

## Book Three

A brief assessment at this point:

As stated in the Introduction, the threefold schema is being followed: scriptural verses, notations and excerpts from the **Commentary** itself relative to the scriptural verses. Some verses are starting to repeat themselves with greater frequency and will do so for the rest of this document. Nevertheless, the meaning in the context of a given Song verse changes. It's still too early to determine whether a "para-commentary" can be written from these brief, even terse notations, much as it is desired. Perhaps the scriptural verses that had been extracted require more expansion. Surely Origen didn't focus upon a given verse in isolation but saw it in a larger context, an amazing feat for a third century author. However, to expand the notations beyond what's necessary doesn't seem to be the way to go, at least for now.

Section #8 of Book Two has been divided into three sections, the reason being given in a footnote there, namely, the relatively long section of #8.

### Bk 3 #1

Sg 1.15: Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.

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.

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

Mt 3.16: And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him.

Ps 55.6: And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."

Ps 68.12: The women at home divide the spoil, though they stay among the sheepfolds—the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with green gold.

1Cor 11.3: Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

Rom 7.22: For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self.

1Cor 2.14: The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for he is unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Ex 12.5: Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Lev 12.8: And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering.

In 14.16: And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever.

In 14.17: Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

1Jn 2.1: My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Zach 4.3: And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.

This section begins with the bridegroom noticing the beauty of his spouse's eyes, i.e., like doves, and is followed by two more Song verses already covered which concern the bride not knowing herself and her cheeks being comely. This emphasis upon the bride's beauty helps set the tone for Christ's baptism, the beginning of his ministry with the "Spirit" or *Pneuma* descending as a dove upon him. This presence of the divine *Pneuma* enables Jesus to exclaim that he "would fly away and be at rest," the second verb being *shakan* which means to dwell or to lay down. While Christ is laying down in the desert, so to speak, after his baptism, "the women at home" are "among the sheepfolds." That is to say, they are equally at rest in preparation for their divine bridegroom after his temptation by the devil: "and behold, angels came and ministered to him."

Several verses later Christ prays to his Father for "another Counselor" or *Parakletos* who, if you will, had been resting on Christ's head all this time. With this image in mind, we could say he wishes the same for others. Those two whom this *Pneuma/Parakletos* is given don't have to worry about being seen as such; the world "neither sees him nor knows him."

The covering of a woman's head is due to the fact that "the head of every man is Christ" with the head of a woman being her husband.

"Spiritual" man is *psuchikos* or pertaining to the *psuche* or soul, principle of life. *Psuchikos* is opposite *Pneuma* whose gifts are "spiritually discerned;" the verb being *anakrino* (to examine closely) with the adverb *pneumatikos*.

The two references to a lamb can refer to the offering of Christ on the cross, that is "without blemish" or *tom*, an adjective which connotes wholeness, innocence and integrity.

The two olive trees and bowl, along with the lampstand and seven lamps, represent the positions held by Joshua and Zerubbabel... "two anointed who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Behold, you art fair, My neighbor; behold, you art fair. Your eyes are doves. (1.15—Vg. 1.14)

Behold, you art fair, my neighbor; behold, you art fair. Your eyes are doves. Now for the second time the Bridegroom engages in conversation with the Bride. The first time He spoke, He urged her to know herself, telling her she was indeed the good one among women, but that, unless she knew herself, she would suffer certain things. And, as though she has come swiftly to knowledge of

herself in mind and understanding, He compares her to His horses or horsemen with which He defeated the chariots of Pharaoh. At the same time He compares her cheeks to turtle-doves, because of her outstanding modesty and the speed of her conversion; and her neck He likens to necklaces of jewels.

Now, however, He declares her fair, and fair not only among women, as before, but as being neighbor to Himself; and then He honors her with even loftier praise by telling her that she is fair not only when she is thus close to Him, but fair also if she should chance to be away from Him. This is made clear by the fact that after He had said, Behold, you art fair, my neighbor, He added simply and without any qualification, Behold, you art fair.

In the former passage, however, He had not praised her face, I think because she had not yet attained the insight of a spiritual understanding; but now He says: Your eyes are doves. The greatness of her advance is shown by the fact that she who formerly was called only the fair one among women, is now called neighbor as well as fair; and without doubt she receives the splendor of beauty from the Bridegroom Himself, so that, having once gained that loveliness, she will continue beautiful, even if she should chance to suffer absence from Him for a little while.

Her eyes, moreover, are compared to doves, surely because she understands the Divine Scriptures now, not after the letter, but after the spirit, and perceives in them spiritual mysteries; for the dove is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. To understand the Law and the Prophets in a spiritual sense is, therefore, to have the eyes of a dove. So her eyes are called doves here; but in the Psalms a soul of this sort longs to be given the wings of a dove, that she may be able to fly in the understanding of spiritual mysteries, and to rest in the courts of wisdom.

Indeed, if anyone can sleep among the midst of lots, that is to say, can be put there, and can there repose, and understand the reason for the lots, and discern the causes of the divine judgements, such a one is promised not only the wings of a dove with which to fly in spiritual understanding, but also silver wings, wings that are made beautiful with the adornment of speech and reason. The souls back also is said to be of the color of gold, and this denotes the steadfastness in faith and the stability in its teachings, that are proper to the perfect.

So then, as Christ is called the Head, it seems by no means absurd to me to take the eyes of those who understand spiritually according to the inward man and have a spiritual judgement, as meaning the Holy Spirit. And perhaps this is the reason why in the Law, just as a lamb is appointed as the victim for the people's purification at Passover, so are doves appointed for a man's purification when he first comes into this world. But to speak of these things now and to discuss the different sorts of victims would involve a long digression ill-suited to the work we have in hand.

In regard to the passage before us, Your eyes are doves, let what we have already said suffice; it is as though He said: Your eyes are spiritual eyes, seeing and understanding in a spiritual way.

In the words, Behold, you art fair, my neighbor, there is perhaps a still deeper mystery. They can be understood as spoken of this present age, for even now the Church is fair when she is near to Christ and imitates Christ. The repetition, Behold, you art fair, can then refer to the age to come, wherein she will be fair and beautiful not only by imitation, but also with her own peculiar perfection; and His saying that her eyes are doves may be understood as meaning that the two doves of her eyes are the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.

And you must not be surprised at our calling Them both doves, since each alike is called advocate; just as John in the Gospel speaks of the Holy Spirit as the paraclete, which means advocate, so also in his epistle does he say of Jesus Christ that He is the advocate with the Father for our sins. So too the two olive trees set on the right and left of the candlestick in the prophet Zacharias are believed to denote the Only-begotten and the Holy Spirit.

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## Bk 3 #2

Sg 1.16: Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely. Our couch is green.

Is 53.2-3: For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

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

Sg 1.16: (cf. 4 vss. above).

1Cor 6.15: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

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

2Cor 11.14: And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2Cor 4.16: So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.

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.

1Tm 2.5: For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Rom 5.2: Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that

suffering produces endurance.

As with the introductory Song verse in #1, this one is the same only here we have a mutual “couch” or *mesav* implying seats or couches set in a circle. It is followed by another reference in vs. 16, *heres* which often assumes a hanging curtain for privacy.

The servant in Isaiah is presented as growing from “dry ground,” *tsyahh* suggestive of a drought and the barren environment in which he was born. Thus it’s no wonder that he had no “form, comeliness, nor beauty” (*to’ar, hadar* and *mar’eh*) where the first pertains to beauty, the second suggestive of order and the last more as appearance. Origen applies the queens, concubines and maidens to the bride who comes to her spouse regardless of his appearance. The Psalm verse pertaining to protection from the sun can tie into the negative appearance of the servant. Also, Satan can “disguise” himself as an angel of light which suggests that his true nature is the opposite, black. The verb is *metaschemtatizo*, to change the form of (not necessarily the essence).

Physical “bodies” or *soma* are “members” (*mele*) belonging to Christ.

“The outer nature” (*exo*, outside) may lack loveliness like Isaiah’s servant, but the “inner” one (*eso*) is being “renewed” or *anakainoo* (the preposition *ana* meaning on, upon) daily which means incrementally.

Paul’s “sufferings” (*pathema*) complete what the “afflictions” (*thlipis*) are lacking. The former applies to misfortunes and the latter, straits due to pressure.

The “mediator” or *mesites* being one is contingent upon God being one, both being the same.

“Access” or *prosagoge* is suggestive of an active advancement (*pros*, direction towards-which) which is emphasized by the preposition *eis* (into) regarding “grace” and *en* (‘in which we stand’). This verse contains the noun *thlipis* (‘suffering’), not *pathema*, again suggestive of pressure and used with the noun *hupomone* (‘endurance’ or literally, a standing under). The verb *katergazomai* (‘produces’) has the preposition *kata* (according to) which implies working according to a given plan.

Behold, You art good, my Nephew, behold, You art fair indeed. Our bed is shady. (1 . 6-Vg. 1.15)

Behold, you art good, my nephew, behold, you art fair indeed. Our bed is shady. It seems that the Bride has now looked more closely at the beauty of her Spouse, and has considered with her eyes that have been called doves, the fairness and the beauty of the Word of God. For of a truth nobody can perceive and know how great is the splendor of the Word, until he receives doves eyes—that is, a spiritual understanding.

But the bed which she says she shares with the Bridegroom seems to me to denote the soul’s body; although the soul is still in the body, she has been considered worthy to be admitted to the company of the Word of God. And she says that it is shady—that is to say, not dry, but fruitful, and as it were bushy with a thicket of good works. Thus speaks the Bride, or the soul rather, she who has doves eyes.

But these people who only believe in the Bridegroom, and have lacked power to see what beauty there is in the Son of God, say: And we looked, and He had no beauty nor comeliness, but His appearance was unbeautiful and lacking before the sons of men. The soul, however, who has made good progress and has advanced beyond the rank of the maidens and the eighty concubines and the sixty queens, she can say: Behold, You art beautiful, my Nephew, and fair indeed. And if I, although still in the body, understand the great numbers of spiritual meanings, the sense of the Divine Scriptures that is woven together with such frequent obscurity, so that the fiercer heat that is wont to burn many and shrivel up their fruits, yet cannot darken me, neither can any power of temptation dry up in me the seed of faith—if this be so, then I can say: Our bed is shady.

As for her speaking of our bed, in the sense of the place of her body that she shares with the Bridegroom, you must understand this in the light of the figure that Paul also uses when he says that our bodies are members of Christ. For when he says our bodies, he shows that these bodies are the body of the Bride; but when he mentions the members of Christ, he indicates that these same bodies are also the body of the Bridegroom. If, then, these bodies are shady, as we said just now, in the sense that they are full of good works and leafy with the abundance of spiritual perception, then we can truly say of them that the sun shall not burn you by day, nor the moon by night. For the sun of temptation does not burn the righteous man, resting as he does beneath the shadow of the Word of God (the sun that does burn the righteous is not the sun that may be praised, but rather he who transforms himself into an angel of light).

The Nephew, then, is said to be good and beautiful, and the more closely He can be contemplated with the eyes of the spirit, so much the lovelier and more beautiful is He found. For not only will His own fairness and marvelous beauty appear; but in the soul herself, as she looks at and beholds Him, an immense glory and extraordinary beauty of form will arise, according to the saying of the Apostle who beheld the beauty of the Word of God: For though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Such a soul as this rightly shares her bed—that is, her body, with the Word; for the divine power extends even to bestowing favor on the body, when it implants in it the gift of chastity or the grace of continence and of other good works.

Think, moreover, whether we may not also call the body that Jesus took a bed that is shared by Himself and the Bride. Through it the Church has been allied to Christ and has been enabled to become a partaker in the Word of God. We know this both from the fact that He is called the mediator of God and men, and from the Apostles saying that in Him we have access through faith...in the hope of the glory of...God.

### Bk 3 #3

Sg 1.17: The beams of our house are cedar, our rafters are pine.

1Tm 3.15: If I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

Jn 16.15: All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

1Cor 11.16: If anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

Gal 1.2: And all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia.

Rev 1.4: John to the seven churches that are in Asia: grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne.

Ps 80.8: You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

Ps 80.10: The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.

The opening verse from the Song describes the spouses' house ('our') as comprised of cedar and pine, reminiscent of King Hiram of Tyre speaking with Solomon about construction of the Jerusalem temple: "I am ready to do all you desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber" [1Kg 5.8].

Instead of precious wood, the church "of the living God" (also household, *oikos*) is composed of truth. Within this church the Father will take what belongs to Jesus and "declare" to you. The verb *anagello* means giving a report which means the Father will be engaged in a continuous handing over of reports concerning his Son.

The "practice" at hand concerns the issue of a woman's hair, *suntheia* implying acquaintance and intimacy.

"Seven churches" of Asia have a corresponding seven "spirits" (*pneuma*) before God's throne which intimates that all other churches have these *pneuma*. Each church/*pneuma* may be considered a vine in imitation of Israel's delivery from Egypt. Now this vine covers the mountains with shade and cedars with its branches.

The beams of our houses are cedars, our rafters of cypresses. (1.1.17-Vg. 1.16)

The beams of our houses are cedars, our rafters of cypresses. This seems to be the Bridegroom's answer to the gracious things previously uttered by the Bride. His purpose in speaking is to teach her the nature of these common dwellings, and the sort of timber-work that they contain. This is the substance of the words, so far as the story goes.

It is plain, however, that Christ is describing the Church, which is a spiritual house and the House of God, even as Paul teaches, saying: But if I tarry long, it is that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. So, if the Church is the House of God, then—because all things that the Father has are the Sons—it follows that the Church is the House of the Son of God.

There is, however, frequent mention of churches in the plural; as, for instance, the passage which says: We have no such custom, nor the churches of God. And again, Paul writes to the churches of Galatia, and John to the seven churches. The Church or the churches, then, are the houses of the Bridegroom and the Bride, the houses of the soul and the Word; and in them there are beams of cedar. We read of some cedars of God, upon which the vine that was brought out of Egypt is said to have spread out its boughs and branches, as it says in the Psalms: The shadow of it covered the hills and the branches thereof the cedars of God.

Obviously, then, there are in the Church some things that are called cedars of God. So, when the Bridegroom says, the beams of our houses are cedars, we must understand the cedars of God to be those who protect the Church, and that among them there are some stronger ones that are called rafters. And I think that those who faithfully discharge the office of a bishop in the Church may fitly be called the rafters? by which the whole building is sustained and protected, both from the rain and from the heat of the sun. And I think that, in the next place after these, priests are called beams. Moreover, the rafters are said to be of cypress, which tree possesses a greater strength and a sweetness of smell; and that denotes a bishop as being at once sound in good works and fragrant with the grace of teaching. And in the same way the beams are said to be of cedar, to show that priests ought to be full of the virtue of incorruption and the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ.

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### Bk 3 #4

Sg 2.1-2: I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among the thorns, so is my neighbor among the daughters.

Heb 7.19: (For the law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God.

Mt 6.28-30: (the lilies of the field).

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

Sg 2.2: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Sg 2.2: (cf. 6 vss. above).

1Jn 2.19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; both they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.

Mt 13.22: As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches

choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

The bride as “flower of the field” is reminiscent of the lilies of Lk 12.27 to whom Solomon’s splendor cannot be compared, he being the author of the Song of Songs. *Periballo* (literally, to cast around) is the verb for “arrayed” as pertaining to Solomon in his “glory” or *doxa*. As for the comparison between the Song’s verse and the Gospel image, the latter can be taken as a “better hope” (*elpis*) enabling us to “draw near” (*eggizo*) to God.

Those who “went out from us” refers to those who are anti-Christ. They can be identified as having been sown among thorns. What makes them dangerous is that they have heard God’s word and continued with it for some time while all the time knowing that this would prove “unfruitful” yet concealed from other Christians.

I am the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys; as the lily among the thorns, so is my neighbor among the daughters. (2.1 and 2)

I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys; as the lily among the thorns, so is my neighbor among the daughters. It seems that He, who is at once the Bridegroom and Word and Wisdom, says these words about Himself and the Bride to His friends and companions. But according to the kind of interpretation that we have proposed to follow, Christ is to be understood as speaking in this way with reference to the Church, and to be calling Himself the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valleys. We call afield a level piece of ground that is under cultivation and is tilled by farmers; valleys, on the other hand, rather suggest stony and uncultivated places. So we can take the field as meaning that people which was cultivated by the Prophets and the Law, and the stony, untilled valley as the Gentiles place.

Here, then, among that people the Bridegroom was the Flower; but because the Law brought no man to perfection, the Word of God could not there advance beyond the flower, nor achieve the perfection of fruit. In that valley of the Gentiles, however, He became the Lily. But what sort of lily? Surely just such a one as that of which He Himself says in the Gospels that the heavenly Father clothes it, and that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. The Bridegroom, then, becomes the Lily in this valley, in that the heavenly Father clothed Him with such a robe of flesh as never Solomon in all his glory had power to possess. For Solomon’s flesh was not born spotless, without man’s desire or woman’s intercourse with man; nor was it innocent of any subsequent offence.

He shows us, moreover, why He who had been the Flower of the field, willed to be also the Lily in the valleys. For, though He had been long the Flower in the field, He makes no mention of any other flower as having come forth from that field in imitation and likeness of Himself. But, when He became the Lily in the valleys, forthwith His neighbor too is made a lily in imitation of Himself; so that it has been worth His while to have become the Lily, in order that His neighbor likewise—that is, every single soul that draws near Him and follows His pattern and example—may be a lily too.

So we will take His saying, as the lily among thorns, so is my neighbor among the daughters, as denoting the Church of the Gentiles, either because she has come forth among the infidels and unbelievers, as from among thorns, or else because she may be said to be placed in the midst of thorns because of the vexations of the heretics who clamor round her. And this last will seem the more exact interpretation, because He says: So is my neighbor among the daughters: He would not have used the term daughters for those souls that had never come to faith at all. For heretics all begin by believing, and afterwards depart from the road of faith and the truth of the Church’s teaching, as the apostle John also says in his epistle: They went forth from us, but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.

We can, however, also take this passage as referring to each individual soul. To a soul whose simplicity and evenness and equity entitle it to be called a field, the Word of God may be said to become the Flower, and to teach her the beginnings of good works. But for such as are already seeking deeper things and pondering matters less to be seen on the surface, souls who, either because of their singular modesty or else because of their outstanding wisdom, are as it were the valleys, for those He becomes the Lily, so that they too may become as lilies breaking forth in the midst of the thorns—that is to say, fleeing from those worldly thoughts and interests which in the Gospel are compared to thorns.

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### Bk 3 #5

Sg 2.3: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. In his shadow I desired and sat, and his fruit was sweet in my throat.

Sg 2.2: As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens.

Ps 82.6: I say, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you."

Ps 82.7: Nevertheless, you shall die like men, and fall like any prince.

Ps 89.6: For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord?

Prov 9.1-2: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.

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."

Mt 3.10: Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown



into the fire.

Ps 91:1: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty.

Ps 1:2: But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Lam 4:20: The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's anointed, was taken in their pits, he of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations."

Lk 1:35: And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

Mt 4:16: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.

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.

Col 2:16-7: Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Heb 8:5: They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary.

Rom 6:15: What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

Lam 4:20: The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's anointed, was taken in their pits, he of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations."

Jn 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

1Cor 13:12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Job 8:9: For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, for our days on earth are a shadow.

Mt 4:16: And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him.

Sg 2:3: With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Mt 13:6: But when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away.

Lam 4:20: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Lk 10:18: And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

1Cor 13:12: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Ps 63:7: For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

Sg 2:16-7: My beloved is mine and I am his, he pastures his flock among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows flee.

Sg 2:3: With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Ps 5:9: For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulcher, they flatter with their tongue.

Ps 119:103: How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

2Cor 6:11: Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide.

Ps 119:131: With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.

The bride calls her divine spouse an "apple tree" or *tapuach* (also can apply to a lemon tree) not just by itself but specifically "among" the trees and sons, the preposition *b-* or "in" being used. This verse precedes the one where the bridegroom is a lily among brambles, etc. This divine presence among the bride and her associates is followed by three verses of the same theme: despite being sons of God, they will die. *Harak* is the verb for "compared" which means to arrange or set in order. Compare this arranging with *damah* ('is like') which connotes thinking as well as to be silent, to be quiet. Perhaps the latter can apply to a certain dumbstruck-ness before the divine.

"Wisdom" or *Chakmah* not only builds a house for herself but sets up seven "pillars" or *hamud* which seem to be around the house...a kind of border...not part of it. The tree which fails to bear good fruit will be cut down, symbolic of the opposite of these seven pillars.

When Jesus speaks of himself as bread of life, the place to eat this bread, if you will, is within Wisdom's house, he being Wisdom incarnate. The "shelter" belonging to the Most High or *seter* can also apply to a veil or covering and differs from the "shadow" or *tsel* which is more a protection. And under this *tsel* one can "live among the nations," a verse mentioned a bit later. This *tsel* is the one which can apply to the Spirit who will "overshadow" (*episkiazo*; used with the preposition *epi*; i.e., two uses of it) Mary. Within both a person takes "delight" in the Lord's *Torah* or *chephets* which suggests more the will or inclination to delight. Meditating (*hagah*) on the Torah suggests murmuring or uttering something quietly.

Jesus quotes from Isaiah about the "shadow" of death which isn't in the Hebrew text, *choshek* being used (darkness in the sense of misery). Compare this *choshek* with the Torah as "shadow" (*skia*) of good things to come compared with the "true form" (*eikon*, image). Again, this *skia* is compared with the "substance" belonging to Christ, *soma* being used (body). *Skia* also is used with regard to "copy" or *hupodeigma* (token, mark, pattern) regarding the heavenly sanctuary.

