

## Book Two

(On Cant. 1.3-14—Vg. 1.4-13)

### Bk 2 #1

Sg. 1.5: I am very dark, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

Mt 6.29: Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take of them a people for his name.

Rom 11.28: As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

Ps 45.10: Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house.

Gen 1.27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen 25.13: These are the names of the sons of Ishmael.

Gen 16.11-2: And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold you are with child, and shall bear a son; you shall call his name Ishmael; because the Lord has given heed to your affliction."

Ex 25.4: Blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, goats' hair.

Jn 8.17: In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true.

Jn 10.34: Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I have said, you are gods?'"

Num 12.1: Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.

Jn 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Col 1.15: He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

Heb 1.3: He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.

Sir 8.5: Do not reproach a man who is turning away from sin.

Rom 2.23: You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the Law?

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Num 12.1-2: Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman; and they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it.

Mt 12.42: The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it.

1Kg 10.1-10 (ref. to queen of Sheba).

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Mt 12.42: For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Ps 68.31-3: Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out her hands to God. Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord.

Zeph 3.8-11: (conversion of the nations).

Jer 38.6-10: (Jeremiah in the cistern).

Jer 39.15-18: (an oracle concerning Ebed-melech).

Sg 1.5: I am very dark, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

Num 12.2: And they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Mt 21.43: Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.

Num 12.2: And they said, "has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it.

Num 12.6-8: And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Sg 1.5: I am very dark, but comely, daughters of Jerusalem like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

Rom 7.14: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Mt 12.42: The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

1Kg 10.1: Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions.

Lev 2.9: And the priest shall take from the cereal offering its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, an offering to the Lord.

Eph 2.14: For he is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.

1Kg 10.2-3: She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he could not explain to her.

Jn 15.15: No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

1Cor 13.10: But when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.  
 1Cor 13.12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.  
 Prov 9.1: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars.  
 Jn 4.34: Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work."  
 Gal 3.27: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.  
 Ps 104.15: And wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart.  
 1Kg 10.6: And she said to the king, "The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom.  
 1Kg 10.7: But I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard.  
 Heb 12.22: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.  
 1Cor 13.12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.  
 1Cor 2.9: But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."  
 1Kg 10.8: Happy are your wives! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!  
 1Ths 5.16-7: Rejoice always, pray constantly.  
 Lk 10.39: And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.  
 Lk 10.42: One thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.  
 1Kg 10.9: Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel!  
 Eph 2.14: For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.  
 1Kg 10.10: Then she gave the king 125 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.  
 1Pt 3.20: Who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water.  
 Dt 34.7: Moses was 120 years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.  
 Mt 6.4: So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.  
 Ps 68.31: Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out her hands to God.  
 Rom 11.11: So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.  
 Zeph 3.10: From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.  
 Ps 51.17: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.  
 Jn 6.37: All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.  
 Rom 11.25: Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in.  
 Rom 11.26: And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."  
 Zeph 3.11: On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me.  
 Jer So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire.  
 Jer 38.7: When Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern--the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate.  
 Mt 19.12: For there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the same of the kingdom of heaven.  
 Prov 17.2: A slave who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.  
 Jer 39.16-8: (reference to Ebed-melech).  
 1 Cor 15.12: Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?  
 Sg 1.5: I am very dark, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.  
 Mt 6.29: Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.  
 Ex 26.7-13: (curtains of goats hair for the temple).  
 Heb 8.2: A minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord.  
 Heb 9.24: For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.  
 Ex 26.7: You shall also make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make.  
 Jn 14.2: In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  
 Lk 3.8: Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father;" for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.  
 Sg 1.5: I am very dark, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.  
 Sg 8.5: Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

The bride herself admits of a paradox: that she is not just dark but "very dark" (*shychor*; from a verbal root meaning to break forth as light and implies the darkness before dawn which can seem 'very' dark) as well as "comely" (*na'veh*; from a verbal root meaning to sit in the sense of dwelling, remaining). Nevertheless, such darkness belongs to Solomon's "curtains" implying the temple at Jerusalem which he had built. Despite the glory of Solomon, he was not "arrayed" like the lilies of the field, that is, *periballo* or to

cast around.

Simeon is the same as Peter who spoke of how God had “visited” the Gentiles, the verb being *episkopeo*, to take care, to oversee (*epi-*, upon). Reference to him in the same verse is made twice a bit later which reveals the importance of this choice of Gentiles to be on the same level as the Jews, that is, they too can read the Song of Songs with the same insight.

A contrast between “enemies” and “beloved:” *echthros* and *agapetos*, the latter being derived from *agape*.

The king’s daughter is bidden to “forget” her people and house of her father, (*shakach*) which means forsaking totally her lineage. After this comes the verse pertaining to being made in the divine image and likeness, all else being secondary. Note another reference to human lineage or act of begetting through the example of Ishmael’s birth which contrasts with the spiritual one of the Song.

Note the additional colors of “blue and scarlet” as applicable to *shesh*, “stuff” or better, linen. They are to be put at the service of the ark and hence the Jerusalem temple.

Two references to Torah: the testimony of two men and the fact that we are “gods” or *theos*, the Hebrew being *’elohym*, the latter not being a god in the polytheistic sense but divine as conscious of being made in the divine image and likeness, that verse being cited just above.

Three references to Christ’s divinity: “Word, “image” and bearing the “very stamp” of the Father’s nature: Logos, *eikon* and *charakter*. The last is a mark engraved or impressed as by a stamp and applies to *hupostasis* or “nature,” literally a standing-under in the sense of a support or foundation.

Reference to the “Cushite woman” whom Moses had married results in Miriam (Moses’ sister) being afflicted with leprosy, that is, she had challenged his leadership. Despite this marriage, Moses can be taken as not unlike the bridegroom of the Song who is to be obeyed.

The queen of Sheba traveled a long distance to listen to Solomon’s “wisdom” or *sophia* yet such is not the case with Christ who is ever present in the Song of Songs and requires no distance to travel.

Reference to Egypt and Ethiopia and therefore different races in distant lands ties in with the bride being very dark but beautiful.

Origen refers to three lengthy sections: one from Zephaniah (conversion of nations) and two from Jeremiah (he in the cistern and Ebed-melech the Ethiopian), again, in light of the line just above. Which is quoted again, a fact demonstrating the importance of this verse to Origen relative to Moses and hence to proper transmission of divine revelation.

“And the Lord heard it” refers to those who were jealous of Moses and sought to usurp his power.

Simeon (Peter) is mentioned in the context of the Gentiles of whom Jesus spoke favorably as succeeding Israel and producing “fruit” (*karpos*). The Lord “visited” them, *episkopeo* meaning to look upon (*epi-*), to reflect. Right after this comes mention of the queen of Sheba who traditionally fits the description of the bride as very dark but beautiful.

Origen continues to stress the unique role held by Moses. The Lord spoke with others through dreams and visions but with Moses, it is “mouth to mouth, clearly” or *mar’eh*, this being the noun for sight. Also Moses beholds the divine “form” or *temunath*. Right after these verses pertinent to Moses and the divine favor towards Gentiles, like a refrain we have “I am very dark...” inserted.

The Torah is “spiritual” whereas I (Paul) is “carnal:” *pneumatikos* and *sarkinos*. I.e., one is invisible like breath and the other very dense and thick by nature.

The queen of Sheba is described as coming to Solomon with an incredible array of gifts, but that is secondary to her wanting him to know “all that was on her mind.” *Lev* is the word for “mind” and more properly refers to heart. In the verse at hand it is with the preposition *him*, literally as “with her heart.” This is followed by yet the same verse pertaining to Simeon and conversion of the Gentiles, some that must be on the top of Origen’s mind while composing the Song Commentary.

A contrast between “servant” and “friend,” *doulos* (connotes slavery) and *philos*. After this, Origen makes use for the third time of Simeon and divine favor of the Gentiles.

A second reference to Simeon and God’s visit to the Gentiles.

“Perfect” and “imperfect” or *teleios* and *ek merous* or that which tends towards completion vs. literally “from part.” This has a parallel between “mirror” and “face to face” or “in part” (*ek merous* again) and “fully.” Such interplay occurs while reading the Song of Songs, the bridegroom revealing himself and then withdrawing, this alternating throughout the book.

Two references to Mary, her sister Martha being implied. The former has represented the contemplative life whereas the latter, the active. Such was Origen’s position which became tradition in the church. The queen of Sheba can be taken as a forerunner of Mary as she listened to the wisdom of Solomon (Jesus). Despite Martha and Mary representing two different orientations, they are not a “dividing wall (*mesotioichon tou phragmou*) of hostility.” Another reference to the queen is when she gave Solomon a large amount of gifts for sharing his wisdom. However, the queen knew beforehand of his wisdom and got some of it which prompted her to make these elaborate preparations. This side of her is not unlike Martha.

Noah was saved through water which for Peter is a sign of baptism, for vs. 21 says that it “corresponds” to this, *antitupos* or literally an anti-type. Moses, too, foreshadows Christ (and therefore the Song’s bridegroom) whose “natural force” was (not) “abated:” *lech* (only word in the Bible, referring to moisture) and *nas* or to flee.

Bronze comes from Egypt and from beyond Ethiopia’s rivers comes an “offering” (*minchah*, also a tribute or gift) which can apply to the queen of Sheba. However, the best “sacrifice” (*zevach*, slain offering compared with *minchah*) is a heart both “broken and contrite,” *shavar* (to tear into pieces) and *dakah* (to crush)

“Trespass” vs. “salvation:” *paraptoma* and *soteria*, the former literally as a stumbling or falling beside.

Christ seems to be saying that every person who comes to him he will not “cast out” or *ekbalo* which is used with the preposition *echo* (outside), a double *ek*, if you will.

Two apparently contradictory references to Israel: a “hardening” and “Deliverer:” *porosis* (literally, a turning into stone) and *sozo* (to save, the verb being used). To the first is applied the notion of “mystery” (*musterion*) or that which requires initiation as

one does when reading the Song and the Bible in the spirit of *lectio divina*.

Two references to eunuch: Ebed-melech, who saves the prophet Jeremiah and those who make themselves eunuchs for “the kingdom of heaven.” The latter doesn’t mean physical castration but those who are pure in heart and thus disposed to read the Song.

Christ is “preached” or *kerusso* or better, proclaimed as by a herald.

Another quote from Sg 1.5 regarding the bride as “very dark” yet “beautiful” which is to be read in light of the lilies of the field whose array surpasses that of Solomon, the Song’s author. The verb *periballo* is used for “arrayed” meaning literally to cast around. Compare the bride as “very dark” with the curtains made of goat hair for the temple mentioned twice.

The true tent “not made” with hands, *plasso* being applicable to molding or fashioning. Apply this to “heaven itself” which Christ had entered and appears in God’s presence for us, *phaino* being the verb meaning to bring to light, to exhibit. Note the second use of *antitupos* or “copy” with regard to heaven. Again, reference is made to curtains made of goat hair, that is, over the tabernacle or *ohel*, the movable, portable tent containing the ark. In this *ohel* are, if you will, “many rooms” or *mone*, a staying, abiding.

Christ speaks of “repentance” or *metanoia* as fruit compared with being (naturally) children of Abraham where stones can be fashioned into his children.

This section concludes with a juxtaposition of Sg 1.5, the verse at hand, and 8.5, what appears to be the bridegroom coming up from the wilderness. The latter is towards the end of the Song with the bridegroom now reclining on his spouse’s breast, not the other way around.

I am dark and beautiful, O you daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon. (1.5—Vg. 1.4)

I am dark and beautiful, O you daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Here again the person of the Bride is introduced as speaking, but she speaks now not to those maidens who are wont to run with her, but to the daughters of Jerusalem. To these, since they have spoken slightly about her as being ugly, she now makes answer, saying: I am indeed dark—or black—as far as my complexion goes, O daughters of Jerusalem; but, should a person scrutinize the features of my inward parts, then I am beautiful. For the tents of Cedar, which is a great nation, she says, also are black, and their very name of Cedar means blackness or darkness. The curtains of Solomon likewise are black; but that blackness of his curtains is not considered unbecoming for so great a king in all his glory. Do not reproach me for my color, then, O daughters of Jerusalem, seeing that my body lacks neither natural beauty, nor that which is acquired by practice.

This much is comprehended in the tale enacted, and is the superficial meaning of the story here set forth. But let us return to the mystical exposition. This Bride who speaks represents the Church gathered from among the Gentiles; but the daughters of Jerusalem to whom she addresses herself are the souls who are described as being most dear because of the election of the fathers, but enemies because of the Gospel. Those are, therefore, the daughters of this earthly Jerusalem who, seeing the Church of the Gentiles, despise and vilify her for her ignoble birth; for she is baseborn in their eyes, because she cannot count as hers the noble blood of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, for all that she forgets her own people and her fathers house and comes to Christ.

The Bride knows that the daughters of the former people impute this to her, and that because of it they call her black, as one who has not been enlightened by the patriarchs teaching. She answers their objections thus: I am indeed black, O daughters of Jerusalem, in that I cannot claim descent from famous men, neither have I received the enlightenment of Moses Law. But I have my own beauty, all the same. For in me too there is that primal thing, the Image of God wherein I was created; and, coming now to the Word of God, I have received my beauty. Because of my dark coloring you may compare me to the tents of Cedar and the curtains of Solomon; but even Cedar was descended from Ismael, being born his second son, and Ismael was not without a share in the divine blessing. You liken me even to the curtains of Solomon, which are none other than the curtains of the tabernacle of God—indeed I am surprised, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you should want to reproach me with the blackness of my hue. How have you come to forget what is written in your Law, as to what Mary suffered who spoke against Moses because he had taken a black Ethiopian to wife? How is it that you do not recognize the true fulfilment of that type in me? I am that Ethiopian. I am black indeed by reason of my lowly origin; but I am beautiful through penitence and faith. For I have taken to myself the Son of God, I have received the Word made flesh; I have come to Him who is the Image of God, the Firstborn of every creature and who is the brightness of the glory and the express Image of the substance of God, and I have been made fair. What are you doing, then, reproaching one who turns away from sin, which reproach the Law entirely forbids? How do you come to glory in the Law, and yet to violate it?

Now, however, since we are on the subject of the Church that comes of the Gentiles and calls herself black and yet beautiful, though it may seem a long and toilsome matter to collect from the Divine Scriptures the passages containing types foreshadowing this mystery, and to consider in what way they so foreshadow it, it seems to me that we should not entirely omit the task, but should advert to it as briefly as may be.

First, then, in the Book of Numbers it is written of the Ethiopian woman thus: And Mary and Aaron spoke, and they spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had taken to wife, and said, has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has He not also spoken to us? And again in the Third Book of Kings it is written of the queen of Sheba, who came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, after this manner: And the queen of Sheba heard of the name of Solomon and the name of the Lord, and she came to try him with parables. And she came to Jerusalem with very great array, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones; and she entered into Solomon, and spoke to him all that she had in her heart. And Solomon answered all

her questions: there was no question that the king left out and did not so answer. And the queen of Sheba saw all the prudence of Solomon, and the house which he had built, and his meats, and his servants residence, and the order of his ministers, and his apparel, and his wine-pourers, and his burnt offerings that he offered in the House of the Lord; and she was amazed. And she said to king Solomon: The report is true which I heard in my own country concerning your word and your prudence. And I did not believe them that told me, till I came and saw with my own eyes; and lo, the half has not been told me! For you you added good things beyond everything that I heard in my own country. Blessed are your women, blessed are your servants who stand ever in your sight, and hear all your prudence! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has given you the throne of Israel! For because the Lord has loved Israel and willed him to endure for ever, He has appointed you king over them that you may do judgement with justice, and may judge them. And she gave Solomon a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices a very great store, and precious stones. There had never come thither such spices, nor in such quantity, as those which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

We wanted to quote this story somewhat at length, and to insert it in our exposition, because we know that the correspondence between these matters and the person of the Church, who conies to Christ from out of the Gentiles, is so close that the Lord Himself mentioned this queen in the Gospels, saying that she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. He calls her the queen of the south, because Ethiopia lies in southern parts; and He says from the ends of the earth, in that it is, as it were, situated in the farthest place. But we find further that Josephus also mentions this queen in his History; and he gives us the further fact that when she had returned from Solomon, the king Cambyses—so he says—marveling at her wisdom, which doubtless she had got from Solomon's instruction, bestowed on her the name of Meroe. He relates, moreover, that she held rule not only over Ethiopia, but also over Egypt. And we may adduce further the words of the sixty-seventh psalm with reference to this same type. The writer says there: Scatter you the peoples that delight in wars. Ambassadors shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing you to the Lord!

And in a fourth passage, from the prophet Sophonias, it is written thus regarding this same figure: Wherefore wait for me, saith the Lord, in the day of my rising up for witness, that is to say, for testimony; for my judgement is upon the gatherings of the nations, that I may lay hold on kings and pour out upon them all the wrath of mine indignation; for with the fire of my jealousy shall all the earth be devoured. For then will I change the speech of the peoples for its generation, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him beneath one yoke. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia will I receive the dispersed ones, and they shall bring me sacrifice. In that day you shall not be ashamed, O Saba, for all your doings wherein you have wrought impiously against me.

And it is written also in Jeremias that the princes of the house of Israel cast Jeremias into the pit of Melchias, the kings son, which was in the prison house, and let him down with ropes; and in the pit there was no water, but mire, and he was in the mire. Now Abdimelech the Ethiopian, an eunuch that was in the kings house, hearing that they had put Jeremias in the pit, spoke to the king and said: Lord King, these men have done evil in what they have done against Jeremias the prophet; for they have cast him into the pit, and he will die there of hunger, for there is no more bread in the city. And the king commanded Abdimelech the Ethiopian himself saying: Take from hence thirty men with you, and draw him up from the pit, that he die not there. And what happened then? It was Abdimelech the Ethiopian who drew up Jeremias from the pit. And a little later the word of the Lord came to Jeremias, saying: Go and tell Abdimelech the Ethiopian...saying...Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Behold, I bring my words upon this city unto evil and not unto good, and I will deliver you in that day, and will not give you into the hands of the men before whose face you fear. For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be saved for you, because you you put your trust in me, saith the Lord.

These were the passages from the Holy Scriptures that suggested themselves to me at the moment, as being in accordance with this verse of the Song of Songs which we are now considering—namely, the. verse in which it says: I am dark (or black) and beautiful, O you daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

So, then, in the Book of Numbers we find Moses taking an Ethiopian wife—that is to say, one who is dark or black; and because of her Mary and Aaron speak ill of him, and say with indignation: Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has He not also spoken to us? Now on careful consideration the narrative here is found to lack coherence. What has their saying, Math the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has He not also spoken to us? to do with their indignation about the Ethiopian woman? If that was the trouble, they ought to have said: Moses, you should not have taken an Ethiopian wife, and one of the seed of Ham; you should have married one of your own race and of the house of Levi. They say not a word about this; they say instead: Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has He not also spoken to us? It seems to me that, in so saying, they understood the thing Moses had done more in terms of the mystery; they saw Moses—that is, the spiritual Law—entering now into wedlock and union with the Church that is gathered together from among the Gentiles. This is the reason, apparently, why Mary, who typified the forsaken Synagogue, and Aaron, who stood for the priesthood according to the flesh, seeing their kingdom taken away from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, say: Has the Lord spoken to Moses only? Has He not also spoken to us?

