

Corporeality in the Song Commentary by Bernard of Clairvaux

Introduction

NB: This document is situated under *Essays Related to the Early Church* simply because the normal one (i.e., Patristics) has many articles. It's simply a matter of space.

Not long ago I had posted a document under the same title as the one at hand but later took it down. The goal was to present excerpts from Bernard's **Song Commentary** dealing with how very vivid examples of human corporeality apply to things spiritual, quite a bold move by any standards. That document got as far as Sermon Ten. After a while the arbitrary choices of passages became more difficult to maintain which contributed to a sagging interest in the project. No longer was it enjoyable to sit down and continue with the document. It became a real chore. A short time into the **Commentary** revealed it shot through and through with references to corporeality in one form or another. To do it justice meant going through the entire text, a task which seemed next to impossible. ¹

¹As for the original **Corporeality** text, the Introduction is posted here simply not to discard it:

Because the text at hand will be updated for some time to come, always it will remain at the project end. We're all familiar with how we make contact with the outside world or all that which is outside our bodies. Automatically we think the best way of effecting this is through the faculties of seeing and of hearing, with emphasis upon the former. It seems that both filter 99.99% of reality to our brains whereas the senses of taste, smell and touch play a secondary or supporting role. They're even relegated to the back burner except when it comes to things sensual or sexual. In other words, we tend to think of these three senses as means to obtain pleasure. Thus a certain conflict between the so-called higher senses is implied which is quite unfortunate when it comes to discerning things spiritual. This necessitates taking a closer look at these neglected three senses because they provide information that sight and hearing can't come close to offering. They are in immediate contact with reality that's less susceptible to misinterpretation compared with what we have seen or have heard.

What's special about the three senses is their non-mental, one-on-one contact between our bodies and the outside world. With the exception of touch [for the most part), smell and taste bring the outside world into very ourselves. Generally their impressions last longer than what we've processed through sight or hearing. For example, the smell of burning leaves in autumn bring us right back to childhood. Also we can draw an immediate comparison with the taste of tomato sauce we're enjoying right now with the one grandma used to make, this no matter how long ago she had passed on.

This document examines a number of excerpts from Bernard's **Commentary on the Song of Songs** by St. Bernard of Clairvaux where constantly he employs corporeality as an analogy to describe things spiritual. Quite often he makes use of the senses of taste, smell and touch in a manner which is quite incomparable. Those references, in fact, are the ones we're after here. To be sure, we're wrestling with a paradox but a deliberate one which other writers were quick to get on board. After all, we as humans use all our senses to move around in the world. Thus it's natural for us to employ them for making analogies as to what we perceive as unseen or the spiritual realm.

Bernard's works don't find too much favor nowadays, many people considering him rather gooey or flowery (two good sensory words) compared with more abstract or "spiritual" authors. They are right. However, that impression comes largely from translations compared with the original Latin. Actually when you read him in that language, you're transported into a wholly-other reality. Even after a brief exposure you come away with the impression, how could a human being write like that? Some may disagree with this...perfectly acceptable...that not being an

So instead of slugging through eighty-six sermons in Latin, I decided to focus in on key passages dealing with this corporeality ¹. First comes the Latin followed by the English translation. Within the Latin are bracketed off translations, somethings with a brief notation. ³. In most cases alternate meanings are given for the purpose of enhancing an understanding of the text even if they don't apply to it directly. Also, the original form of the word is maintained, for example, the very first one being *saeculo* which isn't rendered by the normative *saeculum*. The same obviously applies to verbs and adjectives. As we move deeper into the **Commentary**, certain words and phrases are bound to repeat themselves. Some will be noted, many by their familiarity, and thus no need to give a translation. This dropping off, if you will, of words that have become familiar presumes that one has been reading through the text pretty much in its entirety or at least one sermon in its entirety. Obviously the occurrences of some words can reach a high number when taking into account the **Commentary** as a whole.

With regard to the critical Latin text, it is in two volumes entitled **Sermones super Cantica Canticorum** (Rome 1957 and 1958). As for the English translation, it comprises four volumes published by Cistercian Publications. The manner of identifying the excerpts are as follows: the first numeral represents the sermon followed by a dash and another numeral. This second numeral represents the paragraph of both the Latin and English translations.

Postings will be made regularly until all eighty-six sermons (hopefully!) are complete.

Sermon One

1-1. Vobis, fratres, alia quam aliis de saeculo [world; connotes an age or generation], aut certe aliter [differently, wrongly] dicenda sunt. Illis siquidem lac potum dat, et non escam [difference between milk and food, the latter being a dish prepared for table] [1 Cor. III, 2], qui Apostoli formam tenet [to hold or possess a shape, figure] in docendo [taught, instructed]. Nam spiritualibus solidiora apponenda [appointed] esse, itidem ipse suo docet exemplo, Loquimur, inquam, non in doctis humanae sapientiae [wisdom, discernment, skilled practice] verbis, sed in doctrina spiritus [compare with its opposite, *doctis humanae*], spiritualibus spiritualia comparantes [arrange, appoint, establish]; item, Sapientiam [capital S intimates a divine person] loquimur inter [between, among] perfectos [completed, caused] [1 Cor. II, 13, 6], quales vos nimirum esse confido [to trust, rely upon]; nisi frustra [in deception, error] forte jam ex longo studiis [extended, prolonged & pursuit, eagerness] estis coelestibus occupati [having been taken possession of, full],

uncommon perception. On top of it, Bernard quotes scripture like crazy. He strings together direct quotes or parts of them one after another. In translation that makes for boring, an almost list-like reading experience. Yet again, the Latin text is a completely different matter.

- 1 An exception! The first sermon is in full. This was part of the original plan to go through the entire **Commentary**. Instead of deleting or modifying it, I decided to leave it as it is.
- 3 Many, certainly not all, words are noted. Also many words are recognizable clearly; some are omitted whereas others are defined because they have a broader application than the English derivative. All in all this is somewhat arbitrary but geared to reading the text in the spirit of *lectio divina*. Also, for the most part, the classical Latin definition (as opposed to ecclesiastical) is inserted.

exercitati [trained, skilled, disciplined] sensibus, et in lege Dei meditati [planned, worked out] die ac nocte. Itaque parate fauces [throat, gullet], non lacti, sed pani. Est panis apud Salomonem, isque admodum splendidus sapidusque [savory, splendid, wise]; librum [bread and book are the same; one is to eat the Song of Songs] dico, qui Cantica canticorum inscribitur: proferatur, si placet, et frangatur [to break, shatter].

The instructions that I address to you, my brothers, will differ from those I should deliver to people in the world, at least the manner will be different. The preacher who desires to follow St Paul's method of teaching will give them milk to drink rather than solid food, and will serve a more nourishing diet to those who are spiritually enlightened: "We teach," he said, "not in the way philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually." And again: "We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity," in whose company, I feel assured, you are to be found, unless in vain have you prolonged your study of divine teaching, mortified your senses, and meditated day and night on God's law. Be ready then to feed on bread rather than milk. Solomon has bread to give that is splendid and delicious, the bread of that book called "The Song of Songs." Let us bring it forth then if you please, and break it.