Although Jesus says that no one can come to the Father except through him, still we see in a mirror "dimly" compared to face to face, *aenigma* being a dark saying or riddle which is clarified only *prosopon pros prosopon*, *pros* signifying direction towards-which.

The "Spirit" (*Pneuma*) descending upon Jesus at his baptism appeared as a dove, creating, if you will, a shadow to protect him just prior to entering the desert where he was tempted by the Devil.

Within the Lord's *tsel* the psalmist sings for joy, *ranan* implying a sudden, spontaneous shout.

This section draws to a conclusion with several references to the mouth which involves speaking, tasting as well as the psalmist's panting and longing, *sha'aph* and *'avah*: the former suggestive of intense longing whereas the latter implies a wishing, inclining towards.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Nephew among the sons; in His shadow I desired and sat, and His fruit was sweet in my throat. (2.3)

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my nephew among the sons; in his shadow I desired and sat, and his fruit was sweet in my throat. It was fitting indeed for the Bridegroom to speak about Himself, and to tell us what He was in the field, and what He was in the valleys; and concerning the Bride, who she was, and how she stood among the daughters. But, when the Bride replied, the fitting thing for her was not to speak of herself, but to be wholly occupied with wonder at her Spouse, and to confine herself to praising Him. So she compares Him to the apple tree.

But lest the similarity between the words should lead some simpler folk to think an apple tree (*arbor mall*) an evil tree (*arbor mala*) and take its name as derived from malice, let us for our part call it the melum tree (*arborem meli*), using the Greek word which, as a matter of fact, is more familiar than *malum* to the simpler Latins. For it is better for us to offend the philologists than to put any difficulty in our readers way when we expound the truth.

She likens Him, then, to an apple tree (*arborem meli*), and His companions to the other trees of the wood. She says that the Bridegroom resembles an apple tree (*arbori meli*, etc.) in such sense that she can say of herself that she desired and sat beneath His shadow, and can affirm that His fruit was sweet in her throat. And she appears to be addressing these words to the maidens, just as when the Bridegroom spoke before, He addressed His companions.

Now, however, let us see who it is whom, according to the mystery, the Bride calls the sons, whom the Bridegroom, so she says, surpasses, even as the apple tree surpasses the other trees of the wood; and let us see if, following the twofold interpretation given above about the daughters and the thorns, we can take the sons as meaning either those who were such afore time and now are such no longer, or else the multitudes of heavenly ministers. For that which is written: I have said, You are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High, applies to all in the beginning; but a difference intervened in respect of what follows: But you like men shall die, and shall fall like one of the princes. The latter, however, also has reference to this: For who in the clouds can be compared to the Lord? Or who among the sons of God shall be reckoned as equal to Him?

The Bridegroom is among the sons, therefore, as the apple tree is among the trees of the wood, in that He bears fruit that not only surpasses all other fruits in taste, but also in fragrance, and thus appeals equally to the souls two senses, taste and smell. For Wisdom furnishes her table for us with a variety of riches: she not only sets thereon the bread of life, she also offers us the Flesh of the Word. And she not only mingles her wine in the bowl, she also supplies plenty of fragrant apples, apples so sweet that they not only yield their luscious taste to mouth and lips but keep their sweetness also when they reach the inner throat.

We can, then, take the trees of the wood as meaning those angels who have been the authors and promoters of every heresy; so that in this passage, when the Church compares the sweetness of Christ's teaching with the sourness of heretical dogmas and their barren and unfruitful doctrine, she describes as apples the sweet and pleasant doctrines preached in the Church of Christ, but as trees of the wood those that are asserted by the various heretics.

And the words of the Gospel, Behold, now is the axe laid to the roots of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire, will be seen to apply to those unfruitful trees of the wood. Thus the Brides Nephew is to her as an apple tree in the Church of Christ; but the various heretics, being unfruitful trees of the wood, are sentenced by the divine judgement to be cut down and cast into the fire.

The Bride, therefore, desires to sit down in the shadow of this apple tree: this is either the Church, as we said, under the protection of the Son of God, or else the soul fleeing all other teachings and cleaving to the Word of God alone; the Word whose fruit, moreover, she finds sweet in her throat by continual meditation on the Law of God, chewing as it were the cud thereof like a clean animal.

But as to the mention of that shadow under which the Church says that she desired to sit, I do not think it inappropriate to adduce in connection with it such passages as we can find in the Divine Scriptures, to help us to a worthier and more godly understanding of what this shadow of the apple tree denotes. Jeremiah says in Lamentations: The breath of out face, Christ the Lord, has been taken with us in our corruptions, to whom we said: Under His shadow we shall live among the Gentiles. You see, then, how the prophet, moved by the Holy Spirit, says that life is afforded to the Gentiles by the shadow of Christ; and indeed how should His shadow not afford us life, seeing that even at the conception of His very body it is said to Mary: The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you?

As, therefore, at His body's conception the overshadowing was that of the Most High, His own shadow will justly give life to the Gentiles. And justly does His Bride the Church desire to sit beneath the shadow of the apple tree, in order, surely, that she may be made partaker of the life that is in His shadow. But the shadow of the other trees of the wood is such that he who sits thereunder may find himself sitting in the region of the shadow of death.

And further, in order to make the passage before us plainer still, let us also look into what the Apostle means when he speaks of the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, and calls all the things that are written about feast days and sabbaths and new

moons a shadow of good things to come—meaning, of course, the things that were done according to the letter; and in what sense he declares that all the rites of the ancients were an example and shadow of heavenly things. If that is so, certainly it follows that all who were under the Law and had the shadow rather than the substance of the true Law, sat under the shadow of the Law. We, however, are strangers to their shadow; for we are not under the Law, but under grace.

Yet, though we are not under that shadow which was cast by the letter of the Law, we are notwithstanding under a better shadow. For we live under the shadow of Christ among the Gentiles. And there is a certain progress in coming from the shadow of the Law to the shadow of Christ; since Christ is the Life and the Truth and the Way, we must first be fashioned in the shadow of the Way and in the shadow of the Life and in the shadow of the Truth, and apprehend in part and in a glass and in a riddle, in order that later on, if we persevere in this Way that is Christ, we may be able to achieve the face-to-face apprehension of those things which formerly we had beheld in the shadow and in a riddle. For no one will be able to reach the things that are true and perfect who has not first desired and longed to sit in this shadow.

Job says in the same way that the whole life of man is a shadow, meaning, I think, that every soul in this life is shadowed by the covering of this gross body. So all who are in this life must of necessity be in the shadow in some sense.

Some, however, are sitting in the region of the shadow of death, that is, those who do not believe in Christ. The Church, by contrast, says with confidence: Under the shadow of the Bridegroom I desired and sat, although there was a time when anyone sitting under the shadow of the Law was protected from the rigors of heat and summer. That time, however, has passed. We must come now to the shadow of the apple tree; and, although one may avail oneself of another shadow, it seems that every soul, as long as she is in this present life, must needs have a shadow, by reason, I think, of that heat of the sun which, when it has arisen, immediately withers and destroys the seed that is not deeply rooted. The shadow of the Law indeed afforded but slight protection from this heat; but the shadow of Christ, under which we now live among the Gentiles, that is to say, the faith of His Incarnation, affords complete protection from it and extinguishes it. For he who used to burn up those who walked in the shadow of the Law was seen to fall as lightning from heaven at the time of the Passion of Christ. Yet the period of this shadow too is to be fulfilled at the end of the age; because, as we have said, after the consummation of the age we shall behold no longer through a glass and in a riddle, but face to face.

I think there is like meaning in the passage: Under the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice. But later in this little book the Bride speaks thus: My Nephew to me, and I to Him, who feeds among the lilies, till the day breathe and the shadows be taken away. By these words she shows us that the time will come when all shadows will be removed, and the truth alone will abide.

But her saying, and His fruit was sweet in my throat, applies to the soul that has in its mouth nothing that is dead, nothing senseless, and is wholly unlike those of whom it is said that their throat is an open sepulcher. For the mouths of such as bring forth words of death and destruction are called sepulchers, as also are all that speak against the true faith or make any opposition to the discipline of chastity, justice, and sobriety.

Those, then, are the people whose mouths are sepulchers and homes of death, whence words of death come forth. But the just man says: How sweet are Your words to my palate! And another person who taught the words of life says thus: Our mouth is open to you, O you Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. And yet another who opened his mouth to the Word of God says: I opened my mouth and drew in my breath.

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### **Bk 3 #6**

Sg 2.4: Bring me into the house of wine.

Sg 1.4: Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers.

Prov 9.1-6: (Wisdom inviting us to her feast).

Prov 9.5: Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Mt 8.11: I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

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

Ps 8.1: To the choirmaster: according to the Gittith. A Psalm of David (reference to "wine pressers").

Ps 81.1: (cf. vs. just above).

Ps 84.1: (cf. 2 vss. above).

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

Jn 15.4: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

Gen 9.21: And he [Noah] drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent.

Ps 22.5: You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Prov 9.1-2: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.

Prov 4.17: Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

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.

Jn 15.1: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Mt 26.29: I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

This "house of wine" seems different from the one of 1.17 ('our house'), a place reserved for celebration. Right after it we have the king bringing his spouse into his "chambers" which occurred somewhat earlier, the two being related insofar as wine equals inebriation and sleep can equal rest as well as sexual intercourse. All this is followed up with Wisdom inviting people to her feast. She doesn't do this in person but has maids as agents who call "from the highest places in the town." They utter Wisdom word for word, not saying anything of their own accord. In the meanwhile Wisdom is waiting attentively in her house. A verse related to this follows several lines below.

Those invited to sit with Abraham come from the rising of the sun as well as from its setting. The verb *anakhino* means to recline as around a table, an image of the kingdom of heaven as feast not unlike the one Wisdom prepares.

Angels are "ministering spirits" or *pneuma* who are *eis diakonian* or literally into attendance or ministry and are not unlike the maids whom Wisdom sends out to announce her feast.

The three Psalm references deal with the introductory verse of each which pertains to the Gittith or wine presses. This is followed by Jesus as the source of this wine, the "true vine" or rather, the Father as the one who tends to the vines. The abiding (*meno*, to remain) Jesus wishes is to be stationary within him which is reciprocal. Bearing fruit depends upon this *meno*, the two working hand in hand.

Noah in his drunken stupor within his tent is the opposite of the Song's house of wine.

The anointing of the psalmist's head with oil is preceded in the same verse with the Lord preparing a table for him, most likely with the help of Wisdom's maids as in Proverbs.

The opposite of enjoying wine is stolen water and bread eaten in secret. To such a person may be applied the vine of Sodom opposite to Christ as the vine, cited a second time.

Jesus will drink the fruit of the vine as "new" (*kainos*) in the kingdom of his Father (who is the vine dresser). These words were uttered at the Last Supper.

Bring me into the house of wine.

Bring me into the house of wine. It is still the Bride who speaks, but her words are now addressed, I think, to the friends and intimates of the Bridegroom, whom she is asking to bring her into the house of gladness, where wine is drunk and a banquet prepared. For she who had already seen the royal chamber desires now to be admitted also to the royal feast, and to enjoy the wine of gladness.

We have already stated above that the friends of the Bridegroom should be taken as meaning the prophets and all who ministered the Word of God since the beginning of the world. The Church of Christ and the soul that cleaves to the Word of God may both of them rightly ask these friends to bring them into the house of wine—that is to say, into the place where Wisdom has mingled her wine in a bowl and through her servants entertains all the unwise and them that lack understanding, saying: Come, eat my bread and drink the wine that I have mingled for you.

This is the house of wine and the house of the feast, at which feast all who come from the east and the west shall recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. To this house and to this feast the prophets lead the souls who hear and understand them; so also do the holy angels and the heavenly powers, who are sent to minister for them who receive the inheritance of salvation.

This is the wine that is in view in the Psalms that bear the title For the presses. This is the wine made from the Vine who says: I am the true Vine; His heavenly Father is the Husbandman who makes it in the press. This is the wine which those branches produced that abode in Jesus not only on earth, but also in heaven. For that is how I understand His saying that every branch that abides not in me can bear no fruit. For no one brings forth the fruit of this wine, save he who abides in the Word, and in wisdom, and truth, and justice, and peace, and all the other virtues. This is moreover the wine with which the just and holy rightly desire to be inebriated. I think too that it is on seeing these things in the spirit that Noe is said to have been drunken; and David marvels at the cup of this feast and says: And your cup which inebriates, how goodly it is!

The Church, therefore, or the individual soul who longs for the things that are perfect, hastens to enter this house of wine, and to enjoy the teachings of wisdom and the mysteries of knowledge as the sweetness of a banquet and the gladness of wine.

We must however recognize the fact that besides this wine which is pressed from the dogmas of truth and mingled in Wisdom's bowl, there is another wine of an opposite nature with which sinners and those who accept the harmful dogmas of false learning wickedly get drunk. Of these Solomon says in Proverbs: They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of iniquity. We read also in Deuteronomy of this same wicked wine: Their vine is of the vineyard of Sodom, and their vine-shoots of Gomorrha; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their cluster is one of bitterness; their wine is the rage of dragons and the rage of asps which is incurable.

But the wine that comes from the true Vine is always new; for, as learners advance, their understanding of the divine knowledge and

wisdom is perpetually renewed. And that is why Jesus said to His disciples: I will drink this wine with you new in the Kingdom of my Father. For the understanding of secrets and the revelation of mysteries through the wisdom of God is always being renewed, not to men only, but also to the angels and celestial powers.

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### Bk 3 #7

Sg 2.4: Set in order charity in me.

Ps 16.11: You show me the path of life.

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

Lk 10.27: 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.

Mt 22.39: And a second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Eph 4.25: Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

1Cor 12.22: On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable.

1Tm 5.17: Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

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.

1Tm 5.17: (cf. 2 vss. above).

1Ths 5.13: And to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

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

1Ths 5.13: (cf. 2 vss. above).

1Tm 5.17: (cf. 6 vss. above).

Mt 5.44: But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Sg 2.4: Bring me into the house of wine.

Tt 2.2: Bid the older men be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Sg 2.4: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Eph 5.25: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Eph 5.28: Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

1Cor 4.15: For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Sg 2.4: (cf. 6 vss. above).

Wis 11.24: For you love all things that exist and do not loathe anything which you have made.

Wis 11.26: You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord who love the living.

Wis 11.20: But you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.

1Cor 15.9: For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

2Cor 4.9: Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

2Cor 11.28: And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Ex 23.22: But if you hearken attentively to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

2Chr 19.2: Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the Lord.

Ex 20.12: Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Lk 14.26: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

2Cor 6.14-5: Do not be mis-mated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

Sg 2.4: He brought me to the house of wine, and his banner over me was love.

1Cor 13.8: Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Sg 2.5: Strengthen me with ointments, encompass me with apples, because I am wounded by love.

Dt 32.43: Praise his people, O you nations; for he avenges the blood of his servants and takes vengeance on his adversaries and makes expiation for the land of his people.

Ps 34.7: The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

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.

Rev 2.18-9: The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your later works exceed the first.

2Mac 15.14: And Onias spoke, saying, This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God."

Sg 2.4-5: Bring me into the house of wine; set love before me. Strengthen me with perfumes, stay me with apples, for I am wounded with love.

The bride's request to have "charity" set in her is very important (*ahavah*, the root meaning to desire, to breathe) with the verb *dagal* (to cover over, to array with banners) in that it reveals her earnestness in conforming to her divine spouse. Such is the

“path” of life, *’orach* (suggests a manner of living) which the Lord will “show,” *yadah* being the verb which means intimate (sexual) knowledge. Once on it, a person must not “swerve” left or right nor “turn” his foot from evil. The two verbs are *natah* and *sur* (to stretch out, to extend and to turn aside, depart).

Both the *’ahavah* of the bride and Christ’s quote from Deuteronomy is *agape* with the faculties of heart, soul, strength and mind. Application to one’s neighbor is cited in another verse pertinent to this quote. “Falsehood” (*pseudos*) is to be “put away” (*apothemi*), suggestive of quietly shelving it, not violently rejecting it, the motive being “members” (*mele*) of each other. This implies, of course, forming a single body, some of which are weaker but “indispensable” (*anagkaios*, necessary). Such “it is with Christ,” one body and many members.

“Elders” (*presbuteros*) are worthy of a double “honor” (*time*) by reason of *logos* and *didaskalia* (literally word and teaching). For Origen this responsibility is important (he as teacher as well as elder) which is why he mentions it several times shortly after this. The command to “esteem,” repeated two verses later, pertains to those working among fellow Christians applies to such elders, *hegeomai* also meaning to rule. The same applies to the verse concerning elders, some of whom could be among the older men of Tt 2.2. *Agapao* also is used with regard to “all things that exist” (*ta onta panta*). “Love the living” is rendered as *philopsuchos* or lover (*philos* connotes friendship) of the soul.

“Love” and “pray for” or *agapao* and *proseuchomai* with respect to one’s enemies, the two being inseparable. The same *agapao* applies to husbands regarding their wives, an image of Christ and the church.

“Ordered” or *diatasso* suggests an ordering through (*dia-*) with regard to measure and weight, suggestive of a balance or scales.

Paul is “unfit” to be an apostle, *hikanos* (worthy) being the adjective with the negative. Also he is among those who are not “destroyed” despite trials, *dioko* meaning to chase or to hunt and among these has “anxiety” for the churches, *merimna* which connotes solicitude.

The Lord bids Israel to “hearken attentively” to his voice which is put with a double use of the verb *shamah* (to hear) along with the preposition *b-* (in) prefaced to “voice.”

“Wrath” from the Lord or *qetseph* (also means strife) is toward those who hate the Lord.

“Honor” (*kavad*) applies to one’s parents which is to be contrasted with Jesus’ command to “hate” them (*miseo*). He includes other family members, even one’s own wife.

“Partnership” does not exist between righteousness and iniquity, *metoche* meaning literally a having (*echo*) with (*meta-*). The following are words of participation (‘partnership, fellowship, accord and in common’): 1) *koinonia* with the preposition *pros* or direction towards-which 2) *sumphonesis* or literally a voice with or *meta-* with the preposition *pros* or direction towards-which, 3) *meris* with the preposition *meta* or with, 4) *sugkatathesis* or literally a putting with and in accord with along with the preposition (*meta*).

Three verbs relative to that which is transitory (*katargeo*, *pauo* and *katargeo* or ‘pass away, ‘cease’ and ‘pass away’): the first and last means to render ineffective or to cancel and the second also as to stop or to hinder.

“Takes vengeance” and “makes expiation:” *naqam* and *kaphar* (the latter fundamentally means to cover). Both are two reasons for praising the Lord, the verb being *ranan* which fundamentally means to shout for joy.

Two verses which mention the function of angels which here are constant: “encamps around” and “behold the (Father’s) face” or *savav* and *blepo* (having the power of sight).

The Lord knows “works, love, faith, service and patient endurance:” *ergon*, *agape*, *pistis diakonia* and *hupomone*. The first and last two pertain to the exercise of the second (*agape*).

“Man who loves the brethren” is *philadelphos* (literally, love as friendship for one’s brother) and *proseuchomai* (usually refers to public prayer) with the preposition *peri* (fundamentally as around).

Origen concludes this second with reference to the bride’s request to her divine lover to have him bring her into the house of wine and to set love (*dagal*) before her. She obtains strength from perfumes and apples: the former to revive her, if you will, and the latter for nourishment.

#### Set in order charity in me. (2.4b)

Set in order charity in me. The words are still the Brides, and still addressed to the same persons, though we may perhaps include Christ’s apostles among those to whom she is speaking now. Her saying, Set in order charity in me, means this, therefore: Most certainly all men love something; and there is no one who has reached the age when one is capable of loving, who does not love something, as also we have shown sufficiently in the preface to this work. But whereas in some people this love or this charity advances in due order and is suitably directed, with very many its advance is out of order. We say that charity is out of order in a person, when he either loves what he ought not to love, or else loves what he ought to love either more or less than it is right for him to do. In people of the latter kind charity is said to be inordinate; but in the former—and they are very few, I think—those, namely, who go forward on the way of life and turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left, in those and those alone charity is ordinate, and keeps the order proper to itself.

Here now is an example of its order and its measure. In loving God there is no measure to observe, no limit, save only that you ought to give Him as much as you have got. For in Christ Jesus God is to be loved with the whole heart, and the whole soul, and the whole strength. So in this there is no measure. But for the love of ones neighbor there is a certain measure: You shall love they neighbor as yourself; Scripture says. If, then, you have either done somewhat less in the way of loving God than is within your capability and strength, or if you have not kept an even balance between yourself and your neighbor, but have made some differences, then charity is not ordinate in you, and is not keeping the order proper to itself.

But as we are discussing the order of charity, let us enquire more particularly whom we ought to love, and how much we ought to love them. For if, as the Apostle says, we are members one of another? I think we ought to have towards our neighbors the sort of attitude that makes us love them, not as alien bodies, but as our own limbs. This fact of our being members one of another demands, therefore, that we shall have a similar and equal love for all.

In view, however, of the further fact that there are in the body some members that are more honorable and comely, and others that are more uncomely and more feeble, I think that the balance of love ought to be adjusted according to the merits and honor of the members loved. So, if a person sets out to behave reasonably in all things and to control his actions and affections in accordance with the Word of God, I think that he should know and observe the order of charity with regard to every member severally.

To make plainer what we are saying, let us now take some rather clearer instances of this. If a man were to labor in the Word of God, for example, and instruct and enlighten our souls, teach us the way of salvation, and deliver to us the rule of life, does it not seem to you that you have in him a neighbor indeed, but one much more worthy to be loved than is some other neighbor who does none of these things? The latter also must be loved, of course, because we are members of one body and made of the same stuff; but the former who, besides having the neighbors claim on us which all other men have, gives us this greater ground for charity towards himself, in that he shows us the way of God and bestows health on our soul by the illuminations of the Word of God, ought to be loved much more.