Moreover, Moses himself, in spite of all the great and splendid achievements of faith and patience that are recorded of him, was never so highly praised by God as on this occasion when he took the Ethiopian wife. It is said of him, in reference to this: Moses was a man exceeding meek above all men that are upon earth. Further, in this same connection the Lord says concerning him: If there be among you a prophet, I will speak to him in visions or in dreams. But it is not so with my servant Moses, who is faithful in all my house; mouth to mouth will I speak to him, plainly and not by riddles; and he has seen the glory of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak ill of my servant Moses?

Moses was found worthy to hear all these things, because of his marriage with the Ethiopian woman. But we have dealt with these questions more fully in our exposition of the Book of Numbers; anyone who thinks it worth his while may look them up there. Now, however, let it suffice to demonstrate from these things that this black and beautiful woman is one and the same as the Ethiopian who is taken in marriage by Moses—that is, by the spiritual Law, who is undoubtedly the Word of God and Christ—although the daughters of Jerusalem, namely, that people and their priests, decry him and speak evil of him for so taking her.

Now let us look at the passage which we quoted from the Third Book of Kings about the queen of Sheba, who also was an Ethiopian; and concerning whom the Lord bears witness in the Gospels that in the day of judgement she shall come together with the men of this faithless generation, and shall condemn them; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And He adds: A greater than Solomon is here, teaching us thereby that the Truth is greater than the figure of the Truth.

This queen came, then, and, in fulfilment of her type, the Church comes also from the Gentiles to hear the wisdom of the true Solomon, and of the true Peace-Lover, Our Lord Jesus Christ. She too at first comes trying Him with riddles and with questions, which had seemed to her insoluble before; and He resolves all her perplexity concerning the knowledge of the true God, and concerning the created things of the world, the immortality of the soul, and the future judgement, all of which ever remained doubtful and uncertain for her and for her teachers, at least for the Gentile philosophers.

She came to Jerusalem, then, to the Vision of Peace, with a great following and in great array; for she came not with a single nation, as did the Synagogue before her that had the Hebrews only, but with the races of the whole world, offering moreover worthy gifts to Christ, fragrant spices, so the writer tells us—namely, good works that ascend to God in the sweetness of their savor. She came with gold also, with the trained perceptions and the rational habits of mind which she had acquired through this common knowledge of the schools before she came to faith. She brought also precious stones, by which we may understand the adornments of good behavior. With this pomp, then, she enters in to the Peaceable King Christ and opens her heart to Him, in confession, doubtless, and repentance for her past transgressions. And she spoke to Him all that was in her heart; wherefore Christ, who is our peace, answered all her questions, and there was no question that the King left out and did not so answer. And, to crown all, when the time of His Passion was near, He spoke to her—that is, to His chosen disciples—as follows: I will not now call you servants, but friends; for the servant knows not what his lord does; but I have made known to you whatsoever things I have heard of my Father.

Thus, therefore, is the saying fulfilled that there was no matter which the peace-making Lord did not declare to the queen of Sheba, to the Church that is gathered from among the Gentiles. And, if you look at the constitution of the Church, and consider the way in which her affairs are ordered and governed, then you will see why the queen marveled at all the prudence of Solomon.

And you may ask at the same time why He spoke of all the prudence of Solomon, and not of all his wisdom; for learned men would have us understand prudence in relation to human affairs, and wisdom with reference to things divine. Perhaps the reason is that the Church likewise marvels at the prudence of Christ for a time, while she is yet on earth and lives her life among men; but when that which is perfect is come, and she has been translated from earth to heaven, then, when she no longer perceives through a glass and in a dark manner, but sees face to face in respect of every single thing, then she will see all His wisdom.

She saw, moreover, the house that He had built—doubtless the mysteries of His Incarnation, for that is the dwelling that Wisdom has built for herself. She saw the meats of Solomon; that means, I think, the meat of which He said: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to perfect His work. She saw also His servants residence, which seems to me to mean the order which obtains in the Church with regard to the seats of bishops and of priests. That she saw also the orders—or stations—of His ministers seems to me to denote the order of deacons who assist at divine worship. And her seeing His apparel refers, I believe, to that with which He clothes those of whom it is said: As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And I think His wine-pourers means the teachers who mix the Word and teaching of God like wine for the people, so that it may rejoice the hearts of those who hear. And that she saw His burnt offerings denotes undoubtedly the mysteries of prayers and supplications.

When, therefore, this black and beautiful one saw all these things in the house of the Peaceable King, that is, of Christ, she was amazed. And she said to Him: The report is true which I heard in my own country concerning Your word and concerning Your prudence. For because of Your word, which I recognized as the true word, I came to You. For all the words that were said to me, and which I heard while I was in my own country, from worldly teachers and philosophers, were not true words. That only is the true word, which is in You.

But perhaps you will think we should enquire why this queen says to the King I did not believe them that told me concerning You, since she certainly would not have come to Christ, unless she had believed. Let us, however, see if we can solve this problem thus. I did not believe them that told me, she says, for I did not put my trust in those who spoke of You, I put it in Yourself—that is to say, I believed not men but You, O God. I heard of You by means of them indeed, but it was to You Yourself that I came, and You whom I believed; and with You my eyes beheld far more than the things which were being told me.

For truly, when this black and beautiful one comes to the heavenly Jerusalem and enters the vision of peace, she will see things many more and far more splendid than have been told her now. For she sees now as in a glass and in a dark manner; but then face to face, when she attains to the things that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man. And she will see then that what she heard while she was still in her own country was not the half of them.

Blessed, therefore, are Solomon's women; for this doubtless means the souls who become partakers of the Word of God and of His peace. Blessed are his servants, who stand ever in his sight; it is not those who sometimes stand and sometimes do not stand who are truly blessed, but those who always and unceasingly stand by the Word of God. Such a one was that Mary who sat at Jesus feet, hearing Him; and the Lord Himself bore witness to her, saying to Martha: Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

And finally the black and beautiful one says: Blessed be the Lord who has willed to grant You (to sit) upon the throne of Israel. For truly, because the Lord has loved Israel and willed him to endure for ever, He has appointed you king over him. Whom? The Peacemaker, undoubtedly. For Christ is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition.

And, after all these things, we read that the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon a hundred and twenty talents of gold. This number a hundred and twenty is that which was allotted as the lifetime of those men who lived in the days of Noe; that space of life is granted them wherein they are invited to repent. The same number was also that of the years of the life of Moses? So the Church offers to Christ, in this semblance and weight of gold, not only the whole sum total of her faculties and mental powers; but the metaphor, inherent in this number that includes the span of Moses years of life, denotes the further fact that her faculties are devoted to the Law of God.

She offers sweet spices too, such spices and in such amount as had never come thither before. You can take these as meaning either prayers or works of mercy, whichever you like. For never had she prayed so rightly as now when she drew near to Christ; and never had she wrought so dutifully as when she recognized that she was doing her acts of piety, not before men, but before the Father who sees in secret and will repay openly. But it is a big undertaking to follow up in different places all these things which you see we have adduced as evidence—Let that which has been said about the Third Book of Kings suffice.

Let us give some attention now to the passage we cited from Psalm, in which the writer says: Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. For, if you consider how salvation comes to the Gentiles through Israel's offence, and that it was Israel's failure that opened the way for the Gentiles to come in, you will observe how the hand of Ethiopia—that is, the people of the Gentiles—outstrips and precedes in its approach to God those to whom first His oracles were given. You will see that this is how the saying is fulfilled, that Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God, and that black one becomes beautiful, for all that the daughters of Jerusalem are unwilling that it should be so, and envy and revile her.

And I think that the statement which we quoted from the prophet, in which the Lord received those also who come from places beyond the rivers of Ethiopia and bring offerings to God, calls for a like interpretation. For it seems to me that he is said to be beyond the rivers of Ethiopia who has been darkened with exceeding great and many sins and, having been stained with the inky dye of wickedness, has been rendered black and dark. And yet the Lord repels not even these; He drives away from Him none who offer the sacrifices of a troubled spirit and humbled heart to God, turning to Him with the password of confession and repentance. For thus says Our Lord the Peaceable: Him that comes to me I will not cast out.

Those, however, who, dwelling beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, shall even so come to the Lord, bearing sacrifices, can also be taken as denoting those who will come after the fullness of the Gentiles—for which the rivers of Ethiopia are a figure—has come in, and then all Israel shall be saved. In this case their being beyond the rivers of Ethiopia would refer to their being outside the regions to which the floodtide of the salvation of the Gentiles comes, and after it in point of time. And perhaps that is how this saying also is fulfilled: In that day you shall not be ashamed, O Israel, for all your doings wherein you have wrought wickedly against me.

It remains now to expound only that passage from Jeremias which relates how Abdimelech, the Ethiopian eunuch, having heard that Jeremias had been put in the pit by the princes of the people, draws him out thence. And I do not think it is unsuitable to say that this foreigner, this man of a dark and ignoble race, who draws forth from the pit of death him whom the princes of Israel had cast therein, represents the people of the Gentiles, which believes in the resurrection from the dead of Him whom those princes had handed over to death and, by its faith, recalls and brings Him back from hell. But I think that this same Ethiopian is said to be a eunuch, because, He had made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven, or even because He had in Himself no seed of wickedness. He is also a servant of the king, because a wise servant rules over foolish lords; for Abdimelech means servant of kings. And this is why the Lord, forsaking the people of Israel because of their sins, addresses Himself to the Ethiopian and tells him; Behold, I bring my words upon this city unto evil and not unto good, . . . and I will save you in that day, and will not give you into the hands of men...but will surely deliver you. And the reason why he is delivered is that he drew forth the prophet from the pit—that is, that by his faith in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, in a manner of speaking he drew Him forth from the pit.

There are thus, as you see, many passages which bear witness to the fact that this dark (or black) and beautiful one behaves freely with the daughters of Jerusalem, and asserts confidently: It is true that I am dark (or black) as the tents of Cedar, but I am beautiful as the curtains of Solomon.

I do not remember anything in Scripture that refers expressly to the curtains of Solomon. But I think they may have to do with his glory, concerning which the Savior says that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. We do, however, find frequent mention of the word curtains in connection with the tabernacle of witness; as for example when the Lord says: You shall make also curtains of goats hair to cover the top of the tabernacle of witness, eleven curtains shall you make. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits and the breadth four cubits. The measure of all the curtains shall be equal. And you shall join live

curtains together, and the other six in the same way, and you shall fold back the sixth curtain from the front of the tabernacle. And you shall make fifty loops in the edge of one curtain, and fifty loops in the edge of the other curtain, with which to join the curtains one to another. You shall make also fifty brazen rings for each, and you shall join the curtains with these, and they shall be one whole. And you shall fold back from the front of the tabernacle the half of one curtain out of that which remains over of the curtains; and with the other half that is left over you shall cover the back of the tabernacle; a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other shall overlap, of the extra length of the curtain; and the tabernacle will be covered on both sides.

That, I think, is why curtains are mentioned in the Song of Songs, and are said to be Solomon's, by whom is understood the Peaceable Christ. The tabernacle, then, is His; so also are its fittings; especially if we consider that tabernacle which is called the true tabernacle, which God has pitched, and not man, and concerning which the writer says: For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true. So, if the Bride compares her beauty to the curtains of Solomon, she doubtless means the glory and beauty of those curtains which cover that tabernacle, which God has pitched, and not man. But, if it is her blackness (with which, as we have seen, the daughters of Jerusalem reproach her) that she compares to the curtains of Solomon, we must take these curtains as belonging to this tabernacle that is called the pattern of the true tabernacle, and as being in fact black themselves, since they were woven of goats hair; though they served none the less for the worship and adornment of the tabernacle of God.

But, although the speaker appears as a single person, she has likened herself in her blackness to the tents of Cedar and the curtains of Solomon in the plural number. We must understand, therefore, that a single character appears, yet there are countless churches scattered all over the world, and huge gatherings and multitudes of peoples; just as the kingdom of heaven is said to be one, yet there is mention of many mansions in the Fathers House.

It can be said also of each individual soul that turns to repentance after many sins, that she is black by reason of the sins, but beautiful through her repentance and the fruits of her repentance.

And finally, because she who now says: I am black and beautiful has not remained in her blackness to the end, the daughters of Jerusalem say later on concerning her: Who is this that comes up, having been made white, and leaning upon her Nephew?

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## **Bk 2 #2**

Sg. 1.6: Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy (the sun has burnt me), because the sun has scorched me.

Mt 12.42: The queen of the south will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Sg 1.5: Do not gaze at me because the sun has burnt me, because the sun has scorched me.

Sg 8.5: Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

Jn 1.9: The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

Mal 4.2: But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall.

LK 21.36: He said to them, "But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one."

Rom 11.25: Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has coming upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in.

Rom 11.30-1: Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy.

Rom 11.25: (just above).

Prov 4.27: Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

Prov 4.26: Take heed to the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure.

Mal 4.2: But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall.

Lk 1.6: And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

Mt 5.14: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

Mal 4.2: (quoted 3 vss. above).

Lev 26.21: Then if you walk contrary to me, and will not hearken to me, I will bring more plagues upon you, sevenfold as many as your sins.

Jn 1.9: The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

Lev 26.21: (quoted 2 vss. above).

Lev 26.32-4: And I will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

Lev 26.40-1: But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity.

Ex 9.12: But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them; as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

Mal 4.2: But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like

calves from the stall.

Ex 1.14: And made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field; in all their work they made them serve with rigor.

Ex 2.23: In the course of those many days the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God.

Ex 5.7: You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves.

Ex 2.24: And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Ps 121.6: The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.

Jn 3.20: For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Dt 4.24: For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

1Jn 1.5: This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

This section contains many references to light which is to be considered in view of the bride having been scorched by the sun.

After having described herself as “very black (*shachor*),” the bride now calls herself “swarthy” or *shecharchor* which is the diminutive form...not unlike saying “I am black, a little.” She attributes this to having been exposed to the sun. As earlier, the queen of Sheba can be identified with the bride at this point in her darkness and swarthy. This is intimated as a defect, yet she will participate at the “judgment” (*krisis*) by reason of having come from afar to listen to Solomon’s wisdom. A few verses later Origen mentions the “sun of righteousness (*tsedaqah*) will arise” (*zarach*, implies scattering of rays) which, if you will, has the power to darken the bride.

Origen inserts a verse towards the end of the Song which here is a kind of refrain, about the yet as to be identified woman (queen of Sheba?) coming “up from the wilderness.” This ascent of the “beloved” can be taken as an image of that “true light” (*phos*) which “enlightens (*photizo*) those coming into the world, that is, as their birth. So light is present at birth which is fulfilled at that stage through baptism. Another reference from Malachi follows with regard to the “sun of righteousness” which has “healing” or *marpe*’ located in its wings which means such healing (the verb means to droop as well) will endow a person with the ability of flight, as it were, symbolic of the divine *Ruach*.

Two sets of a contrast: 1) “mystery” and “hardening” or *musterion* and *porosis* (i.e., initiation and turning into stone) and 2) “disobedient” and “mercy” or *apeithomai* (i.e., not being persuasive) and *eleeo*.

Origen refers to two proverbs with regard to walking on the straight path of the good and has two pairs, if you will: 1) “swerve” and “turn” or *natah* and *sur* (to incline and to depart) and 2) “take heed” and “will be sure” or *palas* and *kun* (to make level and to establish, to found). Luke refers to Zechariah and Elizabeth who were engaged in this walking as “blamelessly” or *amemptos* (adjective), the verb *poreuo* implying making to go, to convey.

Compare two references to light: first, as pertaining to the world and as a city on a hill and second, as enlightening each person coming into this same world. Putting the two together we have the second as enabling the first. Then the quote from Leviticus applies, namely, that one’s land is desolate, *shamam* being the verb which also means to be astonished. The second Leviticus quote speaks of removing obstacles to this light, if you will. That consists of confessing (*yadah*: also as to throw, to cast, to give thanks) “iniquity” *havon* (connotes depravity) which extended all the way back to “their fathers.” The Israelites experienced a similar hardening in Egypt, that is, “hard service,” *qashah* being the adjective which connotes heaviness. However, the Lord did hear the “groaning” of the Israelites which caused him to remember his covenant with the three patriarchs he had made prior to Israel coming to Egypt.

Note the comparison of two hearts: one which is “uncircumcised” and the other as “hardened” and belonging to Pharaoh. Those who “fear my name,” however, are free from these two types of restraints enabling the “sun of righteousness” to rise.

Those who do not come “to” the light (*pros* is indicative of direction towards-which) do so as not to expose their deeds, *phaneroo* being the verb. However, the “message” (*aggelia*) is first heard and then proclaimed that God is light and has no darkness. The verb is *anagello* from which *aggelia* is derived.

Look not at me, for that I am darkened; for the sun has looked down on me. (1.6a—Vg. 1.5a)

Look not at me, for that I am darkened; for the sun has looked down on me. If the explanation we have constructed above, either concerning the Ethiopian woman whom Moses took to wife, or in regard to the Sheban queen of the Ethiopians who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, seems to us to fit the facts, this dark (or black) and beautiful one appears now to give good reason for her blackness or darkness, and a proper explanation to those who reproach her for it. She tells them that it is not a natural condition in which she was created, but something that she has suffered through force of circumstance. It came to pass, she says, because the sun looked down on me; and thus she shows that she is not speaking of bodily blackness, because the sun is wont to tan or blacken when it looks at, and not when it looks down on anyone.

And it is commonly said among the whole of the Ethiopian race, in which there is a certain natural blackness inherited by all, that in those parts the sun burns with fiercer rays, and that bodies that have once been scorched and darkened, transmit a congenital stain to their posterity. But the reverse is the case with the blackness of the soul; for the soul is scorched, not by being looked at by the sun, but by being looked down upon. Its blackness, therefore, is acquired not through birth, but through neglect; and, since it comes through sloth, it is repelled and driven away by means of industry.

And lastly, as I said just now, this same person who is now called black, is mentioned towards the end of this Song as coming up, having been made white, and leaning on her Nephew. She became black, then, because she went down; but, once she begins to come

up and to lean upon her Nephew, to cleave to Him and suffer nothing whatever to separate her from Him, then she will be made white and fair; and, when all her blackness has been cast away, she will shine with the enveloping radiance of the true Light.