1-2. Nam de verbis Ecclesiastes satis [adequately, sufficiently], ni fallor, per Dei gratiam instructi [equipped, prepared] estis mundi hujus cognoscere et contemnere [to learn, be acquainted, recognize & to scorn, despise] vanitatem [emptiness, nothingness]. Quid et Parabolas? An non vita et mores [manner, custom, behavior] vestri juxta eam quae in ipsis invenitur doctrinam sufficienter emendati sunt et informati [corrected & delineated, fashioned, instructed]? Proinde illis ambobus praelibatis [offering, first fruits], quos nihilominus de amici arca praestitos [present, at hand] accepistis, accedite [approach, advance] et ad tertium hunc panem, ut probetis [approve, demonstrate] forsitan potiora. Cum enim duo sint mala [destructive], quae vel sola, vel maxime militant [to wage war] adversus animam, vanus scilicet amor mundi et superfluous [empty & overflowing, unnecessary] sui, pesti [disease, plague] utrique duo illi libri obviare [to resist, hinder] noscuntur [to recognize]; alter sarculo disciplinae prava [crooked, deformed] quaeque in moribus [manner, custom, behavior], et carnis superflua [flowing over] resecans [curtailing]; alter luce rationis in omni gloria mundi fucum [pretense, disguise] vanitatis sagaciter deprehendens [wisely & to seize, overtake], veraciterque [truly] distinguens a solido veritatis [along with the adverb veraciter]. Denique universis [whole, entire, collectively] humanis studiis [study, eagerness, desire], ac mundanis [worldly, cosmopolitan] desideriis praetulit [to place before another] Deum timere [to fear], ejusque observare mandata [mandate, law]. Merito quidem. Verae etenim sapientiae primum illud, initium; secundum, consummatio [summing up, conclusion] est: si tamen constat [to stand together, to agree] vobis non aliud veram et consummatam esse sapientiam, quam declinare [to bend, turn away] a malo, et facere bonum; itemque recedere [to fall back, retreat] a malo neminem posse perfecte [achieved; adverb] absque timore Dei, nec bonum opus [accomplishment] omnino esse praeter observantiam [observance, remark, note] mandatorum.

Now, unless I am mistaken, by the grace of God you have understood quite well from the book of Ecclesiastes how to recognize and have done with the false promise of this world. And then the

book of Proverbs—has not your life and your conduct been sufficiently amended and enlightened by the doctrine it inculcates? These are two loaves of which it has been your pleasure to taste, loaves you have welcomed as coming from the cupboard of a friend. Now approach for this third loaf that, if possible, you may always recognize what is best. Since there are two evils that comprise the only, or at least the main, enemies of the soul: a misguided love of the world and an excessive love of self, the two books previously mentioned can provide an antidote to each of these infections. One uproots pernicious habits of mind and body with the hoe of self-control. The other, by the use of enlightened reason, quickly perceives a delusive tinge in all that the world holds glorious, truly distinguishing between it and deeper truth. Moreover, it causes the fear of God and the observance of his commandments to be preferred to all human pursuits and worldly desires. And rightly so, for the former is the beginning of wisdom, the latter its culmination, for there is no true and consummate wisdom other than the avoidance of evil and the doing of good, no one can successfully shun evil without the fear of God, and no work is good without the observance of the commandments.

1-3. Depulsis [expelled, repelled] ergo duobus malis duorum lectione [a picking, selecting] librorum, competenter [suitably, properly] jam acceditur [to come toward, approach] ad hunc sacrum theoricumque [related to observation, consideration] sermonem: qui cum sit amborum fructus [profit, produce, enjoyment], non nisi sobriis [not drunk] mentibus [mind, intellect, reason] et auribus omnino credendus est [to confide in, trust]. Alioquin ante carnem disciplinae [teaching, method, instruction] studiis [study, eagerness, desire] edomitam [tamed] et mancipatam [to transfer, sell] spiritui, ante spretam et abjectam [severed, rejected & cast away] saeculi pompam [procession] et sarcinam [package, burden], indigne [unworthily, shamefully] ab impuris lectio sancta praesumitur [to anticipate, presuppose]. Quomodo nempe lux incassum [to no purpose] circumfundit [to flow around] oculos caecos vel clausos [blind & closed], ita animalis homo non percipit [to perceive, feel, understand] ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei [ibid., 14]. Quippe Spiritus sanctus disciplinae effugiet [to flee] fictum [feigned, fictitious] [Sap. 1, 5], quod est vita incontinens [impudent, intemperate]; sed nec erit ei unquam pars cum mundi vanitate, cum veritatis sit Spiritus [Joan. XIV, 17]. Quae enim societas [union for common purpose] ei quae desursum [from above] est sapientiae, et sapientiae mundi, quae stultitia [folly, stupidity] est apud Deum [1 Cor. III, 19]; aut sapientiae carnis, quae et ipsa inimica [hostile, unfriendly] est Deo? [Rom. VIII, 7.] Puto [to value, esteem, judge] autem quod jam non habebit unde adversum nos murmuret [to grumble, complain] is, qui nobis de via venit amicus, cum et tertium istum insumpserit [to spend, apply] panem.

Taking it then these two evils have been warded off by the reading of choice books, we may suitably proceed with this holy and contemplative discourse which, as the fruit of the other two, may be delivered only to well prepared ears and minds. Before the flesh has been tamed and the spirit set free by zeal for truth, before the world's glamour and entanglements have been firmly repudiated, it is a rash enterprise on any man's part to presume to study spiritual doctrines. Just as a light is flashed in vain on closed or sightless eyes, so "an unspiritual person cannot accept anything of the Spirit of God." For "the Holy Spirit of instruction shuns what is false," and that is what the life of the intemperate man is. Nor will he ever have a part with the pretensions of the world, since he is the Spirit of Truth. How can there be harmony between the wisdom that comes

down from above and the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness to God, or the wisdom of the flesh which is at enmity with God? I am sure that the friend who comes to us on his travels will have no reason to murmur against us after he has shared in this third loaf.

1-4. Sed quis franget? Adest [to be present, attend] paterfamilias; cognoscite [to be acquainted, recognize] Dominum in fractione panis. Quis enim alter idoneus [suitable, proper]? Non equidem ego mihi istud temere [to fear] arrogaverim [to claim as one's own, associate with]. Sic spectetis [to watch, observe] ad me, ut ex [ad & ex or to and from] me non exspectetis [to wait for]. Nam et ego unus sum de exspectantibus, mendicans [begging, asking] et ipse vobiscum cibum animae meae, alimoniam spiritus [cibum & alimonia, two words for sustenance with anima & spiritus]. Revera [actually, in fact] pauper [poor, in the general sense] et inops [helpless, destitute] pulso [to push, strike] ad eum, qui aperit et nemo claudit [to open & to close], super sermonis hujus profundissimo [intense, extreme] sacramento. Oculi omnium in te sperant [to hope for], Domine. Parvuli petierunt panem [three consecutive words beginning with 'p,' indicative of fast motion]; non est qui frangat eis; speratur id a benignitate [liberality, favor] tua. O piissime, [most pious] frange esurientibus [hungering] panem tuum, meis quidem, si dignaris [to deem worthy], manibus, sed tuis viribus [strength, force, virtue]

But who is going to divide this loaf? The Master of the house is present, it is the Lord you must see in the breaking of the bread. For who else could more fittingly do it? It is a task that I would not dare to arrogate to myself. So look upon me as one from whom you look for nothing. For I myself am one of the seekers, one who begs along with you for the food of my soul, the nourishment of my spirit. Poor and needy, I knock at that door of his which, "when he opens, nobody can close," that I may find light on the profound mystery to which this discourse leads. Patiently all creatures look to you, O Lord. "Little children go begging for bread; no one spares a scrap for them;" they await it from your merciful love. O God most kind, break your bread for this hungry flock, through my hands indeed if it should please you, but with an efficacy that is all your own.