Again, if someone, finding me going astray and on the verge of sinning with a woman, were to recall me to the light of truth, and snatch and withdraw me from that imminent ruin, and thus save me and deliver me out of the very jaws of everlasting death, does it not seem to you that that man should be loved, after God, with the selfsame fullness of charity, if that be possible, as that with which we love God? And that you may not think that we are going too far in saying this, listen also to what the Apostle Paul says of those who labor in the Word of God: that you esteem them the more abundantly in charity for their works sake.

Let us now look also at another order of charity, simply that which we are bidden to have towards our neighbors. If there be someone who lacks the grace of teaching and instruction and of preaching the Word of the Lord, yet is a man of holy life, blameless, unspotted, and walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame? do you think that such a person should be regarded as being in the same order of charity as he who does none of these things, simply because both equally are called neighbor? Should not this man, for the sake of his work and the merit of his life, be held in more abundant love for the sake of the work of his life, even as—to quote the Apostle—that other who labors in the Word of God?

And there is still another order of charity: we are bidden also to love our enemies. Let us then see whether in their case there will be only one sort of love, or whether the saying, Set in order charity in me, will apply here as well. My own opinion is that the order of charity does apply here. For instance, there is someone hostile to me, who nevertheless is kind to others, modest, sober, observant of many of Gods commandments to a certain extent, though erring humanly in some respects; and there is another person who likewise is our enemy, who is also die enemy of his own life and soul, ready for deeds of evil, quick to do acts of shame, with no thought of anything holy or religious. Does it not seem to you that some difference of love should be observed here too between these enemies?

Indeed I think that the examples cited have made it abundantly clear that there is one force of charity; but that there are many reasons for loving, and many degrees thereof, and that this is the reason why the Bride now says: Set in order charity in me: that is to say, Teach me the different degrees of charity. And if there is anything more that needs to be said, we can bring forward the Apostles injunction: Husbands, love your wives as your own bodies, as Christ also loved the Church. Now then, husbands must love their wives; of course; but must they not also love other women in all purity and holiness? Or will the others not come under the heading of neighbors? Are we to bestow love on a wife, or a mother, or a sister, if they are such as believe and cleave to God, and not bestow it on any other woman who has a neighbors status too? Though this may seem strange, yet the order of the commandment does require that a chaste love should be given to these also; and even among those same female persons, to whom love ought to be given, a certain order in charity and a suitable distinction ought assuredly to be observed. And love ought indeed to be rendered with greater honor to a mother and, in the next degree, with a certain reverence none the less, to sisters too. But love to wives ought to be shown in a manner peculiar to itself and set apart from these. After the foregoing persons, however, love should, as we stated above, be rendered to every woman, in all purity, according to her merits and claims.

We shall follow the same principles in regard to a father, or brother, or other relatives. But to the holy persons who have begotten us in Christ, and the pastors and bishops and the presbyters who are stewards of the Word of God, or those who minister well in the Church or surpass others in faith—how shall the affection of charity not be given, in proportion to their merits, far more generously to such, than it can be to those who have done none of the aforesaid things, or else have done them not without reproach? Is it possible, moreover, not to make a distinction in respect of charity between believing and unbelieving parents, and between believing and unbelieving brothers and sisters?

The Bride, surveying these differences and seeing that the soul in search of perfection needs to have knowledge about them all that she may assess the measure of charity due in every case, says to the Bridegroom's friends—to those, that is, who serve the Word of God— Set in order charity in me; that is to say, Teach me and tell me how I must observe the order of charity in each of these cases. For all men, as we have already said, ought to be loved alike simply because they are men like ourselves; nay more, since we ourselves are rational, every other rational being ought to be loved equally by us. But, in respect of charity, there is something extra to be considered in regard to each person, alike as a man and as a rational being. If, for example, a man excels others either in his

behavior, or in his work, or in his intentions, or in his knowledge, or in his occupations, there is some measure of especial charity to be added to the general love that is his due, in return for each of these ways in which he excels, according to his merits.

But that we may have a higher authority for this, let us take an example from God Himself. He loves equally all that are, and hates none of the things which He has made, for He did not make anything that He should hate it; yet He did not for this reason love the Hebrews and the Egyptians in a like way, nor Pharaoh as He did Moses and Aaron. Again, He did not love the other children of Israel as He loved Moses and Aaron and Mary, nor did He love Aaron and Mary in the same way as He loved Moses; but, although it is true, as we say, that You sparest all, because they are Yours, O Lord, You Lover of souls, for the spirit of incorruption is in all things, nevertheless He who has disposed all things in measure and number and weight, undoubtedly regulates the balance of His love according to the measure of each. For surely we cannot think, can we, that Paul was loved by Him in the same way when he was persecuting the Church of God, as he was when he was himself bearing persecutions and torments for her sake, and when he said that he was bearing the solicitude for all the churches?

It is now important for us to introduce among those orders of charity some remarks also about the emotion of hatred, which is the disposition opposed to that of charity, for the Lord Himself says: I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries; and again: If you help a sinner, you art also a friend of him whom the Lord hates. The explanation of these things surely is the same as that which underlies the words, Honor your father and your mother, and, He that hates not his father and mother, etc.—namely, that obviously excess of love generates the opposite disposition towards God in those who oppose Him; since there can be no fellowship between light and darkness and between Christ and Belial, and the believer and the unbeliever have not the same part.

Now that we have explained about these orders of charity to the best of our ability, it is easy to understand what the Bride—that is to say, the Church or the soul in pursuit of perfection—is asking the Bridegroom's friends to do for her. Having asked to be brought into the house of wine, where doubtless she had understood that among all the things that she had seen the grace of charity was best and first of all, and had learnt that that same charity was greater than all, and that charity alone never falls, therefore she asks further that she may learn its order; lest perchance she should do something out of order and so receive some wound from charity, as she says later: I have been wounded by charity.

But if we take these words as spoken to the angels by whom she asks to be instructed and protected, there will be nothing incongruous in such an interpretation, in view of what is said of the people of God: Rejoice, you nations, with His people, and may all the angels of God comfort them; and as it is said in another place The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him and shall deliver them; and in yet another: Despise not one of these least ones that are in the Church, for their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. And in the Apocalypse of John the Son of God testifies to the angel of Thyatira of the charity which he ordered in the Church committed to his care; for it is written thus: I know your works and your charity and faith and ministry and patience, and your last works which are greater than the former.

It seems too that there is nothing incongruous in taking this passage as referring to the prophets who ministered the Word of God before the Bridegroom's coming; the Church will be desiring, in that case, to learn the order of charity from their teaching—that is, to be instructed out of the prophetic books. Neither will it be unsuitable if we should say that all the saints who have departed this life, still having charity towards those who are in this world, are concerned for their salvation and help them with their prayers and intercessions with God. For it is written in the Books of the Maccabees thus: This is Jeremias, the prophet of God, who always prays for the people.

Again, there will be nothing strange in our referring the words to the apostles, as we said before; for through them the whole Church of God, or the soul seeking God, is brought into the house of wine, as we noted above, and is filled with sweet odors and placed among apples, as we read in the following, and is taught the whole order and meaning of charity.

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### Bk 3 #8

Sg 2.5: Strengthen me with perfumes, stay me with apples, for I am wounded with love.

Sg 1.4: He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Prov 9.1-2: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.

Wis 7.20: The varieties of plants and the virtues of roots.

Mt 12.33: Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

Mt 3.10: Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

1Cor 1.2: To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

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

Gen 2.8: And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Mt 15.13: Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.



Col 3.10: And have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Sg 2.3: As the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.

Rev 2.7: To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Jn 6.32: Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."

Jn 15.1: (cf. 7 vss. above).

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!"

Ex 16.31: Now the house of Israel called its name manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Wis 16.20: Instead of these things you gave your people the food of angels, and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat.

Sg 2.5: Strengthen me with perfumes, stay me with apples, for I am wounded with love.

Is 49.2: He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.

St 2.5: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Is 49.2: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Ijn 4.8: He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

Sg 2.5: (cf. 3 vss. above).

Ps 27.1: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

Eph 6.16: Above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.

Ps 11.2: For lo, the wicked bend the bow, they have fitted their arrow to the string, to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.

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

Eph 6.16: (cf. 3 vss. above).

Two verses from the Song with the second being later in the text, both of which refer to nourishment in the bridegroom's "banqueting house" which in Hebrew is "house of wine." This fits in with Wisdom's house and seven pillars. Thus we have a correspondence between the (male) divine bridegroom and the (female) Wisdom.

A tree is "known" (*gignosko*) by its fruit. Those not bearing "good" fruit (*kalos* fundamentally means beautiful and has moral connotations) are to be eliminated.

People in every "place" (*topos*) join with the example of Corinth's church in calling on the name of Jesus, the verb being *epikaleo* which means this literally (the preposition *epi-* meaning upon).

Compare Jesus as true vine with the garden God had planted and in which the first man was placed. He is a plant put there by "my heavenly Father" which unfortunately had been rooted up.

Putting on (*enduo* suggests putting on of clothes) the new nature is being responsive to the Father as vine dresser doing his pruning which is to make human nature after the "image" or *eikon* of its creator. The preposition *kata* (according to) suggests conforming human nature accord to the divine one, an ongoing process.

Apple tree among sons = beloved among sons.

"Conquers" (*nikao*) isn't specified clearly but is akin to repentance (do the words you did at first, vs. 5), the ability to eat from the tree of life.

"The next day" refers to the day after John had baptized Jesus.

Jesus makes a distinction between "bread from heaven" and "the true bread from heaven," a distinction perhaps lost on many of his listeners. That is why manna is called literally "What is it?"

The verb *psomizo* for "gave...food" suggests parceling out in little bits, that is, relative to food of angels. Compare *pepo* as "supplied" which is the common verb for to send, the relative to bread from heaven. The bride's request to her beloved to be strengthened with perfumes and apples follow this verse which intimates how she was nourished.

After having eaten the true bread from heaven, one's mouth is "like a sharp sword" implying that the nourishment endows a person to speak as God wants him to.

A closeness exists between *agapao* and *gignosko* (loving and knowing), the latter dependent upon the former.

Compare the Lord as "my light" with the evil one's "flaming darts," two different forms of illumination. Such flaming darts can be inferred as those shot in the dark at the upright.

Another use of the verb *enduo* which suggests putting on of clothes, this time concerning not just the armor of God but its entirety. This will enable a person to stand "against" (*pros* or direction towards-which, suggestive of aggressive action) the devil's "wiles" or *methodeia*, i.e., his craftiness.

Strengthen me with ointments, encompass me with apples, because I am wounded by Charity. (2.5)

Strengthen me with ointments, encompass me with apples, because I am wounded by charity. In Greek the text reads: Strengthen me with amoyrs, naming the amoyr as a certain kind of tree; the Latins, thinking that it was the same as myrrh, translated it as ointments. The sequence of the narrative is, then, as follows. After the Bride has heard the words from the Bridegroom's own lips and has entered into the Kings chamber, and into the house of wine and the place of feasting and wisdom, and has beheld therein the victims and the wine bowl mingled in His mysteries, she, being as it were amazed and smitten with wonder at all these things, begs of those same friends and companions of the Bridegroom that she may be strengthened and, being weak as it were, may lie down and be supported for a little while on an amoyr or apple tree. For, being smitten with the wound of charity, she seeks the consolation of trees and woods. So much for the literal meaning.



But in order to extract the spiritual meaning from these facts we need the grace that Solomon was found worthy to attain from God, the grace of knowing the natures of all the things that are, of roots and trees and shrubs; so that we too may know what is the property and nature of the amoyr tree, so that we may suitably adjust the spiritual explanation to the natural. But the only thing we have been able to learn about this tree is that it has a sweet smell only; it does not bear fruit. In regard to the apple tree, however, everyone knows that it bears not only fruit, but very sweet and pleasant fruit.

Very well, then. All men are called trees, whether good or bad, whether fruitful or unfruitful, even as the Lord says in the Gospel: Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree evil and its fruit evil; and again: Every tree that bears not good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire. So it seems that men fall into three classes: some who bear no fruit at all, and others who do bear; while among those that bear, the fruits are either bad or good. And here the Bride, that is, the Church of Christ, asks that she may be strengthened, and that she may recline upon a tree, an apple tree that bears good fruit; and her request is right and suitable. For it is by those who are fruitful and grow in good works that the Church is strengthened and supported.

But what does the Bride mean by wanting to be strengthened with amoyrs, unfruitful trees, rejoicing in their fragrance only? I think myself that by those who rejoice only in their fragrance and do not bear the fruits of faith, she means those persons of whom Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says that they invoke the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ in every place of theirs and ours.<sup>90</sup> In that they invoke the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they have a certain sweet odor in themselves from the very fact that they do so invoke it; but in that they do not approach the faith with all boldness and freedom, they are not bringing forth any fruits of faith. And we can take this passage as referring to the catechumens of the Church, by whose means the Church is to some extent strengthened. For she has no small confidence in them, and also a great hope that they too may become fruitful trees one day and may be planted in Gods paradise by the Father, the Husbandman Himself. For it is He who plants such trees as this in the Church of Christ, which is the paradise of delights, even as the Lord says: Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up.

The Church is, therefore, in the first place encompassed with apples, and she also takes her rest thereon. By those apples we must understand the souls who are being daily renewed according to the image of Him that created them. For, since the sons of God are thus repairing His Image in themselves by the renewal of themselves, they are rightly called apple trees; because the Bridegroom Himself also was said just now to be as the apple tree among the trees of the wood.

And let it not surprise you that He should be called the apple tree, as well as the tree of life and various other things; seeing that He also bears the title of the true Bread, and the true Vine, and the Lamb of God, and many others. For the Word of God becomes all these things to each and every one according as the capacity or the desire of the participant requires; in just the same way the manna also, although it was one food, yielded its flavor to each person after his desire. So He does not offer Himself only as bread to those who hunger, and as wine to those who thirst, but He presents Himself also as fragrant apples to those who crave delights.

That, then, is the reason why the Bride, being already as one refreshed and amply fed, asks further to be stayed with apples, knowing that all delights are in the Word for her, as well as every food; and she passes these in review more particularly when she feels she has been wounded by the darts of charity.

If there is anyone anywhere who has at some time burned with this faithful love of the Word of God; if there is anyone who has received the sweet wound of Him who is the chosen dart, as the prophet says; if there is anyone who has been pierced with the love-worthy spear of His knowledge, so that he yearns and longs for Him by day and night, can speak of nought but Him, would hear of nought but Him, can think of nothing else, and is disposed to no desire nor longing nor yet hope, except for Him alone—if such there be, that soul then says in truth: I have been wounded by charity. And she has received her wound from Him of whom Isaias says: And He has made me as a chosen dart, and in His quiver has He hidden me.

It beseems God to strike souls with such a wound as this, to pierce them with such spears and darts, and smite them with such health-bestowing wounds, that, since God is Charity, they may say of themselves: I have been wounded by Charity. And indeed in this as it were drama of love the Bride does say she has received the wounds of Charity. And the soul who is aflame with longing for Gods wisdom—a soul, that is, who has been able to behold the beauty of His wisdom—can say in the same way: I have been wounded by Wisdom. And another soul, contemplating the splendor of His might, and marveling at the power of the Word of God, can say: I have been wounded by Might; and such a soul, I think, was that one who said: The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? And yet another soul, enkindled by the love of His justice and contemplating the justice of the dispensations of His providence, says surely: I have been wounded by Justice. And another, beholding the vastness of His goodness and loving kindness, speaks in the same manner. But the one wound that includes all these is that wound of charity with which the Bride declares she has been wounded.

We must know, however, that as there are those darts of God which inflict the wound of salvation on the soul, so also are there the fiery darts of the wicked one with which the soul who is not protected by the shield of faith is wounded unto death. Of these the prophet says: Lo, the wicked have bent their bow, they have prepared their arrows in the quiver, to shoot in the dark at the upright of heart. It is the unseen demons whom in this place he calls the wicked that shoot from hiding; and these have certain darts—some of fornication, others of greed and avarice; and with these they wound as many as they can. They have also the javelins of boasting and vainglory. But all these are very subtle, so that the soul scarcely perceives that she has been pierced and wounded by them, unless she is wearing the armor of God and standing watchful and unmoved against the deceits of the devil, guarding herself

constantly with the shield of faith and taking care to leave no part of her body naked of faith. And however many spears the demons have fashioned, even though they be fiery, even though they blaze with the flames of lusts and the fires of vices, if they find a mans mind fortified by faith, his complete faith extinguishes them all.

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### Bk 3 #9

Sg. 2.6: His left hand will be under my head and his right hand will embrace me.

1Cor 15.45: Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being;" the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Prov 3.16: Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

Gal 3.28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Prov. 3.16: (cf. 2 vss. above).

2Cor 8.9: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Jn 17.1: When Jesus has spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you."

Prov 3.16: (cf. 5 vss. above).

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

Eph 5.23: For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

1Pt 2.24: He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Gal 3.13: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree."

Jn 12.46: I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

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.

This section begins with the bride being embraced by her divine bridegroom. The first man as a "living being" is rendered as *eis psuche zosan* or literally "into a living soul." The second (Christ) as a "life-giving spirit" also has the preposition *eis* prefaced to *pneuma*, with both having the verb *zao* (living). *Eis* can be taken as movement-into, a continuous growth. Such are the bride's left hand and right hand, if you will.

In Wisdom's two hands are long life and riches along with honor, both of which may be applied to the embrace the bride is now enjoying. This emphasis upon two distinct realities is reconciled as being one in Christ Jesus.

Christ has a twofold representation, if you will: rich and poor so that believers who are the latter may become the former. Another example where this theme of twofold-ness is manifest is the Father glorifying (*doxazo*) the Son and the Son glorifying the Father. The focus upon twofold-ness is reconciled in Christ as the "Word" (*Logos*) "with" God and being God. *Pros* ('with') is more as in the direction towards, of the Son always relating to the Father (and visa versa).

"Head" (*kephale*) pertains to the husband vis-a-vis his wife and Christ vis-a-vis his church. Christ-as-*kephale* took on our sins or more accurately, in his "body" or *soma*. This corporeality, if you will, enables believers to "live" (*zao*) in righteousness. Such living may also be called redemption, the verb being *exagorazo*, literally as to buy out of the market place (as buying a slave).

A contrast between light and darkness, with the verb *meno* ('remain') applicable to the latter and hopefully to be extended to the former.

Christ both "reflects and "bears" or *apaugasma* and *phero*, the former being a noun connoting effulgence (divine glory) and the latter a verb suggestive of carrying (the universe or literally 'all').

His left hand is under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me. (2.6)

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me. The picture before us in this drama of love is that of the Bride hastening to consummate her union with the Bridegroom. But turn with all speed to the life-giving Spirit and, eschewing physical terms, consider carefully what is the left hand of the Word of God, what the right; also what His Brides head is—the head, that is to say, of the perfect soul or of the Church; and do not suffer an interpretation that has to do with the flesh and the passions to carry you away.

For the Bridegroom's right and left hands are the same in this place as those attributed to Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, where the writer says: Length of life is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and glory. And, just as in this place you will not think that Wisdom is a woman because she appears under a feminine name, so also you must not understand the left and right hands of the Word of God in a corporeal sense, simply because He is called the Bridegroom, which is an epithet of male significance. Nor must you take the Brides embraces in that way, simply because the word bride is of feminine gender.

Rather, although the Word of God is of the masculine gender in Greek, and neuter with ourselves, yet all these matters with which this passage deals must be thought of in a manner that transcends masculine and neuter and feminine, and everything whatever to which these words refer. And this applies not only to the Word of God, but also to His Church and to the perfect soul, who likewise is here called the Bride. For thus says the Apostle: For in Christ there is neither male nor female, but we are all one in Him.

The Divine Scripture expresses these things after the manner of human speech, for the sake of those who cannot understand them unless they are thus couched in terms to which they are accustomed. The words in which we hear them, therefore, will be well known and familiar; but our perception of them, if we give them the perception they deserve, will be of things divine and incorporeal. For, just as he who calls himself a lover of the beauty of wisdom will transfer the natural affection of charity that is in him to the pursuit of wisdom; so likewise here the Church that is the Bride begs her Bridegroom who is the Word of God to support her head with His left hand, but with His right hand to embrace the whole of her, and hold her body fast.

But it is in her left hand that Wisdom is said to hold riches and glory. And what riches has the Church, and what glory, save those that she received from Him who, though He was rich, became poor, that through His poverty the Church might be made rich? And what is her glory? That, surely, of which He says: Father, glorify Your Son; meaning without a doubt the glory of the Passion. Faith in the Passion of Christ is, therefore, the glory and the riches of the Church that are held in His left hand.

I think, moreover, that the left hand of the Word of God ought to be interpreted as follows. There are in Him some dispensations wrought before the Incarnation, and some wrought by the Incarnation. That part of the Word of God which in the divine economy was exercised before He took flesh, can be regarded as His right hand; and that which functioned through the Incarnation can be called His left. It is for this reason that He is said to have in His left hand riches and glory; for through the Incarnation He won riches and glory—that is to say, the salvation of all nations. We are told, however, that length of life is in His right hand; and that doubtless points to the fact of that sempiternity of His, whereby the Word was God with God from the beginning.

This left hand, then, the Church, whose Head is Christ, desires to have beneath her head, and she wills to have her head protected by the faith of His Incarnation. But she desires also that His right hand may embrace her—that is, that she may know and be instructed in those matters which were locked up in mysteries and secrets before the time of this dispensation which He wrought through the flesh. For we must think of all right-hand things as being where there is included nothing of the grief of sinners, nor of the fall of weakness; and the left-hand things as being of that time when He Who was Himself made sin and made a curse for us, healed our wounds and bore our sins.