So now, apologizing to the daughters of Jerusalem for her blackness, she says: You must not think, O daughters of Jerusalem, that this blackness which you see in my face is natural; you must understand that it has come to pass because the sun looked askance at me. For the Sun of Justice found me not standing straight; and so He did not focus His rays on me directly. I am the people of the Gentiles, who beheld not the Sun of Justice before, nor stood before the Lord; therefore He looked not at me, but looked askance at me; nor did He stand by me, but rather passed me by. But you likewise, who art called Israel, and you experienced this yourself already, wilt again and again admit that this is so and say: For as when I of old did not believe, you were chosen and did obtain mercy, and the Sun of Justice regarded you, but looked askance at me and spurned me, as disobedient and unbelieving; so likewise now, when you you become unbelieving and disobedient, do I hope to be looked upon by the Sun of Justice and to obtain mercy. And I will bring you the magnificent Paul, who knew the secrets of heaven, to testify to you that we thus share this being looked askance at by the sun, and that I first was so despised by Him by reason of my disobedience, when you were looked upon; but that now not only has the sun looked askance at you, but also a certain partial blindness has befallen you. This is what he says: For as you—he is clearly addressing the Gentiles—in times past believed not God, but now have obtained mercy through their unbelief; so these also now have not believed in your mercy, so that they also may obtain mercy. And again he says in another place: That blindness in part has happened in Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in. This blackness, then, for which you reproach me, is in me because the sun has looked askance at me by reason of my unbelief and disobedience. But when I shall stand upright before Him and shall be crooked in nothing, when I turn aside neither to the right hand, nor to the left, but make straight the paths for my feet, walking before the Sun of Justice in all His justifications without blame, then He who is Himself upright will look on me, and there will be in me no crookedness, nor any cause for Him to look askance at me. And then my light and my splendor will be restored to me, and that blackness for which you now reproach me will be banished from me so completely, that I shall be accounted worthy to be called the light of the world.

Yonder visible sun, then, darkens and burns the bodies which come within its range when it is at the zenith; whereas it keeps within its light and does not burn at all those bodies that are distant, and situated further from it when in that position. But the spiritual sun, by contrast, the Sun of Justice in whose wings is healing, we are told, illuminates and surrounds with every brightness those whom He fords upright in heart and standing close to the zenith of His splendor; but must needs look askance at those who walk contrary to Him, and cannot look on them with favor; and it is their own fickleness and instability that brings this about.

For how can those who are turned aside receive that which is straight? It is as if you put a perfectly straight ruler against a curved line; the crookedness of the thing will indeed be patently shown by the ruler, but it is not the ruler that made the line go crooked. It behooves us, therefore, to hasten to straight ways and to stand in the paths of virtue, lest it happen that when the Sun of Justice come straight over us, finding us crooked and turned aside, He look askance at us and we be made black.

And indeed, in so far as we are incapable of receiving His light, thus far also shall we make room for darkness and blackness in ourselves. For this is the very Sun, who both was the true Light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world, and Himself was in the world, and the world was made by Him. For it was not by that visible light of ours that the world was made; that light is itself a part of the world. The world was made by that true Light, who, as we are told, looks askance at us if we walk contrary thereto.

And, when we thus walk contrary, that Light itself walks contrary to us, in a sense; as it is written in the curses in Leviticus: And if you walk contrary to me, it is said there, and will not obey me, I will bring upon you seven more plagues. And a little further on: And if you will not amend, but will walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you; or, as we read in some copies: If you walk crookedly with me, I also will walk crookedly with you. And a little further on He says again, in conclusion: And because they have walked crookedly in my sight, I also will walk crookedly with them in wrath.

We have adduced these passages to show in what sense the sun is said to look askance—that is, to look crookedly. And it has plainly appeared that He looks askance at and walks contrary to and crookedly with those who walk crookedly with Him. But let us not leave undiscussed the point which this present passage suggested—namely, that the sun is seen as having twofold power: by one it gives light, and by the other it scorches; but according to the nature of the objects and substances lying immediately under it, it either illuminates a thing with light, or darkens and hardens it with heat.

Perhaps it is in this sense that God is said to have hardened the heart of Pharaoh, because the substance of his heart was obviously such as to elicit from the Sun of-justice not His illumination, but His power to harden and to scorch; that no doubt was the reason why this same Pharaoh afflicted the life of the Hebrews with hard works, and wore them out with clay and bricks. And certainly the works that he devised came from a heart as miry and muddy! And, as the visible sun contracts and hardens the substance of clay, so with the selfsame rays wherewith He enlightened the People of Israel and by means of those rays selfsame properties, the Sun of Justice hardened the heart of Pharaoh, that harbored muddy devices.

But that these things are so, and that the servant of God through the Holy Spirit is writing here no ordinary story of the human sort is demonstrated also by the fact that when he relates that the children of Israel groaned, he says that they did so, not because of the clay, or the bricks, or the straw, but because of their works. And again he says, their cry went up to God; and this, he says, not because of clay and bricks, but again because of their works. Wherefore he adds that the Lord heard their groaning; for assuredly He

hears not the groaning of those who do not cry unto the Lord by reason of their works.

Although we may seem to have dealt with these matters at too great length, we adjudged the opportunity afforded by these passages such as should certainly not be missed; especially because they bear a certain likeness to this saying of her who is darkened because the sun has looked askance at her. And we have shown that this takes place wherever a sinful condition has previously obtained, and that a person is darkened or scorched by the sun where the ground of sin exists. But where there is no sin, the sun is not said to burn or darken; even as it is written of the just man in the Psalms: The sun shall not burn you by day, nor the moon by night. So you see that the sun never burns the saints, in whom is nothing sinful; for, as we have said, the sun has twofold power: it enlightens the righteous; but sinners it enlightens not, but burns, for they themselves hate the light because they do evil.

And, lastly, it is for this reason too that our God is said to be a consuming fire, yet at the same time is called the Light, in whom there is no darkness. Light is He without a doubt to the just; and fire to the sinful, that He may consume in them every trace of weakness and corruption that He finds in their soul. And, if you look into the matter: you will find over and over again that in many passages in Scripture where sun and fire are mentioned, it is not the visible sun and fire that are meant, but those that are unseen and spiritual.

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### Bk 2 #3

My mother's sons were angry with me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard I have not kept.

Sg 1.6 (quoted 1 vs. above).

Gal 4.21-6: (allegory of Hagar and Sarah).

Heb 12.22: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

2Cor 10.4-5: For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Gen 27.27: So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed!"

Sg 1.6: My mother's sons were angry with me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard I have not kept.

Phl 3.7: But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Phl 3.8-9: Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Jer 2.21: Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?

Dt 32.32-3: For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of serpents, and the cruel venom of asps.

Ps 106.47: Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

Ezk 11.17: Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."

1Tm 2.14-5: And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Eph 5.32: This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church.

Rom 5.6: While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5.8: But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

1Tm 2.14: And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

1Cor 3.1: But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ.

Eph 6.11: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Mt 21.16: And they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have brought perfect praise?'"

Gal 4.2: But he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father.

Mt 18.10: See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Mt 19.14: But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Sg 1.6: Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has scorched me. My mother's sons were angry with me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard I have not kept.

Heb 12.22: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering.

Gal 4.26: But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

1Cor 8.6: Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Gal 4.26: (quoted two vs. above).

Sg 1.6: Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has scorched me. My mother's sons were angry with me, they made

me keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard I have not kept.

Col 3:9: Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices.

Ps 104:15: And wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

"Mother's sons" can refer to the bride's siblings where possibly she is the only daughter in the family and hence being relegated to care of the vineyards, that is, away from what transpires in the home. However, she admits to not having kept her own vineyard, so her brothers were justified in rebuking her. Thus bride can identify with Hagar whom Abraham sent away in favor of Sarah. However, she is chosen by the bridegroom to enter Mount Zion along with the angels who will be her new companions. In that city the bride will meet the Gentiles whom Simeon said God had visited.

Weapons are "not worldly" (*sarkikos*) or literally comprised of flesh but have divine "power" (*dunamis*, capacity to do something) to "destroy" (*kathairesis*), a noun meaning a pulling down with respect to strongholds. Such fortifications can be in the form of "arguments and proud obstacles:" *logismos* and *hupsomos* (reasoning which connotes conniving thoughts and that which is lifted up. They are opposed to "knowledge" or *gnosis* of God.

The patriarch Isaac cannot see but can smell the scent of Jacob's garments which actually belong to Esau. In other words, the sense of smell is deceptive in this instance. This example fits in well with the Song's bride being expelled for not minding her own vineyards, a fact which makes her resourceful compared to her brothers. What the bride has she can count now as "loss" for the sake of Christ, *zemia* (often a commercial loss or the vineyards). This loss is contrasted with "righteousness" through faith in Christ, *dikaiosune*.

Two types of vines: "choice and wild" or *soreq* and *neker* (that which is reddish or tawny and the other as foreign). The latter belong to Sodom and Gomorrah, the result of divine destruction of those two cities. From them the psalmist begs to be saved and gathered, *yashah* and *qavats*: the former being the verbal root for the names Jesus and the latter, often as to grasp with the hand. This pair parallels the one of "gather and assemble" or *qavats* and *'asaph*, the latter more a taking to oneself.

Two verbs for "deceived:" the one pertinent to Adam or *atapatao* (to cheat, to outwit) and *exapatao* (the preposition *ex* or from prefaced to the verb, literally as 'deceived from'). This is cited a few verses later.

*Musterion* or "mystery" as aptly applied to the Song of Songs, "Christ and the church" or bridegroom and bride.

"Right time" or *kairos*...special event...with the preposition *kata* or literally "according to a *kairos*."

Two types of men: "spiritual and "of the flesh:" *pneumatikos* and *sarkinos*, the latter being associated with "babes" or *nepios*, literally as not yet speaking. *Nepios* is used just below as from Jesus quoting Ps 8:2.

"Wiles" or *methodeia* (craftiness) which belong to the devil.

"Guardians" (*epitropos*) set in place by the father for his son. This is followed by two instances of Jesus speaking of children: as protected by angels and to whom belong the kingdom of heaven. The text uses the verb "is" which shows a closer union between the two than the English "belongs."

With the "old man" are associated "practices," *praxis* often being associated with a transaction or business.

Another quote of Sg 1:6 followed by two references to coming to Jerusalem which is both "heavenly and "free." Again the same Song quote appears after these verses.

This section which deals with the bride not having kept her own vineyards concludes with reference to wine and oil: the former is associated with gladness and the latter with shine, *samach* and *tsahal* (connotes shouting with joy).

The sons of my mother have fought in me, they have made me the keeper in the vineyards; my vineyard I have not kept. (1:6b—Vg. 1:5 b)

The sons of my mother have fought in me, they have made me the keepers in the vineyards; my vineyard I have not kept. She, who is dark indeed by reason of her former sins, but beautiful through faith and change of heart, now makes this further statement that her mother's sons fought not against but in her; and that after this war which they waged in her, they made her keeper not of one vineyard only, but of many vineyards. And the same speaker tells us further that, besides those vineyards over which she was set by her mother's sons, she has another one, her own, which she has not kept. That is the story of the play before us.

Let us now enquire who the mother of the Bride who tells us this may be; and also who the others, the mother's sons, may be, who fought in the Bride and, when the war was over, committed vineyards to her keeping, as though she could not have so guarded them, had they not fought; yet, having thus received the care of other vineyards, she either could or would not keep her own.

Paul says, writing to the Galatians: Tell me, you that desire to be under the Law, have you not heard the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondswoman and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondswoman was born according to the flesh; but he of the freewoman was according to promise. Which things are said by an allegory. For these are the two testaments, the one from Mount Sinai engendering unto bondage, which is Agar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which is likened to the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Paul thus calls the heavenly Jerusalem both his own mother and that of all believers. Then in what follows he adds the conclusion: So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondswoman, but of the free, by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. Paul, therefore, plainly declares that everyone who through faith from Christ follows after liberty, is a son of the freewoman; and he says that this freewoman is the free Jerusalem, which is above; she it is who is the mother of us all.

We understand, therefore, both that the Bride is herself a daughter of this mother, and that those who fought in her and made her a

keeper of the vineyards are her sons. It appears from this that these, empowered both to wage war in her and to appoint her keeper of the vineyards, were not the citizens of some mean and lowly place; so we can take the sons of the Brides mother as meaning the apostles—that is, the sons of the heavenly Jerusalem, who formerly fought in her who is gathered from among the Gentiles. They fought that in her they might overcome her former dispositions of unbelief and disobedience and all pride that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ; as is said too by Paul: Destroying counsels and every height that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. They fought, therefore, not against but in her, that is to say, in her dispositions and her heart, so that they might destroy and drive away all unbelief, all vice, and all the teachings which she had absorbed from the false statements of the sophists, the while she lived among the heathen.

Christ's apostles had, therefore, a great war to wage before they could cast down from the Bride all the towers of untruth and the walls of wrong teaching, before they could overthrow the arguments of iniquity and overcome the evil spirits that wrought and kindled all these in her heart. And when they have thus routed from her all the dispositions of the old unbelief; they do not leave her idle, lest perchance through idleness the old things should creep back, and those that have been driven away return; but they give her a task to perform, they assign to her the charge of the vineyards.

We may take the vineyards as meaning each and all of the books of the Law and the Prophets; for every one of these was as a plentiful field which the Lord has blessed. These, then, do those brave men, when they have won the war, commit to her to guard and keep, for, as we said, they do not leave her idle. In the same way we may take the evangelic writings and the apostles letters as vineyards, committed by them to her who is gathered from among the Gentiles and for whom they fought, that she may keep and till them.

But as to her own vineyard, which she says she has not kept, we can call that the learning that everyone used to receive before he came to faith; which learning he, when he believes in Christ, doubtless forsakes and leaves, counting as loss for Christ the things that used to seem to him as gain. Thus does Paul also boast that the observance of the Law and the whole glory of the Jewish system was to him as dung, so that he might be found in Christ, having not his own justification that was of the Law, but the justification that is of God. In this sense, therefore, Paul kept not his own vineyard—that is to say, he did not keep the Jews tradition after he had received the faith of Christ. And perhaps the reason why he did not keep it was that, although it had been planted by God as a true vine, it had turned into the bitterness of a strange vine, and their vine was as the vineyard of Sodom, and their vine shoots of Gomorrha, and bitter clusters among them; their wine was the fury of dragons and the incurable wrath of asps.

And among the Gentiles also there were many teachings of this sort; and, after those wars waged by the teachers to get them to believe in and acknowledge Christ, I think it should be counted an offence for anyone to keep such vineyards and to continue to till a field that has been sown with poisonous and harmful doctrines.

But you should not be surprised that she who is gathered out of the dispersion of the nations and prepared to be the Bride of Christ, has sometimes been guilty of these faults. Remember how the first woman was seduced and was in the transgression, and could find her salvation, so the Scripture says, only in bearing children; which for our present purpose means those who continue in faith and love with sanctity. The Apostle, therefore, declares what is written about Adam and Eve thus: This is a great mystery in Christ and in the Church; He so loved her that He gave Himself for her, while she was yet undutiful, even as he says: When as yet we were ungodly according to the time, Christ died for us; and again: When as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us.

So it is not surprising that she who was seduced and was in transgression, she who was ungodly according to the time, and a sinner, should be said to have cultivated such a vineyard at the time she was still undutiful; which vineyard she was obliged to forsake and on no account to keep.

If it is permissible to offer a third explanation, let us refer these words to every soul who, after she has turned to God and come to faith, undoubtedly experiences conflicts of thought and assaults of evil spirits, which strive to call her back to the attractions of her former life and the errors of unbelief. But, lest this should happen, lest the evil spirits should again find foothold in her, Gods providence looked forward in such wise as to provide the little ones and those who, being as yet but babes and sucklings in Christ, cannot defend themselves against the wiles of the devil and the attacks of evil spirits, with angel champions and guardians. These are ordained by Him to act as tutors and governors of those who, as we said, are under age and so unable to fight for themselves. And, that they may do this with greater confidence, it is granted them always to see the face of the Father who is in heaven. And I think that they are those little ones, whom Jesus has bidden to come to Him and will not suffer them to be forbidden, and who, He says, always see the face of the Father.

And you must not think it contradictory if this soul that is tending Godwards calls these angels the sons of her own mother. For, if the heavenly Jerusalem is the mother of souls, and the angels equally are called heavenly, there will be no inconsistency in her calling these who like herself are heavenly, her mothers sons. It will, on the contrary, seem supremely apt and fitting that those for whom God is the one Father should have Jerusalem for their one mother.

But when she says: My vineyard I have not kept, she seems to indicate that it was praiseworthy not to have kept those habits and customs and the way of life that she practiced when she lived after the old man; and this was ever since she fought and conquered by the angels help and completely drove out of herself the old man with his deeds, and was appointed by them to be the keeper of the vineyards—that is, of the divine secrets and teachings, so that from them she may drink wine to gladden her heart.

**Bk 2 #4**

Sg 1.7: Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon, lest by chance I be made as one who is veiled among the flocks of your companions.

Sg 1.2: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

Ps 45.9: Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Sg 6.8-9: There are 60 queens and 80 concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one, is only one.

Sg 6.8: (cf. the vs. just above).

1Cor 12.27: Now you are the body of Christ and individually member of it.

1Cor 12.12: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, through many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Mt 9.36: When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Sg 1.7: Tell me, whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon?

1 Pt 5.4: And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

1Cor 11.10: That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels.

Dt 32.9: For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.

Dt 32.8: When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Jn 10.27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Jn 10.26: But you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.

Sg 1.7: Tell me, whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who wanders beside the flocks of your companions?

1Jn 4.7: Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.

Lk 10.27: And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Sg 1.7: (cf. 3 vss. above).

Ps 23.1: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Ps 23.2: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he restores my soul.

Ps 23.3: He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Ps 23.4: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Ps 23.5-6: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Ps 23.2: (cf. 4 vss. above).

Jn 10.11: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Jn 10.9: I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Mal 4.2: But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

Ps 46.6: God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early.

Gen 18.1-2: And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mature, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him.

Jn 8.39: They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did."

Rom 13.12-3: The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and jealousy.

Gen 18.1: (cf. 3 vss. just above).

Gen 43.16: When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon."

Gen 43.26: When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground.

Mt 27.45: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

Lk 23.44: It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mk 15.33: And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Gen 1.26-31: (the creation of man).

Gen 1.24: And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds."

1Cor 2.7-8: But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this.

1Cor 2.12: Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

2Cor 3:18: And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.

Sg 1.7 has the bride speaking of her "soul" or *nepesh* as though this *nepesh* had independent existence of her. It means life principle or that which governs the body and can stand for the bride's ability to watch without judgment the function of her body which has one-on-one contact with everything in the created realm.

Origen intimates that the bride has five groups of companions forming a very large retinue: daughters of kings, the queen of Ophir, sixty queens, eighty concubines and maidens without number. All for the "body of Christ" and "members," *soma* and *mele* with the latter being many like the bride's retinue. Opposite this retinue which has a purpose under the bride's direction are sheep which are "harassed and helpless" or *skullo* and *rhipto* or literally flayed and cast down. The shepherd is Christ, equivalent to the bridegroom.

Christ is "Chief Shepherd" or *Archipoimenos*, *archi* (-e) being that which is first as the first principle of anything. The bride asks this *Archipoimenos* where he makes his flock recline during the noonday heat.

In her ardor the Song's bride removes the veil from her head; not because of the angels but to behold her bridegroom. The text has *exousia* (authority) instead of "veil."

