

The Fourth Homily

Sg 1.15: Behold, you are fair, my companion; behold you are fair; your eyes are doves.

This new homily starts off with a statement of admiration by the divine bridegroom for his spouse, that she is “fair” or *yapheh* which derives from a verbal root meaning to shine or to be bright. Already she has “put on” the qualities of Col 3.12, the verb *enduo* meaning literally to put in (*en-*), that is, she assimilated them. It is used with regarding the new “nature” or *anthropos* (literally, man) with the preposition *kata* regarding likeness (literally as in accord with the likeness).

Col 3.12: Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience.

This and the next two verses has the verb “put on” or *enduo*.

Rom 13.14: But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Eph 4.24: And put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

1Pt 1.14: As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

Rom 12.2: Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

The verb *suschematizomai* is used in two verses (‘conformed’ and ‘transformed’) which literally means to have a schema or figure with (*sus-*).

2Cor 3.18: (cf. above).

Acts 26.13: At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me.

Paul witnesses to King Agrippa as to his conversion: a “light” (*lamprotes*) “shining round” (*perilampo*). Privately Paul could have been comparing his experience with Christ’s transfiguration, the verb *metamorphoo* meaning to change into...after or *meta-*...another form. Compare this *morphe* with *schema* just above. After this we have the insertion of the Song’s bridegroom speaking of his spouse being *yahaph* or “fair.”

Mt 17.2: And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light.

Sg 1.15: Behold, you are fair, my companion.

Gal 5.25: If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

First comes living followed by walking, the latter being the verb *stoicheo*, to go in a line or row, to set in battle order.

Rom 8.13: For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

Two uses of the preposition *kata* (in accord with which sets up a sequence): “flesh and Spirit.” or *sarx* and *Pneuma*

1Cor 2.13-3.3: (spiritual vs. unspiritual man).

The lengthy reference to 1Cor 1 (etc.) deals with the “spiritual and unspiritual” man, *psuchikos* and *pneumatikos*. The former pertains to the *psuche* or soul, usually taken as principle of natural life.

Mt 3.16: And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened.

With regard to Jesus’ baptism, note the interaction of two verbs: “went up” and “were opened,” as those the heavens were ready to receive him but from them came the Spirit who led him into the desert.

2Cor 4.4: In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

“Has blinded and to keep from seeing” are effected by the god of this “world” or *aion*, a period of existence which usually is long.

1 Cor 12.3: Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except the Holy Spirit.

The “Spirit” or *Pneuma* is used twice, both with the preposition *en* (in).

Sg 1.16: Behold, you are fair, my beloved, and beautiful.

Rom 2.29: He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God.

“Inwardly” as being a Jew (*en to krupto*) or literally in that which is hidden. “Spiritual and (not) literal:” the two nouns being *pneuma* and *gramma* (letter).

Wisd 7.8: I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her.

“Preferred and accounted” or *proekrino* and *hegeomai*: to anticipate a crisis (*krino* as to judge with two prepositions, *pro* and *ek* or before and from) and to go before or to lead the way.

Ps 118.21: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

“Salvation” or *yeshuah* (verbal root for the proper name Jesus) used here with the preposition *l-* (to), literally as to salvation.

Heb 7.14: For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

Sg 1.16: (cf. above).

Eph 1.10: As a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

“Plan” or *oikonomia*, literally house + law or custom, with mention of *pleroma* but involving *kairos* for “time,” a special event or intervention. *Oikonomia* also applies to “mystery” or *mysterion* which implies that which is secret and requiring initiation to comprehend.

Eph 3.9: And to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.

Phl 2.7: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

“Emptied” himself (*kenoo*) to assume both a “form” and “likeness” or *morphe* and *homoioima*. The former is more concrete and the latter suggests resemblance.

Ex 33.20: But you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.

The common verb to see is applied both to God’s face and “me” or God as more than his face.

Is 9.1: But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish.

“Gloom and anguish” or *muhaph* and *mutsaq*: the former applies to darkness and the latter, that which is narrow.

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

The adjective “one” is applied to both God and Christ as “mediator,” *mesites*.

2Cor 11.2: I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ.

“Jealousy” or the noun *zelos* with the verb *zeleo* which reads literally “I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God.”

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

“Mystery” or *mysterion* applies to Christ and the church, the two being used with the preposition *eis* (into).

2Cor 5.1: For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Three types of dwellings: “tent, building and house.” *skene*, *oikodome* and *oikia*. The last two have *oikos* (house) as their common root, the former applicable more with the building of a house. Christ as cornerstone applies to them, not to the tent, a temporary, movable dwelling. Also both have beams of cedar and paneling of cypress meaning they are adorned lavishly and are founded not on sand but on rock.

Mt 21.42: The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

Sg 1.17: The beams of our house are cedars, our paneling is of cypress.

Mt 7.25: And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

Eccl 10.18: Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks.

A connection between “sloth and sluggard:” *hatslah* and *shiphloth*. The first connotes languor and the latter a falling down. Compared to this use of *hatslah* (two verses), the Lord’s planting of Lebanon cedars is indicative of beauty and endurance by reason of the longevity of these trees.

Prov 26.15: The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.

Ps 104.16: The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted.

Savah is the verb for “watered abundantly” which means to be satisfied.

Ps 124.7: We have escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

“We” as those who have escaped is the noun *nephesh* or soul.

Prov 3.4: So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.

“Favor and good repute:” *chen* which fundamentally means grace and *sekel*, alternately as intelligence or prudence.

2Cor 5.11: Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but what we are is known to God, and I

hope it is known also to our conscience.

Two verbs for “known:” *eido* and *phaneroo* or alternately as to see and to make manifest.

1Tm 3.7: Moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into the reproach and the snare of the devil.

“Well thought of” is rendered as the noun *marturia* and the modifying adjective *kalos*, literally as a good witness.

Mt 5.16: Let your light so shine before men.

1Ths 4.12: So that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody.

Two adverbs for “outsiders:” *apo ton exothen* and *pros tous excho*, the former more as “from without” and the latter with the preposition *pros*, direction towards-which. The same insight can apply to shining one’s light “before” men, *eprosthēn*.

1Cor 3.10: According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it.

“Skilled master builder” or the noun *architekton* modified by the adjective *sophos* (the noun *sophia* normally as wisdom fundamentally refers to having skill).

1Cor 14.40: But all things should be done decently and in order.

“Decently and in order” or *euschemonos* and *taxis* with the preposition *kata*: the noun *schema* (form, shape, manner) prefaced with *eu-* to signify something well done or good and in accord with an arrangement, something that has been drawn up.

Sg 2.1: I am a flower of the field, a lily of the valleys.

“Flower and lily” or *chavatsleth* and *shushan*; the former is a white colored flower tinged with saffron growing in meadows and the latter, also a white colored flower. Both have not fallen in among thorns but “mature,” *telesphoreo* or literally carry...bear...to the end. With regard to the “daughters,” *shushan* is “among,” *beyn* alternately meaning in between. Several verses later sons are mentioned with regard to the “apple” or *taphuach*, from the verbal root *naphach*, “to blow,” “breathe.”

Lk 8.14: And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

Telesphoreo is the verb for “mature” which consists of the noun *telos* (end, perfection) and the verb *phoreo* (to bear, to carry).

Rom 8.38: For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers.

“I am sure” or *peitho* which means to persuade, here with regard to any external threat.

Sg 2.2: As a lily among thorns, thus is my sister among the daughters.

Mt 12.50: For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.

A distinction and similarity with regard to doing the Father’s will in heaven and Christ being brother, sister and mother (i.e., not father). Because of this unique relationship, forsaking both one’s people and father’s house are not simply required but relinquished gladly.

Ps 45.10: Forget your people and your father's house.

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.

Two types of receiving (*lambano*): “spirit” (*pneuma*) of slavery and “sonship,” *huiiothesia* or literally, son-placing.

Jn 8.44: You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

“Will” is a verb with regard to father’s (devil) “desires” or *epithumia*, literally as desire-upon.

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

Ps 104.20: You made darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth.

“Darkness” or *choshek* connotes misery and affliction compared with the more generic night.

Ps 80.13: The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

That which the boar devours is the vine brought out of Egypt or Israel.

Heb 4.15: For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning.

“Sympathized and tempted” or *sumpatheo* and *peirazo*, the former consisting of the root meaning to suffer prefaced with the preposition *sum* (with).

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

The true light enlightens every man coming into the “world” (*kosmos*) or being born *eis* it.
Jn 6.51-6: (eating the body and blood of Christ).

The reference to Christ as bread is prefaced in Jn 51 with *ego eimi* or “I am” reminiscent of the “I am who am” of Ex 3.14.

Ps 16.2: You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.

“Apart from you” is rendered literally as “not on (*hal-*) you.”

Rom 11.17: But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree.

“Share” or *sugkoinoneo* with respect to the olive tree’s richness suggests having in common (*koinonia* being a noun) along with, *sug-*. Several more verses here pertain to cultivating an olive shoot.

Rom 11.19: Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.

Rom 11.24: For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Lk 8.7: And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it.

Compare the seed which fell in among thorns with the lily among thorns of the Song.

1Ths 5.5: For you are all sons of light and sons of the day.

Eph 2.3: Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh.

“Lived” with regard to the flesh’s passions is *anastrepho* (to conduct oneself) is comprised of the root meaning to turn back prefaced with the preposition *ana*, motion upwards or backwards.

1Ths 5.5: (cf. above).

Lk 10.6: And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you.

“Son of peace” suggests a father of peace, someone who had passed on this gift.

Sg 2.3: His fruit is sweet in my throat.

Two references to the adjective “sweet” *malats* and *matog*, the former applicable to that which is smooth and the latter to what is pleasant.

Ps 119.103: How sweet are your words to my taste.

Sg. 2.3: (cf. above).