And although all those things support the head and the faith of the Church, they will nevertheless rightly be called the left hand of the Word of God. Some of them, moreover, He is stated to have endured contrary to that nature which is wholly right-hand, and wholly light and splendor and glory.

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### Bk 3 #10

Sg. 2.7: I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and by the virtues of the field, that you do not rouse or wake my love until he pleases.

Gen 27:27: So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him.

1Cor 3.9: For we are fellow workers for God; you are God's field, God's building.

Rom 1.11: For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

Sg 2.7: (cf. 5 vss. above).

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

Sg 2.7: (cf. 7 vss. above).

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!"

1Jn 4.18: There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

Col 1.13: He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

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.

Sg 2.7: 12 vss. above).

Eph 5.14: Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

The bride now turns attention to the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, not to wake her divine spouse. Such caution is echoed when Jacob approaches his blind father, Isaac, in order to deceive him, as pretending to be Esau.

The daughters of Jerusalem may be likened to "fellow workers" or *sunergos* (working-with or *sun-*). Like Isaac who compared the smell of Jacob's garments to a field, so are the *sunergoi*: not just as God's field but as his building.

The verb for "desire" is *epioptheo* where the preposition *epi* (upon) is suggestive of intense longing.

Our mother is the Jerusalem above which is free compared with the one below which presumably is captive.

Two types of spirits (*pneuma*): slavery and "sonship," the latter being *huiiothesia* or literally son-placing.

Love (*agape*) which is "perfect" (*teleios*, tending towards completion) is contrasted with fear.

"Delivered and transferred:" *rhuomai* and *methistemi*. The former connotes a placing-after (*meta-*) or transference whereas the latter, a sense of drawing. The former pertains to darkness and the latter to the Song's kingdom.

*Agapao* is the verb for "love" which literally is from (*ek*) God, an emanation of sorts. The same preposition is used with respect to being born of God.

"Awake and "arise:" *egeiro* and *anistemi*. The former pertains to sleep and the latter to getting up where the preposition *ana* (above) suggests the opposite of being down.

I have entreated you, daughters of Jerusalem, buy the powers and the forces of the field, whether you have raised and roused up charity as far as He will. (2.7)

I have entreated you, daughters of Jerusalem, buy the powers and the forces of the field, whether you have raised and roused up charity as far as He will. The Bride is still speaking to the maidens, urging and exhorting them, and even adjuring them by die things which she knows that they hold dear and lovable, that—if so be they have begun to raise up charity, now lying down in them, and to awaken that which so far sleeps in them—they will raise it up and rouse it up, just so far as it shall please the Bridegroom, and will do nothing less with it than His will shall permit.

For herein lies the loving Brides perfection, that she desires nothing to be done by anyone against the mind and will of her Beloved. And, so that they shall not be negligent or slack in doing this, they are entreated by the powers of the field—that is, by the young trees and bushes that are in the field, and by its forces, which surely means the things that have been sown in it. Let us then understand the text of this dramatic story in this sort of way, and let this be the construction that we put upon it.

Now let us enquire further the hidden meaning underlying the text. Every soul, especially a soul who is a daughter of Jerusalem, possesses a field all her own which has been given her by Jesus, through a kind of hallowed sharing in His merits. Such also was the field of Jacob, of which the patriarch Isaac, moved by its pleasantness, said in mystical language: Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord has blessed. So, as we said, every soul has her field; for her life and her manner of living are her field. In this field the diligent and industrious soul is very busy, and takes care to plant all the good dispositions and to cultivate all the powers of the mind; and not only the powers of the mind, but also the forces of works with which the activities enjoined by the commandments can be fulfilled.

Each soul, therefore, has, as we said, her field, which she tills and plants and sows on the lines that we have mentioned. But there is also one common field that belongs to all the daughters of Jerusalem together; of that Paul says: You are Gods husbandry. Let us take this field as meaning the common practice of the Church's faith and way of life, in which assuredly are heavenly powers and forces of spiritual graces. To the cultivation of this field every soul, who is now called a daughter of Jerusalem because she knows her mother is the heavenly Jerusalem, must of necessity bring some contribution; and she must desire this to be made worthy of being a heavenly possession.

By the powers and the forces of that field, therefore, the Church declares that the maidens and those who have the beginnings of faith must raise and rouse up the charity of Christ, and says to them: Have you raised and roused up charity as far as He will? Which is as much as to say: If you have reached the point where you are beginning to be influenced not by the spirit of...fear, but by the spirit of adoption, and have made such advance that perfect love is casting out fear from you, and you are raising and exalting charity in yourselves, and waking it up, then you must raise and lift it up so far as it shall please the Son of Charity, even Him who is the Charity of God; lest perchance, if you think that the standards of human charity are good enough, you should do somewhat less in the charity of God than is worthy of God. For the sole standard of Gods charity is that our love should be as great as He would have it be; for the will of God is always the same and never changes. Therefore no change nor termination ever find place within the charity of God.

You must surely notice that she did not say, whether you have received charity, but whether you have raised it up, as though she would say, Charity is in you, certainly, but at present it is lying down and has not found its feet. Again, she did not say: whether you have found charity, but whether you have aroused it, implying that it is within them, truly, but is inactive and dormant in them, until it finds someone to wake it up. I think that Paul was arousing this same sleeper in his disciples when he said: Rise, you who sleep, and you shall lay hold of Christ.

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### Bk 3 #11

Sg 2.8: The voice of my beloved.

Sg 2.10: The fig tree has put forth its young figs, the vines put forth the tender grape; they yield a smell. Arise, come, my beloved, my fair one, my dove; yes, come.

Sg 2.10-14: (the lover summons his bride at spring).

Sg 2.14: You are my dove, in the shelter of the rock near the wall. Show me your face and let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful.

Sg 2.8: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Sg 2.9: My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.

Sg 2.8: (cf. 7 vss. above).

Mt 28.20: Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Mt 25.14-5: For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

Lk 19.12: A nobleman went into a far country to receive kingly power and then return.

Mt 25.6: But at midnight there was a cry, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."

Jn 14.22: Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"  
 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 2.8: (cf. 14 vss. above).  
 Sg 2.9: Behold, he is behind our wall, looking in through the windows, peeping through the lattices.  
 Sg 2.11: For the winter is past, the rain is gone, it has departed.  
 Sg 2.6: His left hand will be under my head, and his right hand will embrace me.  
 Rom 1.11: For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.  
 Sg 2.9: (cf. 4 vss. above).  
 1Tm 3.7: Moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.  
 2Tm 2.26: And they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.  
 Sg 2.11: (cf. 6 vss. above).  
 Ps 74.17: You have fixed all the bounds of the earth; you have made summer and winter.

This section contains a series of references from the Song itself, the ongoing dialogue between the human spouse (soul and/or church) and divine bridegroom (Jesus Christ). Thus it is a "teaching" (*didasko*) to "observe" (*tereo*, equivalent to the frequent use of that term and Hebrew variants in lengthy Psalm 119) what Jesus had commanded. Such *tereo* depends upon the keen memory of the apostles and other early followers of Jesus to consolidate and pass on to future generations. This they had effected, and it will be kept...*tereo*... until the "close" of the age or *sunteleia*, a noun consisting of the root *telos* (end, completion) prefaced with the preposition *sun* (with), a closing-with. The same theme of keeping is found several verses below, that is, with respect to Jesus' "word" or *logos*. The remaining scriptural verses in this section center around this general theme.

"Going on a journey" or *apodomeo* is rendered literally as going from one's own home (*demos*). The man who thus is about to set out gives talents to servants according to his "ability" or *dunamis* (force or capacity to do something). The same theme is used regarding a nobleman to receive "kingly power" or *basileia* (kingship) which means he will extend that power to his home upon returning.

The bridegroom returns at midnight when people (ten maidens included) are bidden to "meet" him, *apantesis* or a noun which often refers to meeting someone in an open court. It is prefaced with the preposition *eis* or into...into meeting him. Judas (not Iscariot) is present at this midnight event, if you will, or the Last Supper where he asks Jesus to "manifest" himself, *emphanizo* meaning to indicate or make oneself known.

The bridegroom stands outside both "looking in" and "peeping through" (*shagach* or to behold, look at and *tsuts* or to glance). The longing of Rom 1.11 (*epipotheo*, literally as to desire upon) echos these two modes of seeing. Two other Song verses follow.

"Well thought" is rendered as *marturia* (witness) modified by the adjective *kalos* (beautiful). Such witness must be given by those who are outside the Christian community, *exothen*.

"Snare" or *pagis* belongs to the devil as a result of having been "captured" by him, *zogreo* (means to capture alive).

"Fixed and "made:" *yatsav* (to put into place and *yatsar* (to form, to fashion).

The voice of my Nephew! Behold here He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. (2.8)

The voice of my nephew! It is advisable for us to remind you frequently that this little book is cast in the form of a play. The line that we have just now cited for consideration suggests something like this. The Bride was addressing herself to the maidens, the daughters of Jerusalem, when suddenly, as from afar, she perceived the Bridegroom's voice talking with some people. Breaking off what she was saying to the maidens, therefore, she turned her attention to catching whatever it was that she had heard, and said, The voice of my Nephew!

You must understand, however, that at first, before He appeared before her eyes, the Bridegroom was recognized by the Bride by His voice alone. Afterwards, however, He appeared before her eyes, leaping upon certain mountains near that place where the Bride was, and skipping over the hills and mountains, not with great steps so much as with great bounds, after the manner of a hart or roe, and in this manner coming with all speed to His Bride.

Understand that when He reached the house wherein the Bride was staying, He stood a while behind the house, so that at any rate His presence might be noticed; though as yet He would not enter the house openly and for all to see but, lover-like, would first look through the windows at the Bride.

Understand also that near the Brides house some nets and snares had been set; so that if she or one of her companions among the daughters of Jerusalem should chance to go out at any time, they would be caught. The Bridegroom, moreover, had come to these nets, certain that He could not be caught in them; and, being stronger than they, He tore them and, having torn them, He stepped over them and also looked through them. And after achieving this work He says to the Bride: Arise, come, my neighbor, my Bride, my dove.

And He says this in order to show her by the very fact of what He had done, how boldly she herself should now despise the nets which the Enemy had spread out in her path, and that she should not fear the snares which she now sees torn by Him. And, in order to urge her still more cogently to hasten to Himself, He tells her: The whole time that seemed oppressive is now past, and the winter, whose incidence had been her excuse, has departed, and the unprofitable rains have ceased, and the time of flowers is come. So, do



not delay to take the road that leads to me. For look, the farmers likewise, now that the time of spring has smiled upon them, are tending their vineyards and, amid the notes of other birds, the loud and welcome voice of the turtle-dove announcing spring is likewise heard. Yes, and the fig tree, sure of the mildness of spring, without anxiety puts forth her shoots; and the vines are so certain of the seasons calmness, that they venture to produce their flowers and scents.

All these things about the calmness of the season He points out to the Bride, that she with greater confidence may venture to set out upon the way that leads to Him. But He also describes the place where He desires her to rest with Him. There is a place, He tells her, that has been made most shady by the covering of a certain rock, which is near to the wall itself, or to the outwork part. He wants her to come to this place and, when the veil has been removed, there to behold His unveiled face, that face to face she may be known to her Bridegroom, and that He may not only see her face unveiled and free, but may also hear her voice there; for He is certain both that her face is beautiful and that her voice is sweet and a delight to hear.

We have anticipated these things and connected them with the preceding, so as not to leave the impression that we were disrupting the order of the play and the text of the narrative. And in thus anticipating we have reached the point in the story where He says: For your voice is sweet, your countenance is fair. Now, looking back to the place where we began, let us see what she means by saying, The voice of my Nephew!

Christ, to begin with, is recognized by His Church by His voice alone. For He first sent her His voice in advance through the prophets, and so, although He was not seen, He was heard. And heard He was through the things that they proclaimed about Him; and the Bride, that is, the Church which was gathered together from the beginning of time, heard His voice only, until such time as she saw Him with her eyes and said: Behold, here he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. For He leaped upon the prophetic mountains and the holy hills, those, namely, who in this world bore His image and His form. And, if you reckon the apostles also as the mountains upon which He leaps, as being higher than them all, and take the hills in the same way as meaning those whom in the second place He chose and sent, it will not be unfitting. For among these He is made like unto a roe or a young hart—to a roe, because its sight is keener than that of any other animal, and to a hart, because He comes to destroy the serpent.

Now every soul—if such there is who is constrained by love for the Word of God—if at any time it is in the thick of an argument about some passage—and everyone knows from his own experience how when one gets into a tight corner like this, one gets shut up in the straits of propositions and enquiries—if at any time some riddles or obscure sayings of the Law or the Prophets hem in the soul, if then she should chance to perceive Him to be present, and from afar should catch the sound of His voice, forthwith she is uplifted. And, when He has begun more and more to draw near to her senses and to illuminate the things that are obscure, then she sees Him leaping upon the mountains and the hills; that is to say, He then suggests to her interpretations of a high and lofty sort, so that this soul can rightly say: Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.

In making these remarks, however, we have not forgotten that earlier He has already spoken with the Bride as being Himself personally present. But, because—as we have often said—this little book contains a kind of play, sometimes things are said with reference to a Bridegroom who is present, and sometimes to one absent; and the interchange of the characters is so conducted that either sequence seems properly used. Thus, although the Bridegroom promises and tells His Bride—that is, His chosen disciples: Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world, He nevertheless tells her elsewhere in parables that the householder called his servants and distributed to each one his money to trade with, and departed. And again He says that He went away to seek a kingdom for Himself; and yet again it is said with reference to the absent Bridegroom, that at midnight there was a cry made of those who said, The Bridegroom comes!

The Bridegroom is thus sometimes present and teaching, and sometimes He is said to be absent; and then He is desired. And either of these will suit either the Church or the dutiful soul. For when He allows the Church to suffer persecution and tribulations, He seems to her to be absent; and again, when she goes forward in peace and flourishes in faith and good works, He is understood as being present with her.

So also is it with the soul. When she is trying to understand something and desiring to know some obscure and secret matters, as long as she cannot find what she is looking for, the Word of God is surely absent from her. But when the thing she sought comes up to meet her, and appears to her, who doubts but that the Word of God is present, illuminating her mind and offering to her the light of knowledge? And again we perceive He is withdrawn from us and comes again, in every matter that is either opened or closed to our understanding.

And this state of affairs we endure until we become such people as He may condescend not only often to revisit, but to remain with. This is in full accordance with what He said when a certain disciple having asked Him, saying: Lord, how is it that You wilt manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world? The Savior replied: If anyone loves me, he keeps my word, and my Father loves him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.

If, then, we too want to see the Word of God, the Bridegroom of the soul, leaping upon the mountains and skipping over the hills, we must first hear His voice and then when we have heard Him in all things, we shall be able to see Him under the same conditions as those under which the Bride is said to have seen Him here. For although she herself saw Him before, she did not see Him as she sees Him now, leaping upon the mountains and skipping over the hills, nor did she see Him leaning through the windows or looking through the nets; but rather it appears that on that first occasion she saw Him in the time of winter. For He says now for the first



time that the winter is past. The fact that emerges is, therefore, that He appears to His Bride all through the winter—that is to say, in the time of tribulations and trials.

That visitation, however, whereby she is visited for a little while and then left, in order that she may be tested, and then sought again, so that her head may be upheld and she be wholly embraced, lest she either waver in faith or be weighed down in body by the load of her trials, is different. And so it seems to me that the winter was that time when she asked for her head, that is, the crown of her faith, to be held in the Bridegroom's left hand, and for His right hand to embrace her whole body. And, on the other hand, this vision that appears now from the mountains and hills, should denote, I think, the heights and powers of spiritual graces. And that He is said also to look forth through the windows seems to me to represent the light afforded to the souls perceptions; while the nets which He tears and rends stand, I think, for the snares of the devil; inasmuch as the time of temptation, like winter, has now passed away.

The tokens of summer and spring are displayed too, as is said in the Psalms: Summer and spring, You made them. Therefore, at last the Church has brought forth flowers of progress too, when her trials have been overcome and the business of pruning finished, as will be shown in the proper places when we come to the actual passage that deals with this.

Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. We have already traced the course of the narrative above. Now we must see in what sense Christ comes to the Church leaping upon the mountains and springing forth (for springing forth is proper to the true sense rather than skipping) over the hills. For whereas Isaac increased by walking and marching on until he became very great, and Paul advanced no longer by walking but by running, saying, I have finished my course, Our Savior and the Bridegroom of the Church is said neither to walk, nor yet to run, but to leap and to spring forth over these things.

For if you consider how in the space of a short time the Word of God has run through all the world that was possessed of false beliefs, and has recalled it to the knowledge of the true faith, you will understand in what sense He leaps upon the mountains—overcoming some great kingdoms with His leaps, that is to say, and inclining them to receive the knowledge of divine religion—and springs forth over the hills in that He swiftly subjugates the lesser kingdoms and leads them to the piety of true worship.

And, as He leaps from place to place, from kingdom to kingdom, from provinces to provinces by the illumination of preaching, you will understand through him who said that from Jerusalem round about as far as unto Illyricum he replenished the Gospel of Christ in what sense the Bridegroom comes leaping upon the mountains and springing forth over the hills.

This passage can, however, be taken in another sense too, as we remarked just now; for Moses wrote of Him, and so too the prophets foretold concerning Him. This foretelling, of which we read in the Old Testament, has a veil on it, however; but when the veil is removed for the Bride, that is, for the Church that has turned to God, she suddenly sees Him leaping upon those mountains—that is, the books of the Law; and on the hills of the prophetic writings He is so plainly and so clearly manifested that He springs forth, rather than merely appears. Turning the pages of the prophets one by one, for instance, she finds Christ springing forth from them and, now that the veil that covered them before is taken away, she perceives Him breaking out and emerging from individual passages in her reading, and bursting out of them in a manifestation that is now quite plain.

I believe that it was for this reason that Jesus Himself, when He came to be transfigured, was not on some plain, nor in a valley, but went up a mountain and was there transfigured; you are to understand from this that He always appears on mountains or hills, to teach you too, lest you should ever seek Him elsewhere than on the mountains of the Law and the Prophets. And you will find many passages in Scripture indicating that mountains are holy. Thus He says in the Psalms: The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains; and again: I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me—we receiving help in tribulations from the meanings of the Divine Scriptures.

We can further take the mountains, upon which the Word of God is said to leap and to be borne more freely, as it were, as the New Testament, and may understand the hills, from which He sprang forth as one who had been long restrained and hidden, as the books of the Old Testament.

Further, in Jeremiah the hunters and fishers who are sent to capture men for their salvation are said to capture them on mountains and hills; the passage runs: Behold, I send many fishers and many hunters, and they shall capture them upon every mountain and upon every hill. I think myself that this prophecy is to find its fulfilment rather in the future, at the consummation of the age; so that when, according to the Gospel parable, the angels have been sent forth at harvest time to separate the wheat from the tares, he who has lived on a higher plane and followed a more lofty way of life may be found on the mountains or hills, and not in the low-lying places, nor in localities where he might be confused with the tares. Rather, he will be situated in the region of higher understanding and the loftiness of faith, ever cleaving to the Word of God, who leaps on the mountains and springs forth on the hills. And this is also stated, with the same meaning, by another parable in the Gospel: If any is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of the house.

And the extraordinarily rich saying of the verse before us may suggest yet another meaning. For it is possible to call every whole-hearted believer in God a mountain or a hill, according to the quality of his living and the extent of his understanding. Though such a one was formerly a valley, as Jesus advances in him in age and wisdom and grace, every valley shall be filled; for of such it is said that they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, and of Jerusalem it is said that the mountains are round about her. But all such as are proud and haughty like mountains and hills shall be brought low; because everyone that exalts himself shall be humbled, and he

that humbles himself shall be exalted.

For this reason I think that Our Savior likewise, since He Himself is said to be a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that became a great mountain, can rightly be called the Mountain of mountains, in the same way that He is called the King of kings and the Priest of priests.

But in order to include a third interpretation, let us return to the subject of the individual soul. If there are some who are more able to receive the Word of God, souls who have drunk the water given them by Jesus, and if this water has become in them a fountain of living water springing up into life everlasting, then such as these, in whom the Word of God bursts forth in frequent and abundant perceptions like ever-flowing streams, have become mountains and hills by virtue of their life and knowledge and teaching. And the Word of God is fitly said to leap on them, and to spring forth from them, through the outpouring of their teaching, as a fountain of living water springing up into life everlasting.

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### Bk 3 #12

Sg. 2.8: The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.

Gen 26.13: And the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.

2Tm 4.7: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Rom 15.19: By the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Jn 5.46: If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me.

2Cor 3.14: But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.

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

Mt 17.1-2: And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.

Ps 87.1: On the holy mount stands the city he founded.

Ps 121.1: I lift up my eyes to the hills.

Jer 16.16: Behold, I am sending for many fishers, says the Lord, and they shall catch them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks.

Mt 13.24-30: (parable of the seed).

Mt 24.17: Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house.

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

Lk 3.5: Every valley shall be filled.

Lk 18.14: I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Ps 125.1: Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Ps 125.2: As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from this time forth and for evermore.

Dan 2.34-5: (human image of stone which filled the earth).

1Tm 6.15: And this will be made manifest at the proper time by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Heb 4.14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Jn 4.14: But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

This section begins with the bridegroom's "voice" (*qol*) which isn't specified but originates from afar off, on the mountains and hills. The fact that he is both leaping and bounding means this voice is a joyous one.

The man who became rich is Isaac not long after he defrauded Esau of his birthright. Despite his richness, Isaac was forced to leave the land because the Philistines were jealous of his riches.

From Jerusalem issue the "power" (*dunamis*) both of "signs and wonders" (*semeion* and *teras*), the former referring to a mark or token and the latter suggestive of something so extraordinary it requires close observation.