"Heritage and inheritance" or *nachalah* (possession) and *nachal* (the verb): one pertains to Jacob and the other to the nations or Jews and Gentiles.

Sheep: both those belonging to Christ and those who do not, the former attentive to his voice and the latter as not believing, if you will, as a result of this voice speaking. The bride wishes to belong to the former by asking her beloved where he pastures (*raha*) his flock instead of those who wander beside those flocks of his companions.

"Beloved" (*agapetos*) is derived from the verb "love" (*agapao*). As a result of *agapao*, a person is first "born" of God (*ex*, from) and then "knows" (*gignosko*) God. Such *agapao* is prefigured with Christ quoting Dt 6.5 about it coming from one's "heart, soul, strength and mind" (*lev*, *nepesh* and *me'od*). "Mind" (*dianoia*) is missing in the Deuteronomy verse; *me'od* is an adverb meaning "excessively"...with all your excessiveness, to put it literally.

Origen gives a series of citations from the famous Good Shepherd Psalm (23) which is appropriate, given Sg 1.7's reference to the bridegroom's flock. They are capped off, if you will, by Christ as "good shepherd" and as "door" where a person can go both in and out.

Fear of God's name (*yare'* is the verb, more akin to reverence) causes the sun of righteousness to arise. This sun has the ability to fly, a way of saying it moves east to west in the sky and contains "healing" (*marpe'*; dropping) in its wings, possibly a way of speaking about rays.

*Qerev* means "midst" or the very center, here of Jerusalem.

The Lord himself appears (*yare'*) to Abraham in the "heat of the day." Then Abraham seeks three men, the two being identified as one most likely due to the shimmering heat coming off the desert floor. Jesus confronts those who claim Abraham as their father who did not do what he had done, for example, show hospitality as he did to the three men/angels. Reference to this incident occurs three verses below.

Conduct which is becoming or *euschemonos* consists of the noun *schema* (form, shape, manner) prefaced with *eu-* to signify something well done or good.

"Far gone" or *prokopto* implies that which is advanced or has moved alone, namely, the night, and implies the darkness prior to dawn. At this very late stage Paul urges his listeners to put on the armor of light which means this armor will shine in the pre-dawn darkness taking the place, if you will, of the sun itself.

Compare the banquet Abraham prepares for the men/angels with the one Joseph sets before his brothers who did not yet recognize him..

Origen has three references to the three hours of "darkness" (*skotos*, implies gloom) while Christ was on the cross followed by two references to Genesis regarding the creation of man and living creatures. These flow from Christ who had just been crucified and form a new creation as a result of his death.

"Spirit (*pneuma*) of the world" can be taken as the way the world breathes, *pneuma* meaning breath. It differs from the divine *Pneuma* which enables an understanding of his gifts (*charizomai*: to give gratuitously). Staying with this *Pneuma*, it allows "beholding" divine glory or *katoptrizo* which means to show in a mirror, and such mirrors were of polished metal not giving an exact reflection as with modern ones. Such beholding tinged with a certain golden or silver hue allows change into the divine "likeness" (*eikon* or image compared with *homoiosis* which usually translates as likeness). Note use of the prepositions "from and to" or *apo-eis* (the latter more as into). This reveals the hidden nature of change or *metamorphoo*, literally to change-after, to bring a form (*morphe*) after (*meta*), if you will, or into a new state, and that is an eternal dynamic, not static.

Tell me, O You whom my soul has loved, where do You feed, where do You have Your couch in the midday, lest perchance I be made as one that is veiled above the flocks of Your companions. (1.7-Vg. 1.6)

Tell me, O though whom my soul has loved, where you feed, where do You have Your couch in the midday, lest perchance I be made as one that is veiled above the flocks of they companions.. It is still the Bride who speaks, but to the Bridegroom now, not to the daughters of Jerusalem. So from the beginning, where she says Let Him kiss me, down to this place, above the flocks of Your companions, all the things that have been said are the words of the Bride. But she addresses herself first to God, then to the Bridegroom, and thirdly to the maidens: standing as it were between them and the Bridegroom, and acting—to use dramatic phraseology—as a sort of chorus-leader, she directs her words sometimes to them, sometimes to the Spouse; and then again she answers the daughters of Jerusalem. This last speech, therefore, is addressed to the Bridegroom; she asks Him where He feeds at the midday, where He keeps His flock: she fears that while she is seeking Him, she may come upon those places where His companions

assemble their flocks throughout the time of noon.

It is plain from these words that this Bridegroom is also a shepherd. We had already learnt that He is also a king, for the undoubted reason that He rules over men. But he is a shepherd, because He feeds the sheep; He is the Bridegroom, because He has the Bride, who is to reign with Him even as it is written: The queen stood at Your right hand in gilded clothing. These are the elements in the drama, as far as the historical sense goes.

Let us now search out the mystical meaning; and, if it is necessary to anticipate somewhat matters that we shall have to deal with later, in order to show what sort of people these companions are, let us remember that it is written that there are threescore queens, but only one dove among them, only one perfect one, who shares the kingdom. But the others are of lower rank, those who are called the fourscore concubines; yet the young maidens, who are without number, come after the concubines in point of dignity. Now all these represent different classes of believers in Christ, associated with Him in different relationships; so that, for instance, taking another figure, we call the whole Church the Body of Christ, as the Apostle does; but in that Body, so he tells us, there are divers members, some of them eyes, some hands, some even feet, and all of them co-ordinated in the members of this Body according to the merit of their several functions and works.

Now, then, we must understand the passage before us on the same lines. In this marriage drama we must take it that some souls who are associated with the Bridegroom in a nobler and more splendid sort of love, have with Him the status and the love of queens; others whose dignity in respect of progress and the virtues is undoubtedly less, rank as His concubines; and others again are in the position of the maidens who are placed outside the palace, though not outside the royal city. And lastly, and after all these, there are, as we remarked above, those souls that are called sheep. And, if we look more closely, we shall perhaps find further that out of all these sheep some are inferior and last of all—those, namely, that are reckoned as belonging to His companions flocks. For they, too, are said to have some flocks, which the Bride does not wish to meet; and that is why she asks the Bridegroom to tell her where He feeds and where He passes the midday, lest perchance I be made, she says, as one that is veiled above the flocks of Your companions.

The question is, therefore, whether these companions who are said to possess some flocks, do so as servants of the Bridegroom, acting under Him as the Chief of shepherds, since they are called His companions; or whether, since the Bride flees and is afraid, lest perchance she meet the companions flocks while she is looking for her Spouse, these companions desire to possess something as their own exclusive property in a manner not accordant with the Bridegroom's mind.

But consider whether by her further words, lest perchance I be made—not veiled, but as one that is veiled, she may not show that one or more of the companions are as brides, wearing the bridal dress and being veiled, having a veil upon their head, as the Apostle says. And, to make the figure in this saying clearer, let us again investigate what is said as taking place in the course of the drama. The Bride asks her Bridegroom to show her the place of His private retreat and rest; because, being impatient for love, she longs to go to Him even through the noonday heat—that is, at the particular time when the light is brighter and the splendor of the day perfect and pure—so that she may be near Him, as He feeds or refreshes His sheep. And she earnestly desires to learn the way by which she ought to go to Him, lest perchance, if she have not been taught the windings of this way, she should come upon the companions flocks and resemble one of those who come veiled to His companions; and, having no care for modesty, she should fear not to run hither and thither and to be seen of many. But I, she says, who would be seen of none save You alone, desire to know by what road I may come to You, that it may be a secret, that none may come between us, and that no vagrant, strange onlooker may fall in with us.

And perhaps the reason why she asks what are those places where the Bridegroom feeds His sheep, and the reason why she shows to Him the modesty that makes her anxious not to meet the flocks of the companions, is so that He may keep His sheep apart from the companions and feed them separately, and thus the Bride may not only be seen of Him alone, but also may more privately enjoy the Bridegroom's secret and unspeakable mysteries.

Let us now consider the matter in detail. And notice first that, if we may say that the Lord, whose portion was Jacob and the lot of whose inheritance was Israel, is Himself to be understood as the Bridegroom; then His companions must be those angels, according to whose number the Most High, when He divided the nations and scattered the sons of Adam, appointed the nations bounds according to the number of the angels of God, as Scripture says. So perhaps the flocks of the Bridegroom's companions may be all those nations that are divided up like herds under angel shepherds; but those are to be called the Bridegroom's flock, of whom He Himself says in the Gospel: My sheep hear my voice. For look and note carefully that He says my sheep, as though there may be others beside which are not His; even as He Himself says in another passage: You are not of my sheep. All of which things are, of course, highly relevant to this hidden mystery.

If this interpretation is correct, it is fitting also that the Bride should want the flock of each of the companions to be understood as that companions bride, the bride whom she has described as being veiled. But, because she was sure that she herself was superior to all those, she does not want to seem like any of them; for she knows that she ought to surpass those brides of the companions—or, as the Bride calls them, the veiled ones—in the same measure as her Bridegroom surpasses the companions.

It will be seen, however, that she had other motives for asking what she did. She knows that the Good Shepherd makes it His business to seek for the best pastures for His sheep, and to find green and shady groves where they may rest during the noonday heat; whereas the Bridegroom's companions do not know how to do this, neither do they possess His knowledge and care in choosing

their feeding-grounds. That, therefore, is the reason why she says: Tell me where do You feed, where do You have Your couch in the midday: she desires just that time when the light is poured out on the world more copiously, when the day is pure and the daylight clearer and brighter.

And then, says she, tell me, O You whom my soul has loved, where do You feed, where do You have your couch in the midday, lest perchance I be made as one that is veiled above the flocks of Your companions. The Bride has now called the Bridegroom by a new name. For, knowing that He is the Son of Charity—nay, rather that He is Himself the Charity that is of God, she has made a sort of tide for Him with the words: You whom my soul has loved. Yet she has not said You whom I have loved, but You whom my soul has loved, knowing that one must not love the Bridegroom with just any sort of love, but with ones whole soul, and ones whole strength, and with all ones heart.

Where do You feed, she says, and where do You have Your couch? I think, moreover, that the prophet likewise is speaking of this place, concerning which the Bride desires of the Bridegroom to learn and to be told the whereabouts; set as he is under the same Shepherd, he says: The Lord rules me—or, as we read in other versions, The Lord feeds me—and I shall want nothing. And because he knew that other shepherds through sloth or inexperience assemble their flocks in the drier places, he says about the Lord, this best of shepherds: In a green place, there has He set me; He has brought me up on the water of refreshment, thus making it clear that this Shepherd provides His sheep with water that is not only plentiful, but also wholesome and pure and utterly refreshing.

And, because he has been changed from his former estate of being a sheep under a shepherd, and has advanced therefrom to rational and higher things, and has achieved this advance as a result of his conversion, he says further: He has converted my soul; He has led me on the paths of justice for His own names sake. But, since he had advanced to the point of entering the paths of justice and justice itself inevitably has injustice fighting against it—and he who enters the way of justice must experience struggle with those who oppose him—trusting in faith and hope, the prophet says about these conflicts: For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for You art with me.

After this, as though returning thanks to Him who had instructed him in shepherd lore, he says: Your rod and Your staff—with which I was appointed to the office of shepherd —they have comforted me. Then, when he sees how he has been changed over from shepherd pastures to rational meats and mystical secrets, he goes on to say: You have prepared a table before me against them that afflict me; You have anointed my head with oil, and Your chalice which inebriates—how goodly it is! And Your mercy will follow me all the days of my life, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days. That first life, the pastoral, was a preparatory one, in order that, being set in a green place, he might be brought up on the water of refreshment. But the things that follow have to do with progress and perfection.

And, since we have brought up the subject of pastures and of greenness, it seems fitting to support what we say out of the Gospels also. There too have I encountered this Good Shepherd talking about the pastures of the sheep; there is a passage where He styles Himself the Shepherd, and even calls Himself the Door, saying: I am the Door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures.

Him, therefore, the Bride now plies with questions that she may learn and hear from Him in what pastures He keeps His sheep, and in what pleasant places He keeps Himself during the midday heat. And what she calls midday denotes those secret places of the heart in which the soul pursues the clearer light of knowledge from the Word of God; for midday is the time when the sun is at the zenith of its course. So when Christ, the Sun of Justice, shows to His Church the high and lofty secrets of His powers, then He will be teaching her where lie His pleasant pastures and His places of repose at noon. For when she has only begun to learn these things and is receiving from Him the rudiments, so to speak, of knowledge, then the prophet says: And God will help her in the morning early. At this time, however, because she is now seeking things that are more perfect, and desiring higher things, she asks for the noonday light of knowledge.

I suppose this is the reason also why it is recorded of Abraham, after the many previous experiences in which God had appeared to Him and taught him on particular matters, that God appeared to him at the oak of Mambre, as he was sitting at the door of his tent at midday. And lifting up his eyes, Scripture says, he saw, and behold, three men were standing over him. As we believe that these things were written by the Holy Spirit, I take it that it was not for nothing that the Divine Spirit saw fit to commit to the pages of Scripture even the time and hour of the vision; the detail of that hour and time was to add something to the knowledge of the children of Abraham—of those, that is, whose duty is to do the works of Abraham, and also to hope for those visitations. For he who can say: The night is passed and the day is at hand...let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, having gone through all these experiences, will have stepped over this time when the night is passed and the day is at hand, and will be hastening on, not to the beginning of the day, but to midday; so that he too may attain the grace of Abraham. For, if the light of the mind that is in him and the purity of his heart shall be bright and shining, he will have this midday time within himself; and, being set as it were in the noon through this purity of heart, he will see God as he sits by the oak of Mambre, which means From Seeing.

With regard to the time of vision, then, he sits at midday who puts himself at leisure in order to see God. That is why Abraham is said to sit, not inside the tent but outside, at the door of the tent. For a mans mind also is out of doors and outside of the body, if it be far removed from carnal thoughts and carnal desires; and therefore God visits him who is placed outside all these. It is relevant to the same mystery that Joseph likewise, when he had received his brothers in Egypt, feeds them at midday, and at midday they bow

down to him with their gifts.

And, in conclusion, I suppose that was the reason why none of the Evangelists wanted to write about the things that the Jews committed against the Savior, that they were done at midday; although the sixth hour denotes no other time than that of noon, yet no one calls it that. But Matthew puts it like this: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour; Luke says: And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour because the sun was darkened; and Mark likewise: And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour. Whence it appears that in the visitation of Abraham and in the banquet of the patriarchs with Joseph there was no need for that time to be denoted under the name of the number six; it was all right for it to be called midday. For the Bride, who was already foreshadowed in them, wanted to learn where the Bridegroom fed and where He had His couch; and therefore she calls the time midday. But the Evangelists, in telling their story, needed not the expression midday, but the number of the sixth hour, manifestly in order to narrate the sacrifice of that Victim who was offered on the day of the Pasch for the redemption of man, who himself was formed by God on the sixth day, after the earth had brought forth the living creature after its kind, four-footed and creeping things and beasts of the earth.

For this reason, therefore, in the present passage the Bride desires to be enlightened with the full light of knowledge, lest going astray through lack of instruction she may be made in any respect like those schools of teachers which occupy themselves not with the very wisdom of God, but with the wisdom of this world and of the princes thereof. The Apostle also appears to state this selfsame thing in the passage where he says that we speak the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery...which none of the princes of this world knew. And again he signifies the same thing when he says: For we have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God.

So, then, the Bride of Christ enquires for His noonday resting-places and asks God for the plenitude of knowledge, lest she appear to be as one of the schools of the philosophers, which are said to be veiled, because with them the plenitude of truth is hidden and veiled. But the Bride of Christ says: But we behold the glory of God with open face.

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## Bk 2 #5

Sg 1.8: If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents. Gen 1.27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Mt 25.33: And he will place the sheep at his right and, but the goats at the left.

Phl 3.13: Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

Rom 7.15: I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

2Cor 9.7: Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Gen 1.27: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Mt 19.30: But many that are first will be last, and the last first.

Eph 4.14: So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.

Jn 10.11: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Sg 1.8: Follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Hos 10.12: Sow righteousness, gather in the fruit of life; light for yourselves the light of knowledge; seek the Lord until the fruits of righteousness come upon you.

1Cor 12.8: To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

Mt 11.27: All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Lk 10.22: The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Jn 10.15: As the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Ps 46.10: Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.

Wisd 7.17-8: For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times, the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons.

1Cor 15.53: For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

Sg 1.8: If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents.

1Cor 12.8: To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

Sg 1.8: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Sg 1.8: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Sg 6.8: There are 60 queens and 80 concubines, and maidens without number.

Sg 1.8: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Sg 6.9: My dove, my perfect one, is only one, the darling of her mother, flawless to her that bore her. The maidens saw her and called her happy; the queens and concubines also, and they praised her.

Lk 12.48: Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more.

Wisd 6.6: For the lowliest man may be pardoned in mercy, but mighty men will be mighty tested.

Sg 1.8: (cf. 4 vss. above).

Lev 20.10: If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.

Lev 21.9: And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

Rom 5.15: But the gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Mt 25.18: But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

Gen 38.9-10: But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went into his brother's wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and he slew him also.

Sg 1.8: If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents.

ICor 2.6: Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

Dt 32.9: For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.

ICor 2.6: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Rom 8.14: For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Rom 8.15: For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba, Father!"

ICor 2.12: Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

Rom 8.15: (cf. 2 vss. above).

"If you do not know" in Hebrew is "If you do not know (*yadah*, intimate or even sexual knowledge) yourself (literally, 'to you,' *lak*), and Origen rightly brings in the Genesis quote about man being made in the divine image and likeness as a sign of this knowledge.

Christ separating the sheep from the goats is a sign of what can happen to anyone if he doesn't follow the injunction to know oneself which, in addition to the bride, has implications of the Delphic oracle's famous injunction. However, that is reading more into the text but can't help but be noted.

"It" in Phl 3.13 refers to the resurrection of the dead which can be obtained by a certain type of forgetfulness, *epilanthano* being the verb which has the preposition *epi* prefaced to the verb, a forgetting-upon. Once done—and this follows immediately—there comes a "straining forward," another verb with *epi* prefaced to it, *epikteino*, a straining-upon.

On one hand we have Paul not understanding his own actions, the verb *gignosko* being used with *katergazomai*, to effect by labor or to acquire and on the other, a person who "has made up his mind" or *proaireo*, to chose (*aireo*) beforehand (*pro-*). Those who opt for the latter may be "last" but can be the "first."

"Tossed to and fro" and "carried about" or *kludonizomai* (suggestive of waves) and *periphero* (literally, to bear or carry around, implying rapidly going around a tighter and tighter circle).

The bride asks her bridegroom as to where he pastures his flock, etc, although the Song doesn't seem to have him present. I.e, the bridegroom is the "good shepherd."

"Righteousness" (*tsedaqah*), "fruit of life" (*chesed* or tender mercy for the latter), "light" (*nyr*, connotes a lamp) and again "righteousness" with a slightly different spelling, *tsedeq*. The verbs sow, gather, light and seek are associated with each respectively.