Gen 2.9: The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Two example of the “tree of life:” the garden of Eden and with regard to the “river of the water of life.”

Rev 22.2: Also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

Ps 1.1: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

The first word of the first Psalm is *‘ashry*; from a verbal root meaning to be straight and related to the relative pronoun. This to be *‘ashry* means to be transitional, of moving from one state to another without being able to nail this process down completely.

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 fundamental notion behind the verbal root for “to be sick,” *chalah*, is “to polish,” “to be smooth,” perhaps due to the fact that illness tends to *level down* one’s health and spirits (used for ‘wounded’ here). The house of wine of the Song is the place where Wisdom has mixed her wine and whose vats are bursting with it. Isaiah asks about the color of the man’s garments, the one coming from Eden and Bozrah, as having tread the wine press as in Wisdom’s house.

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

The fight which Paul fought is “good” or *kalos*, more as beautiful.

Prov 9.2: She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.

Harak is the verb for “set” meaning to spread out.

Prov 3.10: And your vats will be bursting with wine.

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

Is 63.2: Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his that treads in the wine press?

1Jn 4.8: He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

“Love and know” or *agapao* and *gignosko* are equivalent. The verb “abides” is *meno*, indicative of remaining used with regard to *agape*.

1Jn 4.16: So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Three uses of the preposition *en* (in): “in us,” “in love” and “in him.”

Ps 62.2: He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.

God as “salvation” or *yeshuhah* is the proper name for Jesus...“He only is my Jesus,” if you will.

1Cor 14.40: But all things should be done decently and in order. (cf. vs. above).

Gen 4.7: And if you do it do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.

The verb *ravats* translates as “couching” (i.e., sin) which means preparing to spring on prey.

Dt 15.19-22: (consecration of firstling males for Passover).

Reference to the “consecration” of firstling males is a making holy or setting apart, the sense of the verb *qadash*. This is similar to the “first” or *reshyth* of the “first fruits” or *bikor*; from a verbal root meaning to cleave, to be first.

Ex 23.19: The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.

Mk 12.30: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

“Love” or *agapao* is used with regard to four faculties: heart, soul, mind and strength. The preposition *ex* (from) is used with each (‘from the heart,’ etc.). *Agapao* is used between husbands and wives, image of Christ and the church.

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

Rom 12.17: Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

“Take thought” or *pronoao*: to perceive (*noeo*) beforehand (*pro-*) with respect to that which is “noble” or *kalos* (literally, beautiful). Compare *kalos* with *agathos* or “good” to be done to one another, both adjectives similar in meaning.

1Ths 5.15: See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all.

Dioko as “seek” fundamentally means to hunt, to chase.

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

“Disobedience and obedience” or *parakoe* and *hupakoe*: the root *akouo* (to hear) prefaced with the prepositions *para* and *hupo* or beside and under.

Rom 5.10: For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

“Reconciled” or *katallasso* literally means to change or exchange.

Sg 2.5: Strengthen me with perfumes.

The Hebrew of Sg 2.5 has “raisins” instead of “perfumes” used with the verb *samak* (‘strengthen’) which connotes a propping up as support. The same is found several verses below.

1Cor 3.12: Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.

The verb for “builds” is *epoikodomeo* with the root *oikos* (house) and verb *demo* (to build, construct), prefaced with the preposition *epi* (upon).

Col 3.11: Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

“Here” (*hopou*) is a spacial term referring to a non-spacial reality with regard to having been raised with Christ.

2Tm 3.16: All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and for training in righteousness.

“Inspired by God” or *theopneustos* (*theos* and the root *pneuma*) along with the adjective *ophelimos* (profitable) for teaching, the preposition *pros* suggesting dynamic acquisition of knowledge, direction towards-which.

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

“Warning” is the adverb *tupikos* meaning by way of example. *Katantao* is the verb for “has come” which is suggestive of a meeting, here the end of ages.

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.

“Of and from” with respect to the earth is the preposition *ek* or “from.” “From above” is the adverb *anothen*,

suggestive of height.

Jn 13:15: For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

“Example” or *hupodeigma* also means a token or mark; the root *deigma* (sample, proof) prefaced with the preposition *hupo* (under).

Mt 11:29: Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

The taking of Christ’s yoke comes first followed by learning from him, namely, that he is “gentle and lowly” (*praus* and *tapeinos*), the former suggestive of that which is soft.

Phl 2:5-7: Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus...

“Have (this) in mind” or *phroneo* means to be wise and prudent.

Phl 2:8: And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

“Being found” is the verb *gignomai* which means to become.

Sg 2:5: Stay me with apples.

1Jn 4:8: He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

“Love and know” or *agapao* and *gignosko* go together, God being *agape* itself.

Is 49:2: He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.

“Me” in the Hebrew text is “mouth” applicable to the servant song of Isaiah which is hidden in the Lord’s quiver meaning it is ready to be shot or spoken.

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.

No person can “ever” see God, *popote* which conveys a sense of absoluteness with regard to the faculty of sight. “Bosom” or *kolpos*, also is a fold in a garment used with the preposition *eis*, literally as “into the bosom.”

1Cor 1:18: For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

“Word” or *logos* is applicable to the cross of Christ and also is the *dunamis* of God, the force or capacity to do something.

Rom 8:2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.

“Law” or *nomos* (also as norm, standard) as applicable to *Pneuma* echos the Law or Torah. This is the same *Pneuma* the Lord causes to enter the dry bones and bring them to life.

Ezk 37:5: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

Ruach or “breath” also means spirit and wind.

Jn 14:23: 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.

“Love and keep” or *agapao* and *tereo*, the latter as applicable to keeping guard Jesus’ (as divine *Logos*) *logos*.

Prov 3:16: Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

With regard to the right and left hands (long life and riches, honor; bridegroom’s left hand under the head of his spouse) of Wisdom, this is not a question of one hand not knowing what the other is doing, but of both cooperating.

Sg 2:6: His left hand is under my head.

Prov 3:16: (cf. above).

1Tm 2:4: Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“Desires” is the verb *etheleo* and “knowledge” is *epignosis*, literally as a knowing-upon (*epi-*). The same verse is found several verses below.

Sg 2:7: I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, that you do not rouse or wake my love until he pleases.

“Charge” is the verb *shavah* from which is derived the number seven considered a sacred number as the seven days of creation. *Shavah* also is used as “sworn” in the next verse.

Ps 132:11: The Lord has sworn the truth to David, and he will not go back on his word.

Emeth is the word for “word” which usually means truth.

Gen 24:2-9: (Abraham contracts a marriage for his son).

The son is Isaac whom Abraham entrusts to the guardianship of an anonymous servant, one of many examples where such anonymous persons play a small but pivotal role.

1Tm 2.4: Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“Desires” is the verb *etheleo* and “knowledge” is *epignosis*, literally as a knowing-upon (*epi-*).

Gn 24.9: So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

Another example of the verb *shavah* as to swear.

Sg 2.7: (cf. above).

Mt 13.38: The field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom.

“Good” is the adjective *kalos* meaning beautiful which has a richer meaning than in English, intimating a moral and spiritual characteristic dear to ancient Greeks.

Ecl 1.2: Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher.

“Vanity” is *hevel* fundamentally meaning a breathing as from the mouth.

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

“Power and wisdom” or *dunamis* and *sophia*. While both are Christ’s, Paul emphasizes both qualities by naming them separately. The “powers” and “strength” of the next two verses also may apply to him.

Ps 103.21: Bless the Lord, all his powers.

Tsava’ is the noun for “powers” and often refers to an army or host.

Ps 17.2-3: Lord as rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, horn of salvation and stronghold.

1Cor 7.31: For the form of this world is passing away.

“Form” or *schema* (shape, manner) is “passing away” or *parago* which fundamental means to lead aside (*para-*).

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

Angels are an example of beings who came into existence without physical procreation. Their very nature is to communicate messages, mostly to human beings. Thus two types of created beings interact, and all examples of them are extremely brief, so much so that they can disappear without perceiving them.

2Cor 10.3: For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war.

The verb *her* is *strapteuo*, to do military service which is *kata sarka* or literally according to the flesh, the same phrase used in the next verse. The preposition suggests following all the rules and protocols of the noun it governs.

Rom 8.12: So then, brethren, we are debtors, not the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

Rom 12.2: Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

The verb *suschematizomai* is used in two verses (‘conformed’ and ‘transformed’) which literally means to have a schema or figure with (*sus-*).

Mt 6.10: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

This sentence holds together by *hos* or “as” which puts two opposite realms on the same plane.

Sg 2.7: (cf. above).

1Cor 2.7: But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.

“Wisdom” or *sophia* is both “secret and hidden, the former being the noun *musterion* (mystery requiring initiation) with the preposition *en* (in). The verb “impart” is the common *laleo* (to speak).

Col 1.26: The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints.

The same *musterion* here is “manifest” or *phaneroo* which connotes disclosure, emphasis upon sight as opposed to speaking. In the previous verse “we” impart divine *sophia* whereas here *musterion* comes from God.

Rom 16.25: Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages.

“Able and firm” are similar in tone, *dunamai* (to be capable) and *sterizo* (to make firm, stable) with regard to (*kata* again, signifying a specific order) “my” gospel which seems to indicate Paul has a way of presenting Jesus Christ not other than the four evangelists but parallel to them.

The Song of Songs, 1.15-2.7

Behold, you are fair, my companion, behold, you are fair; your eyes are doves. Behold, you are fair, my beloved and beautiful, overshadowing our bed. The beams of our house are cedars, our paneling is of cypress. I am a

flower of the field, a lily of the valleys. As a lily among thorns, so is my sister among the daughters. As the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. Under his shadow I desired and sat down, and his fruit was sweet in my throat. 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. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me. I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, that you do not rouse or waken my love until he pleases.