Belief in Jesus is equivalent to belief in Moses, the verb being *epipisteuo* or literally to believe upon (*epi*-).

"Minds" or *noema* also means perception or thought over which is a veil is "unlifted," *anakalupto*, or not being revealed or made manifest. The preposition *en* (in) is used with regard to "Christ," in Christ. Reference to the veil being lifted is a verse from Ex 34.34 concerning Moses speaking with the Lord and then the people. On the mountain this veil was lifted when Jesus was "transfigured" or *metamorphoo* (to change into...after or *meta*-...another form). Upon this same mountain is the city God "founded," *yesudah* being a noun (only one in the Bible); from the verbal root *yasad*, to found in the sense of establishing. To this place the psalmist lifts up his eyes, *nasa'*.

The Lord sends both fishers and hunters, the latter searching out high places for prey which is not unlike the bride searching out her divine bridegroom's *qol* or "voice."

The parable of the seed refers to an enemy which had sown weeds while people were sleeping, but the owner asked to let these weeds and wheat grow together.

Reference to not leaving the housetop is with regard to the desolating” sacrilege” (*shiquts* or that which is detestable) which will take place in the holy place (cf. Dn 9.27).

“Increased” or *prokopto* means literally to lengthen out by hammering which here pertains to the wisdom and stature of Jesus. While this is transpiring, valleys are being “filled” or *pleroo*, *pharagx* being a valley or more a ravine characterized by narrowness.

Exalt and humble or *hupsoo* and *tapeinoo* which work together either to pride or humility.

Mount Zion is equivalent to persons trusting in the Lord which “abides” forever, *yashav* meaning to sit or to dwell. While in this *yashav*, the Lord is “round about” (*savav*) his people where emphasis is upon the Lord making a circuit, of going around.

Although the image of a statue dreamt by King Nebuchadnezzar, a rival of sorts to Mount Zion, is “mighty and of exceeding brightness” [vs. 31], it will be shattered.

“Proper time” or *kairos* suggests a specific event in reference to Christ’s appearance who as high priest has “passed through” (*dierchomai*) the heavens, and this forms one’s “confession” or *homologia*, an assent or profession. Jesus speaks of water he will give (future tense) which will happens after this *dierchomai* which will well up to eternal life, the preposition *eis* being used for “to” or more literally, into eternal life.

My Nephew is like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel. (2.9a)

My nephew is like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel. The roe or hart is mentioned because these are clearly included among the animals that are accounted clean in Deuteronomy; the passage reads as follows: These are the beasts that you shall eat: the calf and the lamb of the cattle, and the he-goat of the goats; the hart and the roe and the gazelle and the wild goat and ibex and giraffe. Moreover, there are in the Divine Scriptures many places where a holy man is likened to a hart; as for instance where we read in the Psalm: As the hart pants after the fountains of water, so my soul pants after You, O God.

In the text that we have taken from Deuteronomy, however, we should not overlook the fitness of the order observed in enumerating the clean beasts: the calf comes first, then the lamb, and thirdly the he-goat. But among those which, according to the same Moses, are not offered at the altar, he puts the hart first, the roe second, and then writes the remaining animals in turn. The reason for this arrangement will become plain and clear to those to whom the Holy Spirit has granted a fuller spiritual grace in respect of the gift of knowledge.

Yet it seems fitting that we who are under obligation to speak about the hart and the roe in the course of our explanation of the verse before us, should to the best of our ability collect from the Sacred Scriptures the passages which have to do with these animals. The same Moses speaks of them when he is treating of those that might be eaten as meat when people wished, if they had not been offered at the altar—like the roe or the hart, he says. There is a striking passage also in the twenty-eighth Psalm. Writing in order about the powers and the force of the voice of God, the writer speaks of the hart thus: The voice of the Lord perfecting the harts—that is, making the harts perfect—and it will discover the thickets. For just as the voice of the Lord is said to divide the flame of fire and to shake the desert, so also is He declared to perfect the harts and to discover the thickets.

And in Job also we find reference to the hart, when the Lord speaks to Job through the whirlwind and the cloud, saying: Have you observed the time when the deer bring forth, or numbered the months when they are ready for birth? Have you eased their pangs or fed their young, or will you send forth their offspring without pangs? Their children will break away and will be multiplied in birth; they will go forth, and they will not return. And to the foregoing passages we should add what we read in Proverbs as follows: Let the hart of friendships and the fawn of graces speak to you.

These are all the passages of Scripture about the hart that we are able to recall at present. We have quoted them that we may speak not in the doctrine of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Let us therefore call upon God, the Father of the Word, that He may make plain to us the secrets of His Word, and may transfer our perception from the doctrine of human wisdom and lift and raise it to the doctrine of the Spirit, to the intent that we may utter not the things that the ear of the flesh perceives, but those that are contained within the Spirits will.

Paul the apostle teaches us that the invisible things of God are understood by means of things that are visible, and that the things that are not seen are beheld through their relationship and likeness to things seen. He thus shows that this visible world teaches us about that which is invisible, and that this earthly scene contains certain patterns of things heavenly. Thus it is to be possible for us to mount up from things below to things above, and to perceive and understand from the things we see on earth the things that belong to heaven. On the pattern of these the Creator gave to His creatures on earth a certain likeness to these, so that thus their great diversity might be more easily deduced and understood.

And perhaps, even as God made man to His own image and likeness, so also did He create the other creatures after the likeness of some other heavenly patterns. And perhaps the correspondence between all things on earth and their celestial prototypes goes so far, that even the grain of mustard seed...which is the least of all seeds, has something in heaven whose image and likeness it bears; and so, because the nature of this seed is such that, though it is the least of all seeds...it nevertheless becomes greater than all herbs...so that the birds of heaven come and dwell in the branches thereof, the likeness that it bears is not merely that of some heavenly pattern, but of the kingdom of heaven itself.

In the same way, therefore, it is possible that other seeds too that are in the earth may have a likeness and relationship to something

found in heaven. And, if this is the case with seeds, it is doubtless the same with plants; and if with plants, undoubtedly with animals, whether they fly or creep or go upon all fours.

And there is something further that can be discerned. The grain of mustard seed resembles the kingdom of heaven because the birds dwell in its branches, but that is not its only likeness. It is an image also of the perfection of faith, so that if a man had faith as a grain of mustard seed, and told a mountain to move away, then it would move away. This being so, it is possible that other things also bear the appearance and likeness of things heavenly, not in one respect only, but in several.

And although in a grain of mustard seed, for example, there are several qualities that reflect the likeness of things heavenly, yet its last and final use is to serve the bodily needs of men. So with the other seeds and plants and roots of herbs, and even with the animals, it is possible to think it might say: The things that are hid and that are manifest have I learned.

In the same way the writer has knowledge also of the substance of the world, not only of its visible and corporeal substance, which is manifest, but also of that incorporeal and invisible essence that is hid from us. He knows the elements of the world too, not the seen ones only, but the unseen too, and he knows the virtues of both.

And as to what he says about the beginning and the end and the middle of the times, he is speaking of the beginning of the visible world, a beginning which Moses put at not quite six thousand years ago; the middle is a term relative to the total count of time; and the end is that for which we hope, when heaven and earth shall pass away. But in the knowledge of hidden things the beginning is that which he understands, whom the wisdom of God has taught, that which no times nor ages can comprehend; the middle is the things that are going on now, and the end is the things that are yet to be—that is, the perfecting and consummation of the universe. Yet all these hidden things can be understood and deduced from the things that are seen.

Moreover, he relates the alterations of courses and the changes of seasons and the revolutions of the year of the things that are seen to the unseen changes and alterations of incorporeal things. And the revolutions of the temporal years of our present estate he relates to those more ancient and eternal years after the manner of him who said: I had in my mind the eternal years. Nor will he who has merited to have this knowledge of things hid and manifest hesitate to relate the positions of the stars that are clearly seen to those which are hidden; and he will tell us that a certain race of holy persons, tracing descent chiefly from Abraham, is as the stars of heaven. And, in accordance with his knowledge of things hidden, he will further pronounce the glory of the future resurrection to be stars; and in this he will be following him who said: One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

I should like you to take his mention of the natures of animals and the rages of beasts in the same way. For without a good knowledge of the natures of animals the Savior would never have said in the Gospels: Tell that fox; nor would John have said of certain people that they were serpents, a brood of vipers; nor yet would the prophet say of some that they are become as stallions; nor another, that man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he is compared to the senseless beasts, and is become like to them. Again, he who said: Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent, as that of the deaf adder that stops her ears, had carefully studied the rages of beasts.

And when he mentions the forces of the winds, he will mean on the visible side the winds and breezes of the air, and on the invisible the forces of the unclean spirits, which Paul also calls the winds of doctrine. It follows from these things that he both knows after a bodily manner the reasonings of men which come from the human heart, and also recognizes without sight those beings that suggest bad and wicked thoughts to men; as it is written in the Gospel: When the devil had put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord...and as is said in Proverbs: If the spirit of him that has power ascend upon you, leave not your place, because right reason restrains great sins. Good thoughts, however, also have their instigator; wherefore it is written in the Psalms, I think: Blessed is the man whose help is from You, O Lord, in his heart he has disposed to ascend; and again: The thought of man shall give praise to You, and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to You.

So, as we said at the beginning, all the things in the visible category can be related to the invisible, the corporeal to the incorporeal, and the manifest to those that are hidden; so that the creation of the world itself, fashioned in this wise as it is, can be understood through the divine wisdom, which from actual things and copies teaches us things unseen by means of those that are seen, and carries us over from earthly things to heavenly.

But this relationship does not obtain only with creatures; the Divine Scripture itself is written with wisdom of a rather similar sort. Because of certain mystical and hidden things the people is visibly led forth from the terrestrial Egypt and journeys through the desert, where there was a biting serpent, and a scorpion, and thirst, and where all the other happenings took place that are recorded. All these events, as we have said, have the aspects and likenesses of certain hidden things. And you will find this correspondence not only in the Old Testament Scriptures, but also in the actions of Our Lord and Savior that are related in the Gospels.

If, therefore, in accordance with the principles that we have now established all things that are in the open stand in some sort of relation to others that are hidden, it undoubtedly follows that the visible hart and roe mentioned in the Song of Songs are related to some patterns of incorporeal realities, in accordance with the character borne by their bodily nature. And this must be in such wise that we ought to be able to furnish a fitting interpretation of what is said about the Lord perfecting the harts, by reference to those harts that are unseen and hidden.

For what perfection would come to those visible harts from the voice of the Lord? Or what teaching ever comes down to them from the voice of the Lord? But if we were to look for the spiritual harts, of which the corporeal animal possesses the form and image, you would find that they can be brought to the height of perfection by the voice of the Lord.

We must notice also how it became the Lord to guard the births of these harts, and how fitting it was that He should stand by, offering His services as healer when they brought forth, until they were delivered of such sons as should oppose and chase the race of serpents, in a manner worthy of the divine majesty; also what sort of deer they are whose bringing to birth it beseems the Lord to guard that they may not miscarry, whose months it beseems Him to count till their time to give birth is come, and over whose travail pangs He keeps a fitting watch, so that their offspring may not come to nought, but that their birth may be perfect, and they may be in labor only until such time as Christ be formed in them.

The Lord Himself, then, feeds the fawns of deer like these, that is, of those who pour out their thoughts on the Lord, that He Himself may feed them and guard them in the pangs of birth, when by the fear of the Lord they have conceived in their womb, and have given birth, and have brought forth the spirit of salvation. The Lord Himself looks after travail pangs such as these. And He also sends forth their griefs that they may go and weep, bearing their seed, and may share the griefs of men, and be scourged along with men, lest haply pride get hold of them.

These same harts also snatch away their offspring, as Scripture says. For those whom they have begotten through the Gospel they tear away from the chains of sin and the snares of the devil, that they will be no longer held enchained to his will. These also will be multiplied and, as the Scripture says, will not return. For they will not imitate Lots wife, they will not return backward; for they know that a man who puts his hand to the plough will not be fit for the kingdom of heaven if he looks back; no, they will always forget the things that are behind, and press on towards those that are before.

Such, then, are the harts whom the voice of the Lord makes perfect. And what is the voice of the Lord save that which is contained in the Law and the Prophets, and reaches even to John who was the voice of one crying in the wilderness? And Johns own voice, that said: Prepare the ways of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God, made harts perfect that they might be perfect in the same mind, and in the same knowledge. For one who is such says with reason: As the hart pants after the fountains of waters, so my soul pants after You, O God.

And as for the hart of friendships, who else should this be but He who destroys the serpent that had beguiled Eve and by spreading the poison of sin in her with his inbreathed encouragement had infected the whole of her posterity with the contagion of the Fall, He who came to loose in His own flesh the enmities which the baneful mediator had brought to pass between God and man?

The fawn of graces, however, can be taken as denoting the Holy Spirit from whom those who thirst and long for God win spiritual graces and celestial gifts.

Now we have said all this in order to make clearer the reason why the Bride compares her Nephew with a young hart. And if you would enquire further why He is compared to a young hart, and not, as elsewhere, to the hart itself, do note the fact that, though He was in the form of God, a Son was given to us and a Child was born to us, whose power was upon His shoulder. He is a fawn, for He was born a little child for us. And perhaps the harts may be understood as some of the saints, such as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David and Solomon, and all from whose seed Christ came according to the flesh. Those harts the Lords voice did indeed make perfect, and their fawn is He who was born as a child of them according to the flesh.

I am moved also by a passage in the hundred and third Psalm which reads: The high hills for the harts. We have indeed remarked already, with reference to the harts, that they may be taken as meaning the saints, who came into this world in order to destroy the poison of the serpent. But let us see now what the high mountains are which appear as being reserved for the harts alone, and which none can scale unless he be a hart. My own opinion is that it is knowledge of the Trinity that is called high mountains; no one can achieve possession of that, unless he be made a hart.

But these same mountains that here are called high mountains in the plural, in other places are termed a high mountain in the singular, as Isaias says: Get you up upon a high mountain, you that bring good tidings to Sion; lift up your voice with strength, you that bring good tidings to Jerusalem. For that which in the former place is understood of the Trinity because of the distinction of Persons, is here understood as the One God by reason of the unity of Substance.

Let that suffice about the young hart. Now let us see why the Nephew is compared also to a roe or little fallow deer. If we look to the Greek, this creature has received its name from its keen power of sight. And who is there who sees as Christ sees? For He alone it is who sees or knows the Father. For, although it is said of the pure in heart that they shall see God, they will doubtless see Him only by Christ's revealing; for it is a further part of the roes nature that it not only sees and perceives most acutely itself, but also bestows the power of sight on others. For those who are skilled in medicine assert that there is a certain fluid in the viscera of this animal which dispels dimness from the eyes and stimulates defective vision. Deservedly, therefore, is Christ compared to a roe or fallow deer, since He not only sees the Father Himself, but also causes Him to be seen by those whose power of vision He Himself has healed.

But you must not take this talk of seeing the Father in any bodily sense, or think that God is visible. The sight by which God is seen is not of the body, but of the mind and spirit. Our Savior Himself marks this distinction in the Gospel by the word that He employs;



for He did not say that no man saw the Father save the Son, but that no man knew the Father save the Son. And finally, to those to whom He gives the power of seeing God, He gives the Spirit of knowledge and the Spirit of wisdom, that by the same Spirit they may see God. And for that reason He told His disciples: He that has seen me has seen the Father also.

But we shall surely not be so silly as to think that he who saw Jesus in the body, saw the Father too in the same way. For were that so, we should find the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, and Pilate who scourged Him, and all the people who cried Crucify, crucify Him, seeing the Father when they saw Jesus in the flesh; and that would obviously be both ridiculous and profane. For just as when crowds were pressing Him along with His disciples, none of those who thus crowded and jostled Him is said to have touched Him, save only she who, vexed with an issue of blood, came and touched the hem of His garment, and He bore witness to her alone, saying: Somebody has touched me, for I felt virtue is gone out of me; so also, though there were many who saw Him, none of them is said to have seen Him, save he who recognized that He was the Word and Son of God, in whom at the same time the Father is said to be recognized and seen.

Let us not miss this further point, however, that He is compared to a roe or a fawn in the first place, though a hart is obviously a larger animal than is the roe. Look at this closely; does not the reason for it lie perhaps in the fact that while the salvation of believers depends upon two things, their understanding of the faith and the perfection of their works, it is the element of faith—likened, as we have said, to a roe by reason of its power of sight and contemplative insight—that is taken as the first step in salvation, whereas second place is given to perfection of works, which is represented under the figure of the hart, that conquers and destroys the poison of serpents and the wiles of the devil?

The Bride, then, says that her Nephew is like to a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel. Bethel means the House of God. So the mountains that are in the House of God can be taken as meaning both the books of the Law and the Prophets, and also those of the Gospels and apostolic writings. It is by means of these that the faith of God is beheld and also the perfection of works is learned and fulfilled.

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### Bk 3 #13<sup>1</sup>

Sg. 2.9: My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.

Dt 14.4-5: These are the animals you may eat: the ox, sheep, goat, hart, gazelle, roebuck, wild goat, ibex, antelope and the mountain sheep.

Ps 42.1: As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for you, O God.

Rom 1.11: For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

Dt 12.21-2: (permission to eat gazelle or hart).

Ps 29.9: The voice of the Lord makes the hinds to calve.

Ps 29.7-8: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness, the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

Job 38.1: Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

Job 38.1-4: (God questioning Job regarding creation).

Prov 5.19: A lovely hind, a graceful doe. Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, be infatuated always with her love.

1Cor 2.13: And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

Rom 1.20: Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.

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

Heb 9.23: Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Gen 1.26: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

Mt 13.31-2: The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

Mt 17.20: Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move hence to yonder place," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

Wisd 7.17-21: (knowledge to know nature).

Ps 104.24: In wisdom you have made them all.

Wisd 7.21: I learned both what is secret and what is manifest.

Mt 24.35: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

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

Ps 77.6: I have in my thought the eternal years.

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<sup>1</sup>Because this section contains a lengthy list of scriptural verses, it is divided into two sections simply for the sake of convenience. However, the excerpt from Origen's Song **Commentary** will not be divided into two parts.



Wisdom 7:19: The cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars.

Gen 22:17: I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore.

1Cor 15:41-2: There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead.

Wisdom 7:20: The natures of animals and the tempers of wild beasts.

Lk 13:32: God and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.

Mt 3:7: But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Jer 5:8: They were well-fed lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife.

Ps 49:12: Man cannot abide in his pomp, he is like the beasts that perish.

Wisdom 7:20: (cf. 5 vs. above).

Ps 58:4: They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stops its ear.

Wisdom 7:20: (cf. 7 vs. above).

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.

Wisdom 7:20: (cf. 9 vs. above).

Eph 4:14: (cf. 2 vs. above).

Wisdom 7:20: (cf. 10 vs. above).

Mk 7:21: For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery.

Jn 13:2: And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

Ecc 10:4: If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for deference will make amends for great offenses.

Ps 84:5: Blessed are the men whose strength is in you, in whose hearts are the highways to Zion.

Ps 76:10: For the inward thought of man shall give thanks to you, and the memorial of his inward thought shall keep a feast to you.

Ex 3:10: Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.

Dt 8:15: Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock.

The bride compares her divine bridegroom to a "roe" or *tseyv* which also means glory and is applicable to this animal's beauty, as well as among those the Israelites are permitted to eat. The "hart" (*'ayal*) is a stag and can also mean a ram which in Proverbs is "lovely," derived from the verbal root *'ahav*, to love. This *'ayal* (also a doe) has "affection" (*dod*) which will fill a person with "delight" or *'ahavah* (cf. *'ahav*). *Shagah* as "be infatuated" means to wander, to reel.

The verb for "long" is *epipothéo*, the preposition *epi* (upon) indicative of intense desire.

Three uses of "voice" (*qol*): with respect to hinds, flashing flames of fire and shaking the wilderness (also of Kadesh). It is the same *qol* which answers Job from the "whirlwind" or *seharah*, derived from a verbal root meaning to shake violently. That sets the stage for the Lord to question Job as to him being present at creation.

A contrast between human "wisdom" (*sophia*) and "Spirit" (*Pneuma*). Both are used with "taught" or *didaktos*.

Compare "clearly perceived" and "unseen:" *kathorao* and *skopeo* (to look down from on high or in accord with or kata- and to fix one's gaze upon in intense fashion).

Compare "copies" and our "image:" *hupodiegma* and *tselem* (a sign suggestive of anything and shadow).

Birds of the air "make nests" in the branches of a mustard tree or shrub, *kataskenoo*, literally as to pitch their tents there. It could be said that one's "little faith" as a mustard seed is not the issue; rather, focus should be upon the nature of *kataskenoo*.

The three verses of Wisdom (vs. 20 cited four more times in this section) pertain to "knowledge" of nature (*gnosis*) which are "secret" or "manifest" (*kruptos* and *emphanos*), that part of the excerpt cited shortly afterwards. *Chakmah* or "wisdom" is the agent by which God has made creation. Despite the divine origin of creation, it will "pass away" or *parerchomai*, the common verb *erchomai* (to go) prefaced with *para* (beside) which intimates a slipping away from beside. To have this ability is looking to things which are "unseen," the verb *blepo* being used or being endowed with the capacity for sight.

Ps 77.6 is from the LXX which has for "meditated" a verb which has the noun *eidolon* (image, phantom), implying the formation of images to assist one's thought.

Several verses pertaining to the stars follow which has no connection with any type of astrology but as created by the Lord.

Following the "natures" (*phusis*) of animals, Jesus calls Herod a fox in the context of his ministry of healing. In another context he calls the religious authorities a brood of vipers. In another verse that follows the psalmist mentions serpents and a deaf adder.

