance of a man will appear. This man is the Word, because "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14): this man is the driver of our animals, He is the ruler of our morals, who according to the reason of our merits, either ascends a chariot for the most part, or a mountain, or a ship.

18. "Place me as a seal in your heart, as a seal in your arm," which new and old things you have kept for me. You are my seal, you are after my image and likeness. In you shines the image of justice, the image of wisdom, the image of virtue. And because the image of God is in your heart, let it be also in your works: let the effigy of the Gospel be in your deeds, so that in your morals you may keep my precepts. The effigy of the Gospel will be in you, if you offer the other cheek to the one who strikes you, if you love your enemy, if you take up your cross and follow me. Therefore I carried the cross for you; lest you should hesitate to carry it on account of me. The daughters of Jerusalem heard this, that already the Lord God was joining the Church to Himself: and because, considering the magnitude of the Word, they were judging themselves unequal to such nuptials; lest by chance they should not be able to sustain the weight of such a bond, they excuse themselves saying:

19. (Vers. 8.) "Our sister is a little one, and she has no breasts." For so those who want to defer nuptials are accustomed to excuse themselves, so that they may pretend the infirmity of immature age, and assert that they have no breasts, which signify the time of marriageable age. This is accustomed to be a common symbol for all virgins about to marry; so that when the breasts have begun to stand out, then they may be judged fit for union. Disturbed, therefore, because the Bridegroom urges the nuptials with the study of love, they say:

20. "What shall we do for our sister, in the day when he shall speak in her," or as Symmachus has it, "when he shall speak to her?" That is, in the celebration of espousals a conference and confirmation of nuptials is accustomed to take place. What therefore shall we do, they say being disturbed, because the spiritual union urges? From such nuptials they cannot excuse themselves; for there is no one who does not think the bond either of the soul and the spirit, or of Christ and the Church, to be blessed. But because the fullness of the Word or of the Holy Spirit vibrates and shines, and there is nothing which can be equaled to them; therefore they desire to defer, so that by that delay either the soul or the Church may be more perfect. They say therefore:

21. (Vers. 9.) Si murus est, aedificemus super eum receptacula argentea: et si janua est, sculpamus super eam tabulas cedrinās. Murus est anima sancti. Habet et Ecclesia muros suos, quae jam perfectior dicit: Ego civitas munita (Esai. XXVII, 3). Hic est murus, qui habet duodecim portas apostolicas, per quas populo nationum patet ingressus in Ecclesiam. Sed murus quamvis ambitum totius urbis includat, tunc tamen est munitior, cum receptacula habuerit praeparata, in quibus propugnatores urbis tutum spectandi ac tuendi possint habere subsidium. Sed quia rationalis haec civitas est, et omnis spes ejus in Dei Verbo est, non ferrea, sed argentea ei propugnacula requiruntur, eloquiis coelestibus magis quam corporeis voluptatibus hostiles impetus repulsare consueta.

22. Eo fulta praesidio, eo splendore fulgens, habilior Christi copulae judicatur. Et quia janua Christus est, qui ait: Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur (Joan. X, 9); et ecclesia janua nuncupatur, quia per ipsam patet populis aditus ad salutem. Sed ne haereticorum corrumpatur tineis aut vermibus, dicunt filiae Hierusalem, vel angeli, vel animae justorum: Aedificemus super eam tabulas cedrinās, hoc est, fidei sublimis bonum odorem. Est enim suavis hujus materiae odor, quam non vermis, non tinea corrumpat. Ideo hujus materiae usus eligitur tectorum fastigiis elevandis formandisque litterarum elementis, quibus aetas puerilis ad studium liberalis eruditionis imbuitur. Est ergo materia ista sublimis ad gratiam, levis ad onus, suavis ad odorem, utilis ad instrumentum scientiae, habilis ad ministerium cognitionis aeternae. Sed quemadmodum Sponsam suam diligens Christus urgebat ad copulae spiritalis solemnitatem; ita et Ecclesia Verbi decore jam capta, festinabat ad nuptias. Ideoque morarum et dilationis impatiens, quas filiae Hierusalem innectere gestiebant, dicit:

23. (Vers. 10.) Ego murus, et ubera mea turres. Hoc est, nolite dubitare utrum murus sim; illae enim dixerant: Si murus est; ego, inquit, murus sum, et non parva ubera habeo, sed ut turres ubera mea sunt. Quomodo dicitis, quia non habeo ubera? Sensus habeo ut turres sapientiae, in quibus est abundantia, sicut scriptum est: Et abundantia in turribus tuis (Psalm. CXXI, 7). His uberibus, id est, sensibus, habilem se tantis nuptiis aestimabant. Sed filiae Hierusalem adhuc non poterant aestimare, quia sensuum ejus abundantiam non videbant. Et addidit:

24. (Vers. 11.) Ego eram in oculis ejus tanquam inveniēns pacem; hoc est, deliberatis de meis sensibus, cum pacem Dei invenerim, quae exsuperat omnem mentem, et custodit corda et sensus in Christo Jesu. Talis, inquit, eram in oculis sponsi, qualis quae habet pacem; scriptum est enim: Qui recte quaerunt pacem, gaudebunt.

21. (Vers. 9.) "If she is a wall, let us build upon it silver bulwarks: and if she is a door, let us carve upon it cedar tablets." A wall is the soul of the saint. The Church also has her walls, she who already more perfect says: "I am a fortified city" (Isaiah 27:3). This is the wall which has twelve apostolic gates, through which the entrance into the Church lies open to the people of the nations. But the wall, although it includes the circuit of the entire city, is then nevertheless more fortified when it has prepared bulwarks, in which the defenders of the city can have a safe support for watching and protecting. But because this city is rational, and all its hope is in the Word of God, not iron, but silver ramparts are required for it, accustomed to repulse hostile impetus more by heavenly speeches than by corporal pleasures.

22. Supported by that protection, shining with that splendor, she is judged more fit for the bond of Christ. And because Christ is the door, who says: "If anyone enters through me, he will be saved" (John 10:9); and the Church is called a door, because through her the access to salvation lies open to the peoples. But lest it be corrupted by the moths or worms of heretics, the daughters of Jerusalem, or the angels, or the souls of the just say: "Let us build upon it cedar tablets," that is, the good odor of sublime faith. For the odor of this material is sweet, which neither worm nor moth may corrupt. Therefore the use of this material is chosen for raising the gables of roofs and for forming the elements of letters, by which the boyish age is imbued for the study of liberal erudition. This material is therefore sublime for grace, light for a burden, sweet for odor, useful for an instrument of science, fit for the ministry of eternal knowledge. But just as Christ, loving His Bride, was urging her to the solemnity of the spiritual bond; so also the Church, already captured by the decorum of the Word, was hastening to the nuptials. And therefore impatient of delays and deferment, which the daughters of Jerusalem were striving to interweave, she says:

23. (Vers. 10.) "I am a wall, and my breasts are towers." That is, do not doubt whether I am a wall; for those had said: "If she is a wall"; I, she says, am a wall, and I have no small breasts, but as towers are my breasts. How do you say, that I have no breasts? I have senses as towers of wisdom, in which there is abundance, as it is written: "And abundance in your towers" (Psalm 122:7). By these breasts, that is, senses, she was judging herself fit for such great nuptials. But the daughters of Jerusalem were not yet able to judge, because they were not seeing the abundance of her senses. And she added:

24. (Vers. 11.) "I was in his eyes as one finding peace"; that is, after my senses have been deliberated upon, since I have found the peace of God, which surpasses every mind, and guards hearts and senses in Christ Jesus. Such, she says, was I in the eyes of the bridegroom, as one who has peace; for it is written: "They who rightly seek peace, shall rejoice."

25. (Vers 12.) Ego, inquit, civitas munita, ego civitas obsessa (Esai. XXVII, 3). His munitur muris, his obsessa defenditur. Et vere murus anima, quae praetenditur in castris. Unde et ipsa ait in Canticis: Ego murus, et ubera mea sicut turres (Vers. 10). Bonus murus quem pinxit Dominus, sicut ipse ait: In manibus meis pinxi muros tuos, et in conspectu meo es semper (Esai. XLIX, 16). Bona anima quae habet speculatorem Deum, et in manibus ejus est; sicut anima prophetica, quae in manus Dei commendatur ut spiritus (Psal. XXX, 6), et quae in conspectu Dei est: Oculi enim Domini super justos; sicut et ipse ait: Ego eram in oculis ejus tanquam inveniens pacem. Bonas turres habet, quae habet et de intelligibilibus verbum, et de moralibus disciplinam. Festinantibus igitur dilecto atque dilecta, celebrata conjunctio spiritalis est, mutuo expetita consensu. Ideoque tamquam nuptiale canens carmen, exsultavit Spiritus in propheta dicens:

26. (Vers. 11.) Vineam facta est Salomoni in Beelamon, dedit vineam suam iis qui servant. Clamat ergo Spiritus, Plantata est congregatio populorum, sed vitis aeternae radice fundata, et spiritalia sub jugum Verbi corde mansueto corda subjecit. Plantata autem est in multitudine nationum. Hoc enim intelligendum Beelamon, Symmachus, Aquila, aliaeque translationes graeco sermone docuerunt. Repudiata est vetus copula quae fructum afferre non poterat, data est vinea novis fidelibusque cultoribus, qui non solum facere fructum possent, sed etiam custodire. Una igitur ovis erravit, sed revocata totius spatia orbis implevit. Unam ovem error abduxerat, sed multitudinem populorum Domini gratia congregavit. Erravit homo, sed in Ecclesia jam murus est et murus validus. Erravit Adam, murus est David, qui mandata Dei oblitus non est. Custodita igitur et vallata haec vinea munimine spiritali, mille fructus dat Christo, ducentos autem fructus custodibus; ideoque ait Ecclesia:

27. (Vers. 12.) Vitis mea in conspectu meo mille Salomoni, et ducenti servantibus fructum. Perfectio et plenitudo Christi est portio parvulorum. Habes hoc mysterium in Genesi, ubi quinque partes Benjamin fratri juniori tribuit Joseph, singulas reliquis fratribus (Gen. XLIII, 34). Domino igitur quinque sensuum portio et praerogativa defertur, quam illi utique tribuit ipse quem diligit, sicut dilexit et Paulum, cui dedit ad gentes evocandas sapientiae principatum.

25. (Vers 12.) "I," she says, "am a fortified city, I am a besieged city" (Isaiah 27:3). She is fortified by these walls, she is defended when besieged. And truly a wall is the soul, which is stretched forth in the camps. Whence she herself also says in the Canticles: "I am a wall, and my breasts as towers" (Vers. 10). Good is the wall which the Lord painted, as He himself says: "In my hands I have painted your walls, and you are always in my sight" (Isaiah 49:16). Good is the soul which has God as a watcher, and is in His hands; like the prophetic soul, which is commended into the hands of God as a spirit (Psalm 31:5), and which is in the sight of God: "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just"; as he himself also says: "I was in his eyes as one finding peace." She has good towers, she who has both the word concerning intelligible things, and discipline concerning moral things. While the beloved and the beloved were therefore hastening, a spiritual union was celebrated, sought by mutual consent. And therefore as if singing a nuptial song, the Spirit exulted in the prophet saying:

26. (Vers. 11.) "A vineyard was made for Solomon in Baal-hamon, he gave his vineyard to those who keep it." The Spirit therefore cries out, The congregation of the peoples is planted, but founded by the root of the eternal vine, and has subjected spiritual hearts to the yoke of the Word with a mild heart. Moreover, it was planted in the multitude of the nations. For this is to be understood by Baal-hamon, as Symmachus, Aquila, and other translations have taught in the Greek speech. The old bond which was not able to bring forth fruit was repudiated, the vineyard was given to new and faithful cultivators, who were not only able to make fruit, but also to keep it. One sheep therefore wandered, but being recalled it filled the spaces of the whole world. Error had led away one sheep, but the grace of the Lord gathered a multitude of peoples. Man wandered, but in the Church he is already a wall and a strong wall. Adam wandered, David is a wall, who did not forget the mandates of God. Therefore this vineyard, kept and walled around by a spiritual fortification, gives a thousand fruits to Christ, and two hundred fruits to the keepers; therefore the Church says:

27. (Vers. 12.) "My vine is in my sight, a thousand for Solomon, and two hundred for those keeping the fruit." The perfection and fullness of Christ is the portion of the little ones. You have this mystery in Genesis, where Joseph attributed five parts to Benjamin the younger brother, and single parts to the remaining brothers (Gen. 43:34). To the Lord therefore the portion and prerogative of the five senses is deferred, which certainly he who loves him attributes to him, just as he loved Paul also, to whom he gave the primacy of wisdom for calling out the nations.