J.100 If any foreign matter becomes mixed with gold and M.832 adulterates it, expert goldsmiths remedy the situation by refining the gold in fire. They repeat this process several times, and at each repetition they observe how the color of the gold has improved. This cleansing by fire does not end until the appearance of the gold is pure and unadulterated. The reason for mentioning this in the present context will become clear to you from a consideration of the text. Human nature was golden at the beginning and shone by reason of resemblance to the undefiled good. However, it became discolored and blackened by the admixture of vice as we have heard the bride say at the beginning of the Song of Songs: her neglect J.101 to tend the vineyard made her black. God, who fashions all things in his wisdom, cares for his bride's deformity. He does not contrive for her any new beauty which was not formerly there; rather, he leads her back to her first grace by removing what was blackened through evil, changing her color to one which is not defiled. After the first casting, expert goldsmiths observe how much the gold's beauty has been enhanced by the process of purification. At the second casting, if the gold has not been sufficiently cleansed in comparison with the first, they observe the added beauty and often repeat the same process, carefully noting the progress at each step. So, too, the attendant of the blackened gold (i.e. the bridegroom) has brightened the soul by a kind of refining process through the application of his remedies. In what preceded (Homily 3) he testified that his spouse's beauty resembled a horse. But now, he says, her loveliness has become that of a virgin: "Behold, you are fair, my companion: behold you are fair; your eyes are doves.

The Song teaches us by these words about the restoration of beauty which the bride gained J.102 by approaching the true beauty from which she has departed. For the bridegroom says, "Behold, you are fair, my companion," which is to say: "Formerly you were not fair. Having strayed from the archetypal beauty by association with vice, you became ugly." This means that to wherever the inclination of free will moves, it is changed accordingly. For if free will is seized by anger, it becomes irascible; seized by lust, it dissolves into pleasure. When the inclination is to cowardice, J.103 fear or any other passion, human nature takes on the forms of each of them. On the other hand, if human nature assumes patience, purity, peace, freedom from anger, lack of grief, courage, fearlessness and the like, it displays the character M.833 of each of these virtues in the soul's constitution and becomes calm and free from passion. Therefore, virtue and vice are diametrically opposed to each other, and they can never be present together at one time in the same person. For he who has rejected temperance turns to a licentious way of life. He who regards a life of impurity as abominable, by the very fact of having turned from evil, lives a good and chaste life. So it is with all the other virtues. The humble person has separated himself from haughtiness, and he who puffs himself up with vanity has rejected humility. What need is there to point out that in contradictory elements the absence of one implies the establishment and existence of the other? Since our free choice has the capacity to become whatever it desires, the Word rightly says to the bride who has been made beautiful. J.104: "You have rejected fellowship with evil and have drawn near to me. By approaching my archetypal beauty, you have become beautiful. Just like a mirror you have taken on my appearance." Human nature is in fact like a mirror, and it takes on different appearances according to the impressions of free will. If gold is held up to the mirror, the mirror assumes the appearance of gold and reflects the splendor of gold's substance. If anything abominable is held up, its ugliness is impressed on the mirror, for example, a frog, toad, centipede or anything unpleasant to behold. Thus the mirror represents in its own being whatever is placed before it. So, too, the soul, when cleansed by the Word from vice, it receives within itself the sun's orb and shines with this reflected light. Therefore the Word says to his bride: "You have become beautiful by approaching my light; by drawing near to me, you have attained communion with my beauty. " "Behold, you are fair, my companion."

Then the bridegroom stops and seeing his spouse's J.105 enhanced beauty, repeats the words, "Behold, you are fair." Before he had called her "companion." Now recognizing her by the beauty of her eyes, he says, "Your eyes are doves." When the bride was compared to a horse, her cheeks and neck were praised. Now when her own

beauty is manifest, the loveliness of her eyes is extolled. The bridegroom says that her eyes are those of a dove which seem to convey this meaning: when the pupils of the eye are clear, the faces of those gazing at them are clearly reflected. Persons skilled in studying natural phenomena say that the eye sees by receiving the impression of images emanating from visible objects. For this reason the beauty of the bride's eyes is praised since the image of a dove appears in her pupils. Whenever a person gazes upon an object, he receives in himself the image of that object. He who no longer attends to flesh and blood looks toward the life of the Spirit. As the Apostle says, such a person lives in the Spirit, conforms to the Spirit, and by the Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body. This person has become wholly spiritual; he is neither natural nor carnal.

J.106 For this reason the soul freed of bodily attractions is said M.836 to have the image of a dove in its eyes, meaning that the stamp of the spiritual life shines from within. When the purified eye of the soul has received the impression of a dove, it becomes capable of contemplating the bridegroom's loveliness. First the virgin gazes at her bridegroom's beauty when she has the dove in her eyes. "For no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is in the Holy Spirit." And the bride says, "Behold, you are fair, my beloved, and beautiful." "Since nothing seems beautiful to me now that I have turned away from everything which I had first estimated as good, no longer is my judgment of beauty in error. I do not hold anything else as beautiful in comparison with you--neither human acclamation, glory, nor worldly power." For those who look to the senses, these things appear beautiful, but they are not what they seem to be. How can anything be beautiful which lacks substance? Things held honorable in this world have existence only in the minds of those who think J.107 they exist. But you are truly beautiful; not only are you beautiful, you are the very substance of beauty. You always remain what you are. You do not blossom for a season and then lose your flower. Throughout the eternity of your life your beauty lasts. Your name is "love of mankind" (*philanthropia*). You are sprung from Judah, and the Jewish people are brothers of the one who comes to you from the Gentiles. Therefore you are rightly called "beloved", of the one who desired you because of the manifestation of your divinity in the flesh.

Next the bride describes her spouse as "overshadowing our bed." That is, human nature recognizes or will recognize that you overshadow it with your care. "You have come," she says, "the beautiful one, the lovely one, to J.108 overshadow our bed." For unless you "shaded yourself over" with the form of a servant while unveiling the pure rays of your divinity, who could bear your manifestation "For no one can see God's face and live." You have now come as one who is lovely but as one we are capable of receiving. You came with the covering of your body which shadowed over the rays of your divinity. How could a mortal, perishable nature be joined with an imperishable, inaccessible nature unless the shadow of his body acted as a mediator of the light for us who live in the darkness? The bride uses the term "bed" to interpret in a figurative sense the blending of human nature with the divine. In the same way, the great Apostle Paul joins us as virgins to Christ and acts as an escort for the bride. He says that the clinging together of two persons in the union of one body is a great mystery of Christ's union with the Church. For he said, "The two shall be one flesh," and then he added, "This is a great mystery with reference to Christ and the Church."

M.837 Because of this mystery, the virgin soul names the union J.109 with God a "bed." This could not have happened unless the Lord had appeared to us "overshadowed" with a human body. He is not only bridegroom but builder of the house. He is not only bridegroom but builder of the house; he is also in us as the house's architect and building material. He places a roof on the house and adorns this work with material which does not rot. Such material is cedar and cypress which resist rotting. Neither does it yield to time, beget moths nor is subject to corruption. The long cedar beams are used for the roof proper, while the cypress wood is used in the coffered work adorning the inner part of the house. The Song says, "The beams of our house are cedars, our paneling is of cypress." The hidden meanings signified by these words are clear to those following the sequence of the text. The Lord calls "rain" the various assaults of temptations in the Gospel. He says of a person who builds his house upon rock, "The rains came and the winds blew, and the floods came, and the house remained unshaken by such things."

Because of this evil downpour we must have such beams J.110 of cedar. They are the virtues which do not allow in the influx of temptations; they are firm and steadfast and do not yield to the evil of temptation. We can see the lesson here if we compare a parallel text in Ecclesiastes where it says, "By slothful neglect a building will be brought low, and by idleness of the hands the house will fall to pieces." If the timbers of the roof are not firm

but weak due to their thinness, and if the master of the house is careless about the building, the roof is useless to prevent rain from streaming in. For the roof necessarily sags, yielding to the weight of the rain water on it, and the fragile wood gives way since it cannot resist the added weight. Therefore, the water gathers in the sag of the roof and penetrates into the house's interior. And so the rain, like that mentioned in Proverbs, drives a man from his house when the downpour comes. Thus by the symbolism contained in the parable, we are exhorted through the strength of our virtues to be firm against the onslaught of temptation. Never should we allow ourselves to become soft under the storms of the passions, to sag under their weight, and so to let into our hearts the rush of these waters which destroy the treasures stored there.

J.111 The cedars of Lebanon planted by the Lord, in which the sparrows build their nests and the heron makes her home, are the virtues. They fortify the house of the bridal chamber. In them the souls which have become like sparrows and have escaped the snares build their nests and the herons have their M.840 home, as Scripture says. People familiar with observing birds say that this bird [heron] has a certain aversion to intercourse and only couples with another out of necessity. It becomes depressed, cries and displays sadness at the prospect. It seems to me then that the text symbolically signifies purity by this example. The bride of the Song looks up at the beams of the chaste bridal chamber and sees the decorative J.112 work in cypress which graces the beautiful sight with its highly polished and well fitted construction. For the text said that the paneling of the roof was cypress. "Paneling" (*phatnomata*) is the name for a graceful and closely fitted style of woodwork used to adorn a ceiling. What then can we learn from this? Cypress naturally has a pleasant scent. It is immune to decay and useful in many kinds of skillful art work because of its lightness and adaptability for construction and decoration in notch-work. The lesson we can learn here is that we should not only cultivate virtue in an interior fashion, but we should not neglect our exterior good appearance. It is necessary to care for what is honorable before God and men; to let our good deeds be manifest to God and to persuade men and maintain a good reputation among "those outside;" to shine with works of light before men; and to conduct oneself becomingly towards "those outside". This is the "paneling" that comes from the good odor of Christ of which cypress is a symbol. It is skillfully wrought by a decent life. The wise architect Paul knew how to express such things in a becoming, harmonious manner: "Let all things among you be done decently and in order."