1-5. Dic, quaeso, [to beseech] nobis, a quo, de quo, ad quemve dicitur: Osculetur me osculo oris sui? [Cant. 1, 1.] aut quale est istud ita subitaneum [sudden, unexpected], et factum repente [suddenly] de medio sermonis exordium [formal beginning]? Sic quippe in verba prorumpit [to burst forth or out of], quasi quempiam loquentem praemisit [to sent forward or ahead], cui consequenter [appropriately, suitably] respondentem et hanc introducat personam, quaecumque est ipsa quae osculum flagitat [to demand, require]. Deinde si se osculari a nescio [to be ignorant] quo vel petit, vel praecipit [to ask, request & to seize beforehand]; cur signanter et [expressly & in detail] ore, et ore suo; quasi aliud quam os, aut alienum, et non potius suum, exhibere [to hold forth, show, sustain] sibi soleant [to be accustomed to] osculantes? Quanquam ne hoc quidem dicit: Osculetur me ore suo: sed aliud profecto inusitatus [more unusual, uncommon]; Osculo, inquit, oris sui. Et quidem jucundum [pleasant, agreeable] eloquium [speech, diction], quod ab osculo principium [beginning, origin] sumit, et blanda [pleasant, agreeable] ipsa quaedam Scripturae facies facile afficit et allicit [to treat, manage & to entice, attract] ad legendum [to be chosen, read], ita ut quod in ea latet, delectet [to conceal & to delight, please] etiam cum labore investigare [to track or trace out] nec fatiget inquirendi forte difficultas, ubi eloquii suavitas

[sweetness, pleasantness] mulcet [to beat up, cudgel]. Verum quem non valde [very much] attentum faciat istiusmodi principium sine principio. et novitas [newness, strangeness] locutionis in veteri libro? Unde constat hoc opus non humano ingenio [innate, natural quality], sed Spiritus arte ita compositum [ordered, arranged, composed], ut quamvis difficile intellectu [comprehension, understanding] sit tamen inquisitu [search] delectabile [enjoyable, agreeable].

Tell us, I beg you, by whom, about whom and to whom it is said: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth." How shall I explain so abrupt a beginning, this sudden irruption as from a speech in mid-course? For the words spring upon us as if indicating one speaker to whom another is replying as she demands a kiss— whoever she may be. But if she asks for or demands a kiss from somebody, why does she distinctly and expressly say with the mouth, and even with his own mouth, as if lovers should kiss by means other than the mouth, or with mouths other than their own? But yet she does not say: "Let him kiss me with his mouth"; what she says is still more intimate: "with the kiss of his mouth." How delightful a ploy of speech this, prompted into life by the kiss, with Scripture's own engaging countenance inspiring the reader and enticing him on, that he may find pleasure even in the laborious pursuit of what lies hidden, with a fascinating theme to sweeten the fatigue of research. Surely this mode of beginning that is not a beginning, this novelty of diction in a book so old, cannot but increase the reader's attention. It must follow too that this work was composed, not by any human skill but by the artistry of the Spirit, difficult to understand indeed but yet enticing one to investigate.

1-6. Sed quid? titulum praeterimus [to pass by, disregard]? Non oportet [it behooves] ne unum quidem iota [Matth. V, 18], quando et minutias jubemur [to command, order] colligere [to gather] fragmentorum, ne pereant [Joan. VI, 12]. Titulus talis est: Incipiunt Cantica canticorum Salomonis. Observa in primis Pacifici nomen, quod est Salomon, convenire [literally, to come together] principio [beginning, origin] libri, qui incipit a signo [sign, mark] pacis, id est ab osculo; simulque advertit [to turn towards] hujusmodi principiis solas ad hanc intelligendam [to understand, recognize] scripturam mentes invitari pacificas, quae sese jam a vitiorum [crime, fault] vindicare [to avenge, deliver] perturbationibus [confusion, disturbance] et curarum tumultibus [uproar, sudden outbreak of violence] praevalent [to prevail].

So now what shall we do? Shall we by-pass the title? No, not even one iota may be omitted, since we are commanded to gather up the tiniest fragments lest they be lost. The title runs: "The beginning of Solomon's Song of Songs." First of all take note of the appropriateness of the name "Peaceful," that is, Solomon, at the head of a book which opens with the token of peace, with a kiss. Take note too that by this kind of opening only men of peaceful minds, men who can achieve mastery over the turmoil of the passions and the distracting burden of daily chores, are invited to the study of this book.

1-7. Dehinc ne hoc quoque otiosum [idle, unemployed] putes [to value, arrange, consider], quod non simpliciter Cantica, sed Cantica canticorum habet inscriptio. Multa quippe legi cantica in Scripturis, et nullum illorum memini [to remember, be mindful] taliter [in such a manner] appellari [to address, call by name]. Cecinit [to sing, recite, play] Israel carmen [song, poem, incantation] Domino, quod gladium pariter [equally] et jugum evaserit [to pass over, escape]

Pharaonis, gemino maris mirabiliter [wonderfully] liberatus simul et vindicatus [freed & avenged] obsequio [complaisance, yielding]. Non tamen quod cecinit, dictum est Canticum canticorum; sed, si bene recolo [to cultivate, reconsider]: Cecinit, ait Scriptura, Israel carmen hoc Domino [Exod. XV, 1]. Cecinit etiam Debhora [Judic. V, 1], cecinit et Judith [Judith XVI, 1], cecinit et mater Samuelis [1 Reg. II, 1]; prophetae quoque aliqui cecinerunt, et nemo eorum legitur [to choose, select, read] appellasse canticum suum Cantica canticorum. Sane omnes, ni fallor [I am mistaken, deceived], cecinisse reperies [to find out, discover] pro quocunque suo, suorumve percepto commodo [perceived, observed & opportunity, convenience]: verbi gratia, pro obtentu [occupied, possessed] victoriae, pro evasione periculi [escape & danger], aut pro concupitae [coveted] rei qualiscunque adepti beneficio [overtaken, obtained & benefit]. Ita ergo plerique cecinerunt, singuli pro singulis causis, ne ingrati [ungrateful] divinis beneficiis invenirentur [to find, discover], juxta illud: Confitebitur [to acknowledge, show] tibi, cum benefeceris ei [Psal. XLVIII, 19]. At vero rex iste Salomon, sapientia singularis, sublimis gloria, rebus affluens [flowing, abounding in], pace securus [unconcerned, composed], nullius talium eguisse [to be needy, in want] cognoscitur [to learn, be acquainted with], pro quo accepto [taken, received] ista decantare [to sing the praises of] libuerit [it is pleasant, agreeable]. Sed nec Scriptura ipsa sui uspiam [anywhere, somewhere] tale aliquid significare [to show, express] videtur [to see, look at]

Again, the title is not simply the word “Song,” but “Song of Songs,” a detail not without significance. For though I have read many songs in the Scriptures, I cannot recall any that bear such a name. Israel chanted a song to Yahweh celebrating his escape from the sword and the tyranny of Pharaoh, and the twofold good fortune that simultaneously liberated and avenged him in the Red Sea. Yet even though chanted, this has not been called a “Song of Songs”; Scripture, if my memory serves me right, introduces it with the words: “Israel sang this song in honor of Yahweh.” Song poured from the lips of Deborah, of Judith, of the mother of Samuel, of several of the prophets, yet none of these songs is styled a “Song of Songs.” You will find that all of them, as far as I can see, were inspired to song because of favors to themselves or to their people, songs for a victory won, for an escape from danger or the gaining of a boon long sought. They would not be found ungrateful for the divine beneficence, so all sang for reasons proper to each, in accord with the Psalmist's words: “He gives thanks to you, O God, for blessing him.” But King Solomon himself, unique as he was in wisdom, renowned above all men, abounding in wealth, secure in his peace, stood in no need of any particular benefit that would have inspired him to sing those songs. Nor does Scripture in any place attribute such a motive to him.