The lusty stallions of Jeremiah resemble beasts that perish, the verb being *mashal* which also pertains to having dominion. The same applies to man in his "pomp" or *yeqar* which also means magnificence or preciousness. Children as both "tossed to and fro" and "carried about" (*kludonizomai* or to be driven by waves and *periphero*, to carry around or about).

"Heart" or *kardia* (with preposition *eis* or 'into the heart) is used with reference to Judas' betrayal of Jesus from which come evil "thoughts" (etc.), *dialogismos* implying machinations. The heart also is a source of strength in God, forming "highways" to Zion or *meslah*, more an embanked highway. Moses being sent by the Lord to Pharaoh will set out a way from Egypt, to bring them forth. It will traverse a "wilderness" (*midbar*) which is both "great and terrible" (*gadol* and *yare'*, the verbal root to fear).

"Deference" or *marpe'* also means a remedy or that which is refreshing.

Sg 2:9: My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.

Ps 29.9: The voice of the Lord makes the hinds to calve.  
Job 39.1: Do you observe the calving of the hinds?  
Gal 4.19: My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!  
Ps 55.22: Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.  
Job 39.2: Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when the bring forth?  
Is 26.18: We were with child, we writhed, we have, as it were, brought forth wind.  
Ps 126.6: He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.  
Ps 73.5-6: They are not in trouble as other men are; they are not stricken like other men. Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment.  
Job 39.3: When they crouch, bring forth their offspring, and are delivered of their young?  
1Cor 4.15: For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.  
1Tm 3.7: Moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.  
Job 39.4: Their young ones become strong, they grow up in the open; they go forth, and do not return to them.  
Gen 19.26: But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.  
Lk 9.62: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.  
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.  
Ps 29.9: The voice of the Lord makes the hinds to calve.  
Mt 3.3: For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."  
1Cor 1.10: I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.  
Ps 42.1: As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for you, O God.  
Prov 6.19: A false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers.  
2Cor 11.3: But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.  
Eph 2.14-5: For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.  
Prov 6.19: (cf. 3 vss. above).  
Rom 1.11: For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.  
Sg 2.9: My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.  
Phl 2.6: Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.  
Is 9.5: For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.  
Rom 9.5: To them belong the patriarchs and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ.  
Ps 29.9: The voice of the Lord makes the hinds to calve.  
Rom 9.5: (cf. 2 vss. above).  
Ps 29.9: (cf. 2 vss. above).  
Rom 9.5: (cf. 4 vss. above).  
Is 9.5: (cf. 6 vss. above).  
Ps 104: The high mountains are for the wild goats.  
Is 40.9: Get up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not.  
Jn 6.46: Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.  
Mt 5.8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
Jn 14.9: Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip?  
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.  
Is 11.2: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
Wisd 7.22: For wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. (followed by many attributes).  
Jn 14.9: (cf. 4 vss. above).  
Mt 23.13: But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against me; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in.  
Jn 19.1: Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.  
Lk 23.21: But they shouted out, "Crucify, crucify him!"  
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.  
Lk 8.43-4: And a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by anyone came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased.  
Lk 8.46: Someone touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me.  
Rev 19.13: He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.  
Jn 1.34: And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.  
Sg 2.9: My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.

Sg. 2.9: (cf. vs. above).

"Hinds" or *'ayalah* is mentioned twice in reference to the divine bridegroom being likened to a roe or young hart and is a wild she-goat (cf. *'ayal* or ram). The Lord's "voice" or *qol* causes them to give birth away from the sight of humans. Next follows reference to being in "travail" or *odino* (to give birth to a child) with regard to the forming of Christ in people, *morphoo*. Hinds are also inferred several verses below with regard to crouching for birth.

"Burden" is literally "what he has given you" which results in being sustained by the Lord, the verb being *kul* which also means to nourish, to measure.

Two verses pertaining to birth with the same verb *yalad* with regard to bringing forth (a child).

A contrast between "weeping" and "shouts of joy:" *bakah* and *rinah*.

In "trouble and stricken:" the noun *hamal* and the verb *nagah* (vexation or labor and also as to touch, to reach).

The noun for "guides" is *paidagogos* or more specifically, a tutor for young boys. Such a role does not suffice compared to being a father in Christ by means of the gospel.

"Well thought" is rendered as *marturia* (witness) modified by the adjective *kalos* (beautiful).

Two instances of looking back: Lot's wife (whose name is anonymous) and with regard to not looking forward to the kingdom of God. The latter implies both "forgetting and straining forward" which has two verbs with the preposition *epi* or upon, *epilanthano* and *epekteino*.

"Voice" or *qol* according to Is 40.3 and applicable to the Baptist. "Prepare" or *yashar* means to make straight.

"Dissensions" or *schisma* (cleft or rent) contrast with "mind and judgment" (*nous* and *gnome*, the latter also as thought or purpose) which are the same.

"Longs" or *harag* often is applicable to the cry of a deer (hart) and is applicable to a human soul which contrasts with breathing out lies and sowing discord, the verb being *puach* meaning to blow, to pant.

"Deceived and cunning" or *exapatao* and *panourgia* (the preposition *ex-* signifying a thorough deception and the adjective *pan-* signifying much) contrast with "devotion" or *haplotes* which fundamentally means simplicity.

Christ breaks down the dividing wall, the verb *luo* more suggestive of loosening, a less dramatic but more thorough image of abolishing the wall at hand. This dividing wall had been erected by the false witnesses and sowing of discord noted above in Prov 6.19.

*Epipotheo* or "long" which has the preposition *epi* (upon) prefaced to it, a longing-upon, regarding a spiritual "gift" or charisma.

"Form and equality" or *morphe* and *isos* (adjective, like) are similar.

Clothing of warriors will be burned which precedes the verse about "to us a son is given."

"According to" the flesh is the preposition *kata* which here suggests being in accord with a lineage culminating in Christ. This verse is followed by four which repeat the verses just prior to them.

Two instances of high mountains: for wild goats and Zion. Use of mountain with regard to the latter intimates that one exist which is higher than that focal point of worship.

"From" God is *para* which also means beside, in company with which here pertains to Jesus who has seen the Father.

Compare this seeing with the pure in heart who will see God as well as Jesus being with (*meta*) Philip.

*Paradidomi* is the verb for "has been given" with the preposition *para* (beside, being with) and pertains to all things given to Jesus by the Father from which is derived knowing him in imitation of Jesus knowing him. The verb is *epigignosko*, literally a knowing-upon (*epi*). It is similar to wisdom as "fashioner" who teaches, *technitis* implying the work of an artisan.

The "Spirit" (*Ruach*) will "rest" upon the shoot from Jesse's stump, *nuach* being the verb which implies dwelling.

*Kleio* is the verb for "shut" in the sense of locking a door.

"Human point of view" is rendered as *kata sarka* or according to the flesh which pertains to Pilate and those demanding Christ to be crucified. *Gignosko* is the verb for "regarded."

The sense of touch is used in two verses as related to healing.

"Word" or *Logos* of God who is the Son of God. The second occurs at the beginning of John's Gospel and the first towards the end of Revelation.

Behold, He stood behind our wall, leaning against the windows, looking through the nets. My Nephew answered, and He says to me: Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove. Lo, the winter is past, the rain is gone, the flowers have appeared in our land...The fig tree has put forth her green figs, the vineyards have yielded their sweet smell. (2.9b-13 b)

Behold, he stood behind our wall, leaning against the windows, looking through the nets. My nephew answered, and he says to me. When I consider the difficulties of finding out the meaning of the words of Scripture that we have here adduced, it seems to me that I am in like case with a man who pursues his quarry by means of the power of scent, such as a wise dog has. For sometimes it happens that when the hunter, following a hot trail, thinks that he has come close to the hidden lairs, he is all of a sudden forsaken by the track-marks. And, having urged his hound to pursue the scent more carefully, he goes back along the same trails that he had traced before, until he finds the place where his quarry, now thoroughly aroused, has secretly betaken itself on to another trail. When the hunter finds this, he follows it up with more alacrity, more sure now of his prey and more certain that he is on the right tracks. So, when the tracks of the explanation that we thought to find have in some way failed us, we likewise hope that after a little search and after pursuing a plainer sort of explanation than appeared possible before, the Lord our God may deliver the prey into our hands, and that we, preparing and seasoning it with the salt of the reasonable word, after the knowledge of our mother Rachel, may be found worthy to obtain blessings from our spiritual father Jacob.

This is the reason why it seems needful, as we said, to go back and briefly unravel the former explanation, so that it may be shown

which is the clearer meaning. I take it, therefore, that at the beginning of the drama before us the Bride is standing out of doors at a place where two ways meet, and for love of her Spouse is looking this way and that, to see if perhaps He may be coming, and maybe is in sight. But so long as she does not know from which direction He is likely to come, she is unwilling either to set out on any road or to stay indoors.

She stands outside, therefore, and, moved with longing for Him, says: Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. But when the Bridegroom has arrived, she says: Your breasts are better than wine, and that which follows up to the place where the Scripture says: We will run after You. After that, the Beloved receives the Bridegroom's answering love, and is brought into His chamber; the King has brought me into His chamber, she says. The rest of what is written after this, however, she speaks as from within the chamber, to the Bridegroom in the presence of the maidens who attend on the Bride, and to the companions who attend on the Bridegroom.

The Bridegroom, however, is to be understood as a husband who is not always in the house, nor is He in perpetual attendance on the Bride, who stays in the house. Rather, He frequently goes out, and she, yearning for His love, seeks Him when He is absent; yet He Himself returns to her from time to time. It seems, therefore, that all through this little book we must expect to find the Bridegroom sometimes being sought as one who is away, and sometimes speaking to the Bride as being present with her.

But the Bride herself, because she has seen many and great splendors in His chamber, asks further that she may be brought into the house of wine. Having entered this and looked around, because the Bridegroom her husband has not tarried in the house, she goes out once again, anguished anew by love for Him, and goes all round the house, and in and out of it, looking in all directions for her Bridegroom's return. And then all of a sudden she sees Him, overtopping the crests of the nearby mountains with great leaps, and so descending to the house, where the Bride is yearning and burning for His love.

The Bridegroom, however, on reaching the wall, stands a while behind it, considering something, as a person will, and turning it over in His mind. Then, being Himself moved now with something of love for the Bride and availing Himself of His height, which reaches to the windows of the house—and these windows are furnished in part with what is called network—since He, when He leans against them, is taller than they and reaches to their upper parts which, as we said, are divided off by network, He looks through these nets and speaks to the Bride, saying: Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove, etc.

This is the sequence of events which, as we remarked before, seemed to us very difficult to sort out and explain; and I think that the foregoing analysis of the dialogue will have made it clearer.

The spiritual interpretation, however, is not so difficult and hard to come by. For the Bride of the Word, the soul who abides in His royal house—that is, in the Church—is taught by the Word of God, who is her Bridegroom, whatsoever things are stored and hidden within the royal court and in the Kings chamber. In this house, which is the Church of the living God, she becomes acquainted also with the cellar of that wine which is extracted from the holy wine-presses, the wine that is not only new, but also old and sweet—that is, the teaching of the Law and the Prophets.

And when she has been adequately trained in that, she receives unto herself the Word Himself, who was God with God in the beginning. He does not always stay with her, however, for that for human nature is not possible: He may visit her from time to time, indeed, and yet from time to time she may be forsaken too by Him, that she may long for Him the more. But—taking the meaning of the verse before us—when she is visited by the Word, He is said to come to her leaping upon the mountains, that is, revealing to her the meaning of high and lofty truths of heavenly wisdom in such wise as to effect the building up of the Church, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth; and then He stands near or behind the wall, so that He is neither wholly hidden, nor yet wholly in open view. For the Word of God and the word of knowledge does not appear as set in public places where everyone can see, nor is He to be trampled underfoot of men; nay rather, He is found when He is sought for, and found, as we said, not in the open courtyard, but covered over and as it were hiding behind the wall.

So, therefore, the wall likewise is a part of this house and it can be taken as denoting the stability of doctrines: it is beneath this wall that the Bridegroom is said to stand, and in these doctrines He is so great and tall, that He over-tops every building and looks upon the Bride—that is, the soul. But He does not show Himself openly and wholly to her yet; rather, looking at her through the nets, as it were, He encourages and urges her not to sit idle in there, but to go to Him outside and try to see Him—no longer through windows and nets, nor through a glass in a dark manner; but, going out to Him, to see Him face to face. For now, because she cannot yet behold Him thus, He stands not in front of her, but at her back, and behind the wall.

Moreover, He also leans through the windows, which doubtless were open to admit the light and to bring light into the house. Leaning and looking through those windows, then, the Word of God calls on the soul to rise and come to Him.

We can take the windows as meaning the bodily senses through which life or death gains entrance to the soul; for that is what the prophet Jeremias means when, speaking of sinners, he says: Death is come up through your windows. How does death come up through windows? If the eyes of a sinner should look on a woman to lust after her; and because he who has thus looked upon a woman has committed adultery with her in his heart, then death has gained entrance to that soul through the windows of the eyes.

Similarly, when a person hears some piece of vanity, and especially the vanity of the false knowledge of perverted teachings, then death enters that soul through the windows of the ears. When, on the other hand, a soul, seeing how the world is decked out, perceives the Creator of all in the beauty of His creatures and marvels at His works and praises their Maker, to this soul life enters

through the windows of the eyes. And also, when she listens to the Word of God and takes delight in the reasonings of His wisdom and knowledge, to her the light of wisdom enters through the windows of her ears.

So the Word of God, looking through these windows and fixing His regard on the Bride-soul, exhorts her to arise and come to Him, that is to say: to forsake things bodily and visible and to hasten to those that are not of the body and are spiritual. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Thus also is the Spirit of God said to go around and seek for worthy souls, such as can be rendered fit for Wisdom to inhabit. But that He is said to look through the nets of the windows doubtless points the fact that so long as the soul is in the house of this body, she cannot receive the naked and plain wisdom of God, but beholds the invisible and the incorporeal by means of certain analogies and tokens and images of visible things. And this is what is meant by the Bridegroom looking at her through the nets of the windows.

If, however, we are to expound the passage with reference to Christ and the Church, then the house in which the Church was dwelling is the writings of the Law and the Prophets. For there too is a king's chamber, filled with all the riches of wisdom and knowledge; there too is a house of wine—the teaching, whether mystical or moral, that cheers the heart of man.

When Christ was coming, therefore, He stood awhile behind the wall of the house of the Old Testament. He was standing behind the wall, in that He was not yet showing Himself to the people. But when the time is come, and He begins to appear to the Church who sits inside the house, that is, within the letter of the Law, and to show Himself to her through the windows of the Law and the Prophets, that is, through the things that had been foretold concerning Him, then He calls her to come forth and come outside to Him.

For, unless she comes out, unless she comes forth and advances from the letter to the spirit, she cannot be united with her Bridegroom, nor share the company of Christ. He calls her, therefore, and invites her to come out from carnal things to spiritual, from visible to invisible, from the Law to the Gospel. And therefore He says to her: Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove.

And if we may anticipate somewhat of that which we shall have to say later on, because we do not want to lose a meaning that has just occurred to us, perhaps that is the reason why He tells her further: Lo, the winter is past, the rain is gone: He thereby both indicates the actual time of the Passover, for He suffered when winter was past and the rains had spent themselves, and also signifies on the spiritual side that there were rains upon the earth up to the time when the Lord endured His Passion. For up to that time the Lord was giving command to the prophet-rains to pour the shower of the Word upon the earth. But because the prophets functioned only until John the Baptist, the showers are rightly said to have gone away and departed.

The prophetic showers ceased, however, not to the loss of believers, but for the greater profit of the Church. For what need is there of showers, when the river makes the city of God joyful, when a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting is found in every faithful heart? What need is there of showers, now that the flowers have appeared in our land, and since the coming of the Lord the fig tree, that formerly was barren, is no longer cut down? For now she has put forth her green figs. So too the vineyards have yielded their sweet smell. Wherefore a certain member of that vineyard said: We are the good odor of Christ unto God in every place, in them that are saved and in them that perish.

As we have remarked above, however, we have dealt with these matters before we reached their actual place in the Scripture, fearing lest perhaps the meaning, which was obvious to us at the moment should escape our memory. Now, therefore, let us go back and consider in what sense He is said to look forth through the nets.

It is written: For nets are spread not unfairly for birds; and again, the just man, if he have fallen into sin, is commanded to flee as a doe from the snares, and as a bird from the nets. The life of men, then, is full of the snares of deadly offences, full of the nets of fraud, which he who is called Nemrod, the giant hunter against the Lord, spreads for the human race. For who is in fact that giant, save the devil, who rebels even against God? So the snares of temptations and the craftily contrived gins of the devil are called nets. And, because the Enemy had spread these nets everywhere and had trapped almost everyone in them, it was needful that somebody should come who should be stronger than they and stand out above them and should destroy them, and thus clear the way for those who followed Him. Therefore is the Savior also tempted by the devil before He could enter into union and alliance with the Church; so that, conquering the snares of temptations, He might look through them and through them also call her to Himself, thus teaching and showing her beyond all doubt that the way to Christ leads, not through idle ease and pleasure, but through many trials and temptations.

There was, therefore, none other who could overcome these nets. For all have sinned, as it is written; and again, as Scripture says: There is no just man upon earth that has done good and has not sinned; and again: No one is free of uncleanness, not even if his life be of but one day. Therefore Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ alone is He who did no sin; but the Father made Him to be sin for us, that in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin He might condemn sin.

So He came to these nets; but He alone could not be caught in them. Instead of that, when He has torn and trampled them, He so emboldens His Church that she too dares to trample now upon the snares, and to pass over the nets, and with all joy to say: Our soul has been delivered as a sparrow out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are delivered. Who rent the snare,



save He who alone could not be held by it? For, although He suffered death, He did so willingly, and not as we do, by necessity of sin; for He alone was free among the dead.

And, because he was free among the dead, when He had conquered him who had the empire of death, He brought forth the captives that were being held by death. And He did not raise only Himself from the dead; He also raised, together with Himself, those who were held by death, and made them to sit with Him in the heavenly places. For ascending on high, He led captivity captive, not only bringing forth the souls, but also raising their bodies, as the Gospel testifies: Many bodies of the saints...were raised...and appeared to many, and came into the holy city of the living God, Jerusalem.

We have adopted the foregoing as a secondary explanation of the nets. It is for the reader to judge which of the two best suits the mystical sense of the words.

### Book Three [Four]<sup>2</sup>

#### Bk 3(4) #14

Sg 2.10-13: Rise up, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove. For behold, the winter is past, the rain is gone, it has departed. The flowers are seen in the land; the time of pruning has arrived; the voice of the turtle-dove has been heard in our land. The fig tree has put forth its young figs, the vines put forth the tender grape; they yield a smell.

Rom 8.9: But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit.

Eph 4.4: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

2Cor 4.16: So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.

Lk 3.22: And the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove.

Ps 55.6: And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."

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

Col 3.5: Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.

Rom 6.5: For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Lk 3.22: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Sg 2.11: For behold, the winter is past, the rain is gone, it has departed.

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.

Sg 1.2: The voice of the turtle-dove has been heard in our land.

1Cor 2.6-7: 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. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.

Sg 2.13: The fig tree has put forth its young figs.

Gal 5.22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

Mt 15.13: Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.

1Cor 3.9: For we are fellow workers for God; you are God's field, God's building.

1Cor 3.6: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

Mt 12.33: Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

Jn 15.1-2: I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

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

Sg 2.10: My companion, my fair one, my dove.

Sg 2.11: For behold, the winter is past, the rain is gone, it has departed.

Sg 2.11: (cf. vs. above).

Ex 7-9: (the plagues against Egypt).

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.

Sg 2.10-11: (cf. vss. 5 & 6 above).

Is 5.6: I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Is 52.6: Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.

Mt 21.19: And deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.

2Cor 3.6: For the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Sg 2.13: The fig tree has put forth its young figs, the vines put forth the tender grape; they yield a smell.

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.

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

Mt 26.29: I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

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

Sg 2.10: (Rise up).

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<sup>2</sup>Endnote 231 of Lawson's translation (cf. p. 239) explains why the two sections of Book Four are numbered #14 and #15. It is retained here for the sake of convenience.

Sg 2.10-1: Rise up, come my companion, my fair one, my dove. For behold, the winter is past, the rain is gone, it has departed.

Sg 2.12: The flowers are seen in the land; the time of pruning has arrived; the voice of the turtle-dove has been heard in our land.

Mt 3.10: Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Sg 2.12: (cf. 2 vss. above).

Ps 37.11: But the meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

1Cor 13.12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Sg 2.13: The fig tree has put forth the tender grape.

Mt 22.30: For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

The Song verses for this section deal with the arrival of spring thereby setting the tone of winter's passage, culminating in mention of Christ's resurrection in the very last verse, like angels in heaven.

Two types of "in:" flesh and Spirit. Despite their opposition, there are three types of "one:" body, Spirit and hope. Such oneness allows for not losing heart, *egkakeo*, which has as its root *kakos* (evil).

The Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism in bodily "form" or *eidos* (external appearance or shape). Jesus then enters the wilderness for forty days being endowed with the psalmist's "wings like a dove." In the meanwhile, Jesus hides the treasures of "wisdom and knowledge" or *sophia* and *gnosis*.

"Earthly" is rendered as *epi tes ges* or literally "upon the earth," sight of where we are to mortify ourselves. Such mortification is because of our union with a death like that of Jesus which will be like his resurrection, the noun *homoionoma* (likeness).

"Tossed to and fro and carried about" (*kludonizomai* or to be driven by waves and *periphero*, to carry around or about) belong to the time of winter, theme of this section.

The verb *laleo* (to speak) is used for "impart" with regard to "wisdom" (*sophia*) which is both "secret" and hidden, the former being the noun *mysterion* (mystery in the sense of initiation). "Glorification" is the noun *doxa* (glory) with the preposition *eis*, "into glorification."