J.113 By properly carrying out what we just mentioned, beauty will grow in us, and the breadth and length of our nature will yield a fragrant and pure blossom. The name of this flower is the lily whose visible radiance suggests the gleam of chastity. The bride explains this when she says to her companions, "After the bridegroom came to our bed 'shadowed over' by his body—he who built me as a house for himself and roofed me over with the cedars of the virtues and adorned the ceiling with the good scent of cypress—I became a flower from the plain of nature which differs in its color and scent from the other flowers. For I grew up, a lily from the valleys. As the text reads 'I am a flower of the field, a lily of the valleys.'"

According to what we previously had seen, the soul was cultivated upon the breadth of human nature. (Upon hearing the word "field" we understand the breadth of human nature because of its capacity for grasping an unlimited multitude of concepts, words and teachings.) Thus the soul cultivated by the husbandman of our nature blossoms as a fragrant, shining, pure flower from the field of our nature. This J.114 field, even if it is called a valley in comparison to the life of heaven, is in no way less a field, and the soul that is well M.841 tended in it is not prevented from being a flower. From this hollow valley the shoot rises up to the heights just as in the case of a lily. Quite often a lily's green shoot runs up to the heights from its root like a reed; then the flower spreads out on the top. There is also quite a distance between the flower and the ground. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that its loveliness might remain pure while raised on high and not be defiled by contact with the earth below.

Therefore the just eye of the bridegroom looks upon the bride who has either become the lily or has desired to become one. (Both interpretations are possible: either the bride is boasting as if she has already become what she desired or she asks the cultivator that she may become a flower by springing up through his wisdom from the valleys of human existence into the beauty of a lily.) Whether or not the bride has reached what she desired, her bridegroom's righteous eye sees her. Looking upon her good desire, he consents to make her a lily not suffocated by life's thorns which he calls "daughters." I believe this implies the powers hostile to human

life, and their father is named the inventor of evil.

J.115 "As a lily among thorns, thus is my sister among the daughters." What great progress we see in the ascent of the soul! The first step in the ascent was the comparison of the bride to the horses which destroyed the Egyptian forces; the second was the bride's becoming a "companion" to the bridegroom and the comparison of her eyes to doves. The present step, the third, consists in no longer being called "companion" but "sister" of the Lord. "Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father, this one is my brother, my sister, and my mother." Having thus become a flower, the soul is not injured by thorny temptations in her transformation into lily; she forgets the people and house of her father and looks to her true Father. Therefore she is named sister of the son, having been introduced by the Spirit of adoption into this relationship and released from fellowship with the J.116 daughters of that false father. And so she becomes still more sublime and gazes at the mystery through dove's eyes. I mean she does this by the spirit of prophecy. What she sees is the following: "As the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." What is it that the bride has seen? Holy Scripture usually names "wood" the material side of human life overgrown with a multitude of passions. Here the destructive beasts dwell and hide in their dens. They lack power in sunlight and their strength lies in darkness. After the sun sets and night comes on, the beasts emerge from their holes, as the prophet says. Then the solitary animal feeding in the thickets has destroyed the beauty of human nature. As the prophet says, "The boar from the thicket bus laid it waste, and the wild beast has devoured it." Because of this, the apple tree grows in the M.844 thickets; being made of wood, it has material similar to human nature and has been tempted in every way while being without J.117 sin. Because the apple tree bears fruit which sweetens the soul's sense, it differs more from other trees than the lily does from the thorns. A lily is delightful in both sight and scent. On the other hand, the apple delights three of the senses: it is a pleasant sight to the eyes by its beautiful appearance, a sweet and lovely fragrance and food sweet to the sense of taste. The bride correctly sees a difference between herself and her master because as light he is joy to our eyes, perfume to our scent, and life to those who eat of him. The Gospel says, "He who eats him shall live." Human nature perfected through virtue becomes a flower; it does not give nourishment to the husbandman but provides adornment for itself. He has no need of our goodness, but we of his. As the prophet says, "You do not need any of my good deeds."

Therefore the purified soul looks to its bridegroom who is an apple tree among the trees of the thicket. It seeks to graft J.118 onto itself all the wild branches of the forest and to prepare them to blossom with similar fruit. We have understood the daughters (thorns) to be children of the false father who grow up together with the flower and who pass over to the grace of a lily. Likewise, when we hear men being compared to trees of the wood, we understand that they refer not to the bridegroom's friends, but to his enemies. They are sons of darkness and children of wrath; but by fellowship with the fruit, he (God) transforms them into sons of light and the day. Therefore, the soul whose senses are trained says, "His fruit is sweet in my throat." The fruit is clearly his teaching. "How sweet are your words to my mouth," says the prophet, "more than the honey of the comb."

"As the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. Under his shadow I desired and sat J.119 down, and his fruit was sweet in my throat." Truly the soul's senses are sweetened at the bridegroom's word when the shadow of the apple tree protects us from the flame of temptation and prevents us from being burned by the sun's heat blazing over our unprotected heads. However, the soul cannot be refreshed under the shadow of the tree of life unless she has an eager desire for it. You see that desire is placed in you to create a longing for the apple tree whose enjoyment is manifold for those who have approached it. For the eye is refreshed at seeing the apple's beauty; the nose inhales its good odor; the body is nourished; the mouth is sweetened; burning heat is warded off and the shadow becomes a chair on which the soul sits once it has rejected the seat of pestilence.

M.845 The bride then says, "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." Oh, how the soul likened to a horse runs on the divine course! How she leaps and bounds toward what lies before her and does not turn back! And still she thirsts. The intensity of her thirst has become so great that she is not satisfied with the cup of J.120 wisdom. The entire cup is not enough to quench her thirst. She seeks to be brought into the very house of wine; to put

her mouth right at the vats which bubble over with sweet wine; to see the cluster of grapes pressed in the vats and the vine which nourished the cluster and at last, to see the husbandman of the true vine who tended the cluster and made it sweet. To explain in detail each of these elements would be unnecessary here; the symbolic meaning of each detail is clear enough. The bride obviously wants to see that mystery concerning the bridegroom's garments which are reddened by treading the winepress. Of this mystery the prophet says, "Why are your garments red, and your apparel as those from treading the winepress?" Because of this and other mysteries like it the bride desires to be within the house containing the mystery of wine. Having entered it, she again leaps up to what is greater, for she seeks to be subjected to love. According to St. John, God is love. The subjection of the soul J.121 to God is salvation as David reveals. "Since I have come," she says, "into the house of wine, subject me to love; set love over me." No matter how you put it, we get the same meaning from each of the two statements—whether she is subject to love or love is enjoined upon her.

The bride is teaching us here a familiar doctrine, namely, our love offered to God and our treatment of men. It is necessary that everything be well ordered, especially with regard to love. Cain would not have been condemned for wrongly dividing his offerings if he had not only performed the correct sacrifice, but if he had kept the correct order, that is, retaining what he needed for himself and consecrating the rest to God. Cain should have offered in sacrifice the first born of his flocks, but he took for himself the better part and offered the rest to God.

J.122 It is important to realize the order of love for which the Law is a guide—how one should love God, neighbor, wife and enemy, lest the practice of love be disordered and perverted. It is necessary to love God with one's whole heart, soul, strength and feeling and our neighbor as ourselves. If we have purer souls, we ought to love our wives as Christ loved his Church. On the other hand, if we are more prone to passion, we ought to love our wives as our own body M.848 as Paul the authority in such matters, exhorts us. We are not to repay our enemies evil with evil but are to repay injustice with good deeds.

Now we observe in many people a confused and disordered love, a love which is unbalanced and lacking direction. They love money, honors and women (sometimes with a passion) with their whole soul and strength. They give the impression that they would gladly lay down their lives for them. But they love God only for appearance's sake. They scarcely show their neighbor the love owed to enemies and towards J.123 persons who hate them, their attitude is to return a greater evil than they themselves had first received. Thus the bride says "Order love within me, that I may attribute to God his due, that I may not miss the proper measure with regard to everything else." Perhaps we could also understand the text as follows: "Although I was loved first, I was reckoned with the enemy because of my disobedience; now, however, I am restored to the bridegroom's favor and joined with him through love." "Establish in me this ordered and unchangeable grace, you who are the bridegroom's friends. By your care and concern keep firm my inclination towards what is better."

Having said these words, the bride passes on to loftier matters, that is, she seeks to be supported by perfumes in order to secure the good things she already has. "Strengthen me with perfumes." What an extraordinary new support! How can perfume ever be pillars for a house? How can a roof's heavy construction be supported by a good fragrance? Is it not clear that the virtues, once ordered in us in all their variety, are J.124 named according to their different operations? For virtue is not only looking to the good and participating in it, but also persevering unflinchingly in it. Therefore, the one who wishes to be supported by the perfumes seeks perseverance in virtue. Perfume is virtue because it is separated from every unpleasant odor of sin.

What comes next in the text is also extraordinary, namely, the support the bride desires for her house. She asks not for brambles, thorns, straw or hay (or as the Apostle says, not wood, hay or straw) with which material houses are built. Rather, apples are to be the firm support of the roof of this house. She says, "Stay me with apples" in order that this fruit may be all in all for her—loveliness, fragrance, sweetness, nourishment, refreshment in its shade, a seat of rest, a firm pillar and a sheltering roof. Beauty is lovely to behold; perfume is sweet to the smell; nourishment enriches the body and sweetens the palate; shade refreshes from the burning heat; a seat gives J.125 & M.849 rest for toil; the roof of a house is a shelter for its inhabitants; pillar provides stability; the fair apple tree adorns the roof. For what could be a more beautiful sight than an arrangement of apples when the fruit, attractively and uniformly laid out, yields a many-colored spectacle to the eyes by the blend of ruddiness with white? If it were possible for this arrangement of apples to be seen lifted up on high,

what could be a more lovely sight? It is not impossible to accomplish this in the realm of desire for spiritual goods, for that kind of fruit is not heavy, nor does its weight pull it toward the ground, but its natural inclination is upward. Virtue grows upward and looks to what lies above. Therefore the bride desires the roof of her own house to be adorned with the beauty of such apples. What is the text driving at here? Certainty not just the spectacle of a cluster of apples on a roof. What path to virtue can there be in such words unless we can extract a useful interpretation?