The noun for "utterance" is *logos*, commonly implying an expression, here used with *sophia* and *gnosis*, both from the same *Pneuma*.

Again Origen inserts reference to the Song reference to queens and concubines as potential associates of the bride.

"Given" and "required" or *didomi* and *zeteo*, the latter also meaning to seek.

"Lowliest" and "mighty (men)" or *elachistos* and *dunatos*, the latter intimating being fit for service or powerful.

Two verses with regard to adulterous behavior: the first with regard to the wife of a neighbor and the second concerning a priest's daughter, both subject to the death penalty.

Onan could be taken as the man who receive one talent from his master and buried it instead of using it in accord with God's purpose.

*Teleios* or "mature" or those who have the (divine) end (*telos*) in mind and to whom is given *sophia* but not one of this "age" or *aion* which here can apply to the generation at hand intimating those who are in authority.

"Portion and heritage" or *cheleq* and *nachalah*, the former often being associated with the portion of a field and the latter more with regard to the actual occupation of something.

The last few verses of this section pertain to "spirit" or *pneuma*: being lead by it, the one of slavery vs. sonship and the world vs. the One of God.

Unless you know yourself, O good (or fair) one among women, go forth in the footsteps of the flocks, and feed your goats among the shepherds tents. (1.8—Vg. 1.7)

Unless you know yourself, O good (or Fair) one among women, go forth in the footsteps of the flocks, and feed your goats among the shepherds tents.

The admirable maxim Understand yourself or Know yourself is said to derive, among others, from one of the seven men whom popular opinion acclaims as having been of outstanding wisdom among the Greeks. But Solomon who, as we saw in our Introduction, anticipated all these sages in time and in wisdom and in the knowledge of things, says to the soul, as to a woman, and with the implication of a threat: Unless you have known yourself, O fair one among women, and have recognized whence the ground of your beauty proceeds—namely, that you were created in Gods Image, so that there is in you an abundance of natural beauty; unless you have thus realized how fair you were in the beginning—though even now you art superior to other women and art the only one of them to be called fair, unless you have in this wise known yourself for what you art—for I would not have your beauty to seem good by comparison with that of your inferiors, but rather that you form your judgement of yourself by looking squarely at yourself and your own comeliness—unless, I say, you have done this, I command you to go forth and put yourself at the very back of the flocks, and no longer to feed sheep or lambs, but to feed goats, those creatures which, by reason of their wantonness and perversity, will be standing on the left hand of the King when He sits in judgement. And though, when you were brought into the royal chamber, I may have shown you things that are supremely good, if you know not yourself, I shall show you also things that are supremely bad, that you may profit from them both, alike by terror of the evil as by desire for the good. For, if you have not known yourself, and have lived in ignorance thereof, not trying to acquire self-knowledge, you shall certainly not possess a tent of your own, but shall run about among the shepherds tents, and, in those now of one, now of another, you shall feed your goats, those restless, straying creatures that are appointed for sins. These things shall you endure till circumstances and experience teach you how great an evil it is for the soul not to know herself, nor yet that beauty of hers by which she is superior not to other virgins, but to other women—those, namely, who have suffered corruption and have not kept their maidenhood intact.

After all those sayings of the Bride, this is what the Bridegroom says at this point in the drama. He speaks with a certain sternness, as giving a warning, and turns the thoughts of the Bride to the care for self-knowledge. But now let us do as we have done before, and apply these things to Christ and to the Church.

In addressing these words to His Bride—that is, to the souls of believers, He makes the height of spiritual health and blessedness to consist in the knowledge and understanding of oneself. I do not think it is possible to explain easily or briefly how a soul may know herself; but as far as we are able, we will try to elucidate a few points out of many.

It seems to me, then, that the soul ought to acquire self-knowledge of a twofold kind: she should know both what she is in herself, and how she is actuated; that is to say, she ought to know what she is like essentially, and what she is like according to her dispositions. She should know, for instance, whether she is of a good disposition or not, and whether or not she is upright in intention; and, if she is in fact of an upright intention, whether, in thought as in action, she has the same zeal for all virtues, or only for necessary things and those that are easy; furthermore, whether she is making progress, and gaining in understanding of things, and growing in the virtues; or whether perhaps she is standing still and resting on what she has been able to achieve thus far; and whether what she does serves only for her own improvement; or whether she can benefit others also, and give them anything of profit, either by the word of teaching or by the example of her actions.

If, on the other hand, she knows herself not to be of a good disposition nor upright in intention, let her in this case find out whether she is greatly deficient and far from the path of virtue; or whether she has already been set in that same way, and is trying to follow it, desiring to apprehend the things that are before and to forget those that are behind, ne but has not yet drawn near or, if she have come near, at least has not as yet attained perfection.

And the soul needs to know herself in another way—whether she does these evil deeds of hers intentionally and because she likes them; or whether it is through some weakness that, as the Apostle says, in she works what she would not and does the things she hates, while on the contrary she seems to do good deeds with willingness and with direct intention. Does she, for example, control her anger with some people and let fly with others, or does she always control it, and never give way to it with anyone at all? So too with gloominess: does she conquer it in some cases, but give way to it in others, or does she never admit it at all? It is the same with fear, and all the other things that are patently opposed to the virtues.

And the soul who knows herself needs further to enquire whether she is greatly desirous of glory, or only slightly so, or not in the least. She can tell that from her reactions to praise—if she is greatly delighted thereby, or only mildly so, or not in the least degree; and regarding reproaches—whether they sadden her much, or only a little, or not at all.

For the soul who knows herself, there are, moreover, certain indications in the manner of her giving and receiving—whether she makes her offerings and bestows her gifts in a spirit of sharing, and as one who likes her equity to be recognized among men; or whether she does so, as it is said, with sadness or of necessity, in or at any rate as expecting requital from those who hear her or receive gifts from her. So also in the matter of receiving, the soul who knows herself will notice whether she cares nothing for the things that she receives, or whether she rejoices over them as over something good.

Such a soul will take stock also of her mental processes, so as to find out whether she is easily moved by the hearing of some apparent truth and carried away by the skill and grace of its verbal presentation; or whether this seldom occurs or never at all. But we have said enough about that sort of knowledge. Anyone who so desires can think of a host of further ways like these, by which

the soul may test her knowledge of herself and, contemplating the beauty which she received at her creation in Gods Image, may judge how it may be renewed and restored.

The passage before us, then, enjoins the soul, under the figure of a woman, that she should know herself. It says, Unless you know yourself. That is to say: Unless you have guided your inclinations along the several lines that we have just laid down, distinguishing in every case between what must be done and what must be avoided, between what you lack and what you have in full, what needs to be amended and what has to be preserved; and if, instead of doing this, you have without discrimination chosen to run with other souls on the common human level—which souls here are called women—among whom you art fair, because you you already not only received the kisses of the Word of God, but also you beheld the secrets of His chamber: if, then, I say, you do not known yourself, but, making no distinction, you preferred to live as do the common people, go forth, then, in the footsteps of the flocks. That is to say: If, after all these things that have been given you, you do nothing of uncommon excellence, neither—since you know not yourself you held aloof from the flocks way of life, then be with the rest of the flock. And you shall be not only with the flock, but in the footsteps of the flocks; he shall become the last and latest, who did not understand his own preeminence.

And for this reason, when a soul has thus neglected knowledge, she is bound to be carried about with every wind of doctrine into the deception of errors, so that she pitches her tent now with one shepherd—that is, with one teacher of the Word—and now with another, and so she is carried hither and thither, tending not sheep, which are guileless creatures, but goats—that is, her wanton, restless, sinful inclinations; for which purpose indeed she has sought these divers teachers. And this will be the punishment of the fault of the soul, who has not tried to know herself and to follow that Shepherd only who lays down His life for the sheep.

This is one way in which the soul ought to get knowledge of herself—namely, in her affections and actions. The other way in which the soul who is beautiful among women is bidden to know herself is more abstruse and more difficult. If she can achieve it, she may hope for all good things; if not, then let her know that she must go forth after the footsteps of the flocks, and feed goats in the tents of shepherds, who are strangers to her. Let us then consider and, so far as we are able, embark on the discussion of this kind of knowledge too.

The Divine Word says by the mouth of the prophet: Kindle for yourselves the light of knowledge. Now among spiritual gifts there is one that is indeed the greatest of them all, namely that word of knowledge which is imparted by the Holy Spirit; and the primary object of that knowledge is that which Matthew's Gospel puts in this way: No one has learnt (novit) the Son but the Father, neither has anyone learnt (novit) the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him. But in Luke it runs thus: No one knows (scit) what the Son is but the Father, and no one knows (scit) what the Father is but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him. And according to John we read: As the Father comprehends (cognoscit) me, even so do I know (agnosco) the Father. But in the forty-fifth psalm the writer says: Be still, and know that I am God.

The supreme function of knowledge is, therefore, to know the Trinity; and, in the second place, to know Gods Creation, even as did he who said: For He has given me the true knowledge of the things that are, the substance of the world and the virtue of the elements, the beginning and ending and midst of the times, etc.

For the soul, therefore, these things will include a certain self-perception, by which she ought to know how she is constituted in herself, whether her being is corporeal or incorporeal, and whether it is simple, or consists of two or three or several elements; also, as some would enquire, whether the substance of the soul has been made, or has definitely not been made by anyone; and, if it has been made, how it was made; whether, as some opine, its substance is contained in the bodily seed and originates together with the first beginning of the body; or whether it is introduced from the outside into the womb of a woman, and there united, as a perfect thing, to the body already prepared and formed for it. And, if this be the case, whether it comes as a new creation that has only just been made when the body is seen to have been formed; in which case we should adjudge the reason for its creation to be the need for furnishing the body with a soul; or whether we should think that, having been created some time earlier, it comes for some reason to assume a body. And, if it is believed to be thus drawn into the body for some cause, then the work of knowledge is to determine what that cause may be.

And there is the further question whether the soul puts on a body only once and, having laid it down, seeks for it no more; or whether, when it once has laid aside what it took, it takes it yet again; and, if it does so a second time, whether it keeps what it has taken always, or some day puts it off once more. But if, as the Scriptures lead us to think, the consummation of the world is near and this present state of corruption will be changed into one of incorruption, there seems no doubt that the soul cannot come to the body a second or third time under the conditions of this present life. For, if this other view were accepted, then the world would know no end of such successive re-assumptions.

And the soul, pursuing this knowledge of herself, may further ask if there is some other class of beings, whether there are some spirits of the same sort of nature as herself, and other spirits too, that are not as she, but different from her: that is to say, are there not only some other spirits possessing reason as she does herself, but also some lacking reason? And is her nature the same as that of the angels—for it is generally thought that one sort of rationality cannot by any means differ from another? And, if she is not such as they by nature, will she, if she be worthy, be made so by grace? Or can she not in any case be made like the angels, if the character and make-up of her nature have not received this form? For one would think it possible for that which has been lost to be restored, but not for that to be bestowed which the Creator did not give in the beginning.

And the soul in pursuit of self-knowledge should enquire also, whether her power of reason is changeable and such as can come and

go; or whether it never fails when once it has been acquired. But what need is there to recount further reasons why the soul should know herself? That is to say, if she be neglectful about seeking a perfect self-knowledge, she may be commanded to go forth in the footsteps of the flocks and feed the goats, and this not in her own tent but in the shepherds tents. Everyone who is disposed to follow up such reasons has ready to his hand abundant opportunities to take some of the things we have mentioned, and practice himself therein by the word of wisdom, as his strength permits.

Let us now take it that these words are spoken by the Word of God to the soul that has indeed been set in the path of progress, but has not yet attained the summit of perfection. She is called beautiful because she is advancing; yet to enable her to reach perfection a warning has to be addressed to her, because, unless she knows herself in detail, as we specified above, and exercises herself watchfully in the Word of God and in the divine Law, she will surely gather to herself about those details the notions of all sorts of people, and will follow men who speak nothing of excellence, nothing that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. For this is what it means to follow in the footsteps of the flocks: it is to run after the teachings of those who, continuing sinners themselves, have been unable to provide any remedy for those who sin. He who follows these will be feeding goats that are appointed for sins, and will be going round the shepherds' tents—that is, the various sects of the philosophers.

Consider now more carefully how terrible a thing it is that this figure presages. Go forth, He says, in the footsteps of the flocks. The soul, now within doors and set among the mysteries, because she neglects to know herself and to enquire who she is and what she ought to do and how she ought to do it, and what she should not do, is for that fault of sloth told to go forth; she is turned out by Him who is set over her. So huge a danger is it for the should to fail to know and understand herself.

But we have given a twofold explanation of what is meant by the soul's knowledge of herself. And it may seem that she is deservedly bidden to go forth—in the sense of being driven out of doors from the inside—if, as on the first interpretation, she neglects to examine her acts and test her progress and review her faults; but, on the other hand, the sentence may be though severe, if we follow the second explanation, according to which we said that the knowledge she ought to have is that of her own nature and substance and state, both past and future. For where can there easily be found such a soul, so perfect and so very powerful that the reason and understanding of all these things is clear to her?

We shall reply to this that the words before us are not addressed to all souls; the Bridegroom is speaking not to the maidens, nor to the other women, nor to the eighty concubines, nor to the sixty queens, but only to her who alone is said to be the fair and perfect one among all women. It is obvious from this that the words are spoken to certain beloved souls who, although God has given them many graces of perception and understanding, nevertheless neglect parts of this knowledge and take no pains to get to know themselves. The threat of the divine saying that unto whomsoever much is given, of them much shall be required, applies, therefore, to them; the humble person shall be accounted worthy of pardon and mercy, but the mighty shall be mightily afflicted.

So, then, if you, O soul, that art fairer and more notable than others—teachers, for instance—neglect yourself and continues in your ignorance, how will those desiring edification obtain instruction, and how will the gainsayers be refuted and denounced as false? With reason, therefore, is she told, with an implication of threat, Go forth in the footsteps of the flocks, and feed your goats among the shepherds tents.

We may compare with this what Moses writes, namely, that if an Israelite woman have committed adultery, she shall be stoned; but, if she be the daughter of a priest...she shall be burnt with fire. The threat will seem just, therefore, as uttered against those who have the capacity for learning and knowledge, but slothfully neglect to use it; the Bridegroom's anger against such is very just, for He knows that the negligence of one involves the hurt of many. For such a soul will appear also as resembling him who received a penny and hid it in the earth, so that his lord should get no profit on his money; it will resemble also him whom God slew, so we are told, because he was wicked, that is to say, him who, grudging to posterity the seed of natural knowledge that he had received, spilled that seed on the earth.

And further, as we said before, if indeed this saying is of the nature of a warning to the Church, the shepherds must be taken as denoting the princes of this world, in other words those angels under whose charge the other nations are, having been brought to this condition either by lot or by some more secret processes.

But if the warning be referred to the individual soul who neglects to know herself, then the sages and masters of this present age are to be understood, who teach the wisdom of this world. Thus we may understand once and for all how vital it is for a soul—and especially for one who is good and lovely in disposition and awake in her intelligence—to acquire knowledge of herself, and to give heed to the recognition of herself through the study of doctrine and sacred pursuits, and thus to be led by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of adoption.

For if such a soul as this shall have neglected herself and abandoned sacred pursuits, she is bound to give her attention to worldly pursuits and secular wisdom, and to be led by the spirit of this world again in fear. And that is just what the Apostle means when he says: Now we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; and again: For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry: Abba, Father.

These are the points that have occurred to me about this present passage. Now let us turn to what follows.

## Bk 2 #6

Sg 1.9: I compare you, my love, to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots.

Ex 14.8: And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly.

Ex 14.27: So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the Lord routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Ex 15.4: Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea; and his picked officers are sunk in the Red Sea.

2Kg 6.14: So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army; and they came by night, and surrounded the city.

Hab 3.8: Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your wrath against the rivers, or your indignation against these, when you rode upon your horses, upon your chariot of victory?

Mt 11.30: For my yoke, is easy, and my burden is light.

Rom 8.14: For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Rev 19.11-14: (The victory of Christ and his heavenly army).

Jn 1.1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Col 1.15: He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

Jn 10.18: No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

Col 1.24: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

Eph 5.26: That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

Eph 5.27: That he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Sg 1.9: I compare you, my love, to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots.

Sg 1.8: If you do not know, O fairest among women.

Eph 5.26: (cf. 4 vss. above).

1Tm 1.15: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Rev 19.14: And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses.

Eph 5.26: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Sg 1.9: (cf. 6 vss. above).

Hab 3.8: Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode upon your horses, upon your chariot of victory?

The first person singular is used ('I compare you'), presumably the bridegroom, who must have astonished his spouse with reference to a mare in Israel's dreaded enemy, Egypt, even more so by speaking of its leader, Pharaoh. Not only that, he brings up chariots which were the most terrifying weapon of the day. Surely the bride had in mind the destruction of these chariots in the Red Sea to which several references are made. Two more references to horses and chariots are made with regard 1) to the king of Syria whom the prophet Elisha had vanquished and 2) "rivers" which here are similar to the Red Sea.

Christ speaks of his yoke and burden: "easy and light" or *chrestos* and *elaphros*, useful or good and light with regard to weight. Such are the reigns, if you will, the *Pneuma* employs when leading people (*ago*), and being breath, *Pneuma* is light as well as invisible.

Origen refers to the opening of heaven with Christ on a white horse—again keeping in mind with the already reference to horses—who is called "Word (*Logos*) of God." This *Logos* was "in the beginning" (*arche*) whereas the just mentioned verse has *Logos* at the end, if you will. The *arche* proper to *Logos* is also the "image and first born" of all creation, *eikon* and *prototokos*, two characteristics Christ conveys from *arche* to *apokalupsis*, revelation in the sense of Book of Revelation.

Christ speaks of "power" or *exousia* twice with regard to his own life: to lay it down and to take it up. *Exousia* refers to authority whereas *dunamis* (noted earlier in several sections) refers to capacity or a faculty.

Paul's rejoicing in his suffering (*pathema*) and completing of Christ's afflictions reflect the bride's attitude to being compared to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots if the latter image is taken in the negative sense.

Two verse pertaining to cleansing: 1) washing with the "word" or *rhema* (not *logos* as expression but a sound produced by the voice and having a definite meaning) which acts, if you will, like soap used with water and 2) the church as bride "in splendor" or *endoxos* (*doxa* as glory with the preposition *en* or *in*). With all this in mind, Origen inserts the Song reference to a mare in Pharaoh's chariots yet again. Then he refers to the verse prior to it, of the bride possibly not knowing her spouse's location and being a wanderer with respect to his companions' flocks.

Heaven's armies are clothed in fine linen reflecting the image of Christ on a white horse.

Origen concludes this section with a second reference to rivers noted by the prophet Habakkuk. Keep in mind again the reference to horses (and mare of the Song).