1-8. Itaque divinitus inspiratus, Christi et Ecclesiae laudes, et sacri amoris gratiam, et aeterni connubii cecinit sacramenta; simulque expressit sanctae desiderium animae, et epithalamii carmen, exsultans in spiritu, jucundo composuit eulogio, figurato tamen. Nimirum velabat et ipse instar Moysi faciem suam [Exod. III, 6], non minus forsitan in hac parte fulgentem, eo quod illo adhuc in tempore nemo, aut rarus erat, qui revelata facie gloriam istam speculari sufficeret. Igitur pro sui excellentia reor nuptiale hoc carmen hujusmodi titulo praesignitum [alias praesignatum], ut merito Cantica canticorum singulariter appelletur, sicut is quoque cui canitur, singulariter est dictus: Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium [1 Tim. VI, 15].

We must conclude then it was a special divine impulse that inspired these songs of his that now celebrate the praises of Christ and his Church, the gift of holy love, the sacrament of endless union with God. Here too are expressed the mounting desires of the soul, its marriage song, an exultation of spirit poured forth in figurative language pregnant with delight. It is no wonder that like Moses he put a veil on his face, equally resplendent as it must have been in this encounter, because in those days few if any could sustain the bright vision of God's glory. Accordingly, because of its excellence, I consider this nuptial song to be well deserving of the title that so remarkably designates it, the Song of Songs, just as he in whose honor it is sung is uniquely proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords.

1-9. Caeterum vos, si vestram experientiam [trial, proof, experiment] advertatis [to turn to] , nonne in victoria, qua vicit mundum [world, including inhabitants] fides vestra, et in exitu vestro de lacu [expanse of water] miseriae [misfortune, distress] et de luto [mire] faecis [sediment, dregs], cantastis et ipsi Domino canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit? Rursus cum adjecit primum supra petram statuere [to set up, station] pedes vestros, et dirigere [to lay straight, arrange] gressus [stepping, course] vestros; puto quod et tunc nihilominus pro indulta [indulged] novitate [newness, novelty] vitae immisum [sent in, allowed] sit in os vestrum canticum [song, incantation] novum, carmen [song, poem, charm] Deo nostro. Quid cum poenitentibus [repenting] vobis non solum peccata dimisit [to send away], sed insuper promisit et praemia [prize, reward]; non multo magis spe gaudentes [to rejoice] futurorum bonorum, cantastis in viis Domini, quoniam magna est gloria Domini? At si cui forte vestrum clausum vel obscurum [shut, sealed & indistinct, shadowy] aliquid de Scripturis interdum eluxerit [to illumine], tunc prorsus necesse est pro percepta [perceived, observed] coelestis panis alimonia [nourishment] divinas mulceat [to make sweet, soften] aures in voce exultationis et confessionis sonus epulantis [feasting]. Sed et in quotidianis exercitiis et bellis [army, exercise, practice & war], quae nulla hora pie [dutiful, religious] in Christo viventibus desunt [to fail, miss, be wanting] a carne, a mundo, a diabolo, sicut militiam esse vitam hominis super terram [Job VII, 1] incessanter experimini [to tempt, prove, experience] in vobismetipsis, quotidiana necesse est cantica pro assecutis [followed, achieved] victoriis innovari [to renew, alter]. Quoties tentatio superatur, aut vitium subjugatur, aut imminens [overhanging, threatening] periculum [danger] declinatur [to turn aside], aut laqueus [noose, snare] insidians [ambushing, lurking] deprehenditur [to seize, snatch, overtake] aut annosa [full of years, aged] et inveterata [rendered old, aged] quaecunque animae passio [suffering, enduring] semel perfecteque sanatur, [to restore, correct] aut multum diuque cupita [desired] et saepius petita [sought] virtus tandem aliquando Dei munere [service, obligation] obtinetur [to occupy, demonstrate], quid nisi toties, juxta prophetam, personat gratiarum [thankfulness] actio et vox laudis [Isai. LI, 3], et ad singula quaeque beneficia benedicatur [two words with bene- or wellness] Deus in donis suis? Alioquin ingratus [thankless, unpleasant] reputabitur, cum discussio [discussion, examination] venerit, qui non poterit dicere Deo: Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuae tuae in loco peregrinationis [sojourn, pilgrimage] meae [Psal. CXVIII, 54].

Furthermore if you look back on your own experience, is it not in that victory by which your faith overcomes the world, in “your exit from the horrible pit and out of the slough of the marsh,” that you yourselves sing a new song to the Lord for all the marvels he has performed? Again, when he

purposed to “settle your feet on a rock and to direct your steps,” then too, I feel certain, a new song was sounding on your lips, a song to our God for his gracious renewal of your life. When you repented he not only forgave your sins but even promised rewards, so that rejoicing in the hope of benefits to come, you sing of the Lord's ways: how great is the glory of the Lord! And when, as happens, texts of Scripture hitherto dark and impenetrable at last become bright with meaning for you, then, in gratitude for this nurturing bread of heaven you must charm the ears of God with a voice of exultation and praise, a festal song. In the daily trials and combats arising from the flesh, the world and the devil, that are never wanting to those who live devout lives in Christ, you learn by what you experience that man's life on earth is a ceaseless warfare, and are impelled to repeat your songs day after day for every victory won. As often as temptation is overcome, an immoral habit brought under control, an impending danger shunned, the trap of the seducer detected, when a passion long indulged is finally and perfectly allayed, or a virtue persistently desired and repeatedly sought is ultimately obtained by God's gift; so often, in the words of the prophet, let thanksgiving and joy resound. For every benefit conferred, God is to be praised in his gifts. Otherwise when the time of judgment comes, that man will be punished as an ingrate who cannot say to God: “Your statutes were my song in the land of exile.”

1-10. Arbitror [to judge, witness, believe] vos in vobis ipsis illa jam recognoscere [to know again, recollect], quae in psalterio, non Cantica canticorum, sed Cantica Graduum [step, pace, rank] appellantur [to address, call by name], eo quod ad singulos profectus [advanced, progressed] vestros, juxta ascensiones quas quisque in corde suo disposuit [to dispose, arrange], singula sint cantica depromenda [that which is brought, fetched, produced] ad laudem et gloriam promoventis [propelling, advancing]. Quonam modo impleatur [to fill up, satisfy] aliter ille versiculus [short verse, single line] non video: Vox exultationis et salutis in tabernaculis justorum [Psal. CXVII, 15]; aut certe Apostoli iila pulcherrima saluberrimaque [beautiful & healthy, wholesome] exhortatio: In psalmis, hymnis, et canticis spiritualibus cantantes, et psallentes in cordibus vestris Domino [Ephes. V, 19].

Again I think that your own experience reveals to you the meaning of those psalms, which are called not Songs of Songs but Songs of the Steps, in that each one, at whatever stage of growth he be, in accord with the upward movements of his heart may choose one of these songs to praise and give glory to him who empowers you to advance. I don't know how else these words could be true: “There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the just.” And still more that beautiful and salutary exhortation of the Apostle: “With psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts.”