Facessat hic sacris virginibus metus, quibus tanta praesidia tribuit primum Ecclesia, quae tenerae prolis sollicita successu, ipsa quasi murus abundantibus in modum turrium excrescit uberibus: donec, soluto obsidionis hostilis incursu, pacem validae juventuti maternae praesidio virtutis acquirat. Unde et Propheta ait: Fiat pax in virtute tua, et abundantia in turribus tuis (Psalm. CXXI, 7).

28. (Vers. 13.) Qui sedes in hortis, amici intendentes voci tuae, vocem tuam insinua mihi. Ideoque haec anima habens gratiam suorum uberum, ingreditur in hortos, et inveniens illic Sponsum sedentem et disputantem cum amicis, ait: Qui sedes in hortis, vocem tuam insinua mihi: mihi, inquit, non amicis.

29. Qui sedes in hortis, amici intendentes voci tuae, vocem tuam insinua mihi. Delectabatur enim quod in hortis Christus sedebat, et in hortis positi amici intendebant voci ejus: sed quia amici illi de coelestibus erant, Archangeli vel Dominationes et Throni (homines enim expulsi de paradiso fuerant propter inobedientiam coelestium mandatorum, atque ideo adhuc Ecclesia vocem ejus audire non poterat, quam cupiebat audire), ideo ait: Vocem tuam insinua mihi. Unde et nos si volumus eum in nobis sedere, simus horti clausi atque muniti, feramus virtutum flores, gratiae suavitatem, ut disputantem cum angelis Dominum Jesum audire possimus. Sed quia futurum erat, ut cum ad plenitudinem Ecclesia pervenisset, persecutionibus variis tentaretur; ideo cum Verbi gratia delectaretur, subito cernit insidias persecutorum: et quae plus Sponso quam sibi timeret, aut quia a persecutoribus Christus magis appetitur in nobis, ideo ait:

30. (Vers. 14.) Fuge, frater meus, et similis esto tu capreolae aut hinnulo cervorum, super montes aromatum. Propter infirmos fugit, qui tentamenta graviora ferre non possent. Ideo scriptum est, ut de civitatibus ad civitates fugiamus: et si nos in hac civitate fuerint persecuti, fugiamus in aliam. Propter infirmos igitur, ut diximus, fugiat persequentes: aut fugiat ab infimis, et transeat ad montes aromatum, qui pro martyrio odorem possit beatæ resurrectionis afferre. Montes aromatum sancti sunt. Ad eos confugit Christus; quia Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis (Psal. LXXXVI, 1). Ad eos igitur confugit, qui sunt ejus stabilia fundamenta. In nobis fugit, in illis fida statione subsistit. Mons igitur aromatum Paulus est, qui potest dicere: Bonus odor Christi sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15). Mons aromatum David, cujus orationis odor ascendebat ad Dominum, et ideo dicebat: Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo (Psal. CXL, 2).

Let fear here depart from the sacred virgins, to whom first the Church attributes such great protections, who being solicitous for the success of her tender offspring, herself like a wall grows out with breasts abundant in the manner of towers: until, the incursion of the hostile siege being dissolved, she may acquire peace for the strong youth by the protection of maternal virtue. Whence the Prophet also says: "Let peace be in your virtue, and abundance in your towers" (Psalm 122:7).

28. (Vers. 13.) "You who sit in the gardens, friends listening to your voice, make me hear your voice." And therefore this soul having the grace of her breasts, enters into the gardens, and finding there the Bridegroom sitting and disputing with friends, says: "You who sit in the gardens, make me hear your voice: to me," she says, "not to the friends."

29. "You who sit in the gardens, friends listening to your voice, make me hear your voice." For she was delighted that Christ was sitting in the gardens, and the friends placed in the gardens were listening to His voice: but because those friends were of the heavenly ones, Archangels or Dominations and Thrones (for men had been expelled from paradise on account of disobedience to the heavenly mandates, and therefore the Church was not yet able to hear His voice, which she was desiring to hear), therefore she says: "Make me hear your voice." Whence we also, if we want Him to sit in us, let us be gardens enclosed and fortified, let us bear the flowers of virtues, the sweetness of grace, so that we may be able to hear the Lord Jesus disputing with the angels. But because it was to be, that when the Church had arrived at fullness, she would be tempted by various persecutions; therefore when she was being delighted by the grace of the Word, suddenly she discerns the snares of the persecutors: and she who feared more for the Bridegroom than for herself, or because Christ is more sought in us by the persecutors, therefore she says:

30. (Vers. 14.) "Flee, my brother, and be like a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of aromatics." He flees on account of the weak, who would not be able to bear the heavier temptations. Therefore it is written, that we should flee from cities to cities: and if they have persecuted us in this city, let us flee into another. On account of the weak therefore, as we said, let Him flee those persecuting: or let Him flee from the lowest things, and pass over to the mountains of aromatics, who for martyrdom may be able to bring the odor of the blessed resurrection. The mountains of aromatics are the saints. To them Christ flees; because "His foundations are in the holy mountains" (Psalm 87:1). To them therefore He flees, who are His stable foundations. In us He flees, in them He subsists in a faithful station. A mountain of aromatics therefore is Paul, who is able to say: "We are the good odor of Christ to God" (2 Cor. 2:15). A mountain of aromatics is David, the odor of whose prayer was ascending to the Lord, and therefore he was saying: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Your sight" (Psalm 141:2).

31. Symmachus tamen et Aquila interpretati sunt, quod Christus dicit ad Ecclesiam: Quae sedes in hortis, hoc est, jam in hortis sedes, superno digna es paradiso; et ideo Vocem tuam insinua mihi, cui amici intendunt: ego quoque eam audire desidero. Coepit in hortis esse Ecclesia, postquam in hortis captus est Christus.

32. Fuge, frater meus, et similis efficere cervo aut hinnulo cervi, in montes aromatum. Serpentinis enim invisus colubris, et effugitans canum, atque humi reptantibus infestus serpentibus, nescit habitare nisi in sublimitate virtutum, nescit commorari nisi talibus Ecclesiae filiabus, quae possunt dicere: Christi enim bonus odor sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15). Sed quibusdam odor mortis in mortem, in iis qui pereunt: quibusdam odor vitae in vitam, in iis utique qui odorem resurrectionis Dominicae vivida fide sperant. Isti sunt aromatum montes, qui Domini corpus Jesu acceperunt, et in linteis cum aromatibus ligaverunt. Quicumque enim crediderunt, quia Jesus mortuus est, et sepultus est, et resurrexit, hi excelsum verae cacumen fidei virtutum fastigiis extulerunt. Ubi ergo Christus quaeritur, in pectore prudentis scilicet sacerdotis?

33. Fuge, frater meus. Hortatur ut fugiat Sponsus, quia jam sequi poterit ipsa terrena fugientem. Dicit ut similis sit damulae quae evadit de retibus; vult enim et ipsa fugere, et evolare supra mundum. Fugiamus ergo in patriam verissimam. Illic patria nobis, et pater a quo creati sumus, ubi est Hierusalem civitas quae est mater omnium. Sed quae est fuga? Non utique pedum, qui sunt corporis; isti enim quocumque currunt, in terra currunt, et de solo ad solum transeunt. Nec navibus fugiamus aut curribus, aut equis qui obligantur et cadunt; sed fugiamus animo et oculis, aut pedibus interioribus assuescamus oculos nostros videre quae dilucida et clara sunt, spectare vultum continentiae et temperantiae, omnesque virtutes; in quibus nihil scabrum, nihil obscurum et tortuosum sit: et seipsum spectet quis et conscientiam suam, illum oculum mundet; ne quid sordidum habeat. Quod enim videtur, non debet dissonare ab eo qui videt; quoniam conformes nos Deus imaginis voluit esse Filii sui.

31. Symmachus nevertheless and Aquila interpreted, that Christ says to the Church: "You who sit in the gardens," that is, already you sit in the gardens, you are worthy of the heavenly paradise; and therefore "Make me hear your voice, to which the friends listen: I also desire to hear it." The Church began to be in the gardens, after Christ was taken in a garden.