"Fruit" (*karpos*) pertains to seven attributes of the Spirit which fits in with this section emphasizing the advent of spring. Spring also is a time for clearing one's garden as when the Father roots up what he hasn't planted. Paul imitates this planting but realizes that God makes it grow. This process can apply to both God's field as well as his building, the two being living entities. Over time what is planted will be known by its fruit, *gignosko*.

Christ is true vine on whom the Father works as vine dresser which means that to see the Father is to see this agricultural work, if you will, being performed in the person of Jesus. Sg 2.12 a few verses below speaks of pruning which is similar; any useless branches are cast into fire.

"Aroma" is *euodia* mean a scent that is pleasant (*eu-*) which works two ways: persons being saved and persons who are perishing, present participle for both meaning action is taking place right now. *Eudonia* is "in" both, not external to them.

Reference to the plagues which afflicted Egypt do not convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart but harden his heart, symbolic of winter which ties in with the general theme of this section.

"Trespass" is *paraptoma* literally means falling beside which results in salvation for the Gentiles. As for the Jews, they are likened to the vineyard which will become a "waste" or *batah* whose verbal root suggests anything cut up or divided.

"Meek" or *hanaw* also applies to those who are afflicted.

"Mirror" or *esoptron* is a highly polished piece of metal which does not present a full image as with modern glass ones. Hence any reflection is blurred and tinged with the mirror's metal. Such partiality is not unlike the tender grape or first sign of spring.

Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is gone and has departed to itself, the flowers have appeared on the earth, the time of pruning is come, the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land, the fig tree has put forth her buds, the vines in flower have yielded their sweet smell. (2. 10b-13a)

Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is gone and has departed to itself, the flowers have appeared on the earth, the time of pruning is come, the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land, the fig tree has put forth her buds, the vines in flower have yielded their sweet smell. We have already described the arrangement of the drama; now let us consider what we are here to understand the Word of God as saying to the soul that is worthy and prepared for Him, or what Christ is to be understood as saying to the Church.

Forthwith, then, let the Word of God speak first to this fair and noble soul, to whom He has appeared by means of her bodily senses—that is, through her reading of Scripture and hearing of doctrine—as it were, through windows, and to whom He has shown how tall and great He is; in order that He might speak to her in the words just cited, leaning towards her, and then calling her to come out of doors and, being removed from the bodily senses, to cease to be in the flesh, that so she may merit to hear: But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

For the Word of God would not otherwise say that she was His neighbor, did He not join Himself to her and become one spirit with her. Nor would He call her fair, unless He saw her image renewed day by day. And, did He not perceive her to be able to receive the Holy Spirit, who descended on Jesus at the Jordan in the form of a dove, He would not say to her, My dove. For she had conceived the love of the Word of God and was desiring to come to Him by a swift flight, saying: Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest? I will fly with my affections, I will fly with my spiritual perceptions and rest, when I have understood the treasures of His wisdom and knowledge.

For I think that just as those who accept the death of Christ and mortify their members upon earth are made partakers of the likeness of His death, so also those who receive the power of the Holy Spirit and are sanctified by Him and filled with His gifts, themselves become doves, even as He Himself appeared in the form of a dove. And so, uplifted on the Holy Spirits wings, they fly from earthly and corporeal places to celestial ones.

To show that the time is opportune for these things to happen, He has, moreover, logically inserted: For lo, the winter is past, the rain is gone. The soul is not made one with the Word of God and joined to Him, until such time as all the winter of her personal disorders and the storm of her vices has passed; so that she no longer vacillates and is carried about with every wind of doctrine. When, therefore, all these things have gone out of the soul, and the tempest of desires has fled from her, then the flowers of the virtues can begin to burgeon in her; then the time of pruning also comes to her. And, if there be anything superfluous and of small use in her affections and perceptions, it may be cut back and recalled to the buds of spiritual understanding.

Then also will she hear the voice of the turtle-dove, which surely denotes that wisdom which the steward of the Word speaks among the perfect, the deep wisdom of God which is hidden in mystery. This fact is indicated by the mention of the turtle-dove; for this bird spends its life in the more hidden and remote localities, away from crowds; it loves either mountainous wastes, or the secret parts of the forests, is always found far from the multitude, and is a stranger to crowds.

And what else is there that fits the opportuneness of this time and its delightfulness? The fig tree, He says, has put forth her buds. The spirit of man, of which the fig tree is a figure, does not yet bear the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, and the rest; but it is beginning now to put forth buds of them.

Indeed, different trees are generally understood in the Church as meaning the individual souls of the faithful, of whom it is written: Every tree that my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. And again Paul, who calls himself Gods coadjutor in Gods husbandry, says also of himself: I have planted, Apollo watered; and so too the Lord in the Gospels: Either make the tree good and its fruit good just so, as the different trees are understood in the Church as meaning the individual souls of the faithful, are the various powers and virtues in the individual soul understood under the figure of sundry kinds of trees. There is, then, in the soul a certain fig tree that puts forth its bud; and there is also a vine that flowers and yields its sweet smell. The Husbandman, who is the heavenly Father, purges the shoots of this vine, that they may bring forth much fruit. But according to him who said, We are the good odor of Christ in every place, this vine first rejoices the nostrils with the sweetness of the odor yielded by its flowers. So the Word of God, seeing these beginnings of the virtues of the soul, calls her to Himself, bidding her hasten and come forth and cast aside all things corporeal, and come to Him and be made a sharer in His perfection.

This, then, is the reason why on this first occasion He says to her: Arise, implying that even now she is lying down and reclining amid things corporeal; and she, forthwith obeying Him when He calls and doing what He bids, is praised by Him and hears: My neighbor and my dove.

And after this, lest she be frightened at the storms of temptations, He tells her that the winter is past, and the rain has gone over and departed to itself. Well did He signify the natures of vices and sins in a single marvelous saying, when He said that this kind of winter and of rains that fall upon us from the offence and storm of vices had departed to themselves, thus indicating that sins have no being. For when a mans vices leave him, they are not gathered together to form some other being, but take themselves away and, being dissolved into themselves, they vanish and are reduced to nothing. And therefore He said that it has departed to itself. Tranquillity, then, comes to the soul when the Word of God appears to her, and sin ceases to be. And so at last, when the vineyard is in flower, the virtues and the orchards of good fruits will begin to bud.

But now suppose once more that Christ is speaking these words to the Church, and is representing the whole duration of this present age within the circle of the year. He would then be describing as winter the period in which the hail and storms and the other catastrophes of the ten plagues chastised the Egyptians; or that in which Israel was engaged in diverse wars, or even the time of her resistance to the Savior Himself when, caught in the storm of unbelief, she was overwhelmed in the shipwreck of faith. So, now that by their offence salvation is come to the Gentiles, He calls the Church of the Gentiles to Himself, and says to her: Arise and come to me, for the winter which overwhelmed the unbelievers and held you down in ignorance, has passed. And the rain too has gone—that is to say, no longer will I bid the prophet-clouds to pour the rain of the Word upon the earth; but the voice of the turtle-dove, the very Wisdom of God, shall speak on earth and say: I myself that spoke, I am here. The flowers, therefore, have appeared on the earth. And the time of pruning, through the faith of my Passion and Resurrection, also has come.

For sins are lopped and cut away from men when remission of sins is given in Baptism. The voice of the turtle-dove is heard indeed, as we have said, not just through the various prophets; it is the voice of Gods own wisdom that is heard on earth. And the fig tree is sprouting; which may be taken as referring to the fruits of the Holy Spirit that are now for the first time disclosed and revealed to the Church; or to the letter of the Law, which before Christ's coming was closed and bound up and covered over with a sort of overlying carnal interpretation, whereas, as a result of His presence and coming, a bud of spiritual understanding has been put forth from and the fresh and living meaning that was concealed in it, has now appeared. And in consequence of this the Church, which was concealed by Christ in the fig tree, that is, in the Law, appears not as barren and as pursuing the letter that kills, but as following the flowering and life-giving Spirit.

Yes, and the vines also are said to be in flower, and to have yielded their sweet smell. The various churches too that are found all over the world can certainly be called flowering vines and vineyards. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Juda, His pleasant plant. These vineyards, then, are said to flower when they first come to faith; but when they are adorned with the sweetness of godly works, then they are said to have yielded their sweet smell.

And I think it is not without reason that He says their sweet smell, and not a sweet smell: it was to show that there is in every soul a potential force and a freedom of the will, by means of which it has the power to do all things good. But this inborn good had been beguiled by the Fall, and perverted to sloth or wickedness: when it is amended by grace and restored by the teaching of the Word of God, then assuredly it yields that odor which God the Creator had originally implanted in it, but which the guilt of sin had taken away.

The vines or vineyards can, moreover, be taken also as denoting the heavenly and angelic powers which bestow their sweet smell on men—that is to say, the benefit of teaching and instruction whereby they instruct and imbue souls, until they reach perfection and begin to be able to comprehend God. In the same way the Apostle also, when writing to the Hebrews, says: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation? And for this reason men are said to receive from them first the bloom, as it were, and the sweet smell of good things, but to look to receive the actual fruits of the vine from Him who said: I will not drink...of the fruit of this vine until I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.

These perfect fruits must then be hoped for from Himself; but the beginnings of them, and the sweetness of progress, so to speak, can be ministered by the heavenly powers, or at any rate by those who said, as we remarked above: For we are the good odor of Christ in every place.

There is, however, another way in which we may understand the passage before us: we can say that it is a sort of prophecy given to the Church, to call her to the promised blessings of the future. She is told to arise, as though the consummation of the age were already reached and the time of resurrection come. And, because this word of command forthwith seals the work of resurrection, she is invited into the Kingdom, as being now, by virtue of the resurrection, brighter and more splendid, and is bidden: Come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove, for the winter is past—winter here denoting surely the storms and tempests of this present life and the blasts of temptation with which human life is racked.

This winter, then, is past with its rains, and has departed to itself; for everyone did what he did in this life to himself. The flowers, which have appeared on the earth, we may take as the beginning of the future promises. And take the time of pruning as the axe laid to the root of the trees at the consummation of the age, that it may cut down every tree that brings not forth good fruit. But in the voice of the turtle-dove, which is heard in that land of promise, you must see Christ teaching in His own Person, seen face to face, and no longer through a glass and in a dark manner.

The fig tree, moreover, that puts forth its buds, may be taken as the fruit of the whole congregation of the just. And those holy and blessed angelic powers with whom all the elect and blessed—who will themselves be as the angels of God—will be associated by virtue of the resurrection, they are the flowering vines and vineyards that impart to every soul her fragrant odor, and the grace which she received from her Creator at the first and now, after losing it, has again recovered. And with the sweetness of their celestial fragrance they drive away at last the stench of the mortality and corruption, that the soul has laid aside.

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### **Bk3(4) #15**

Sg 2.13-14: Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove; yes, come. You are my dove in the shelter of the rock near the wall. Show me your face and let me hear your voice. Your voice is sweet and your countenance is beautiful.

Sg 2.8-9: Behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bethel.

Sg 2.13: (cf. 5 vss. above).

Sg 2.12-3: (cf. 4 vss. above).

2Cor 4.18: Because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Sg 1.6: Look not upon me because I am dark, because the sun looked unfavorably upon me.

1 Cor 10.4: For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

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.

Prov 30.18-9: Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden.

1Cor 10.4: (cf. 2 vss. above).

IPt 2.22: He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips.

Ps 40.2: He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

Sg 2.14: You are my dove in the shelter of the rock near the wall.

Jn 14.6: I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me.

Heb 6.20: Where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.  
 Ex 33.22-3: And while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.  
 1Cor 10.4: 9 vss. above).  
 Mt 11.27: No one knows the Son except the Father.  
 2Cor 4.18: (cf. above).  
 Sg 2.14: (cf. 7 vss. above).  
 Jn 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.  
 Ex 19.19: And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.  
 Sg 2.14: (cf. 10 vss. above).  
 Ps 104: 34: May my mediation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.  
 Mt 12.36: I tell you, on the day of judgment me will render account for every careless word they utter.  
 Ps 141.3: Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips!  
 Mt 12.36: (cf. 2 vss. above).  
 Ps 141.3: (cf. 2 vss. above).  
 Col 4.6: Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.  
 Sg 2.14: (cf. 17 vss. above).  
 2Cor 3.18: (cf. above).  
 1Cor 13.12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.  
 2Cor 4.16: Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day.  
 Col 3.10: And have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.  
 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.  
 Sir 13.26: The mark of a happy heart is a cheerful face, but to devise proverbs requires painful thinking.  
 Prov 15.13: A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.  
 Gal 5.22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness against which there is no law.  
 Is 26.1: We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks.  
 Sg 2.13: Arise, come, my companion, my air one, my dove. Yes, come.  
 Ps 55.6: O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.  
 Ps 68.13: Though they stay among the sheepfolds--the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with green gold.  
 Rom 11.25-6: A hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved; as it is written: "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."  
 Ps 68.13: (cf. 2 vss. above).  
 Sg 2.13-4: Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove. Yes come. You are my dove, in the shelter of the rock near the wall.  
 Lam 4.20: The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's anointed, was taken in their pits, he of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations."  
 Sg 2.7: I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and by the virtues of the field, that you do not rouse or wake my love until he pleases.  
 1Cor 9.11: If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?  
 Sg 2.14: (cf. 4 vss. above).  
 Mt 10.32: So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven.  
 Sg 2.14: (cf. 6 vss. above).  
 Ps 73.8: They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression.  
 1Cor 2.15: The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.  
 1Cor 2.14: The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.  
 Jn 1.18: No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.  
 Jn 15.15: But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.  
 Jn 17.24: Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world.

This next-to-last section of the **Commentary** has two Song verses quoted earlier, the divine bridegroom bidding his spouse to come because of her beauty and the coming of the same bridegroom to his human spouse. Shortly after we have the verse where the bride bides him not to look upon her because she is dark, a reminder of her inadequacy for the divine nuptials.

A contrast between things that are "unseen" (*blepo*, with negative) or "eternal" (*aionios* compared with *proskairos* of what is seen). It is repeated several verses below. Thus *blepo* applies to that which cannot be seen, if taken literally as related to *aionios*, that being an adjective which here remains unspecified.

The Rock is Christ and is "supernatural" or *pneumatikos* (spiritual) and is cited again a few verses below. Such drinking can be related to "being changed" (*metamorphoo*, literally as to give form to after or that which is after form). The two instances of "glory" (*doxa*) is used with the preposition *apo* followed by *eis*, literally as from-into. The psalmist mentions a rock on which he stands compared to the desolate pit and miry bog. This rock can be "way, truth and life" or *hodos, aletheia* and *zoe*.

"Wonderful" is the verb *pala'* which also means to be distinguished, arduous. "Understand" is the verb *yadah*. The forth is applicable to *yadah* and perhaps can refer to a man relating to a maiden.

1Pt 2.22 cites Is 53.9 which has for "sin" *chamas* and for "guile" *mirmah*. The former means violence and oppression; the



latter, fraud.

“Forerunner” or *prodromos* (literally, before the road with *hodos* as ‘way’).

By reason of its heaviness, the fundamental meaning of “glory” (*kavod*), Moses requires protection from God as he passes by so as not to be crushed, if you will.

“Knows” or *epigignosko* is between the Father and Son, with the preposition *epi* as “upon” prefaced to the verb, “know-upon.”

“Word” or *Logos* dwelt “among” us or literally in us, the verb *skenoō* meaning to pitch a tent.

The trumpet “grew louder” which is rendered literally as became “exceedingly strong” (the verb *chazaq* with the adverb *me’od*). Still, Moses spoke which testifies to the strength of his voice to overcome this *chazaq* which is *me’od*.

*Syach* or “meditation” also means speech or discourse which the psalmist hopes is “pleasing” to the Lord, *harav* also meaning to pledge.

“Account” is *logos* (word) which pertains to the day of judgment and is mentioned a few verses later.

“Guard” and “keep watch:” the noun *shamrah* and the verb *natsar* (the former connotes preserving and the latter, a sense of keeping).

The verb for “seasoned” is *artuo* meaning to arrange, to prepare for oneself.

“Face to face” or *prosopon pros* (direction towards which) *prosopon*.

*Ho exo* and *ho eso*: “outer nature and inner nature” or literally that which is out and that which is inside. Compare with “new nature” or *ton neon*, literally that which is new which is being “renewed” daily, *anakaioo* (the preposition *ana* prefaced to the verb as on or upon suggests being continuous). The result: she (the church) will be “without spot or wrinkle,” *spilos* and *rhutis* (fleck or stain and a fold in the skin).

“Token” or *ichnos* means trace which here is relative to a heart which is happy. “Wearisome” is the noun *kopos* (burden) which pertains to the mind or *dialogismos* which implies the making of machinations.

A “heart” (*lev*) which is happy reflection on a face which is “cheerful” (the verb *yatav*, to be good). It is contrasted with one which causes the “spirit” (*ruach*) to break (*kahah*, to rebuke).

“Fruit” (*karpos*) of the Spirit consists of seven qualities against which there is no “law” or *nomos* (implies custom).

“Salvation” or *yeshuhah* forms the protection of a city, this being related to the proper name Jesus.

After the divine bridegroom likens his human spouse to a dove, the psalmist wishes to have wings of a dove to both fly away and “be at rest,” *shakan* (to lay down). Such a dove has its wings covered with silver and pinions with green gold.

“Hardening” or *porosis* is a becoming like stone. Upon this stone, if you will, the “full number” (*pleroma*) of Gentiles will walk over as on a pavement.

Lord’s anointed is King Zedekiah captured by the king of Babylon after which Jerusalem was destroyed. Still, some survivors lived under the shadow of his memory while in exile in Babylon.

The bride commands the daughters of Jerusalem not to rouse her divine spouse until he “pleases,” *chaphets* meaning to bend, curve or incline.

“Spiritual good” is the adjective *pneumatikos* and *sarkikos* is the adjective for “material benefits.”

Two types of acknowledgment or *homologeō* (implies making a confession): “before” (*emprosthen*) men and the Father, that is, right in front of. To the former may be attributed those who speak with malice and threaten oppression.

*Anakrino* is the verb for “judges” and means to examine closely; the man who is spiritual (*pneumatikos*) isn’t examined closely because it is impossible to do this with one endowed by the breath...the *Pneuma*. In contrast to this person is one who is “unspiritual” or *psuchikos*, pertaining to the soul (*psuche*) or life.

“Bosom” or *kolpos* is used with the preposition *eis*, literally as into the bosom (of the Father). From this bosom which is of the Father Christ makes him “known,” *gnorizo* indicating to point out, to discover. In the Father’s *kolpos* is where “I am” (Jesus) who enables people to “behold” (*theoreo*, to consider, to observe) his own glory.

Arise and come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove; in the shelter of the rock by the outwork show me your face, and let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is fair. (2.13b-14)

Arise and come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove; in the shelter of the rock by the outwork show me your face, and let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is fair. In the sequence of the drama before us the Bridegroom who has come to His Bride leaping upon the mountains and springing forth upon the hills, says to her now for the second time, as He looks forth at her and sees her through the windows: Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one, my dove. But now He goes a step further, indicating to her the place whither she is to come; this place is situated under a covering or roof of stone. And this same place is to be found, not by the wall, but by some outwork of the wall. An outwork is so called when, beyond the walls that surround a city, there is another wall; the outwork, therefore, is a wall in front of a wall.

After this, speaking as though the Bride were veiled and covered for the sake of reverence, the Bridegroom asks her, when she comes to that place which He has just specified as being more secluded, to lay aside her veil and show her face to Him. And, because the Bride was keeping silence out of her great reverence, the Bridegroom desires further that He may sometimes hear her voice and take pleasure in her words; He bids her let Him hear her voice. It appears, however, that her face is not altogether unknown to Him, neither is He ignorant of her voice; but that some time has elapsed since He saw her face or heard her voice.

That seems to be the implication of the drama before us. The statements that the flowers have appeared on the earth, and that the voice of the turtle-dove is heard, and that the trees have budded, tell us further that the season of spring is now with us. Therefore He calls upon the Bride, who has doubtless sat indoors all winter, to come forth now, as at a fitting time.

But these things seem to be to afford no profit to the readers as far as the story goes; nor do they maintain any continuous narrative such as we find in other Scripture stories. It is necessary, therefore, rather to give them all a spiritual meaning.

First, then, you must take the winter of the soul as the time when she is still tossed with the waves of her passions and battered by the storms of her vices and the strong blasts of malignant spirits. So long as she is in the thick of these, the Word of God does not exhort her to come forth; rather, He would have her hold herself close and guard herself and shield herself on every side against these harmful blasts of the malignant spirits. She gets no flowers of zest from the Divine Scriptures then, nor do the secrets of the deeper wisdom and the hidden mysteries sound as by the turtle-doves voice. Her sense of smell likewise receives no favor, as from the flowering vines, neither does her vision find delight, as in the budding fig tree: during the storms of temptations it is all that she can do to keep safe and guarded from falling into sin.

But if she does contrive to get through these unscathed, then the winter is past, and spring has come to her. For spring for her is when repose is given to her soul and calmness to her mind. Then the Word of God comes to her, then He calls her to Himself, and bids her come forth, not only from the house, but from the city itself—in other words, she must forsake not only fleshly vices, but also everything bodily and visible that the world contains. For we have already demonstrated plainly that the city is a figure for the world. The soul, therefore, is summoned forth outside the wall, and is brought to the outwork, when, forsaking and leaving things seen and temporal, she hastens towards those that are unseen and eternal.