What, then, do I suggest? Because of his love for man, the one who has sprung up in the forest of our human nature became an apple by participation in our flesh and blood. Each of these (flesh and blood) has a parallel in the colors J.126 of an apple. Its whiteness imitates the color of flesh, and its red exterior is related in appearance to the color of blood. When the soul delights in divine things, desires to see apples on the roof; by looking to what is above and concentrating on the apples, it is guided to the heavenly way of life by means of the Gospel's teaching. He who comes from above and is above all showed us the way by his appearance in the flesh, having manifested in himself examples of every good, fitting behavior. As the Lord says, "Learn from me because I am meek and humble of heart." The Apostle makes the same point when he explains humility. Let me cite that text to illustrate the general truth. Paul says to those who are looking upward, "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus. He who was in the form of God did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave." He dwelt in our existence through flesh and blood, and in place of the joy set before him, he voluntarily partook of our humility even to the point of experiencing death. Because of this the J.127 bride says, "Stay me with apples" in order that by always looking upward, I may continually see examples of goodness manifested in my bridegroom. In him there is meekness, freedom from anger, reconciliation with enemies, love for those who cause distress, the exchange of good for evil, strength M.852 purity, patience and no trace of vain glory or deception."

Having said this, the bride praises the bowman for his good marksmanship because he hits her with his arrow. The bride says, "I am wounded with love." These words indicate that the bridegroom's arrows have penetrated the depths of her heart. The archer of these arrows is love who sends his own "chosen arrow," the only-begotten Son, to those who are saved, dipping the triple-pointed tip of the arrow in the Spirit of life. The tip of the arrow is faith, and by it God introduces the archer into the heart along with the arrow. As the Lord says, "I and the Father (are one); we will come and make our home with him."

Therefore the soul raised up by these divine ascents sees J.128 within itself the sweet arrow of love by which she was wounded; she boasts of her wound saying, "I am wounded with love." O beautiful wound and sweet blow by which life penetrates within! The arrow's penetration opens up, as it receives the arrow of love, the imagery shifts from archery to nuptial delight. It is well known how a bow is handled, with each hand performing its proper function: the left hand holds the bow while the right hand draws the string back, pulling the arrow back by the notched end. Then the left hand directs the arrow to the target. Earlier we said that the bride was the target; she now sees herself as the arrow in the bowman's hands. She is held in one way by his right hand and in another by his left. However, the significance of these words is evoked through marital imagery. Thus the text does not say that the arrow's tip was held by the left hand or the rest of the arrow by the right hand, as if the soul were an arrow in the hands of the powerful archer aiming at a target above him. Instead, the Song has the bridegroom's left J.129 hand supporting his bride's head, not the arrow tip, while his right hand receives the rest of her body. These two images teach us about the nature of the divine ascent. God is both the bridegroom and the archer. He treats the purified soul as a bride and as an arrow aimed at a good target. He allows his bride to participate in his eternal incorruptibility, gracing her with length of years and a long life with his right hand. With his left hand he gives her the wealth of his eternal bounty and the glory of God of which those who seek the world's glory are not partakers. Because of this the bride says, "His left hand is under my head," for this is the means by which the arrow is directed to its target. "His right hand receives me and draws me back, easing my journey upward where I am directed without being separated from the archer. Simultaneously I am carried away by his act M.853 of shooting and am at rest in the hands of the bowman". Regarding the properties of these hands, Proverbs says that length of years and of life is in the right hand of wisdom In its left hand are wealth and glory.

Now the bride addresses the daughters of the heavenly Jerusalem. An exhortation is expressed in the form of an

oath J.130 that love may multiply and always increase until he who wishes all to be saved and to come to recognition of the truth makes his will effective. The words read: "I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, that you do not rouse or wake my love until he pleases." An oath is an utterance which guarantees its own truth. It works in two ways: either it confirms the truth for those who hear it, or it compels the one under oath not to lie. As the Psalm says, "The Lord has sworn the truth to David, and he will not go back on his word." In this case the trustworthiness of the promise is confirmed by the oath.

When Abraham was concerned that his son should contract a noble marriage, he commanded his own servant not to take a Canaanite woman condemned to slavery as a wife of Isaac so that the nobility of his descendants would not be defiled by admixture with a slave race. Abraham wanted his son to be united in marriage with a woman from his native land, and so he compelled the slave not to neglect J.131 his command by having him swear on oath to do what he has determined for his son. The slave, therefore, was bound by Abraham to arrange a suitable marriage for Isaac.

As I have said, an oath works in two ways. In the present text, the soul is progressing towards great heights, as we have seen. At the same time she is instructing less advanced souls in the way of perfection. She uses the oath not to assure them of the progress she herself has made but to lead them through their oath to a life of virtue. She adjures them to keep their love alert and watchful until his good will comes to fulfillment, that is, until all are saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

The oath of Abraham was on his thigh; here it is by the "powers and strengths of the field." And so the J.132 text says, "I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, that you do not rouse or wake my love until he pleases." We must first consider what is meant by "field," then by "powers and strengths," and then whether or not they differ from each other or have the same meaning. Next to be considered is the arousing and awakening of love. The phrase "until he pleases" has been explained by what was said earlier.

M.856 It is clear that the Master means the world when he speaks of a "field." This world's form will pass away due to its unstable nature. This is clear from Ecclesiastes' loud proclamation which calls every visible and passing thing "vanity." What, therefore, is the power of this field, the world? What is this strength, which does not allow the precept enjoined by oath on the daughters of Jerusalem to be violated? If we look to visible reality for this power, J.133 Ecclesiastes rejects such an assumption. He calls "vanity" everything we see and strive after in visible reality. What is vain lacks substance, and what lacks substance does not have power. Perhaps we can get a hint of the text's meaning from the plural use of the term "power." In sacred scripture we find a distinction in words of this kind: whenever "power" is used in the singular it refers to God; whenever we find the plural form, it refers to angels. For example: "Christ, the power and wisdom of God." This usage reveals the divinity by using the singular form. On the other hand, in the verse, "Bless the Lord, all his powers," the plural form signifies the spiritual nature of the angels. The plural form signifies the spiritual nature of the angels. The term "strength" used along with "power" serves to intensify its meaning. Scripture frequently makes its meaning more emphatic by the use of synonymous terms. Take, for example, the phrase: "Lord, my strength and my firmament." Each word expresses the same thing, but the use of J.134 both together lends emphasis to the statement. Therefore the plural use of "powers" and the synonymous term "strengths" suggests an angelic nature; the oath is imposed upon souls who are still disciples to confirm them in what they have learned. They are not to swear by the passing world but by the angelic nature which always exists. They are exhorted to be attentive to the angels who ratify the stable, constant life of virtue.

After the resurrection we have been promised a life similar to the angels, and he who has promised it does not lie. follows, therefore, the life in this world should be a preparation for the one we hope for later. Though living in the flesh and passing through the field of this world, we should not live according to the flesh nor be conformed to this world; rather, we ought to meditate on the life to come while we are still in this present one. Therefore by imposing an oath, the bride confirms those souls under instruction: while spending J.135 & M.857 their lives in this "field," they will look to the "powers" and imitate their angelic purity by detachment. Love is aroused and awakened; that is to say, it is elevated and continually spurred on to greater growth. God's good will is done "on earth as it is in heaven" when the detachment of the angels is effected in us. This is our

understanding of "I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, that you do not rouse or awake my love until he pleases." If any other text should be found which brings us closer to the truth we seek, let us receive it as a grace and give thanks to him who reveals through the Holy Spirit the mysteries hidden in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

+

The Fifth Homily

Phl 3.13: But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

The verb for "forgetting" is *epilanthano*, literally a forgetting upon (*epi-*), the preposition suggestive of intensification, that the past is forgotten completely.

2Cor 12.2-4: (Paul raised to third heaven).

In this experience Paul was "snatched" into the third heaven, *harpazo* being the verb which connotes something done in haste and almost secretly.

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

First comes the divine bridegroom's "voice" (*qol*), the nature of which isn't revealed, but is located on the other side of the intervening mountains. That means this *qol* became stronger and more distinction the closer he came to his beloved.

Sg 2.9: My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel.

Here the mountains are identified as belonging to Bethel, House of God, the home from which the bridegroom came and which he forsook for the sake of being with his human spouse.

Ps 68.11: The Lord gives the command; great is the host of those who bore the tidings.

"Command" is *'omer* or literally word and *basar* is the verbal root for "bore the tidings," the verbal root meaning to be joyful.

Eph 2.6: And raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Two verbs with the preposition *sun* (with) prefaced to them followed by the preposition *en* (in) with respect to Christ Jesus.

Eph 2.9: Not because of works, lest any man should boast.

The preposition *ex* is sued for "because of," literally as "from works" (*ergon*).

2Tm 1.10: And now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Note the two related words with respect to becoming visible, "manifested and appearing," *phaneroo* and *epiphaneia*, the latter being a shining-upon (*epi-*).

Jn 5.36: For the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear witness that the Father has sent me.

"Works" or *ergon* apply to deeds or action as well as business. Christ is to "accomplish" them, *teleioo* being the verb which means bringing to an end or to perfection.

Ps 48.8: As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts.