To my company of horsemen in Pharaoh's chariots have I deemed you like, my neighbor. The historical sense which the writer seems to give is this: Just as, when long ago in Egypt, he says, Pharaoh advanced in chariots and with horsemen in his pursuit of the people of Israel, and mine—that is, the horsemen belonging to the Lord, the Spouse—far outstripped the chariots of Pharaoh and were superior thereto, for they overcame them and drowned them in the Sea; so likewise you, my neighbor and my Bride, surpasses all women, and has come to be compared to my company of horsemen which, by comparison with Pharaoh's chariots, is considered altogether stronger and more splendid.

This seems to be the sense of the actual saying, and what the words are trying to express. But let us see now whether, on the mystical interpretation, under the figure of the chariots and four-horse teams of Pharaoh headed and driven by him for the persecution of God's people and the oppression of Israel, he is perhaps describing souls who are under the dominion of the spiritual Pharaoh and spiritual wickedness. For it is certain that the evil spirits stir up the temptations and troubles which they arouse against the saints, by means of certain souls who are suitable and convenient for the purpose. Mounting these like chariots, they fiercely attack and assail both the Church of God and individual believers.

But, as to who the horsemen of the Lord may be, we read nothing in the passage in Exodus where Pharaoh's chariots are overthrown and drowned in the Sea, except the bare fact that the Lord cast Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the Red Sea. In the Fourth Book of Kings, however, we find that Eliseus says to his servant, who is alarmed at the approach of the enemy who had come with horsemen and chariots: Fear not, for there are more with us than with them. And Eliseus prayed, Scripture says, and said: 'Lord, open the eyes of this servant that he may see.' And the Lord opened his eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eliseus, which had come down to him. Again, in the prophet Habacuc we read plainly and clearly about the horsemen of the Lord, and that He mounts His horses. The words of Scripture in that place are these: Were You angry, O Lord, with the rivers? Or was Your wrath upon the rivers? Or Your fury on the sea? For You shall mount Your horses, and Your horsemen are salvation.'

Here, then, are the horses of the Lord that He mounts, and also His horsemen. And I myself take both the horses and the horsemen to be none other than those souls who accept the bridle of His discipline, and bear the yoke of His sweetness, and are led by the Spirit of God and, in so doing, find salvation for themselves.

But in the Revelation of John we read that there appeared to him a horse, and sitting upon it One that was faithful and true and judging with justice, whose name, he tells us, is the Word of God. And so he says: And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and with justice (loth He judge and fight. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many diadems, having a name written which no man knows but Himself. And He was covered with a garment sprinkled with blood, and His name was called The Word of God. And His army was in heaven, and they followed Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

To reveal to us the meaning of these things, however, so that we may perceive what these visions signify, what the white horse may be, and He who sits thereon, whose name is the Word of God, we need the grace of God. And perhaps somebody will say that the white horse is the body which the Lord assumed, and by which He, who as God the Word was in the beginning with God, so to speak rode about. Another, however, will prefer to say that it denotes the life which the Firstborn of every creature took, and of which He said: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. And someone else will think that both the body and the life together are called the white horse when they have no sin. Fourthly and lastly, somebody will say that it is the Church which also is called His Body, which appears as a white horse; since she, whom He has sanctified for Himself by the laver of water, has neither spot nor wrinkle. And he will interpret on the same lines also the things which follow, the host of heaven and the army of the Word of God, and the fact that all the followers of the Word of God also are seated on white horses, everyone of them, and are clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Christ, then, is comparing and likening His Church at once to this white horse, by which He Himself is carried who is called the Word of God, and to this heavenly army that follows Him, also on white horses. Moreover, we can take in Pharaoh's chariots also to mean either that just as the Lord's company of horsemen surpasses and excels the cavalry and chariots of Pharaoh, so likewise dost you, who art the fair one among women, surpass and excel all other souls, who still bear Pharaoh's yoke and endure his riders; or it can certainly mean that this my company of horsemen, which has been cleansed by the laver of water and made pure and shining and is deemed worthy to have the Word of God for its rider, has been taken from among the chariots of Pharaoh. For all believers do come thence; because Christ came into the world to save sinners.

We can, therefore, explain the meaning of this phrase in this way: I deem you, my neighbor, like to my company of horsemen that formerly was numbered among Pharaoh's chariots and now, having been purified by the laver of water, follows me upon white horses.

Blessed are those souls, in consequence, who have bent their backs to take upon themselves the Word of God as rider and to endure His bridle, so that He may turn them whithersoever He will, and lead them with the reins of His commandments; for they no longer go in their own way, but are led, and led back, in all things according to their Riders will.

And the fact that the Church is the aggregate of many souls and has received the pattern of her life from Christ, may lead us to suppose that she has received that pattern not from the actual deity of the Word of God—and this obviously is far above those actions and dispositions in respect of which men ought to be given a pattern—but rather that it was the soul that He assumed and in which was the utmost perfection, that was the pattern displayed to men. It will then be the likeness of the same soul which He here calls my neighbor, that the Church—and this is the aggregate of those many souls that were formerly under Pharaoh's yoke and among his chariots, and now are called the company of the Lord's horsemen—ought to bear.

But you who read this must decide for yourself which of these two interpretations best suits the phrase in question.

## Bk 2 #7

Sg. 1.10: Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.

Sg 1.8: If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents.

1Cor 12.14-18: (the body and its members).

1 Cor 12.27: Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Eph 5.21-7: (the Christian household).

Sg. 1.10: (cf. 6 vss. above).

Heb 1.1: In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets.

Eph 5.26-7: That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Mt 11.29-30: Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Sg 1.10: Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.

Mt 11.29: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Phi 2.8: And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Rom 5.19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Gen 38.11: Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"--for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

The shift from a mare in Pharaoh's chariots to cheek and neck seems quite radical, but such imagery can apply to a horse as well as here, the bride herself. This observation about the bride's physical beauty (cheeks and neck give the impression of tall slenderness) ties in with Origen's reference to the verses from First Corinthians about the members of the body: "God arranged (them)" or *tithemi*, the common verb meaning to put, to place. "Individually members of it" reads literally "members from part" (*ek merous*).

The extended quote from Ephesians 5 develops the theme of body-physical members in terms of wives being submissive to their husbands: "as the church is subject to Christ," *hupotasso* (literally, to place under, *hupo*-). Intervening these verse and their continuance (vss. 26-7) is the opening line from Hebrews about the "many and various ways" God communicated himself. Two adverbs are used, *polupmros* and *polutropos*. Both are prefaced with the adjective *polus* (many) and the root nouns *meros* (part, as with 'members from part') and *tropos* (turn, direction, course). The second pair of verses speak of the church-bride (i.e., the Song's bride) as being without blemish.

The taking of Christ's yoke is a kind of learning (*manthano*) from him, for it is "easy" or *chrestos* and *elaphros*, useful or good and light with regard to weight. After Origen quotes the Song's words of the bridegroom concerning his spouse as to her cheeks and neck, he brings up again reference to Christ's yoke.

Human "form" has the verb *gignomai* (to become) and can refer to both *morphe* (of a slave) and *schema* (figure, character or bearing) in the previous verse. This *morphe-schema* proper to Jesus Christ is part of his "obedience" or *hupakoe* or literally, listening-under (*hupo*-) as *hupotasso* several verses above.

Origen concludes this section with reference to the story of Judah and Tamar, the latter being married to the former's first born son, Er. Reference to Tamar as remaining a widow parallels the bride's relationship with her spouse as presented spiritually, that is, a widow can be equated with a virgin but a virgin who is married to Christ.

How lovely have your cheeks become, as are the turtle-doves, your neck as necklaces! (1.10—Vg. 1.9)

how lovely have your cheeks become, as are the turtle-doves, your neck as necklaces! The drama seems to have developed in the following manner. After the Bridegroom had used some sternness in cautioning the Bride, impressing on her that if she knew not herself, she must go forth in the footsteps of the flocks and feed, not sheep but goats, she blushed at the severity of the command. And the redness of shame, which then suffused her face, made her cheeks lovely and much fairer than they had been before; and not her cheeks only, but also her neck is now rendered as beautiful as if it were adorned with necklaces of jewels. Further, the beauty of her cheeks is compared to turtle-doves, because birds of this kind are notable both for their noble mien and for their eager speed. So much for the narrative. Now let us look at its significance.

Paul the Apostle, writing to the church of the Corinthians, speaks as follows: For the body also is not one member, but many. And, if the foot should say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, it would not therefore be riot of the body. And if the ear should say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, it would not therefore be not of the body. If the whole body were the eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, every one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. And, after a further discussion of the matter, he says finally: Now you are the body of Christ and members severally. And again, writing to the Ephesians, he says: Being subject one to another in the fear of Christ, let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the Savior of the body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved His Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it by the laver of water in the Word, that He might make ready for Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And a little further on he says: For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as also

Christ does the Church, because we are members of His body, and so forth.

Therefore, we are taught by these words that the Bride of Christ, who is the Church, is also His Body and His members. If, then, you hear mention of the members of the Bridegroom, you must understand by it the members of His Church. Among these, just as there are some who are called eyes, doubtless because they have the light of understanding and of knowledge, and others ears, to hear the word of teaching, and others hands to do good works and to discharge the functions of religion: so also are there some who may be called His cheeks. But they are called the cheeks of the face, when integrity and modesty of soul appear in them; these cheeks must, therefore, surely be those members of the Church who cultivate the integrity of chastity and virtue.

Because of these, therefore, it is said to the whole body of the Bride: How lovely have your cheeks become! And notice that He did not say, How lovely are your cheeks but, How lovely have your cheeks become! He means to show that previously they were not so lovely. It was only after she had received the Bridegroom's kisses, and after He, who formerly spoke by the prophets, had come and cleansed this Church for Himself in the laver of water and made her to be without spot or wrinkle and given her knowledge of herself, that her cheeks became lovely. For the chastity and virtue and virginity which had not existed before, were spread abroad in a lovely beauty through the cheeks of the Church.

This beauty of the cheeks, however, that is, of modesty and chastity, is compared to turtle-doves. They say it is the nature of turtle-doves that the male bird never mates with any female but one, and the female similarly will not suffer more than a single mate; so that, if one of the pair be killed and the other left, the survivors desire for intercourse is extinguished with its mate. The figure of the turtle-dove is thus fittingly applied to the Church, either because she knows no union with any other after Christ, or because all the continence and modesty that is in her resembles a flight of many doves.

Let us interpret the Brides neck in the same way. It must surely denote those souls who receive the yoke of Christ who says: Take up my yoke upon you...for my yoke is sweet. Her neck is so called, therefore, because of her obedience. And her neck has been made lovely as necklaces, and rightly so. For that which the disobedience of the Transgression formerly made shameful, the obedience of faith has now made beautiful and fair.

Your neck, then, has been made fair as necklaces; for we must understand has been made fair with both subjects. By necklaces are meant here the strings or chains of jewels which rest on the nape of the neck; the rest of the adornment depends and hangs down from them over the entire neck. So He has compared the Brides neck to the ornament that is usually placed on the back of the neck and on the front of it. Our thoughts on this saying are as follows: We have said that subjection and obedience are called the neck; because the neck may be said to receive the yoke of Christ and to offer the obedience of faith in Him. So the adornment of her neck, that is, of her obedience, is Christ. For He himself was first made obedient unto death; and, as by the disobedience of one man—namely, of Adam—many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one—that is, of Christ—many shall be made just. So the adornment and necklace of the Church is the obedience of Christ. But the neck of the Church too, that is, her obedience, has been made like to the obedience of Christ; because His obedience is the necklace of the neck.

Great in this matter, therefore, is the praise of the Bride, great the glory of the Church, when her obedience, patterned as it is on Christ's, equals the obedience of Him whom the Church imitates.

This same sort of necklace is mentioned also in Genesis, as given by the patriarch Juda to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, with whom he had lain as with a harlot. This mystery is not obvious to all. We understand by it that Christ gave to the Church, whom He had gathered in from the prostitution of many philosophical doctrines, these pledges of future perfection, and put this necklace of obedience on her neck.

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## **Bk 2 #8<sup>1</sup>**

Sg 1.11-12: We will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver. While the king was on his couch.

Mt 4.1-11: (Jesus' temptation).

Gal 3.19: Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained by angels through an intermediary.

Heb 2.2: But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Gal 4.2: But he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father.

Gal 3.24: So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 4.4: But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.

Eph 1.4-5: Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

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<sup>1</sup>Section #8 contains a fairly lengthy list of scriptural references. Because of this, it is divided into three sections, more or less arbitrary, in order not become too unwieldily. However, Origen's Song text for this section (and any future sections) will remain undivided. Such will be the case in the future which will be noted.

Ps 74.2: Remember your congregation, which you have obtained from of old, which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage.

Eph 2.20: Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Gen 2.24: Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Eph 5.32: This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church.

Eph 5.25-6: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself. He gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

Heb 1.14: Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Gal 2.20: I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gen 18.1: And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

Ex 3.2: And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Ex 3.4-6: (the burning bush).

Ex 3.6: (cf. the vs. just above).

Sg 1.11-2: We will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver. While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Origen cites 1.12 and part of vs. 12, omitting "my nard gave forth its fragrance." Then he moves on to Jesus' temptation by the "devil" or *diabolos* which consists of two parts: changing stones to bread, throwing himself down to worship the devil and worshipping him. The latter two form one temptation, *peirazo* being the verb (to put to the proof).

The *Torah* was established for "transgressions" (*parabasis*, literally a going aside, *para-*) and "ordained" (*diatasso*: technically, to carry out or to enforce laws) which here are by angels, perhaps the same which ministered to Jesus in his temptation.

The *Torah* is a "custodian" or *paidagogos* or a person responsible for both the education and upbringing of a *paidos* or child. It is not longer needed once the "time has fully come" or the two nouns *pleroma* and *chronos* ('secular' or linear time). Such measurement doesn't apply in our having been chosen by God before the world's "foundation" or *katabole*, literally a throwing in accord with (*kata-*). *Proorao* means "predestined" or to see beforehand into the *chronos* which is according to (*kata*) the *eudokia* or "purpose" (i.e., good will) of his will.

There is a bridge of time between God remembering his "congregation" (*hedah*) which also means an appointed time...a *kairos*...which stands outside the conventional way of measuring time and rests upon the "foundation" (*themelios*) of both apostles and prophets, the old and new covenants. The man leaving his father for a wife can be taken as leaving the old dispensation for the new.

*Musterion* or "mystery" suggests rites of initiation where a person is introduced into the church as bride and thus to be wed to Jesus Christ. Here *musterion* is a kind of wedding ceremony. The command to "love" or *agapao* between husband and wife thus transfers to the church and Christ.

The "ministering spirits" or *pneuma* which are *leitourgikos*, originally fulfilling public service (*ergon*).

The shift from old to new dispensations is akin to being crucified with Christ who now "lives" (*zao* compared with *biao*, to pass one's life) in a person.

Two appearances of the Lord: 1) by the oaks of Mamre where there is confusion between the three men and the Lord and 2) to Moses in the bush which burned but was not consumed.

Origen brings in Sg 1.12 ('ornaments of gold, king on his couch') as a kind of refrain. Here it is expanded compared to omitting part of vs. 12 above.

Hos 2.8: And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Baal.

Ps 12.6: The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

Prov 10.20: The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the mind of the wicked is of little worth.

Ex 25.18: And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat.

Ex 25.31: Ex 25.31: And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold.

Hos 10.12: Sow for yourselves righteousness, gather in for the fruit of life: light for yourselves the light of knowledge; seek the Lord until the fruits of righteousness come upon you.

Sg 1.11: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Gal 3.19: Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained by angels through an intermediary.

Heb 10.1: For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near.

1Cor 10.11: Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

Heb 9.11: But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect then (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation).

1Cor 10.11: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Heb 9.24: For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Sg 1.11: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Ex 25.10-16: (the ark).

Ex 25.17-22: (the mercy seat).

Ex 30.1-6: (the altar).

Ex 25.23-30: (the table).

Ex 26.31: And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim.

Ex 26.37: And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them.

Ex 26.27: And five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward.

Ex 26.10-1: And you shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outmost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which is outmost in the second set. And you shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be one whole.

Ex 25.13-15: You shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark by them. The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.

Ex 27.1-8: (the altar).

Ex 26.1: Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff; with cherubim skillfully worked shall you make them.

Ex 31.7: The tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereon, and all the furnishings of the tent.

Heb 9.2-5: (the tent).

Mt 4.11: The devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Col 2.18: Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.

2Cor 3.16: But when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed.

1Cor 10.11: Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

Mt 7.12: So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

Is 5.7: For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry!

Hosea has Israel as a wayward bride, a warning for the one of the Song and hence the church.

Two mentions of silver: with regard to divine "promises" and the tongue of the "righteous:" *'amar* (the common noun for 'word') and *tsadyq*, both of which are related to speaking. Compare with the gold of the cherubim, usually considered a more precious metal and related directly to God, as well to as the lampstand.

Note the dependence of four verbs on each other: "sow, gather, light and seek." The last sums up the first three in preparation for the coming of the divine "fruits of righteousness" (*tsedeq*).

A contrast between the Law or *Torah* and the "offspring" (*sperma*) comes through an "intermediary" (*mesites*). Apparently the *Torah* did not come this way but handed directly to Moses. Nevertheless, the *Torah* is considered a "shadow" (*skia*) of the goods (*agathos*) to come. Such is the appearance of Christ as high priest, the verb being *paragignomai* which means literally to be beside (*para-*). That is to say, Christ runs concurrent with *Torah*, not contrary to it.

"These things" refer to the Israelites having been "overthrown in the wilderness" (vs. 5) and form a "warning or *tupikos*. This is an adverb meaning literally as "typically" or "according to type." Origen cites this verse again almost immediately with the high priest one inserted in between and later after speaking of the removal of a veil

"Sanctuary" or *hagia* which is "heaven itself" (*eis auton ton ouranon*), the place where Christ appears in God's presence, *emphaino* or literally "to shine in (*em-*).

Origen has a series of lengthy quotes from Exodus with regard to the sanctuary God commanded Moses to fashion, finishing with Hebrews' reference to the tent.

The devil leaves Christ after having tempted him after which angels come to minister to him, these being an introductory experience, as it were, to Christ's ministry.

Paul cautions about worship of angels and "visions," the verb *horaō* being used. This comes after mention of festivals, etc., "a shadow of things to come." These form a veil which is removed once a person turns to the Lord, the verb for "veil" being *anakalupto* (to uncover) which here means "face uncovered."

Law and prophets: both consists in an intent (*thelo*, to wish) coming from people with regard to oneself, that is, favorable.

Israel is equivalent to a vineyard and Judah to a "pleasant planting," *shahah* meaning to delight, to stroke or overspread. Still, bloodshed and a cry come from both instead of justice.

Rev 17.15: And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues."

Ezk 23.4: Oholah was the name of the elder and Oholibah the name of her sister.

Heb 1.3: He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.

Mt 27.51: And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

Sg 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Gen 49.9: Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up.

Gal 1.1: Paul an apostle--not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

Phl 3.10: That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

2Cor 4.18: Because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

Col 3.2: Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Col 3.1: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2Cor 5.16: From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer.