She is shown, however, that the way thereto must be followed beneath the cover of the rock, and not out in the open. And that she may not suffer the sun's heat and perhaps become tanned again and say once more: The sun has looked askance at me, therefore she takes the way beneath the cover of the rock. But He will not have this covering made for her of branches, or canvas, or skins; He will have her covering made of rock—that is, the firm and solid teachings of Christ. For Him St. Paul declares to be a rock when he says: And the rock was Christ.

If, then, the soul be shielded and covered with the doctrine and the faith of Christ, she can come safely to that secret place wherein she may behold the glory of the Lord with open face. We may well believe that the covering of the rock is safe, since Solomon also says of it in Proverbs that the tracks of the serpent cannot be detected on the rock. This is what he says: There are three things that are impossible for me to understand, and a fourth that I do not know: the tracks of an eagle in flight, the ways of a serpent on the rock, the paths of a ship at sea, and the ways of a man in youth. For no tracks of the serpent—that is, no marks of sin—can be found in this rock which is Christ, for it is He alone who did no sin.

Having, therefore, availed herself of the covering of this rock, the soul comes safely to the place on the outwork—that is, to the contemplation of things incorporeal and eternal. David speaks of this same rock under another metaphor in Psalm Seventeen: And He set my feet upon a rock and ordered my paths. Do not be surprised if with David this rock is as it were the ground and basis upon which the soul goes to God, while with Solomon it is the covering of the soul that is set upon reaching the mystical secrets of wisdom; seeing that Christ Himself is at one time called the Way by which believers go, and again the Forerunner, as when Paul says: Into which the forerunner Jesus is entered for us.

Like to these is the saying of God to Moses: Lo, I have set you in a cleft of the rock, and you shall see my back parts. That Rock which is Christ is, therefore, not completely closed, but has clefts. But the cleft of the rock is He who reveals God to men, and makes Him known to them; for no one knows the Father, save the Son. So no one sees the back parts of God—that is to say, the things that are come to pass in the latter times, unless he be placed in the cleft of the rock, that is to say, when he is taught them by Christ's own revealing.

And here, then, under the cover of the rock the Word of God invites the soul that has been made His neighbor, to this place on the outwork, as we said before, to contemplate the things that are eternal and unseen. And there He says to her: Show me your face — surely that He may see that nothing of the old veil remains upon her face, but that she can with fearless gaze behold the glory of God, so that she too may say: And we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

But when she has become worthy to have it said of her, as also it was said of Moses, that Moses spoke, and God answered him, then there is fulfilled in her that which He says: Make me to hear your voice. It is indeed high praise of her that is disclosed in that saying, Sweet is your voice. For thus also said the most wise prophet David: Let my speech be sweet to Him. And the voice of the soul is sweet when it utters the word of God, when it expounds the faith and the doctrines of the truth, when it unfolds God's dealings and His judgements.

If, however, silly talk or smart jests or vanity proceed out of her mouth, or the idle word for which account is to be rendered on the Day of Judgement, that voice is neither sweet nor pleasant. From this voice Christ turns away His ear. And therefore every perfect soul sets a watch before her mouth, and a door round about her lips, that what she utters may ever be seasoned with salt, and so be gracious to those who hear and that the Word of God may say of her: Your voice is sweet.

He says further: Your face is fair. If you understand what Paul means by face when he says, We all...with unveiled face, and again when he says, But then face to face, you will perceive what manner of face it is that is praised by the Word of God and described as fair. It is, without a doubt, the sort of face that is daily being renewed according to the Image of Him who created it, not having spot

or wrinkle or any such thing, but is holy and without blemish, even as the Church which Christ has presented to Himself—in other words, the souls who have reached perfection. And all of these together make up the body of the Church.

This body truly will appear as beautiful and comely, if the souls of which that body is constituted persevere in all the comeliness of perfection. For, as the soul when in a rage makes the bodily visage distorted and wild, but gives to it a peaceful and kindly look when it continues in calm tranquillity, so also the face of the Church is declared to be comely or ugly according to the virtues and aspirations of her believers, even as it is written: A cheerful countenance is a token of a heart that is in prosperity; and again in another place: a glad heart makes a cheerful countenance; but by grief of mind the face is cast down. The heart is glad when it has within it the Spirit of God, whose first fruit is charity, and the second, joy. I think it is from these facts that certain secular sages have formed the opinion that only the wise man is fair, whereas every bad man is ugly.

It remains for us to give a somewhat fuller explanation about the word outwork. This, as we said above, means a wall in front of a wall, and that is expressed also in Isaias like this: He shall set a wall, and a wall round about. The wall is the rampart of the city; but the other wall, in front of or around that one, denotes larger and stronger fortifications. This shows us that when the Word of God calls out the soul, and leads her forth from bodily concerns and physical perceptions, He desires to teach her about the mysteries of the age to come, and thence to find defense for her; so that she, being fortified and encompassed by the hope of things to come, may in no wise be overcome by decoys, nor wearied by tribulations.

Now let us consider in what sense these words are spoken by Christ to the Church, which is to Him a neighbor and fair, but fair to nobody except to Himself alone; for that is what He implies by saying, My fair one. Christ then, arouses her, and proclaims the Gospel of the Resurrection to her, and hence says: Arise, come, my neighbor, my fair one. Moreover, He gave her the wings of a dove, after she had slept among the midst of lots. For the Church was called between the two callings of Israel; that is to say, first Israel was called, and afterwards when Israel had stumbled and fallen, the Church of the Gentiles was called. But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then will all Israel, having been called again, be saved. So, among the midst of these two lots the Church sleeps; and for this reason He gave her the wings of a dove covered with silver, which denotes the flights of reason through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and He covered the broad of her back with the freshness of gold, as some read, or, as the text of others reads, with the paleness of gold; and this may point to the fact that the later calling of Israel, which the Apostle says is yet to be, will be not in the keeping of the Law, but in the preciousness of faith. For when faith blossoms in the virtues, it begets a freshness like to that of gold.

The Church, however, may be said to sleep, or rest, among the midst of lots, in that she is in the midst between the two Testaments; and her wings are silvered over with the understanding of the Law, but the gold on the broad of her back stands for the bountiful gift of the Gospel.

To this Church, therefore, Christ says: Come, you my dove, and be under the covering of the rock, thus teaching her to keep under cover, lest any assault of temptation should befall her, and to walk in the shelter of the shadow of the rock, saying: The breath of our face, Christ the Lord, to whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live among the Gentiles.

She walks thus veiled and covered, however, because she ought to have a power over her head, because of the angels. But when she has reached the outwork place, that is, the state of the age to come, there He says to her: Show me your face, and let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet. He would have the voice of His Church to be heard, because everyone that shall have confessed Him before men, him will He also confess before His Father who is in heaven.

For your voice is sweet. Who would not admit that the voice of the Catholic Church is sweet in her confession of the true faith; whereas the voice of the heretics, who speak not the doctrines of the truth, but blasphemies against God and iniquity on high, is harsh and displeasing? In the same way the face of the Church is fair, but that of heretics is hideous and ugly; if indeed anyone is able to discern this beauty of face—if he is spiritual, that is to say, and a person who knows how to sift all things out. For with ignorant and sensual men the fallacies of falsehood appear more beautiful than do the dogmas of the truth.

As to the outwork in this passage, we can, moreover, add this, that the outwork may be the bosom of the Father, whence the Only-begotten Son declares all things and tells his Church whatsoever things are hidden in the secrets of the Fathers heart. Wherefore also one that was taught by Him said: No man has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. Thither, therefore, does Christ call His Bride, alike to teach her about all things that are with the Father, and to say: I have made known to you all things which I have heard of my Father, and yet again to say: Father, I will that where I am, they also...may be with me.

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### Bk 3(4) #15<sup>3</sup>

Sg 2.15: Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes.

1Kg 18.15: As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.

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<sup>3</sup>9.Lawson's translation also numbers this final section (Book Four) as #15. For the sake of convenience, here it is designated as "b" in parentheses.

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

1Cor 12.10: To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Jn 13.2: And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

Sg 2.15: (cf. 6 vss. above).

Jn 12.6: This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it.

Jn 13.29: Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

2Tm 2.17: And their talk will eat its way like gangrene.

Ps 63.9-10: But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth; they shall be given over to the power of the sword, they shall be prey for jackals.

Mt 8.19: And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

Mt 8.20: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

Lk 13.31-2: At that very hour some Pharisees came, and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.'"

Jud 15.3-5: (Samson catches 300 foxes).

Neh 3.34 (4.2): What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?

Neh 3.35 (4.3): Tobiah the Ammonite was by him and said, "Yes, what they are building--if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!"

Sg 2.15: Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes.

Ps 63.10-1: They shall be given over to the power of the sword, they shall be prey for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall glory; for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

Jn 3.31: He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all.

Rev 8.13: Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets which the three angels are about to blow!

Gen 3.24: And at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Dt 32.8-9: 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. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.

1Tm 6.3: If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness.

Mt 8.20: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

Lk 13.32: Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course."

Jud 15.4-5: (Samson and the 300 foxes).

Neh 3.33-5: (cf. 11 vss. above).

1Cor 3.18: Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

Mt 8.20: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

Lk 10.19: Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.

Ps 137.8: O daughter of Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall he be who requites you with what you have done to us!

Sg 2.15: Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes.

Mt 18.6: But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Ps 119.165: Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

This is the concluding section of Origen's **Commentary** quoting the divine bridegroom in his desire to be rid of the little foxes causing havoc among the vines. One such little fox is King Ahab whom the prophet Elijah confronts and before whom he will stand.

"Ministering" spirits, *leitourgikos* being an adjective pertaining to the performance of a public work. To each of these spirits may be attributed the five gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Judas Iscariot may be described as one of the little foxes who betrayed Jesus, the verb *ballo* for "put" with regard to this action. To him may be attributed the "talk" or *logos* which resembles gangrene.

"Depths" of the earth may be considered as the place destined for Judas, *tachat* being that which is below or beneath.

Jesus mentions foxes on two occasions: that they have a place to live and with reference to King Herod. Both are mentioned several verses below. Then there is the example of Samson with 300 foxes and one such animal that can break down the wall surrounding Jerusalem that was being built.

Jackals are not unlike foxes to whom the psalmist compares persons seeking his life.

Two words for "above:" *anothen* and *epano* (from on high and on top). The preposition *ek* (from) is used three times with regard to a person of the earth. To those on this earth are directed the trumpet blasts by the tree angels in Revelation.

The sword at the east of Eden “turned every way” or *haphak*, a verb which means to overturn, change. The form of the verb here is reflexive, almost as though the flaming sword was endowed with life of its own.

The sons of men and sons of God refer to a separation of divine beings set over people while God himself governs Jacob. *Cheleq* is the noun for “portion” or that which is divided and can refer to spoil.

“Words” (*logos*) which are “sound” belong to Jesus, the verb being *hugiaino* (to be in good health). “Godliness” is eusebeia means reference due to God as well as the correct form of worship.

“Wise and “fool” or *sophos* and *moros*, the latter referring to one who is dull or stupid.

“Authority” or *exousia* is with regard to two types of “upon:” *epano* and *epi* (above, on top and upon more properly speaking). The former deals with poisonous snakes and the latter with the enemy which can be taken as the daughter of Babylon as “devastator” or *shedudah*, one who acts violently or lays waste.

“Causes to sin” or *skandalizo* means literally to trip up or stumble which in the next verse contrasts with persons who have a “peace” (*shalom*) which is great.

Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, and our vineyards will flourish. (2.15)

Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines, and our vineyards will flourish. There is a change of characters in the drama here: the Bridegroom is speaking now no longer to the Bride, but to the companions, and telling them to catch the little foxes that lurk in the vineyards when they are just coming into bud, and do not let the vines develop their flowers.

But we must search out these matters by the spiritual interpretation, as we have done from the beginning. And I think that if you take these words as referring to the soul who joins herself to the Word of God, the foxes must be understood as the opposing forces and the wicked powers of demons who by means of base thoughts and perverted notions destroy the bloom of the virtues of the soul and ruin the fruit of faith. According to the promise of the Word of God who is the Lord of hosts, therefore, command is given to the holy angels, who are sent to minister for them who receive the inheritance of salvation, to catch in every soul such thoughts as these that have been put into her by the demons; so that when these have been driven away, the flowers of virtue may be brought forth. Their catching of the bad thoughts consists in their suggesting to the mind that those thoughts come not from God, but from the Evil One, and in imparting to the soul the power to discern the spirits; so that she may understand which thought is according to God, and which thought is from the devil.

But so that you may know the thoughts which the devil sends into the heart of man, look at what is written in the Gospel. The devil, it says, having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot...to betray Him... So there are thoughts like this which are insinuated into the hearts of men by the demons. But because the Divine Providence fails not, lest human freedom should be disrupted by such insolence as this and there should be no just cause for judgement, the care of men is committed to the kind angels and the friendly powers, that when the foxy deceivers begin to invade the soul, they may support her with the help of their right hands.

This, then, is why it is said: Catch us the little foxes. Suitably indeed He bids them to be caught and taken while they are still little. For as long as a bad thought is only beginning, it is easily driven from the heart. But if it comes again and again, and goes on for long, it surely leads the soul to agree with it; and, once agreed to and entrenched in the heart, it is certain to result in the commission of sin. It must, therefore, be caught and driven out while it is still incipient and small; otherwise, when it has grown up and become a matter of habit, it can no longer be driven out.

Thus Judas too had a beginning of evil in his love of money; and that was for him a little fox. But the Lord, seeing the soul of Judas as a flowering vineyard that was being damaged by it and wishing to catch it and drive it away, committed purses of money to his care; so that, possessing what he loved, he might no longer covet. But he, for all that he had freedom of choice, did not embrace his Physicians wisdom, but in self-indulgence chose to give himself over to that counsel which was destroying his soul, rather than to that which served its healing.

If, however, we would understand these words with reference to Christ and the Church, the words will appear as addressed to the teachers of the Church, giving them orders about catching the foxes that are destroying the vineyards. We can take the foxes as the perverted teachers of heretical dogmas, who by the artfulness of their arguments lead the hearts of innocent people astray and destroy the vineyard of the Lord, so that it does not bear the flower of orthodox belief. Command is given, therefore, to the Catholic teachers to make haste to rebuke and to restrain these foxes while they are still little and only beginners in false doctrine, and to subdue and capture the gainsayers of the word of truth with demonstrations of the truth.

For, if they have tolerated them and indulged them at the outset, their speech spreads like a canker and will become incurable; so that many are found who, deceived by them, presently begin to take up arms on their behalf, and to defend the authors of the error that they have received. It is fitting, therefore, to catch the little foxes and to refute the cunning fallacies of the heretics with positive statements of the truth straight away at their very beginnings.

In order, however, to clarify further both the explanations that we have given, let us collect from the divine books whatever mention of this animal is made therein. In Psalm Sixty-Two we find the wicked spoken of like this: But they have sought my soul in vain, they shall go into the lower parts of the earth; they shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, they shall be the portions of the foxes.

Moreover, in the Gospel according to Matthew the Savior’s answer to the scribe who had said to His Master, I will follow You



whithersoever You go, is this: The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head. And in the same way, in the Gospel according to Luke, to those who said to the Lord: Depart and get You hence, for Herod has a mind to kill You, Jesus replies: Go, tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and do cures to-day and tomorrow and on the third day I shall be consummated.

Samson also, in the Book of Judges, when his wife, who was of the race of the Philistines, had been taken away from him, says to his father: am innocent this time with regard to the foreigners, for I am going to do you evil. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches and tied them tail to tail and he put a torch between two foxes tails. And he set fire to the torches and sent them forth through the foreigners standing corn; and he set fire to all their standing corn and their stubble-fields, and to their vineyards and olive groves.

Again, in the Second Book of Esdras, where Tobias the Ammonite is hindering the building operations of those who had returned from captivity, and preventing them from building the Temple and the wall, he says to the Allophyl: Will they indeed sacrifice and eat what they have offered in this place? Will not the foxes go up and destroy the wall that they are building with stones?

These are all the passages from the Sacred Scriptures that we can think of at the moment, which contain mention of this animal; from them the discerning reader may gather whether what we have given here is an apt interpretation to explain the passage before us that says: Catch us the little foxes. And, though it may be tedious to explain in detail each of these examples that we have adduced, we will nevertheless touch briefly on them, as far as we are able.

First, then, let us look at the sixty-second Psalm, where, because the wicked were persecuting the soul of the just, the Psalmist sang as follows: But they have sought my soul in vain, they shall go into the lower parts of the earth; they shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, they shall be the portions of foxes. Herein it is clearly shown that the bad teachers who desire to deceive the soul of a just man with vain and foolish words, are said to go into the lower parts of the earth; insomuch as their wisdom is that of the earth, and they speak from the earth and descend into its lower parts—that is, into the depths of folly.

For I think that people who live after the flesh are said to be earth and to dwell on the earth, because they do harm only to themselves; whereas those who interpret the Scriptures in an earthly and carnal manner and deceive others by teaching in that way, are said to enter into the lower parts of the earth, from the very fact that they produce such babblings and arguments of carnal and earthly wisdom. For surely the offence of those who teach earthly things is greater than that of those who live earthly-wise, and a heavier doom awaits them in the future, even as it is foretold in this same place that they shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, perhaps that, flaming sword, turning every way.

But let us see in what sense they also become the portions of foxes. Every soul is either the portion of God or the portion of someone who has received power over men. For when the Most High divided the nations and separated the son of Adam, He appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God; and Jacob became the portion of the Lord. As, then, we all agree that every soul is either in Gods portion, or in someone else's, and since our freedom of will makes it possible for anyone to go from one portion to another—to Gods portion, if the change be for the better, and to that of the demons, if it be for the worse — then this mention in the Psalm of those who have sought in vain for the soul of the just and will be the portion of foxes is as much as to say that they will be the portion of the worst and wickedest demons; it will thus be all the baleful and cunning powers by which the deceptions and frauds of the false wisdom have been introduced, that are figuratively termed foxes.

And people who are led into this error and will not consent to the sound words of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to that doctrine which is according to godliness, but suffer themselves to be deceived by such beings, these people will become the portion of such foxes, and will go with them into the lower parts of the earth. They are the same also as those among whom those foxes, to which we referred just now, are said in the Gospel to have holes, but among whom the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. Herod also must be thought of as being called a fox, because of his deceptive shrewdness.

But I find it very difficult to furnish an explanation of this image or figure in relation to Samson, of whom it is recorded that he caught three hundred foxes and tied them together by their tails, and put burning torches between the tails and sent them through the foreigners fields of standing corn, thus setting these on fire along with the stubble-fields and olive groves and vineyards. Let us try to knock something out of it, however, as far as we are able: so let us take the foxes as false and perverted teachers, as in the explanation given above. We will then suppose that Samson, who represents a true and faithful teacher, catches these foxes with the word of truth, and ties them tail to tail—that is to say, he confutes them by setting the holders and teachers of different views against each other; and, by taking syllogisms and propositions out of their own words, he sends out the fire of the conclusion into the foreigners corn, and with their own arguments burns up all their fruits and the vineyards and olive groves of the evil brood.

With regard to these foxes that differ from and disagree with one another, however, the number three hundred itself signifies that there are three kinds of sins. For every sin is committed either in deed, or in word, or by the consent of the mind.

Neither must we ignore entirely what we said is written in the Second Book of Esdras. There, when the Holy of Holies was in building—that is, when the faith of Christ and the mysteries of His saints were in process of establishment, the enemies of truth and the opponents of the faith, who are the wise of this world, seeing the walls of the Gospel rising without literary art or philosophical skill, say scornfully that these things can easily be destroyed by the cunning of words, through crafty falsehoods and the arguments of

dialectic.

Let what we have said about these things, as far as the small space available permitted, suffice for the present. We must return now to the subject before us. In the Song of Songs the Bridegroom is seen to bid the powers friendly to Himself to catch and to rebuke the adverse powers which lie in ambush for the souls of men; lest these, who lurk like foxes in their holes in people who have offered themselves to follow up these matters, should destroy their budding faith and the flower of their virtue under the pretext of some secret and hidden knowledge. And, so that they may be more easily silenced and rebuked, it is commanded that these foxes be caught while they are still little, and have only just begun to exercise their abominable persuasion. For maybe if they grow up and become big foxes, the Bridegroom's friends will no longer have the power to catch them, and only the Bridegroom Himself will be able to do it.

And, too, some holy doctors and teachers of the Church receive the power of catching foxes, even as they have received the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions; for so it has been given them to have power upon all the power of the enemy. And one of these powers of the enemy is certainly the fox that destroys all the vineyards, and is bidden to be caught while it is small, even as also in the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm he is called blessed, that takes and dashes the little ones of Babylon against the rock, and suffers not the Babylonian outlook to grow and increase in itself, but, while it is only beginning, takes and dashes it on the rock; for then it is easily destroyed.

This, then, is the sequence of the interpretation of Catch us the little foxes that destroy the flowering vineyards. His saying (for) us means (for) me, the Bridegroom, and the Bride; or else for me and you, who are my companions.

It can, however, be taken thus: Catch us the foxes; and then, following a pause, that are destroying the little vineyards, so that little is taken as referring not to the foxes, but to the vineyards. The implication then will be that little vineyards are liable to destruction, whereas big ones are not; that is to say, some little souls, and such as are beginners, being not strong and sturdy yet, are liable to be injured by opposing forces; as it is said in the Gospel: If anyone shall scandalize one of these little ones. This shows that it is not the tall and perfect soul that can be caused to stumble, but the little, unformed one, as we read in the Psalm: Much peace have they that love Your name, and to them there is no stumbling-block.

In the same way you can see that any little vineyard, any soul that is only a beginner, can be injured by foxes—that is to say, by evil thoughts and debased teachers, whereas a strong and perfect soul cannot. But if these foxes are caught by good teachers and driven out of the soul, then she will go forward in the virtues and flourish in the faith. Amen!

+ The End +