The small word "as" (*ky-* or *ken*) connects first hearing followed by seeing, both being located in the Lord's city, presumably Jerusalem and related to the temple there.

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

The adjective *polus* (many) is prefaced to *meros* and *tropos*, nouns which here are adverbs or part and way.

Heb 1.2: But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.

The preposition *epi* (on, upon) is used for "in these last days."

2Cor 10.4: For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

"Worldly and divine" or *sarkikos* and *dunatos*, belonging to the flesh and mighty with the noun *theos* (God).

2Cor 10.5: We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

"Knowledge and thought" or *gnosis* and *noema* (implies perception); the former pertains to God and the latter to Christ. This verse is repeated below.

Ps 46.2: Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea.

This verse and the two that follow refer to mountains both shaking and being uprooted, the power of faith.

Mt 17.20: 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.

Mt 17.15: Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly.

"Epileptic" or *seleniazomai*, literally means to be moon-struck.

Mk 11.23: Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.

"Does (not) doubt" or *diakrino*, literally as to judge-through (*dia-*).

Ps 110.1: The Lord says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

Two lords, if you will: the Lord himself and the one of the psalmist.

Ps 91.13: You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Darak is the verb for "tread," the common verb for to go or to walk. Here *darak* suggests an almost casual trampling down of these beasts which are so fearsome.

Lk 10.19: Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.

Exousia or authority can apply to resources at hand; compare with "power" or *dunamis* of the enemy, that term meaning the force or capacity to do something.

Mt 9.32: As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him.

"Demoniac" here is a verb, *daimonao* or to be under the influence of a *daimon* or subject to a divine visitation.

Mk 1.23: And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.

This and the next verse refer to someone with a spirit or *pneuma* and *daimonion*, both unclean, and do so at the beginning of their respective Gospels. The latter is an adjective modifying *pneuma*.

Lk 4.33-7: (man with unclean spirit).

2Cor 10.5: We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

The verb at hand (*kathaireo*) literally means a taking down.

Ps 29.9: The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forests bare.

"Voice" or *qol* means that it must be exceptionally powerful to effect this destruction.

Lk 10.19: (cf. verse above).

Heb 11.1: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

"Assurance" or *hupostasis* (foundation, substance) literally means a standing-under (*hupo-*).

Sg 2.9: Behold, he stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peeping through the lattices.

Note that the wall belongs to both bride and bridegroom ('our'). *Tsuts* as "peeping" primarily means to shine.

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

"Coming" (*erchomai*) into the world: note present tense or a continuous process. Compare this continuous coming with the giving of light in the next verse.

Lk 1.79: To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Sg 2.10-3: (Bridegroom saying that winter is past).

The divine bridegroom begins this section with the command to his bride to "arise" (*qum*) meaning that until then she had been in a kind of hibernation.

Ps 74.17: You have made summer and winter.

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

"Treasures" or *thesauros* (cf. next verse) suggest that which had been laid up and kept under guard but now is made available through wisdom and knowledge.

Is 45.3: I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places.

All four words in this verse have to do with secret, protected things: treasures and hoards relative to darkness and secret places. These words are addressed to Cyrus, not Israel.

Ps 115.8: Those who make them are like them.

Somewhere along the line when making an idol a person becomes that idol. This verse infers that it is up to each person to find that point and avoid it. Idols are mentioned in the next verse relative to being cleansed from them, *tahar* fundamentally meaning to be bright and referring to ritual purification.

Ezk 36.25: I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

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

“Healing” or *marpe*’ which derives from a verbal root also meaning to droop.

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

Jesus quotes from both Prov 18.4 and Is 58.11, combining the two in reference to himself and “heart” or *koilia* (also as intestines or bowels). From this *koilia* within a person there will be a “spring” (*pege*) of water which will well up to eternal life, *hallomai* connoting a strong, continuous flow.

Ps 148.7: Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps.

Note that praise originates from the earth with respect to large, fearful animals which have their home in the ocean, representative of the waters of chaos before creation.

Ps 114.8: Who turns the rock into a pool of water.

Haphak for “turns” can also refer to overturning or perverting.

Mt 3.9: For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Dunamai for “is able” suggests having capacity or ability which here is not manifest but can be if needed. If so, the stones would have more right to claim Abraham as their father (next verse) than those whom Jesus is addressing.

Lk 3.8: Do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father,” for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Jn 8.39: “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did.”

Col 2.17: These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belong to Christ.

“Shadow and substance” or *skia* and *soma*, the latter more specifically as a physical body.

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

The adjective *polus* (many) is prefaced to *meros* and *tropos*, nouns which here are adverbs or part and way.

2Cor 3.14: For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains un-lifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.

“Un-lifted and “taken away” or *anakalupto* (to unveil) and *katargeo* (to abolish, to cease).

Eph 2.14: The guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

“Guarantee” or *arrabon* is money deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase isn’t completed.

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

“Coming” (*erchomai*) into the world: note present tense or a continuous process.

Ps 145.14: The Lord upholds all who are falling.

Samak is the verb for “upholds” which means a strengthening.

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

The fight which Paul fought is “good” or *kalos*, more as beautiful.

Mt 9.5: For which is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or “rise and walk?”

Eukopos or “easier” literally means work which is light or easy (*eu-*).

Ps 68.33: Lo, he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice.

Qol is the noun for voice, the first instance prefaced with the preposition *b-* (in), literally as “gives in his voice.” This giving of the divine voice is equivalent to speaking in the next verse, the common verb *amar*.

Ps 33.9: For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth.

Hamad is the verb for “stood forth” and fundamentally means to stand, to set up.

Sg 2.10: Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove.

Rahyah or “companion” refers to a female friend, someone who is beloved.

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.

“Beholding” divine glory or *katoptrizo* which means to show in a mirror, and such mirrors were of polished metal not giving an exact reflection as with modern ones. Such beholding tinged with a certain golden or silver hue allows change into the divine “likeness” (*eikon* or image compared with *homoiosis* which usually translates as likeness). Note use of the prepositions “from and to” or *apo-eis* (the latter more as into). This reveals the hidden nature of change or *metamorphoo*, literally to change-after, to bring a form (*morphe*)

after (*meta*), if you will, or into a new state, and that is an eternal dynamic, not static.

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

Bodily “form” or *eidos* means that which is seen, a shape, which here is a dove.

Jn 1.32: I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven.

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

Two verbs relative to moving: “past and departed” or *havar* and *chalaph*. The former applies to a moving past and the latter, a kind of gliding or slipping motion. This verse is repeated just below.

ITm 1.19: By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith.

Speaking of shipwreck is ominous in that survivors most likely would be killed or taken into slavery, a more powerful image than today.

Mk 4.39: And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!”

Epitimao or “rebuked” consists of the root *timao* (to honor, to value) with the prefaced *epi* (upon).

Sg 2.11-2: Winter is past, the rain is gone; it has departed. The flowers are seen in the land; the time of pruning has arrived.

Jn 1.23: Make straight the way of the Lord.

“Make straight and prepare” (the latter, the next verse) or *euthuno* (*eu-* suggestive of that which is well or fine) and *etoimazo*. The latter is more vague than the former and is not spelled out in any detail.

Mt 3.3: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Is 11.1: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

“Come forth and grow” or *yatsa’* and *parah*, the latter suggestive of bearing or being born.

Jn 1.29: Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Idou or “behold,” a means of getting the attention of people, equivalent to something like “see there!”

Mt 3.7: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Calling the Pharisees and Sadducees thus suggests that they came crawling out of their holes to listen to John the Baptist whose voice was not unlike that of the turtledove in the next verse.

Sg 2.12: The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land.

Mt 21.32: For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him.

“Way” or *hodos* can refer to John’s mission of preparing the way of the Lord referred to in 3.3, *hodos* being the same word he calls himself.

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

Te’nah or “fig tree” is noted for its large leaves.

Mt 13.29: No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.

“Root up” or *ekrizoo*; note the preposition *ek* (from) which makes the sense of this verb stronger.

Ps 1.3: That yields its fruit in its season.

Heth is the noun for “season” which can correspond to the Greek *kairos*, a specific time or event.

Ps 104.15: And wine to gladden the heart of man.

Samach is the verb for “gladden” and connotes a leap for joy which can apply to Wisdom mixing wine in the next verse.

Prov 9.2: She has mixed her wine.

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

Apostles as aroma are applicable in two ways: people being saved and people perishing, both in the present tense which means a certain insight into their condition, both of which can change. Christ is an offering which is “fragrant” *euodia* or a noun meaning a pleasant (*eu-*) scent.

Sg 2.13: Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove.

1Cor 9.24-6: (image of a runner).

Here Paul exhorts his listeners to run that they may seize the price (*katalambano* being the verb also as to apprehend) which applies to the running in the next verse, *kalos* being the adverb for well which also can apply to that which is beautiful.

Gal 5.7: You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

Kalos is the adverb for “well” and can read as “beautifully.”

Heb 12.1: Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Hupomene means “perseverance,” literally as remaining under (*hupo-*).

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

Kalos is the adjective for “good” meaning beautiful. *Teleo* is the verb for “finished” which implies completion. A similar verb (*teleioo*) is used for “accomplish in the next verse.

Acts 20.24: If only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus.

Teleioo is the verb for “may accomplish” and means bringing to completion as well as perfection.

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.

This verse is found above, indicative of its importance for Gregory of Nyssa.

Sg 2.14: Come by yourself, my dove, in the shelter of the rock, near the wall.

The wording of this verse is not in the LXX version which reads “You are my dove in the shelter of the rock near the wall.”

Ps 119.108: Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord.

The verb for “accept” is *ratsah* meaning to be pleased. *Nadyv* means both “offering of praise” and “free will offering” in the next verse.

Ps 54.6: With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.

Nedavah is the noun for “freewill offering” which implies spontaneity.

2Cor 3.7-18: (the new covenant).