1Cor 10.4: And all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed the, and the Rock was Christ.

1Cor 10.1-2: I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Jn 6.31: Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jn 1.29: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Rev 7.14: I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation."

Ex 26.31: And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined line; in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim.

Heb 10.20: By the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.

Sg 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Num 24.17, 7-9: (the oracle of Balaam).

1Pt 1.10-12: (prophets who foresaw grace of Christ).

Jn 8.56: Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.

Mt 13.17: Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Gal 4.2: But he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father.

Mt 18.10: See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Heb 5.12: For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food.

Lk 2.52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

Sg 1.11: We will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver.

Sg 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

2Cor 6.16: What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

Is 66.2: But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Jn 14.23: Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Sg 1.11-12: (cf. 4 & 5 vss. above).

"Harlot" or *porne* consists of what seem to be the earth's various groups of people, and they parallel the allegory of the sisters Oholah and Oholibah ('she who has a tent' and 'my tent in her'), that is, Samaria and Jerusalem.

Christ's relationship to God: reflects "glory" and bears the "stamp" of his nature, *doxa* and *charakter*, the latter is a mark which has been impressed or engraved. Both enable Christ to exercise "power" or *dunamis* to sustain the world in existence.

The split of the "curtain" in the temple takes place the moment Christ expires on the cross, the noun being *katapetasma* compared with the outer veil. "While the king was on his couch" can be taken as Christ on his cross.

Compare "from men" and "through men" with "through Jesus Christ (and Father)" or *apo-dia* and *dia*. This "double *dia*," if you will, enables Paul to have two types of knowledge (*gignosko*, verb): him or Christ and the *dunamis* or "power" of his resurrection. Sharing in Christ's suffering is rendered as *koinonia* or having fellowship in it. It is the equivalent of looking to what is unseen, the verb *blepo* being used four times, having the power of sight.

*Phroneo* means "set (your) mind" or to be wise with regard to *ta ano* compared to what's upon (*epi*) earth. Compared with "seek" (*zeteo*) the same things, i.e., *ta ano* which are equivalent to the same place Christ is seated. Such *phroneo* and *zeteo* result in having a different view of people, that is, of shedding the "human point of view" or *kata sarka* (literally, according to the flesh). The verb *gignosko* (to know) is used here.

Origen inserts three references to the Israelites being nourished in the desert, these verses from the New Testament which means he believes them foreshadow Jesus Christ.

John sees Jesus approaching him and exclaims that he, the Lamb of God, can parallel the elders addressing John as to those who are clothed in white robes after their "tribulation" or *thlipsis*.

The "veil" or *paroketh* refers only to the one for the tabernacle which is to be fashioned with work that is "skilled" or *chashav* (to think, meditate or to invent). I.e., the work that went into this veil required great planning before its execution. This *paroketh*, made to be very thick and heavy, is the same *katapetasma* considered to be the "flesh" (*sarx*) of Jesus Christ.

Origen inserts a quote from the Song about the king/bridegroom resting on his couch which is repeated several verses later, the former before quoting from the oracle of Balaam. He focuses upon Israel's departure from Egypt in a way described as a wild ox and a lioness. This falls in with Peter's mention of prophets who "inquired" about salvation which in the Greek text has two verbs, both prefaced with the preposition *ex* (from); *exzeteo* and *expeunaio*. The former pertains more to seeking-from and the latter to searching-from.

Jesus speaks of Abraham as currently alive. For him there is no distance, temporal nor spacial, between having seen Christ's "day" (*hemera*) in the past and being "glad" (*chairo*) in the present.

Two verbs for "to see" with regard to prophets and righteous men: *eido* and *blepo*. The former means to see in the sense of having knowledge and the latter refers to the power or capacity for sight. The verb "to hear" (*akouo*) is the same for both uses.

“Guardians and trustees” or *epitropos* and *oikonomos*: *epi* or upon prefaced to *trepo*, to turn, to direct and *oikos* (house) with *nomos* (law, custom).

A parallel between “little ones” (*mikros*) and angels, the latter always (*diapantos*, literally as through all) seeing the Father’s face, the verb being *blepo*.

“First principles” or *stoicheion* or literally, one in a row or rudimentary elements with regard to the *logios* (adjective) of God, that is, versed in stories or eloquent. Here *stoicheion* may be compared with milk, not solid food. The growth of Jesus in “wisdom and “stature” (*sophia* and *helikia*) with the latter referring to a given time of one’s life. The verb relative to both is *prokopto*, the preposition *pro* (before) suggestive of advancement which can be seen in terms of the milk and solid food just noted.

Two verses from the Song of Songs with regard to ornaments for the bride and the king on his couch. This section is concluded with reference to these two verses.

The “temple” (*naos*) of God as belonging to idols and as being of the “living” (*zao*) God.”

God looks (*navat*: connotes beholding, having respect) to a man who is “humble, contrite and trembles:” *hany, nakeh* (literally as to smite) and *charad* (literally as upon God’s *davar*, ‘word’). This three-fold reverential spirit can apply to the *agapao* Jesus speaks with regard to a man for him which is complemented by the Father’s *agapao*. I.e., both will dwell with such a person, the verb *poieo* (to make) with the noun *mone* (a staying or stopping place).

We will make you likenesses of gold with silver inlays, till the King recline at His table. (1. 11-12a—Vg. 1.10-11a)

We will make you likeness of gold with silver inlays, till the king recline at his table. We have already noted 166 that this little book, being cast in the form of a play, is woven out of interchange of characters; and now the friends and companions of the Bridegroom—who, on the mystical interpretation, can be taken, as also we remarked before, either as the angels or even the prophets, or as the patriarchs—appear as speaking the words quoted to the Bride. For it was not only when the Lord after the baptism of John was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, that the angels came and ministered to Him; before the coming of His bodily presence they always ministered. For the Law itself is said to have been ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator; and the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says: For if the word which was received through angels became steadfast...

These acted, then, as governors and guardians appointed for the Bride while she was yet a little child with the Law as her pedagogue—until the fullness of the time should come, and God should send His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, and should lead her who was under governors and guardians and the Law her pedagogue, to receive the kisses of the Word of God Himself, that is, His words and teaching.

Before the time came for these things to happen, therefore, the Bride was being cherished by the service of angels in many ways; they used in those days to appear to men and tell them such things as the time and occasion required. For you must please not think that she is called the Bride or the Church only from the time when the Savior came in flesh: she is so called from the beginning of the human race and from the very foundation of the world—indeed, if I may look for the origin of this high mystery under Paul’s guidance, even before the foundation of the world. For this is what he says...as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight, predestinating us in charity unto the adoption of sons.

And in the Psalms too it is written: Remember Your congregation, O Lord, which You gathered from the beginning. And indeed the first foundations of the congregation of the Church were laid at the very beginning; and for this reason the Apostle says that the Church is built on the foundation not of the apostles only, but also of the prophets. And among the prophets Adam too is reckoned, who prophesied the great mystery in Christ and in the Church, when he said: For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. It is clearly with reference to these words of his that the Apostle says that this is a great mystery, but I speak in Christ and in the Church.

When, however, the same Apostle says: For Christ so loved the Church that He delivered Himself up for it, sanctifying it by the laver of water, he is far from showing that she did not exist before. For how could He have loved her, if she did not exist? Undoubtedly He loved her who did exist; she existed in all the saints who have been since time began. So, loving her, He came to her; and, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner was made a sharer of the same, and delivered Himself up for them. They themselves were the Church whom He loved to the intent that He might increase her in multitude and develop her in virtue and translate her through the love of perfectness from earth to heaven.

The prophets, then, ministered to her from the beginning; so also did the angels. What else was happening when the three men appeared to Abraham as he sat by the oak of Mambre? The angels on that occasion, however, displayed something more than mere angelic ministry, for the mystery of the Trinity was there made known. This was the case also in Exodus, where the angel of the Lord is said to have appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the bush; but directly afterwards it is written that the Lord and God spoke by the angel, and He is designated as the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Some of the heretics reading this passage have said that the God of the Law and the Prophets was much inferior to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit; and they have gone so far in their impiety as to ascribe all plenitude to Christ and the Holy Spirit, but imperfection and weakness to the God of the Law. But more of this another time.

We are setting out now to show in what sense the holy angels who had, charge of the Bride while she was yet a child, before the coming of the Lord, are identical with the friends and companions of the Bridegroom, here represented as saying to her: We will make you likenesses of gold and silver inlays, till the King reclines at His table. They show that they themselves are going to make for the Bride not gold, for they possess none worthy to be given her, but in the place of gold they promise to make her likenesses of

gold, and not one alone, but many. So they speak also of silver, implying that they have that, but only a small quantity of it; for they promise to make her out of silver not likenesses, but inlays. They do not possess enough silver to make a complete solid article of that alone, so they would put only inlays and some little things, like dots, into the thing that they were making for her out of the likeness of gold. These, then, are the ornaments which the Bridegroom's friends, of whom we spoke just now, are making for the Bride.

As to the secret meaning which these things contain, however, and the teaching that these strange words labor to express, let us pray the Father of the Almighty Word and Bridegroom, that He Himself will open to us the gates of this mystery, whereby we may be enlightened not only for the understanding of these things, but also for the propagation of them, and may receive also a portion of spiritual eloquence, according to the capacity of those who are to be our readers.

We have often and in many contexts pointed out that gold symbolizes the perceptive and incorporeal nature; whereas silver represents the power of speech and reason, even as the Lord says through the prophet: I gave you silver and gold, but you have made silver and golden Baalim. Which is as much as to say: I gave you perception and reason, with which to perceive and worship me, your God; but you have transferred the perception and reason that is in you to the worship of evil spirits.

We are told, too, that the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire; again, in another place the tongue of the just is said to be as silver tried by fire. And the cherubim are described as golden, because they are by interpretation the plenitude of knowledge. And it is commanded also that a candlestick of solid gold should be put in the Tabernacle of the Testimony; and that, it seems to us, is a type of the natural law in which the light of knowledge is contained. But what need is there to multiply proof texts, when those who will can easily see for themselves from many Scripture passages, that gold is applied to the intellect and mind, whereas silver is referred only to language and the power of speech?

Now, therefore, let us hasten on to contemplate, along the lines that we have just laid down, the sense in which the Bridegroom's friends speak of making likenesses of gold and silver inlays for the Bride. For it seems to me that because the Law which was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, had but a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things, and because all the things that happened to those who are described as being under the Law happened in a figure, not in the truth, these things are all of them the likenesses of gold, and not true gold. Let us then take it that true gold denotes things incorporeal, unseen and spiritual; but that the likenesses of gold, in which is not the Truth itself but only the Truths shadow, denote things bodily and visible. That tabernacle made with hands, for instance, was a likeness of gold, of which the Apostle says: For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands, the patterns of the true, but into heaven itself.

The unseen and incorporeal things that are in heaven, then, these are the true; but those that are visible and bodily on earth are said to be the patterns of the true, and not themselves the true. It is these, therefore, that are called the likenesses of gold; and they include the Ark of the Testimony, and the propitiatory, and the cherubim, and the altar of incense, and the table of proposition, and the loaves; likewise the veil, and the pillars, and the bars, and the altar of holocausts, and the Temple itself, and all the things that are written in the Law. All these were likenesses of gold. But the visible gold itself, just because it was visible, was not the true gold, but the likeness of that true and unseen gold.

The friends of the Bridegroom, therefore—that is to say, the angels and the prophets who ministered in the Law and the other mysteries—made these likenesses of gold for the Bride Church. And this, I think, is what Paul understood when he said: In religion of angels, being in vain puffed up by the sense of the flesh, in the things that he sees. Thus the whole of the Jewish religion and cult was likenesses of gold.

When, however, a man shall be converted to the Lord, and the veil shall be taken away from him, then he will see the true gold. Before that Gold came and offered Himself to be known, His friends made likenesses of Him for the Bride, so that she, being warned and aroused by these similitudes, might conceive a longing for the true Gold. For Paul shows that this happened when he says: Now these things happened to them in figure, and they are written for our sake, upon whom the end of the ages is come. But do not take this end, of which Paul speaks, in a temporal sense; for the end of time will find many for whom these things were not written, neither will such grasp their significance. You must understand the end of the ages rather as the consummation of things; these are the things that are said to have actually happened to Paul and others like him, and to have been written for their sakes.

We have dealt at unusual length with these matters because we wanted to show that when the Bridegroom's friends tell the Bride that they are making for her likenesses of gold inlaid with silver, they mean thereby the things that have been handed down in writing in the Law and the Prophets by means of figures, and images, and likenesses, and parables.

Among these likenesses, however, there are also some small silver inlays, that is, some tokens of a spiritual meaning and a rational interpretation; though these are only very rare and slight. For before the coming of the Lord scarcely one of the prophets ever disclosed a hint of any hidden meaning; as, for example, Isaías when he says: For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the house of Juda, His beloved newly planted vine; and again in another place: The many waters are many nations! And Ezechiél, speaking of two sisters called Oolla and Ooliba, explains that the one is Samaria and the other Juda. It is passages such as these, the interpretation of which is revealed to the prophets themselves, that are called silver inlays.

But, when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came, upholding all things by the word of His power, a sign was given at His Passion that the things which were concealed in secrets and mysteries were now to be brought into the light and come to manifestation. For the

veil of the Temple, by which the hidden and secret parts of the Holies were curtained off, was rent from the top to the bottom, thus openly declaring to all men that that which had been formerly concealed within could now be seen.

As, therefore, what was ministered by angels and prophets was the likeness of gold, with a few small inlays of silver; so have the things delivered through Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself been set in true gold and in solid silver. For this likeness of gold with silver inlays, made by the friends of the Bridegroom, is not promised to last for ever; its time is fixed for it by the speakers themselves as being till the King recline at His table. For when He has laid Him down and slept as a lion and as a lions whelp, and afterwards the Father has aroused Him, and He has risen from the dead, if then there be such as have been made conformable to His resurrection, they will continue no longer in the likeness of gold, that is, in the pursuit of bodily things, but will receive the true gold from Him. For what they seek and hope for is not things visible, but things invisible; not things on earth, but things in heaven where Christ sits at the right hand of God. And they will say: If we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now we know Him so no longer.

Now, therefore, they will use no longer little inlays of silver, but will use it copiously and freely. For they will understand that Christ was in that likeness of gold, the rock which is said to follow the people and to afford them drink, and that the Sea is Baptism, and the cloud the Holy Spirit, and the manna the Word of God, and the paschal lamb the Savior, and the blood of the lamb the Passion of Christ, and the veil which is in the Holies of Holies and by which those divine and secret things were covered, is His flesh; and countless other things will lie open to them from His resurrection, not now like a little inlay, but as spread out in all their breadth.

But now, however, in order to elucidate the meaning of till the King recline at His table, let us also adduce from the second prophecy of Balaam the passage that refers to Christ. A star, he says, shall rise out of Jacob and a man shall come forth from his seed, and he shall rule over many nations, and his kingdom shall be exalted over Gog, and his kingdom shall increase. For God shall bring him out of Egypt; as the glory of the unicorn he shall lay were the nations of his enemies, and deprive their bones of strength, and shoot them with his darts. Lying down he shall rest as a lion and as a lions whelp, and who shall rouse him up?

So consider these points more carefully, and see in what sense every likeness of gold is said to last for a fixed time—namely, until the Kings reclining at His table. But after these things his kingdom shall be exalted above Gag—that is, above the many mansions. This will happen when it has been translated from earth to the heavenly dwellings. But we have pursued this matter further, as far as the Lord enabled us, in writing on the Book of Numbers.

Let us, however, consider whether the grace of this perfection, which is of the true gold, was given also to the holy fathers and prophets who ministered the Word before the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, or whether they understood these matters only as future, and foresaw in the spirit that they would come to pass; so that when the Lord said of Abraham that he desired to see His day, and saw it and was glad, He meant only that in the spirit he had foreknowledge of the things to be. And perhaps it is the latter view that would be supported by that other saying: Many...just men have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them; although not even they could have lacked the perfection that proceeds from faith. For the things that we believe actually to have happened they, with a greater expectation, believed as going to happen.

As, therefore, the faith of believers since Christ's coming in things that have already taken place has brought them to the summit of perfection, so also did their faith in things to come bring them to the same end. If this be interpreted in relation to the individual soul, we shall get this: As long as the soul is still a little child, and imperfect, and set under tutors and guardians, whether these be the Church's teachers or the angel—whom the little ones are said to have, and who always see the face of the Father who is in heaven—they make her likenesses of gold because she is not fed with the solid and strong meats of the Word of God, but is instructed by means of likenesses and taught, as we may say, by parables and patterns, just as even Christ Himself is said to have grown in age and wisdom and in grace with God and men.

The soul, then, is instructed by these similitudes and silver inlays are made for her while she is a child. For every now and then particles of light are shed upon the deeper mysteries for those too who are being thus instructed, so that they may conceive desire for higher things; for no one can even desire a thing of which he has no knowledge whatsoever. And, therefore, just as beginners and those who are receiving the rudiments of learning must not have everything unfolded to them all at once, so neither must spiritual and mystical matters be wholly hidden from them; but, as the divine Word says, silver inlays must be made for them and some small sparks of spiritual understanding cast into their minds, so that they may somehow acquire a taste for the sweetness that is so much to be desired; otherwise, as we have said, there would be no desire, if that which is desirable be utterly unknown.

Let no one think, however, that, because we call the soul a little child, she is so essentially; no, she is such only in that she lacks learning; because she has but small understanding and very little skill, do we speak of the soul as little. These likenesses had, therefore, to be made only till the king recline at His table—that is, only until such a soul shall advance sufficiently to receive the King reclining at His table in herself. For this King says Himself: I will dwell among them, and I will walk among them, meaning among those, surely, who offer such roomy hearts to the Word of God that He may even be said to walk about in them, that is, in the open spaces of a fuller understanding and a wider knowledge.

That doubtless is the reason too why He is said also to recline at table in that soul, of whom the Lord Himself says by the prophet: Upon whom shall I rest, but upon him that is lowly and quiet, and that trembles at my words? That King, who is the Word of God, reclines, then, at His table in that soul who has already come to perfection, provided that she have no vice in her, but rather is full of holiness, full of piety, faith, charity, peace, and all the other virtues. Then is it that the King takes pleasure in resting and reclining at

His table in her. For it was to this soul that the Lord was speaking when He said: I and my Father will come and will sup with him, and will make our abode with him. And where Christ with the Father sups and makes His abode, how does He not also there recline at table? Blessed is that roomy soul, blessed the couches of her mind, where both the Father and the Son, surely together with the Holy Spirit, recline and sup and have their dwelling-place!

With what precious stores, think you, with what abundance are such Guests regaled? Peace is the first food put on there, with it are served humility and patience, clemency likewise and gentleness and—the sweetest of all to Him—cleanness of heart. But charity holds the highest place at this banquet.

On these lines, therefore, on this third interpretation, you will see that the words: We will make you likenesses of gold with silver inlays, till the King recline at His table, may be applied to any individual soul.