1-11. Sed est canticum, quod sui singulari [unique, alone] dignitate et suavitate [worth, merit, suitability & agreeableness, charm] cunctis merito quae memoravimus [to remind, bring to mind], et si qua sunt alia, antecellit [to surpass, prevail over]: et jure [right, law] hoc appellaverim Canticum canticorum, quia caeterorum omnium ipsum est fructus. Istiusmodi canticum sola unctio docet [to teach, instruct, inform], sola addiscit [to learn in addition to, be informed] experientia [trial, proof, experiment]. Experti [lacking, without] recognoscant [to know again, recollect], inexperti [untried, inexperienced] inardescant [to kindle, become glowing] desiderio [longing, wish], non tam cognoscendi [to be known, recognized], quam experiendi [proved,

tested]. Non est enim strepitus [wild din, noise, crash] oris, sed jubilus [a rejoicing, melodic group of tones to which is chanted the last 'a' of the second and third alleluias, often following the gradual of the Mass] cordis; non sonus labiorum, sed motus [sound & movement, motion] gaudiorum; voluntatum, non vocum consonantia [a sounding together]. Non auditur foris [outside], nec enim in publico personat [to sound through]: sola quae cantat audit, et cui cantatur, id est sponsa et sponsus. Est quippe nuptiale carmen, exprimens [to squeeze out, pronounce] castos jucundosque [pure & joyful] complexus [embrace] animorum, morum [manner, custom] concordiam, affectuumque [affection, mood, emotion] consentaneam [agreeing, according with] ad alterutrum charitatem.

But there is that other song which, by its unique dignity and sweetness, excels all those I have mentioned and any others there might be; hence by every right do I acclaim it as the Song of Songs. It stands at a point where all the others culminate. Only the couch of the Spirit can inspire a song like this, and only personal experience can unfold its meaning. Let those who are versed in the mystery revel in it; let all others burn with desire rather to attain to this experience than merely to learn about it. For it is not a melody that resounds abroad but the very music of the heart, not a trilling on the lips but an inward pulsing of delight, a harmony not of voices but of wills. It is a tune you will not hear in the streets, these notes do not sound where crowds assemble; only the singer hears it and the one to whom he sings - the lover and the beloved. It is preeminently a marriage song telling of chaste souls in loving embrace, of their wills in sweet concord, of the mutual exchange of the heart's affections.

1-12. Caeterum non est illud cantare seu audire animae puerilis et neophytae [boyish, youthful & newly converted] adhuc, et recens conversae [reversed, converted] de saeculo, sed provectae [carried forward] jam et eruditae [instructed, cultivated, enlightened] mentis; quae suis nimirum profectibus [advanced, progressed]. Deo promovente [propelling, advancing], in tantum jam creverit [to increase, grow], quatenus [to what extent] ad perfectam aetatem, et ad nubiles [of marriageable age] quodam modo pervenerit [to come through] annos, annos dico meritorum, non temporum; [deserved & time, period] facta nuptiis coelestis sponsi idonea [suitable, proper], qualis denique suo loco plenius describetur. Sed praeterit [to pass by, surpass] hora [hour, season], qua nos exire [to exit, avoid] urget ad opera manuum et paupertas et institutio [disposition, arrangement] regularis [to direct]. Cras in nomine Domini quod coeperamus [to begin] prosequemur [to escort, pursue] de osculo, quia de titulo hodiernus sermo nos expedivit [to procure, obtain].

The novices, the immature, those but recently converted from a worldly life, do not normally sing this song or hear it sung. Only the mind disciplined by persevering study, only the man whose efforts have borne fruit under God's inspiration, the man whose years, as it were, make him ripe for marriage years measured out not in time but in merits - only he is truly prepared for nuptial union with the divine partner, a union we shall describe more fully in due course. But the hour has come when both our rule and the poverty of our state demand that we go out to work. Tomorrow, with God's help, we shall continue to speak about the kiss, because today's discourse on the title sets us free to resume where we had begun.

Sermon Two

2-1. Senserat [to feel, perceive with either senses or with mind] nimirum in spiritu, quisquis tunc spiritualis esse poterat, quanta foret gratia diffusa [spread] in labiis illis. Propterea loquens in desiderio animae aiebat, Osculetur me osculo oris sui; nimirum omnimodis cupiens [desiring, longing for] tantae suavitatis [sweetness, agreeableness] participio [sharing, partaking] non fraudari [to cheat, defraud].

And intense desire springing from that perception impelled him to utter: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth," hoping with every fiber of his being that he might not be deprived of a share in a pleasure so great.

2-2. Cujus utique sermo vivus et efficax [living & efficacious] osculum mihi est, non quidem conjunctio [combination, association] labiorum, quae interdum pacem mentitur [to lie, deceive] animorum; sed plane infusio [pouring in] gaudiorum [joy, delight], revelatio [uncovering] secretorum [secluded, confided], mira [wonderful, marvelous] quaedam et quodam modo indiscreta [undistinguishable, apart] commixtio [mixing with] superni [upper, lofty] luminis et illuminatae [adorned] mentis. Adhaerens [clinging to] quippe Deo, unus spiritus est [1 Cor. V, 17]

For his living, active word is to me a kiss, not indeed an adhering of the lips that can sometimes belie a union of hearts, but an unreserved infusion of joys, a revealing of mysteries, a marvelous and indistinguishable mingling of the divine light with the enlightened mind, which, joined in truth to God, is one spirit with him.

2-2. Nec sane [soundly, soberly] praesumo [to anticipate, presuppose] me osculatum iri ab ore ipsius est enim hoc assumpti [received, adopted] hominis unicae felicitatis [happiness, good fortune] et praerogativae [sure sign, verdict, election] singularis.

Note how I do not presume that it is with his mouth I shall be kissed, for that constitutes the unique felicity and singular privilege of the human nature he assumed.

2-3. Felix [happy, fortunate] osculum, ac stupenda [to be dazed, astonished] dignatione [dignity, reputation] mirabile, in quo non os ori imprimitur [to press, print], sed Deus homini unitur. Et ibi quidem contactus [touching-with] labiorum complexum [to grasp-with] significat [to mean, have sense] animorum: hic autem confoederatio [an agreeing-with] naturarum divinis humana componit [to place-with], quae in terra sunt, et quae in coelis pacificans [making peace].

A fertile kiss therefore, a marvel of stupendous self-abasement that is not a mere pressing of mouth upon mouth; it is the uniting of God with man. Normally the touch of lip on lip is the sign of the loving embrace of hearts, but this conjoining of natures brings together the human and divine.

2-4. Fuit namque in tempore [period, age] illo rara [scattered, uncommon] fides in terris, et tenuis [thin, slight] admodum spes in pluribus quoque illorum qui exspectabant [to wait for] redemptionem [buying back] Israel.

For in those days faith was a rare thing on the earth, and hope but a faint impulse in the heart even of many of those who looked forward to the deliverance of Israel.

Sermon Three

3-1. Sed si quis ex ore Christi spirituale osculum vel semel accepit, hunc proprium experimentum [test, trial, experience] profecto [actually, indeed] sollicitat [to attract, excite], et repetit [to recount, resume] libens [ready, glad, cheerful]. Ego arbitror [to judge, witness, believe] neminem vel scire [to know in the sense of having knowledge] posse quid sit, nisi qui accipit.

But anyone who has received this mystical kiss from the mouth of Christ at least once, seeks again that intimate experience, and eagerly looks for its frequent renewal. I think that nobody can grasp what it is except the one who receives it.

3-2. Flevit [to weep] amare [bitterly], et de intimis [very secret] visceribus [entrails] longa suspiria [deep breath, sigh] trahens [to drag, prolong], salutaribus [healthy, advantageous] intra se succussa [shaking] singultibus [sobbing], felleos [gall] humores [liquid, fluid] evomuit [to vomit up]

She (Ethiopian queen) wept bitterly, she sighed deeply from her heart, she sobbed with a repentance that shook her very being, till the evil that inflamed her passions was cleansed away.

3-4. Longus saltus [leap] et arduus [steep, lofty] est de pede ad os, sed nec accessus [advance] conveniens [convening, meaning].