32. "Flee, my brother, and be made like a deer or a young hart, into the mountains of aromatics." For hateful to the serpentine colubrids, and fleeing the dogs, and hostile to the serpents creeping on the ground, He knows not how to dwell except in the sublimity of virtues, He knows not how to stay except with such daughters of the Church, who are able to say: "For we are the good odor of Christ to God" (2 Cor. 2:15). But to some the odor of death unto death, in those who perish: to some the odor of life unto life, in those certainly who hope for the odor of the Lord's resurrection with a vivid faith. These are the mountains of aromatics, who received the body of the Lord Jesus, and bound it in linens with aromatics. For whoever believed that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again, these have raised the high summit of true faith with the gables of virtues. Where therefore is Christ sought, in the breast of the prudent priest certainly?

33. "Flee, my brother." The Bride exhorts the Bridegroom to flee, because already she herself will be able to follow Him as He flees from earthly things. She says that He should be like a young doe which escapes from the nets; for she herself also wants to flee, and to fly away above the world. Let us flee therefore into the truest fatherland. There is our fatherland, and the father from whom we were created, where there is the city of Jerusalem which is the mother of all. But what is the flight? Certainly not of the feet, which are of the body; for these wherever they run, run on the earth, and pass from soil to soil. Nor let us flee by ships or by chariots, or by horses which are tied and fall; but let us flee in mind and in eyes, or let us accustom our interior feet and our eyes to see the things which are lucid and clear, to behold the face of continence and temperance, and all the virtues; in which let there be nothing rough, nothing obscure and tortuous: and let one behold himself and his conscience, and let him cleanse that eye; lest he have anything sordid. For that which is seen, ought not to disagree with him who sees; since God wanted us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

34. Cognitum igitur nobis est illud bonum, nec longe est ab unoquoque nostrum: In ipso enim vivimus, adsumus, et movemur; ipsius enim et genus sumus (Act. XVII, 28), ut Apostolus gentiles voluit monere. Ipsum est enim bonum quod quaerimus, et solum bonum; nemo enim bonus, nisi solus Deus. Hic est oculus, qui magnum illum et verum decorem intuetur. Solem nisi sanus et valens oculus non aspicit, nec bonum potest videre nisi anima bona: fiat ergo bonus, qui vult vedere Dominum, et quod est bonum. Hujus boni similes simus, et secundum id operemur quae bona sunt. Hoc est bonum quod supra omnem operationem est, supra omnem mentem atque intellectum, ipsum est quod semper manet, dans vivere et esse omnibus; quia fons est omnium vitae Christus, de quo propheta ait: In umbra ejus vivemus. Nunc enim vita nostra abscondita in Christo est: cum autem apparuerit Christus vita nostra, et nos apparebimus cum ipso in gloria.

35. Ergo non timeamus mortem; quoniam requies est corporis, animae autem vel libertas vel absolutio. Nec vereamur eum qui potest carnem interficere, animam autem non potest; quia non timemus eum qui potest vestimentum auferre, non timemus eum qui potest nostra furari, nos autem non potest. Nos igitur animae simus, si volumus esse Hebraei de iis qui sunt socii Jacob, id est, imitatores ejus. Nos animae simus, nostra autem membra vestimenta sunt: servanda sunt quidem vestimenta ne scindantur, ne inveterascant: sed illo magis qui his utitur, servare se debet et custodire.

34. Therefore that good is known to us, nor is it far from each one of us: "For in Him we live, are present, and move; for we are also His offspring" (Acts 17:28), as the Apostle wanted to warn the gentiles. For He Himself is the good which we seek, and the only good; for no one is good, except God alone. This is the eye, which gazes upon that great and true decorum. The sun is not beheld except by a sound and strong eye, nor can the good be seen except by a good soul: let him therefore become good, who wants to see the Lord, and that which is good. Let us be like this good, and according to it let us work the things that are good. This is the good which is above every operation, above every mind and intellect, it is that which always remains, giving to live and to be to all; because Christ is the fountain of life for all, of whom the prophet says: "In His shadow we shall live." For now our life is hidden in Christ: but when Christ our life appears, then we also shall appear with Him in glory.

35. Therefore let us not fear death; since it is the rest of the body, but for the soul either liberty or absolution. Nor let us fear him who can kill the flesh, but cannot kill the soul; because we do not fear him who can take away the garment, we do not fear him who can steal our things, but cannot steal us. Let us therefore be souls, if we want to be Hebrews of those who are companions of Jacob, that is, imitators of him. Let us be souls, but our members are garments: the garments are indeed to be kept lest they be rent, lest they grow old: but much more he who uses these, ought to keep and guard himself.