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## Bk 2 #9

Sg. 1.12: My nard gave forth its fragrance.

Jn 12.3: Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

2Cor 2.15: For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

Mk 14.6: But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

Sg 4.13-4: My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh, that lies between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Mt 13.45: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

Sg 4.13: Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard.

Sg 1.12: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Jn 4.14: But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Jn 7.38: He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

Jn 6.35: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

Ps 105.15: Saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!"

Heb 5.14: But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

Jn 1.9: The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

Jn 1.1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jn 6.35: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."

1Jn 1.1: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.

Jn 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

The bride's nard may be compared with Mary's as well as her ointment when she anointed Jesus' feet. Both the bride and Mary are "filled" (like the house) with the ointment's fragrance, the verb being *pleroo*. In the same way, members of the church form the "aroma of Christ." It gives off a scent for those being saved and those who are perishing. I.e., the aroma is neutral, if you will, and assumes a given scent for either group of people. One can't perceive this aroma without being one way or another. Christ claims that Mary's gesture is a "beautiful thing" or *kalon ergon*, the noun meaning work, deed or action. Origen leaps ahead in the Song by the bride describing her beloved as a bag of myrrh and cluster of henna blossoms.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a merchant searching for fine pearls, that is, a person who deals in such matters and looking for the cheapest price for the most expensive pearl.

Water from Christ becomes a spring "welling up" (*hallomai*) into (*eis*) eternal life. I.e., this *hallomai* has a specific direction which is "into." On the other hand, the believer will have living water flow from his "heart" or *koilia* (also as intestines, bowels). In addition to water, Christ speaks of himself as "bread of life."

Anointed and prophets: one is singular and the other is plural.

"Solid food" may be likened to Christ as bread of life and is for the "mature" or *teleios*, this adjective connoting that which is final and absolute. They are "trained by practice" or *gumnazo* (literally, to train naked) to (*pros*, direction towards-which) "distinguish" between good and evil, the noun being *diakrisis*, literally, a separation effected by a choosing-through (*dia-*).

Christ as "true light" already has enlightened all people and now is coming into the "world" (*kosmos*) which intimates the possibility of these same people to recognize him, i.e., a received light recognizing its source.

"Beginning and Word" or *arche* (also as first principle) and *Logos* which, in light of the last verse, intimates that *Logos* is light. In addition to *Logos* being light, he is also bread and water.

*Arche* again has the *Logos* but not mentioned as such but can be "heard, seen, looked upon and touched" (*akouo, horao, theaomai* and *pselaphao*). *Theaomai* means to look upon as a spectator, to reconnoiter; *pselaphao* means more to grope about as a blind person or as one in the darkness to get a feel of an object. "Concerning the word of life" with *peri* suggestive of around. I.e., all four words focus *peri* Christ as this *Logos* of life.

“Dwelt” among us or *skenoō* means literally to pitch a tent (*skene*). Such dwelling in a tent, if you will, enables us to “behold” (*theōmai* as just above) Christ’s “glory” (*doxa*) which is specified as being singular, “as” (*hos*) or just like but not exactly (in the sense of being an analogy concerning what cannot be described) the Son from the Father.

My spikenard has yielded its (or His) odor. (1.11b—Vg. 1.11b)

My spikenard has yielded (or his) odor. What is shown by this next step in the drama seems to be as follows. After the foregoing words were spoken, the Bride came in to the Bridegroom and anointed Him with her ointments; and in some marvelous way the spikenard, scentless so long as it was with the Bride, yielded its odor when it touched the Bridegroom’s body; with the result, apparently, not that He has received something from it, but rather that the spikenard has received from Him.

And if we read: My spikenard yielded His odor, as we find in some copies, something still more divine emerges: this ointment of spikenard, with which the Bridegroom has been anointed, has acquired not the odor natural to the spikenard, but that of the Bridegroom Himself; and that the nard has wafted His odor back to the Bride. She, in anointing the Bridegroom, has thus received as a gift the odor of His own ointment; and her present words will therefore mean: My spikenard, with which I anointed the Bridegroom, has come back to me, bearing with it the Bridegroom’s own odor; its natural odor has been mastered by the Bridegroom’s fragrance, and it has brought back His own sweetness unto me.

So much for the dramatic narrative; now let us turn to the spiritual sense.

Let us see the Bride Church in this passage in the character of that Mary of whom it is said with all fitness that she brings a pound of ointment of great price, and anoints the feet of Jesus, and wipes them with her hair. Through the hair of her head she as it were gets that ointment back, and receives it again for herself, steeped in the character and virtue of His body; thus through the hair with which she wiped His feet, she draws to herself the odor not so much of the ointment as of the very Word of God, and what she has put on her own head is the fragrance of Christ, rather than that of the nard. Wherefore she says: My spikenard, having been given to the body of Christ, has yielded me back His odor.

And notice now to what these things refer. Mary, the Scripture says, brought a pound of ointment of spikenard of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with the hair of her head. And the whole house, it says, was filled with the odor of the ointment. This surely shows that the odor of the teaching that proceeds from Christ, and the fragrance of the Holy Spirit have filled the whole house of the world, or else the whole house of the Church. Or, indeed, it has filled the whole house of the soul, who has received a share in the odor of Christ, in the first place, by offering Him the gift of her faith as the ointment of spikenard, and then receiving back the grace of the Holy Spirit and the fragrance of spiritual teaching.

What difference, therefore, does it make whether it is the Bride in the Song of Songs who anoints the Bridegroom with ointment, or the disciple Mary in the Gospel who anoints her Master Christ, hoping, as we said, that by that ointment the odor of the Word and the fragrance of Christ will be returned to her, so that she too may say: We are a good odor...unto God? And, because that ointment was full of faith and of precious, loving intention, Jesus Himself bore witness to her saying: She has wrought a good work upon me.

So likewise, a little further on in the Song of Songs He speaks of the Brides shoots with the same favor as He shows here to Mary’s work: for He says: Your shoots are a paradise with pomegranates, cypress with spikenards, spikenard and saffron. Thus He includes the shoots and gifts of the Bride among these things too.

We have of course observed that in the passage that has just been quoted the plural spikenards was used first, and then the singular I think the reason for this usage is the same as that for which the merchant of the Kingdom of Heaven buys many pearls at first, until such time as he may find the one pearl of great price. And perhaps His saying, Your shoots are a paradise with pomegranates denotes those fruits with many spikenards, which we gather from the elements of instruction and the prophets teaching. The shoots and gifts that we gather from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, however, have not many spikenards, but only one.

Now let us return to her who says, My spikenard has yielded its odor, and see whether we can still understand in this present passage also—if ever we can contrive to treat adequately and fitly of the Godhead of Christ, and to frame worthy statements concerning His might and majesty—that the Church, or the soul, who can thus openly declare His glory in the words, My spikenard has yielded its odor, will perhaps be justified in doing so And we need not think it strange that Christ, who is the Fountain, and from whom rivers of living water flow, who is Bread and gives life, should in the same way also be the spikenard, and yield His odor, and be the ointment which makes those who are anointed by it to be Christs themselves, as it says in the Psalm: Touch not my Christs.

And perhaps, as the Apostle says, for those who have their senses exercised to the discerning of good and evil, Christ becomes each of these things in turn, to suit the several senses of the soul. He is called the true Light, therefore, so that the souls eyes may have something to lighten them. He is the Word, so that her ears may have something to hear. Again, He is the Bread of life, so that the souls palate may have something to taste. And in the same way, He is called the spikenard or ointment, that the souls sense of smell may apprehend the fragrance of the Word. For the same reason He is said also to be able to be felt and handled, and is called the Word made flesh, so that the hand of the interior soul may touch concerning the Word of life. But all these things are the One, Same Word of God, who adapts Himself to the sundry tempers of prayer according to these several guises, and so leaves none of the souls faculties empty of His grace.

**Bk 2 #10**

Sg 1.13: My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh, that lies between my breasts. Sg 1.13

Sg 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Acts 15.14: Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Rom 9.5: To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen.

Sg. 1.13: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Num 19.15: And every open vessel, which has no cover fastened upon it, is unclean.

Lev 5.2: Or if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean beast or a carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, and it is hidden from him, and he has become unclean, he shall be guilty.

Dan 2.34: As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Mic 2.12: I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob.

Is 40.15: Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust.

Phl 2.6: Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Ps 45.1: My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

Ps 45.8: Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad.

Sg 1.13: (cf. 9 vss. above).

Two verses from the Song pertaining to the divine bridegroom: laying between his spouse's breasts and laying on his couch giving off a fragrant odor.

"Visited" or *episkopeo* meaning to look upon (*epi-*), to reflect which implies that God was doing this all along with regard to the Israelites. Nevertheless, Israel had the tradition of patriarchs from whom comes Jesus Christ. This favorable action concerning the nations can be seen in light of the Isaiah verse just belong where they are "a drop from a bucket," etc.

The *Torah* says that a vessel lacking a cover is "unclean" or *tame'* which also means to defile, to pollute. The same applies to "an unclean thing."

"By no human hand" suggests divine action upon the image in the dream of the Babylonian king. Once this image is broken, the Lord is free to "gather all of you" or *'asaph* which also means to increase and to continue with regard to a given action.

*Morphe* or "form" is used with the verb *huparcho* (translated simply as 'is') which means literally to begin (*arche*) under (*hupo*), indicating continual sustaining in existence. It can be said that God lacks *morphe*, a contradiction of sorts. This *morphe* which is beyond human comprehension can be "grasped" (*arpagmos*, a seizing or booty).

"Overflows" or *rachash* means to bubble up and thus indicative of spontaneity coming from deep within ('heart') a person. This bubbling up then transforms itself into a pen like that of a professional scribe who can write down important dictations from his master.

The "robes" which emit a lovely fragrance resembles the Song's nard which "gave forth its fragrance" as well as the "bag of myrrh" cited both at the beginning and end of section ten.

A sachet of a myrrh-drop is my Nephew to me, He shall abide between my breasts. (1.13—Vg. 1.12)

A sachet of a myrrh-drop is my nephew to me, he shall abide (or tarry) between my breasts. These are still the words of the Bride, speaking apparently to the maidens. She had said before that her spikenard had yielded her the Bridegroom's odor, and that, by means of the ointment with which she had anointed Him, she had received the fragrance of His odor. But now she says: My Nephew smells to me like myrrh, and that not diffused and dispersed at random, but bound and tied together, so as to make the sweetness of its odor stronger and more potent. And He, she says, since such He is, tarries and abides between my breasts, and has His rest and His abode in my bosom.

But because the Bride has now for the first time called Him her Nephew, and because she uses this title for Him frequently throughout practically the entire book, I think it well to discuss first the reason for His being so called, and to explain what nephew means, and whence the name derives. A person is called nephew when he is a brother's son. Let us then first enquire who is the Bride's brother, whose son this nephew is held to be, and see if we can say that the Bride is indeed the Church of the Gentiles, and her brother—her elder brother, as circumstances show—the former People. Christ is called the son of her brother by the Gentile Church, because He was born of that former People according to the flesh. Her saying, A sachet of a myrrh-drop is my Nephew to me, denotes, therefore, the mystery of His bodily birth; for the body, with which the myrrh of the divine power and sweetness in Christ is bound, does seem to be a sachet in a sense, and as it were a band on His soul.

If, however, these words be taken as referring to the individual soul, the sachet of a myrrh-drop must be understood as the contents of the divine teachings and the intricacy and complication of the propositions of theology; for the articles of our belief are interwoven, and are bound together with the bands of truth. Moreover, the Law declares further that every vessel that is bound is clean, but that which has been loosed and not tied is unclean; and from that type we can see why Christ, in whom was never any

impurity, is called a satchet of myrrh. Wherefore the soul must not touch anything that has been loosed and that is not supported by reason and tied together with the truth of dogmas, lest it become unclean. For because according to the Law he that shall touch the unclean shall be himself unclean, if an unreasonable opinion and one that is alien from the wisdom of God has touched a man, it has made him unclean.

And now see if possibly we can take the coming of the Son of God in flesh as being here referred to as a drop and described as something small and insignificant. Such is the case when Daniel speaks concerning Him of the small stone that was cut out without hands from the mountain, and thereafter became a great mountain; or as when in the Book of the Twelve Prophets it is said that there will nevertheless be a certain drop that is to gather together the people. For it is written in the prophets thus: And it shall come to pass that out of the drop of this people Jacob shall surely be gathered. For it befitted Him who came to gather not Jacob only, but also all the nations which, as the prophet says, were accounted as a drop in a bucket, to be made Himself as a drop in His self-emptying of the form of God, and so to come and gather the drop of the Gentiles and the drop of the remnant of Jacob alike.

But in Psalm 44 also it is said to the Beloved, to whom also the Psalm itself is addressed: Myrrh and a drop and cassia perfume Your garments. From the garments of the Word of God, therefore, which denote the teaching of wisdom, myrrh proceeds, a symbol surely of the death He underwent for humankind. The drop, as we said before, denotes His self-emptying of the form of God and His condescension in assuming the form of a servant. And cassia likewise, because this kind of plant is said to be nourished and to grow together where it rains incessantly, points to the redemption of mankind bestowed through the waters of Baptism.

This, then, is the sense in which the Bride, speaking in the course of this nuptial drama, says that her Nephew is to her as a satchet of a myrrh-drop abiding between her breasts. Understand the breasts, as we told you before, as the ground of the heart in which the Church holds Christ, or the soul holds the Word of God, fast bound and tied to her by the chains of her desire. For only he who with his whole intention and with all his love holds the Word of God in his heart, will be able to perceive the odor of His fragrance and His sweetness.

## Bk 2 #11

Sg 1.14: My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Sg. 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Sg. 1.13: (cf. 4 vss. above).

Sg. 1.14: (cf. 3 vss. above).

1Cor 1.30: He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

1Cor 1.24: But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Col 2.3: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Jn 15.1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

Ps 104.15: And wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

Gen 49.11: Binding his foal to the vine and his ass's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

Mk 14.24: This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.

Lk 22.12: And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready.

Lk 22.20: (NB: this vs. missing in RSV text; Origen's vs. refers to the chalice of the New Testament).

Lk 24.32: They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Sg 1.14: My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi.

Job 7.1: Has not man a hard service upon earth, and are not his days like the days of a hireling?

Job 2.10: Have you not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Sg 1.12: While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.

Sg 1.13: My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh, that lies between my breasts.

Sg 1.14: (cf. 5 vss. above).

The four verses from the Song concern the fragrance from different types of herbs, thereby focusing upon the scent of smell which serves as a bridge between the two spouses. Such is the "source" of life which is rendered *ex autou*, literally as "from him." And from him issue "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," sources of scents, if you will.

Christ is both the "power and wisdom" of God, *dunamis* and *sophia*, this source being hidden and perceived as "treasures" or *thesauros*.

Christ is the "true vine" as well as source of oil and bread. A "choice vine" is associated with tribe of Judah in which he washes his clothes, *saraq* being the word which also pertains to a shoot or tendril.

Two references to the Last Supper which puts into perspective the verses pertaining to the two senses of scent and taste.

Note the parallel between hearts (literally as 'the heart of ours' burning and Christ opening the scriptures, *kaio* and *dianoigo* (the preposition *dia* or through prefaced to the verb).

"Hard service" or *tsava'* also means an army or host, here suggestive of warfare.

Satan says to the Lord that he has protected Job with a hedge and made him prosper. But if these are removed, Job will

curse the Lord.

Keeping with the theme of this section (basically the sense of smell), three verse of the Song are quoted.

A cluster of cyprus is my Nephew to me in the vineyards of Engaddi. (I .14—Vg. 1.13)

A cluster of cyprus is my nephew to me in the vineyards of Engaddi. As to the literal interpretation, the expression a cluster of cyprus is somewhat ambiguous; for the word cyprus is used for a fine cluster of grapes, and there is also a certain kind of foreign shrub called cyprus which likewise bears a beautiful sort of fruit that grows in the same manner as a bunch of grapes. But as mention is made of the vineyards of Engaddi, the words seem to refer rather to the fruit of the vine. Engaddi, by the way, is a district of Judea where balsam trees, not vines, are mostly grown. The historical sense of the Brides words to the maidens will therefore be as follows. She must be understood as saying to the maidens first: My spikenard has yielded me the odor of my Spouse, secondly: My Nephew has been made for me as a sachet of a myrrh-drop abiding between my breasts, thirdly, that He is as a cluster of grapes from the vineyards of Engaddi, which surpasses everything in the way of odors and of flowery scents, in order that the maidens, hearing her say these things, may be incited to an ever greater charity and love towards the Bridegroom. For that is why she names these things one by one and in this order; first the spikenard, then the drop of myrrh, and lastly the cluster of cyprus that thus she may teach certain stages of advance in charity.

But now let us see what the spiritual meaning may be. If this thing that is called a cluster be taken as meaning the fruit of the vine, we note that as the Word of God is called wisdom and power and the treasure of knowledge, and many other things, so also is He called the true vine. As, therefore, He makes those to be wise and understanding and strong in virtue, for whom He is made to be wisdom and understanding, but does so not all at once, but by certain stages and steps, according to the diligence and application and faith of these sharers in His wisdom and knowledge and power; so also, for those for whom He is made the true vine, He does not suddenly produce ripe grapes and sweet, nor does He all at once become for them the pleasant wine that cheers the heart of man. Rather, He first gives them only the sweet fragrance of the flower; so that souls, attracted at the outset by the grace of His fragrance, may be able thereafter to endure the harshness of the tribulations and trials which are stirred up for believers because of the Word of God. Then, after that, He offers them the sweetness of maturity, until such time as He can lead them to the wine-presses where the blood of the grape is shed, the blood of the New Testament which is to be drunk on the festal day in the heavenly places, when the great feast is set.

Thus, therefore, does it behoove those to advance from stage to stage, who, having been initiated through the mystery of the vine and the cluster of grapes, are being borne onwards to perfection, and are hastening to drink of the cup of the New Testament that they have received from Jesus.

If, on the other hand, cyprus is to be taken as meaning a special sort of tree, the fruit and flower of which are said to possess not so much sweetness of odor as the power of warming and fomenting, we shall assuredly take it as denoting that power of the Bridegroom whereby souls are kindled to believe in and to love Him, the power that had touched the men who said: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He...opened to us the Scriptures?

Or surely, since this cluster is said to come from the vineyards of Engaddi, and Engaddi means the eye of my temptation, if there is anyone capable of understanding the truth of the saying that the life of man upon earth is temptation, and if he understands also how one is saved from temptation in God, and who so knows the nature of his own temptation that it can be said of him that in all these things he sinned not with his lips before God, to such a one as this the Word of God is made a cluster of cyprus from the vineyards of Engaddi.

We must observe, however, that the Brides words are so framed as to make it clear that the spikenard, and the sachet of a myrrh-drop and the cluster of cyprus are for herself alone, as being one who has already risen to these points of progress. For that soul only is perfect, who has her sense of smell so pure and purged that it can catch the fragrance of the spikenard and myrrh and cyprus that proceed from the Word of God, and can inhale the grace of the divine odor.

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