It is a long and formidable leap from the foot to the mouth, a manner of approach that is not commendable.

3-5. Jam tandem in osculis duobus geminum [twin, paired] habens divinae dignationis [respect, regard] experimentum [test, trial, experience], forsan [perhaps] non confunderis [to pour or mix together] praesumere [to anticipate, take for granted]. Quantum quippe crescis [to grown, increase] in gratiam, tantum et in fiduciam dilataris [to spread out, extend]. Inde fit, ut et ames ardentius, et pulsos [pulse, beat] fidentius [bold, confident] pro eo quod tibi deesse [to be lacking] sentis [to feel or perceive with the senses or mind]

Once you have had this twofold experience of God's benevolence in these two kisses, you need no longer feel abashed in aspiring to a holier intimacy. Growth in grace brings expansion of confidence You will love with greater ardor, and knock on the door with greater assurance, in order to gain what you perceive to be still wanting to you.

3-6. Et nunc quid restat [to stand firm, remain] o bone Domine, nisi ut jam in plenitudine [fullness, abundance] lucis, in fervore [ardor, passion, fury] spiritus ad oris quoque osculum dignanter admittens [letting in], adimpleas [to fill up, perform] me laetitia [joy, gladness] cum vultu [expression, appearance] tuo?

O good Jesus, except that suffused as I am with the fullness of your light, and while my spirit is fervent, you would graciously bestow on me the kiss of your mouth, and give me unbounded joy in your presence.

Sermon Four

4-3. At cum etiam ad vivendum emendatius [more often corrected, free from faults], Deoque dignius conversandum [to turn around, consort, abide], placita quadam amplioris gratiae familiaritate [intimacy] donamur [to give, bestow]; ampliori fiducia [trust, confidence] caput jam levamus [to raise, lift up] de pulvere [dust], largitoris [bestower, dispenser], ut assolet [as is wont to happen], manum osculaturi.

But when God endows us with the more ample grace of a sweet friendship with him, in order to enable us to live with a virtue that is worthy of such a relationship, we tend to raise our heads from the dust with a greater confidence for the purpose of kissing, as is the custom, the hand of our benefactor.

4-4. Invenit [to find, discover] profecto [actually, indeed] apud [at, by, near] Deum et verecunda [feeling shame, modest] confessio [acknowledgment], quo se humiliando [to humble, abase] dejiciat [to throw down]; et prompta [ready, exposing to view] devotio, [fealty, deference, piety] ubi se innovando [to renew, restore] reficiat [to refresh, remake]; et jucunda [pleasant, agreeable] contemplatio [a viewing, surveying], ubi excedendo [to be retired, withdrawn] quiescat [to pause, stop, cease]

The heartfelt devotion of a worshiper finds in God renewal and refreshment, the touch, as it were, of his hand, and the delights of contemplation lead on to that ecstatic repose that is the fruit of the kiss of his mouth.

4-5. Nec solum universa [whole, entire] noscit [to recognize, be acquainted with] sine corpore, sed et innotescit [to become known] mundis [clean, pure] corde sine corpore.

Not merely does he know all things without a body's intervention, he also makes himself known to the pure in heart without the need for recourse to it.

Sermon Five

5-1. Verum nos vivimus quidem post corpus; sed ad [contrast between post and this ad, after and to] ea quibus beate vivitur, nullus nobis accessus [approached, advanced] patet [to be open, exposed, attainable], nisi per corpus.

We indeed continue to live after the body's death, but only by means of the body do we gain those merits that lead to a life of blessedness.

5-1. Habet ergo necessarium corpus spiritualis creatura quae nos sumus, sine quo nimirum nequaquam [without doubt & not at all] illam scientiam [knowledge] assequitur [to overtake, comprehend, attain], quam solam accepit [to receive, hear of, learn] gradum [stage, step] ad ea, de quorum fit cognitione [examination, learning] beata.

Therefore our souls have need of a body. Without it we cannot attain to that form of knowledge by which alone we are elevated toward the contemplation of truths essential to happiness.

5-4. Quo enim is involutus [wrapped in] carne et terrae incola [inhabitant, resident] spiritus, ex consideratione [inspection, contemplation] sensibilibus [perceptible, detectable] proficiens [advancing], gradatim [step by step] quodam modo paulatimque [little by little] nititur [to mount, press forward] pervenire [to reach attain] eo ille coelestium habitator [tenant, dweller] ingenita [implanted, engendered] subtilitate ac sublimitate [fineness, keenness & height, loftiness] sua, in omni velocitate facilitateque [speed & ease, readiness] pertingit [to stretch out, extend]

For, what the spirit clothed in flesh and dwelling on the earth strives to achieve gradually and little by little, through the knowledge it derives from the senses, that same the dweller of the heavens attains with all speed and ease, because of the native fineness and sublime quality of its being.

5-5. Porro hominis spiritum, qui medium quemdam inter supremum et infimum tenet [to grasp, possess, hold] locum, usque adeo ad utrumque necessarium habere corpus manifestum est, ut absque eo nec ipse proficere [to take advantage, benefit], nec alteri prodesse [to be useful] possit.

We come now to the spirit of man. This, since it holds a middle place between the extremes of bestial and angelic spirits, manifestly has a twofold need of a body: without it the soul can act neither for its own advantage nor for the benefit of others.

5-8. Illud autem scitote [to know, have knowledge], nullum creatorum spirituum per se nostris mentibus applicari [to apply, attach], ut videlicet [clearly, evidently], nullo mediante [being in the middle] nostri sive corporis instrumento [tool, utensil, equipment], ita nobis immisceatur vel infundatur [to mix into & to pour into], quo ejus participatione docti sive doctiores [taught, instructed & wiser, more learned], vel boni sive meliores efficiamur [to work out, complete, accomplish].

Try to understand this however, that no created spirit can of itself act directly on our minds. This means that without the mediation of a bodily instrument it cannot make contact with or infuse

itself into our minds, so that thereby we either acquire knowledge or increase it, acquire virtue or improve on it.

5-10. Aut certe quia novit [to know, recognize] quae per quae convenientius [suitable, comfortable] fiant; de servitute [servitude, slavery] corporeae creaturae non efficaciam [power, virtue] quaerit [to question, inquire], sed congruentiam [agreement, harmony].

Again, because he knows the means that best suit his purpose, he does not choose a bodily creature for the sake of the efficacy of its action but rather for the fittingness of it.

Sermon Six

6-1. Demus ergo securi [composed, untroubled] veram soli Deo, sicut immortalitatem, ita et incorporeitatem: quod solus spirituum universam [whole, taken collectively] corpoream naturam eo usque transcendat [surpass, exceed], ut quocumque corpore in quocumque opere non indigeat [to need, want], solo, spirituali nutu [nod, command, pleasure], cum vult, ad quaecumque vult agenda [which is to be done or made] contentus [held together, contained]. Sola igitur est quae nec propter se, nec propter alium, (sola) corporei instrumenti [tool, supply] opus habet illa majestas.

We may with perfect confidence then, assert that God is truly an immaterial being, just as he is truly immortal. He alone in the world of spirits so far transcends the efficacy of all corporeal beings, that not only is he entirely independent of bodily aid in all the works that he undertakes, but by a simple gesture of his will he is able to achieve his purpose when and as he pleases. His is the sole sovereign power, therefore, that neither for intrinsic nor extrinsic reasons requires the support of a bodily form.

6-6. Verum illos spirituales pedes Dei, quos primo loco spiritualiter osculari poenitentem [repenting] oportet [it behooves, necessary], praeterire [to pass by, surpass] me non oportet.

However, I must not omit to speak of those spiritual feet of God to which the penitent's first kiss, understood in a spiritual sense, ought to be directed.