This lengthy passage contains the important vs. 15 several verses above in contrast to the “dispensation of death” [vs. 7], *diakonia* being the noun which means service or ministry.

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

Pneumatikos is the adjective for “supernatural” which means spiritual (*pneuma*).

Mt 7.24: Every one then who hears these words of mind and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.

Lk 6.48: He is like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation upon rock.

The noun *oikos* or “house” is in the verb “building,” *oikodomeo*, *domeo* more specifically as to build.

Dt 32.13: He made him ride on the high places of the earth.

Rachav as “ride” means to be carried as by a wagon or the like.

Ps 27.5: He will set me high upon a rock.

Tsaphan as “set” fundamentally means to hide or lay up as with treasures, not unlike *qum* (to rise) or setting one’s feet on a rock in the next verse.

Ps 40.2: And set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

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 sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near.

The law (Torah) as shadow is a *tupos* as in the previous verse and stands in contrast to the “true form” or *eikon* (image) used with the noun *pragma* (things; often as applied to business matters). *Nomos* as “law” suggests a norm for guidance and translates the Hebrew *Torah*.

Ex 20.13: You shall not kill.

Dt 5.17: You shall not kill.

Mt 5.28: Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Blepo is the verb for “looks” meaning to have the capacity for sight. “Lustfully” is the verb *epithumeo* used with the preposition *pros*. This preposition, along with the one prefaced to the verb (*epi* as upon), serves to intensify the verb’s meaning.

Rom 2.25-9: Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law..

This extended excerpt deals with circumcision, the physical type compared with the one which concerns the heart. This type is “spiritual and not literal” (*pneuma* and *gramma*).

Acts 8.32: As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so he opens not his mouth.

A quote from Is 53.7-8. *Epi* is the preposition with regard to “slaughter” or literally “upon the slaughter.”

Heb 9.18: Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood.

Egkainizo means “ratified” and connotes renovation or consecration (*kainos* being the adjective for new) and pertains to Christ as paschal lamb in the next verse.

1Cor 5.7: For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.

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

Pneumatikos is the adjective for “supernatural.”

1Cor 15.47: The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

The preposition *ek* (from) is used with regard to two different sources: earth and heaven.

Rom 2.28: For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical.

Phaneros is an adjective used twice: “outwardly” or that which is visible or manifest and “external.”

Mt 12.12: Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

“Valuable” is the verb *diaphero*, fundamentally as to carry over (*dia-through*). “Good” is the adverb *kalos*, literally as beautifully.

Mt 15.11: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.

Koinoo: “defiles” or literally, to make common.

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

“Law” or *nomos* (also applies to custom but here as Torah) is “spiritual” or *pneumatikos* compared to *sarkinos*, “carnal.”

Sg 2.14: Show me your face, and let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your countenance is beautiful.

“Show, face and countenance” are of the same verbal root, *ra’ah* (to see).

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

The adjective *polus* (many) is prefaced to *meros* and *tropos*, nouns which here are adverbs or part and way.

Jn 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Skenoo: “dwelt” or literally, to dwell in a tent.

1Tm 3.16: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Phaneroo: “manifested” which implies disclosure.

Lk 2.29: Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to your word.

Rhema or “word,” that which is said or the subject of speech used with the preposition *kata*, suggestive of in accord with a plan.

2Cor 6.1: Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain.

Sunergeo and *parakaleo*: “working together and entreat.” Two prepositions, *sun* and *para* (with and beside) are suggestive of a common effort.

Jn 6.68: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Rhema as in two verses above, here identified with life which is “eternal” or *aiionios*, also as lasting for a given age.

Sg 2.15: Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines.

Chaval as “spoil” imply corruption of a moral kind.

Jn 8.44: You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

“Of” has the preposition *ek* or “from the devil.” *Epithumia* or “desires” or literally, desire-upon (*epi*).

Ps 52.3: You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth.

The preposition *min* (from) is used twice, here indicative of separation: “from good” and “from speaking.”

Ps 120.4: A warrior's sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree.

Rotem or “broom tree,” the roots of which were often used as nourishment by poor people. Its color was bright yellow, perhaps indicative of the glowing coals.

Ps 10.9: He lurks in secret like a lion in his covert.

Arav means “lurks” can also mean to ambush.

Ezk 29.3: Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the mist of his streams.

Tanyim is a “dragon” or a great serpent which “lies” in his streams, *ravats* meaning to crouch down and not unlike *arav* in the previous verse.

Is 5.14: Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure.

Nephesh is the noun for “appetite” which fundamentally means soul, here pertaining to Sheol's essence.

Eph 6.12: For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities.

Pale is the noun for “contending” which means wrestling and used with the preposition *pros* (direction towards which) concerning flesh and blood.

Heb 2.14: Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

“Share in and partook” or *koinoneo* and *metecho*. To have *koinonia* or fellowship and literally to have-with (*meta-*).

Is 10.13: I have removed the boundaries of peoples, and have plundered their treasures.

“Removed and plundered” or *sur* (also as to turn aside, depart) and *shasah* (also to take spoil). The verb *sur* is the opposite of “fixed” or *yatsav* in the next verse (also to set, to take a stand).

Dt 32.8: He fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Is 14.13: I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high.

Heaven and above the stars: two places above the earth with the former more pertinent to God’s dwelling. Note that both are visible only at night.

Job 40.18: His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron.

This and the next two verses describe God’s adversary which could include Legion. The first two pertain to Behemoth which could have been a hippopotamus.

Job 41.7: Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears?

Mk 5.9: My name is Legion; for we are many.

Ps 63.10: They shall be prey for jackals.

Ps 24.8: Who is the King of glory?

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

Spirits which are “ministering” or *pneuma* which are *leitourgikos*, originally fulfilling public service (*ergon*).

Mt 4.19: Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

“Follow” is the adverb *deute*, an exclamation such as “come hither, come on.”

Mt 8.20: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has no where to lay his head.

Pou is an adverb for “(no) where.” “To lay” or *klino* means more to incline.

Ps 80.13: The boar from the forest ravages it.

This verse and the next mention two destructive wild beasts, boar and lion.

Ps 22.13: They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

Jon 2.3: Out of the belly of Sheol I cried.

Beten can also mean a womb, here as Sheol but also the *beten* of the fish.

Ezk 32.2: You consider yourself a lion among the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas.

Tanyim is a “dragon” noted above regarding Ezk 29.2.

Eph 6.12: For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Four objects needing resistance: “principalities, powers, world rulers and spiritual hosts:” arche (also as beginning or first principle), *exousia* (also as authority), *kosmokratē* (those with strength in/over the *kosmos*) and *poneria* (baseness, a wicked state) which are *pneumatikos*.

Ps 128.3: Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house.

“Within” or *yarkah* (prefaced with *b-*, in) means a side or the back part of something.

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

Luo is the verb for “has broken down” which is more a loosening as by dissolving.

Sg 16-7: My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies. Until the day dawns, and the shadows flee.

“Is mine” and “am his” has the preposition *l-* (to) or literally, “to me” and “I to him.” This “to-ness” is echoed in seeing “face to face” in the next verse, *prosopon pros prosopon*. Note the preposition *pros* (direction towards which plus part of the word *prosopon*).

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

Literally “in a figure” or *ainigma*, dark saying or riddle.

Ex 3.14: God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”

While interpretation of this has been debated and continues to be so, it might be helpful to focus on the connective or relative pronoun “who,” *’asher*, which bridges the gap between the two “existings.” By its very nature, a relative pronoun connects two distinct elements. At the same time it represents a transition,

essential to go from Point A to Point B, while not attracting attention to itself...almost shy, if such a way of putting it is appropriate. With this in mind, the quicker the relative pronoun makes the transition, the better, and less attention is drawn to it.

2Cor 5.2: Here indeed we groan and long to put on our heavenly dwelling.

“Long” is the verb *epipothéo* (to long for with the preposition *epi*, upon) with regard to *epeneduo* (to put on, also with *epi* plus *en* or in) the dwelling “from” (*ex*) heaven.

1Cor 3.16: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Naos as “temple” refers to its inmost part. This enables God to “move” in his people as in the next verse: *emperipateo* (to walk prefaced with both *en* or in and *peri* or around...to walk in-around).

2Cor 6.16: I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

A quote from Lev 26.12. “Live and move among” or *enoikeo* and *emperipateo*. The former applies to a living in whereas the latter, a walking in-around (*em-* & *peri-*).

Is 40.6: All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

Chesed is the noun for “beauty,” usually as tender mercy as applied to God.

1Pt 1.24: This verse quotes from Is 40.6

Jn 3.6: That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Heb 5.14: But solid food is for the mature.

Stereos as “solid” can apply to anything hard or harsh.

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

Apostles as aroma are applicable in two ways: people being saved and people perishing, both in the present tense which means a certain insight into their condition, both of which can change. Christ is an offering which is “fragrant” *euodia* or a noun meaning a pleasant (*eu-*) scent.

1Ths 5.5: For you are all sons of light and sons of the day.

Both light and day are of the same substance, the latter in contrast to the night.

Sg 2.17: Turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of the ravines.

The turning at hand (*savav*) is an appeal by the divine bridegroom to his human spouse to hasten to him as a gazelle and young stag, that is, with eagerness and speed.

Lk 9.47: But when Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts, he took a child and put him by his side.

“Thoughts” or *dialogismos* implies machinations, something foreign to a child.

Is 40.4 (Lk 3.5): Every valley will be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low.

“Filled and brought low” or *nasa'* (to raise on high) and *shaphal* (to fall). When both have been accomplished, the valley, mountain and hill will become perfectly level or flat.