6-7. His, inquam, pedibus devotas [vowed, promised] perambulat [to walk through] mentes, incessanter [without ceasing] lustrans [purifying, illuminating], scrutansque [searching, probing, examining] corda et renes [heart & kidneys] fidelium.

With these very feet he finds his way into the souls of his lovers, tirelessly enlightening and searching the hearts and loins of the faithful.

Sermon Seven

7-2. Excellit [to raise, elevate, excel] in naturae donis affectio [the relation or disposition towards something produced in a person] haec amoris, praesertim [especially, particularly] cum ad suum recurrit [to run, hasten back] principium [beginning, origin], quod est Deus. Nec sunt inventa [discovered, having been found] aequae dulcia nomina, quibus Verbi, animaeque dulces ad invicem exprimerentur [to imitate, copy, express] affectus [affection, mood, fondness, compassion, feeling], quemadmodum sponsus et sponsa: quippe quibus omnia communia [common, universal] sunt, nil proprium [own, individual, special], nil a se divisum [separated] habentibus. Una utriusque haereditas [succession], una domus, una mensa [table], unus torus [marriage bed, swelling], una etiam caro.

Among all the natural endowments of man love holds first place, especially when it is directed to God, who is the source whence it comes. No sweeter names can be found to embody that sweet interflow of affections between the Word and the soul, than bridegroom and bride. Between these all things are equally shared, there are no selfish reservations, nothing that causes division. They share the same inheritance, the same table, the same home, the same marriage-bed, they are flesh of each other's flesh.

7-2. Non facit prooemium [preamble], non captat [to seize, grasp] benevolentiam [kindness]; sed ex abundantia cordis repente [suddenly] prorumpens [breaking forth], nude frontoseque [stripped, deprived & bold] satis: Osculetur me, ait, osculo oris sui.

There is no preamble, no attempt to conciliate favor. No, but with a spontaneous outburst from the abundance of her heart, direct even to the point of boldness, she says: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth."

7-3. Amat profecto [indeed] caste [purely, virtuously], quae ipsum quem amat, quaerit [to ask, question]; non aliud quidquam ipsius. Amat sancte, quia non in concupiscentia [longing, desire] carnis, sed in puritate [purity] spiritus. Amat ardentem, [passionately, eagerly] quae ita proprio debriatur [to intoxicate] amore, ut majestatem non cogitet [to think, consider, ponder].

Her love is surely chaste when it seeks the person whom she loves, and not some other thing of his. It is a holy love, the impulse of an upright spirit rather than of carnal desire. And it is an ardent love, blinded by its own excess to the majesty of the beloved.

7-4. Itaque per domesticos et intimos [familiar, native & very secret], accessus [approach, entry] ad intima quaeritur, ambitur [to go around, solicit] ad desideratum. Quinam illi? Credimus angelos sanctos astare [to stand by or near] orantibus [begging, entreating], offerre Deo preces et vota [prayer, request & promise, dedication, vow] hominum.

One who seeks access to the interior of the home goes round to the intimate friends or members of the household to attain what he desires. In this present instance who might these people be? In my opinion they are the holy angels who wait on us as we pray.

7-5. Cibus [food] in ore, psalmus in corde sapit [to taste, have a flavor of]. Tantum illum terere [to rub, wear out] non negligat fidelis et prudens [wise] anima quibusdam dentibus intelligentiae suae, ne si forte integrum [whole, intact] glutiat [to swallow, gulp down] et non mansum [that which is chewed], frustretur [to deceive, trick, cheat] palatum sapore [taste, flavor] desiderabili, et dulciori super [beyond, above] mel et favum [honey & comb].

As food is sweet to the palate, so does a psalm delight the heart. But the soul that is sincere and wise will not fail to chew the psalm with the teeth as it were of the mind, because if he swallows it in a lump, without proper mastication, the palate will be cheated of the delicious flavor, sweeter even than honey that drips from the comb.

7-6. Neptalim cervus [deer, stag] emissus [sent forth, discharged] interpretatur: qui nimirum agilitatis [swiftness] suae saltibus [leap, bound] exprimit [to squeeze out, express] speculantis excessus [departure, deviation], sed et opaca [dark] penetrare [to seek through] nemorum, ut ille sensuum, consuevit [to habituate, tend to].

Naphtali, a swift hind, whose powers of agile leaping signify the ecstatic ardors of the contemplative mind. As the hind penetrates the wood's dark avenues, so does the contemplative spirit penetrate the obscure meanings of things.

Sermon Eight

8-3. De ipso igitur audet [to dare, risk] sponsa, ipsumque infundi [to pour into] sibi fidenter [boldly, fearlessly] sub osculi nomine petit [to ask, beg, seek]. Tenet [to hold, grasp] quippe aliquid, unde non desit [to be wanting, lacking] occasio [opportunity] praesumendi [which is presumed]

He it is then who inspires the daring spirit of the bride, he it is whom she trustingly petitions to come to her under the guise of a kiss.

8-6. Merito [according to, with good reason] proinde sponsa, quem diligit [to esteem, have regard for] anima sua inquirens [investigating, examining], non se suae carnis sensibus credit [to confide in, entrust], non curiositatis [inquisitiveness] humanae inanibus [empty, vain, foolish] ratiociniis [reckoning, reasoning] acquiescit [to satisfy, repose]; sed petit [to seek] osculum, id est Spiritum sanctum invocat [to summon], per quem accipiat simul et scientiae gustum [taste], et gratiae condimentum [spice, flavoring].

And hence the bride, when seeking him whom her heart loves, quite properly does not put her trust in mere human prudence, nor yield to the inane conceits of human curiosity. She asks rather for a kiss, that is she calls upon the Holy Spirit by whom she is simultaneously awarded with the choice repast of knowledge and the seasoning of grace.

8-6. Itaque Pater Filium osculans, plenissime [in a most full way] illi arcana [hidden, secret] suae divinitatis eructat [to belch, vomit], et spirat [to breathe, draw breath] suavitatem [appealing to the senses as well as the mind] amoris.

Thus the Father, when he kisses the Son, pours into him the plenitude of the mysteries of his divine being, breathing forth love's deep delight.

Sermon Nine

9-2. Sed praeceps [headlong, precipitous] amor nec iudicium praestolatur, [to wait for, expect] nec consilio temperatur [to moderate, regulate], nec pudore [modesty, shame] frenatur [to curb, restrain], nec rationi [reason, calculation] subijcitur [literally, to throw under].

But headlong love does not wait for judgment, is not chastened by advice, not shackled by shame nor subdued by reason.

9-3. Suspirant [to sigh] plane [distinctly], et inhiant [to breathe in] spiritui sapientiae et intellectus [wisdom, discernment, skilled practice & comprehension, intellect]: intellectus utique quo pertinent [literally as to touch through]; sapientiae, quia gustent [to taste] quod intellectu apprehenderint [to lay hold of, grasp].

That they yearn is indeed evident, their very mouths are open to inhale the spirit of wisdom and insight: insight that they may attain to what they long for, wisdom in order to savor what the mind apprehends.

9-5. Duo sponsi ubera, duo in ipso sunt ingenitae mansuetudinis [gentleness, mildness] argumenta [argument, topic], quod et patienter [patiently, with endurance] exspectat [to wait for] delinquentem [transgressing, erring], et clementer [mercifully, gently] recipit [to receive] poenitentem [repenting]. Gemina, inquam, dulcedo [sweet taste] suavitatis [appealing to both senses and mind] exuberat [to abound, flourish] in pectore Domini Jesu, longanimitas [long suffering] videlicet in exspectando [which is to be waited or expected for], et in donando [which is to be given] facilitas [ease, readiness, willingness].

These two breasts are two proofs of his native kindness: his patience in awaiting the sinner and his welcoming mercy for the penitent. This twofold sweetness of inward joy overflows from the heart of the Lord Jesus in the form of tireless expectancy and prompt forgiveness.

9-6. Nec solum meliora vino, sed et fragrantia [sweet smelling] unguentis optimis; quia non modo internis [inward, internal, domestic] dulcedinis lacte praesentes [present, at hand] alis, sed bonae quoque opinionis [conjecture, belief, report] grato odore respergis [to sprinkle] absentes [not being present].

Not only are they better than wine, but smelling sweet of the best ointments too, for not merely do you refresh those present with the milk of inward sweetness, you also spray the pleasing perfume of good repute over the absent ones.

9-7. Tanta nempe efficaciam [efficacy, power] osculum sanctum [sacred, venerable] est, ut ex ipso mox [soon, quickly], cum acceperit [to receive] illud, sponsa concipiat [to derive, receive, catch], tumescentibus [swelling] nimirum uberibus, et lacte quasi pinguescentibus [to grow fat or rich] in testimonium [evidence].

or so great is the potency of that holy kiss, that no sooner has the bride received it than she conceives and her breasts grow rounded with the fruitfulness of conception.

9-7. Unde et ubera tibi intumuerunt [to rise, swell], facta in ubertate lactis meliora vino scientiae [knowledge] saecularis [pertaining to a generation], quae [alias, quod] quidem inebriat [to intoxicate], sed curiositate [curiosity, inquisitiveness], non charitate; implens [to fill up, satisfy], non nutriens [sucking]; inflans [puffing up], non aedificans [to build, construct]; ingurgitans [to flood, engulf], non confortans [strengthening].

That explains the expansion of your breasts, filled with a milky richness far surpassing the wine of the worldly knowledge that can intoxicate indeed but with curiosity, not charity; it fills but does not nourish; puffs up but does not build up; pampers but does not strengthen.”

9-10. Et pulchre [beautifully] vino comparant [to place together, match] carnalem affectum [affection, mood, feeling, sympathy, love]. Ut enim uva semel expressa [literally, to press out] non habet jam quod denuo [anew, fresh] fundat [to pour out, extend], sed perpetua [continuous, uninterrupted] ariditate damnatur [to discredit, find fault]; sic caro in pressura [a pressing] mortis ab omni prorsus [straight forward, certainly] sua delectatione [delight, pleasure] siccatur [to dry], nec ultra revirescit [to be renewed, become green again] ad libidines [pleasure, fancy, inclination, longing].

This comparison of carnal pleasures with wine is so very apt. For the grape, once pressed, can never again exude its liquid, it is condemned to endless dryness. So too the flesh, caught in the winepress of death, is completely drained of its co-natural pleasures, never again to revive to the stirring of sensual passions.

Sermon Ten

10-1. Igitur, juxta Pauli sententiam [opinion, thought, purpose] (alias, sapientiam), duas illas affectiones [the relation or disposition towards something produced in a person] duobus sponsae uberibus assignabo [to appoint, confer, ascribe]; compassionem [literally, a suffering with] uni, et congratulationem [a wishing, joy] alteri.

Therefore, following Paul's guidance, I shall assign these two affective movements to the bride's two breasts, compassion to one, joyful sympathy to the other.

10-2. Nam congratulatio [a wishing, joy] quidem exhortationis, compassio [literally, a suffering with] vero consolationis [comfort] lac fundit [to pour out, extend]. Porro [further, onwards] utramque speciem [semblance, kind] ubertim coelitus [from heaven] irrorari [to wet with dew, besprinkle] pio [devoutly, dutifully] pectori suo spiritualis mater toties sentit [to feel, perceive], quoties [as often as] osculum sumit.

Joyful sympathy yields the milk of encouragement, compassion that of consolation, and as often as the spiritual mother receives the kiss, so often does she feel each species flowing richly from heaven into her loving heart.

10-4. Est unguentum contritionis [grief], et est unguentum devotionis [fealty, allegiance], est et pietatis [dutiful conduct, sense of duty]. Primum pungitivum [pungent], dolorem [grief, pain] faciens; secundum temperativum [tempering], dolorem leniens [softening]; tertium sanativum [healing], etiam morbum [grief, sorrow] expellens.

There is the ointment of contrition, that of devotion and that of piety. The first is pungent, causing some pain; the second mitigates and soothes pain; the third heals the wound and rids the patient of the illness.

10-5. Est ergo unguentum, quod sibi conficit [to prepare, accomplish] anima multis irretita [entangled] criminibus [judicial decision, verdict], si, cum incipit [to begin] cogitare [to think, ponder, consider] vias suas, colligat, congerat, conteratque [three verbs prefaced with the preposition con- or with] in mortariolo [mortar] conscientiae [a fourth word with con-, literally as knowing with] multas ac varias species [external appearance, pretense] peccatorum suorum, et intra aestuantis [writhing] pectoris [chest, breast] ollam simul omnia coquat [to cook] igne quodam poenitentiae [repentance, grief] et doloris [pain, anguish].

A soul entangled in many sins can prepare for itself a certain ointment once it begins to reflect on its behavior, and collects its many and manifold sins, hems them together and crushes them in the mortar of its conscience. It cooks them, as it were, within a breast that boils up like a pot over the fire of repentance and sorrow.

10-6. Quod si attendamus [to pay attention] quanta in unius peccatoris [sinner, transgressor] conversione [the act of turning around] fragrantia respergatur [to sprinkle or splatter over] Ecclesia, et quantis fiat odor vitae ad vitam quivis poenitens [repenting].

So if we consider how great the fragrance with which the Church is perfumed in the conversion of one sinner, what a sweet smell of life leading to life each penitent can become!

10-7. Profecto [actually, indeed] cum fuerint in vasculo [small container] pectoris [chest, breast] pistillo [pestle] crebrae [thick, frequent] meditationis [the act of thinking or planning] contusa

atque contrita [subdued, beaten to a pulp & ground, crushed to pieces], deinde igne sancti desiderii [longing, wish] simul decocta [boiling down, seething] omnia, et demum [finally, eventually] impinguata [fattened] oleo laetitiae, [joy, gladness] erit unctio longe pretiosior [costlier, more expensive] excellentiorque priore.

When they shall have been pounded and refined in the heart's receptacle with the pestle of frequent meditation, all of them fused together in the fire of holy desire, and finally enriched with the oil of gladness, you will have an ointment more excellent than the former, and far more precious.

Sermon Eleven

11-1. Qui vero in gratiarum [thankfulness, grace] actione [a doing, performing] versantur [move around, dwell], Deum solum intuentur [to look upon or towards, admire] et cogitant [to think, consider, ponder]; ac per hoc ipsi vere habitant [to remain, live] in unum.

Those, however, who are employed in the work of thanksgiving are contemplating and thinking about God alone, and so they cannot help but dwell in unity.

11-8. Haec meditamini [to reflect, plan, consider], in his versamini [to move around, dwell]. Talibus ad oramentis [ointment] refovete [to warm again, restore] viscera [entrails] vestra, quae diu torsit [to twist, bend, distort] odor molestior [troublesome] peccatorum [error, fault], ut abundetis [to overflow] et his unguentis [ointment], non minus suavibus, [pleasant] quam salutaribus. [healthful, advantageous]

Meditate on these things, turn them over continually in your minds. Refresh those hearts of yours with perfumes such as these, hearts writhing so long under the repugnant odor of your sins. May you abound with these ointments, as sweet as they are salutary.