The Song of Songs, 2.8-17

The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bethel. Behold, he stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peeping through the lattices. My beloved answers and says to me, "Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove. For behold, 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 turtledove has been heard in our land. The fig tree has put forth its young figs, the vines put forth the tender grape, they give forth their scent. Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove; yes, come. Come, by yourself, 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 countenance is beautiful. Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes." "My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies. Until the day dawns and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stage on the mountains of the ravines."

J.137 & M.857 The Song of Songs now leads to desire a contemplation of the transcendent good. At the same time it causes pain in our souls when we recognize that we cannot grasp this good. For how could anyone not be sorrowful considering that in such ascents (to the good) the purified soul is exalted through love to participate in this goodness, and yet, as the Apostle says, it does not yet seem to have grasped what it seeks? Earlier, when I described the bride's ascents, I said that she was blessed. She recognized the sweet apple and distinguished it from the barren forest. She desired her bridegroom's shadow, enjoyed his sweet fruit and

entered the inner J.138 & M.860 chambers of his joy. (She called this joy "wine" which gladdens the hearts of those who drink it.) Established in love, the bride was strengthened by the support of perfumes after having been embraced by the cover of apples; she received the arrow of love in her heart and then, once again in the archer's hands, she herself became an arrow directed at the target of truth by the hands of the powerful bowman.

I thought that the bride who had been raised up in so many ways had reached the ultimate peak of happiness. It seems, however, the things accomplished earlier were but an introduction to the bride's ascent. The bride does not name all those earlier ascents contemplation and clear recognition of truth, but she calls them the "voice" of the bridegroom whom she desires. That is to say, she can hear and recognize his voice, but she does not enjoy him and know him. If, then, the bride has been raised to such heights--(for Paul was caught up to the third heaven)--and has not fully obtained what she was seeking, what about us? How should we regard our own situation, for we have not even approached the outer doors of the sanctuary of contemplation?

It is possible to see through the bride's own words the J.139 difficulty she has in contemplating her sought-after spouse? "The voice of my beloved," she says--not his form or face or figure indicating the nature of what is sought after but his voice which allows inference rather than certainty about who the speaker is. That the bride's words are conjecture rather than full and ambiguous comprehension is clear from the fact that the text does not use a single image but several. The bride thinks that she perceives her spouse in different ways at different times and never has the same image of what she has comprehended. She says, "Behold, he comes." The bridegroom is neither standing still nor remaining nearby that she can get a good look at him and see who he is. Instead, he removes himself from the bride's view before she comes to perfect knowledge: "Leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills." At one time he is thought to be a gazelle; at another he is likened to a young stag; "My beloved is like a J.140 gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel." Thus what is always comprehended now has one shape and then another.

These are the things which taken in their literal sense cause me pain and make me doubt that I shall ever attain a true understanding of divine things. But we must put our hope in the God who strengthens those who preach the Good News, and we must see how our consideration of the present text can be adapted to our earlier reflections. The text says, "The voice of my beloved" and immediately adds: "Behold, he comes." What can we understand this to mean? Perhaps these words foresee the dispensation of God's Word which is made known to us through the Gospel. It was announced in advance by the prophets and then made manifest M.861 through the appearance of God in the flesh. The divine voice bears witness to these works, and their accomplishment is joined to the word of promise as the prophet says: "As we have heard, so we have seen." "The voice of my beloved": this is what we have heard. "Behold, he comes": this is what our eyes have beheld. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets:" this is the voice we hear. "But in these last days he has spoken J.141 to us by his Son." This is what was spoken: "Behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills." He is in one sense fittingly compared to a gazelle, and in another sense he is likened to a young stag. "Gazelle" (*dorkas*) signifies keenness of vision, for it is said that this animal has marvelous vision (*derkesthai*) and gets its name from that fact (i.e. *dorkas*, gazelle, is derived from *derkesthai*, to see). Furthermore *derkesthai* means the same as *theasthai*. And so the one who surveys and sees all things is named the God (*theos*) of all creation from the fact that he sees (*theasthai*) all. Since God has appeared in the flesh to destroy the hostile powers by his life, he who looked down from heaven upon the earth, is likened to a gazelle. On the other hand, God is also compared to a young stag since he crosses the mountains and hills with his leaping. That is, he tramples and destroys the haughty, evil deeds of demons. The Bible speaks of mountains which were shaken by God's power. As David puts it, they were removed into the "heart of the sea" and submerged in the abyss of the deep. Our Lord spoke of these mountains in the context J.142 of epilepsy: "If you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain [i.e. epilepsy], 'Be uprooted and cast into the sea.'" Since it is the young stag who is able to destroy wild beasts and to put to flight serpents by its breathing and coloration, the bridegroom who watches over all things is compared to a gazelle; but he is also like a young stag in that he leaps over and destroys every opposing force, which the Song symbolically calls mountains and hills.

The voice of the bridegroom was heard when God spoke through the prophets. After the voice the Word came

leaping over the mountains that stood in his way, and by bounding over the hills, he made every rebellious power subject to himself, both the inferior powers and those that are greater. The distinction between mountains and hills signifies that both the superior adversary and the inferior one are trampled and destroyed by the same power and authority. The lion and the dragon, superior beasts, are trampled; so too are the serpent J.143 and the scorpion which are inferior. Let me give an example. M.864 In the crowds which followed Christ were "mountains," in other words, demons. They were in the synagogues, in the land of Gerasenes and in many other places where they exalted and raised themselves up against human nature. Among them there were both "hills" and "mountains," in other words, inferior and superior demons. But the young stag who destroys serpents and who fashions the disciples into the nature of stags says to them, "I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions." He treads equally on them all and chases them away in order that the greatness of those who are raised on high by virtue might appear and no longer be obscured by the hillocks of evil. The "mountains of Bethel" seem to refer to the exalted heavenly life if we interpret the name correctly. Hebrew scholars translate Bethel as "house of God." Therefore the Song reads "on the mountains of Bethel."

The purified, perceptive eye of the soul perceives these J.144 things, jumping as it does with those divine leaping across the opposing hills. And it speaks of what is to happen in the future as if it were already present. It regards its hope as accomplished fact because it believes so firmly in the promised grace. For she says that he leaps over mountains with speed and grace and jumps from hill to hill. He shows us himself standing behind the wall, speaking to his spouse through the lattices of the windows. The text says, "Behold, he stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peeping through the lattices." What is described in a literal sense is as follows: the lover speaks through the windows to the bride dwelling within, and the wall between them does not prevent them from conversing since the bridegroom's head peeps through the windows while his eye gazes through the lattices into the house's interior. The anagogical interpretation, however, is close to the understanding which we J.145 developed earlier. The Song's text draws human nature to God by a certain method and order, first illuminating it through the prophets and the precepts of the Law. (We understand the windows to be the prophets who let in the light while the lattices are the "woven work" of the precepts of the Law. Through both of these the splendor of true light enters in.) Afterwards, there comes the full brilliance of the light when the true light appears to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death and this light blends itself with our human nature. First the rays of the prophetic writings and the Law illumine our soul through their intelligible windows and lattices; then they create in us a desire to see the sun in the open air. Finally, what we desire becomes a reality.

Let us listen to what he who is not yet within the wall says M.865 to the Church as he speaks to her through the lattices and the windows. "My beloved answers and says to me, 'Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove. For behold, winter is past, the rain is gone; it has departed. The flowers J.146 are seen in the land; the time of pruning has arrived. The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. The fig tree has put forth its young figs. The vines out forth the tender grape, they give forth their scent.'

How beautifully the Creator of spring describes the loveliness of the season! David says to him, "You made spring and summer." He dispels winter's gloom and declares that its sullenness and unpleasant rains have passed. He shows the fields flourishing and adorned with flowers. He says that the flowers are blooming and ready for plucking; flower gatherers can take them either to weave into garlands or to be prepared for perfume. The sound of a voice makes the season enjoyable, and the birds' songs resound all through the groves while the pleasant sound of the dove echoes in our ears. The bridegroom also speaks of the fig tree and the vines present appearance foretells the delight they have in store. The fig tree is putting forth its fruit and the vine is blossoming; both delight our nostrils with their sweet odor. And so the Scripture delights in this rich picture of spring. It puts aside all gloom and takes pleasure in the J.147 beauty of the description. Still, I believe it is necessary for us not to stop with the description of these pleasant things. Rather, we should be led to the mysteries which are being revealed through these words so as to disclose the treasure of meaning hidden in them.

What then are we saying? At one time human nature was frozen stiff in the cold of idolatry when man's changeable nature had been transformed into the nature of the lifeless objects which he worshiped. Scripture

says: "Let them become like them, all those who make them and confide in them." And this was only inevitable, for those who gaze at the true God receive in themselves the properties of the divine nature, while those who attend to the vanity of idols are changed into what they behold and become stone instead of men. Since our nature had turned to stone by idol worship and had become frozen in the cold of idolatry, unable to advance, the Sun of Righteousness rose in this harsh winter and created spring. The south wind scattered the cold and with the rising of the sun's rays, it warmed the whole earth. Thus mankind, which had been turned into stone by the cold, might be warmed by the Spirit and by the J.148 rays of the Word and so became once again like "water leaping up into eternal life." "His wind will blow, and the waters will flow when the rock is changed into pools of water and the stone into springs of water."

The Baptist announced this clearly to the Jews when he M.868 said that the stones were being raised up to become children of the patriarch [Abraham] like him in virtue. The Church, therefore, hears this message from the Word by receiving the splendor of truth through the windows of the prophets and the lattices of the Law. Meanwhile the symbolic wall of teaching-I mean the Law-remained in place, forming a shadow of the good things to come. It did not show the actual image of these realities. The Truth stood behind it concealed in symbols. The Word's brightness first came to the Church through the prophets; afterwards, with the revelation of the Gospel, every shadowy appearance of symbol was destroyed and the wall in between was torn down. The air within the house was joined with the heavenly light; it was no longer necessary to have light through the windows because the true light fully illumined the interior by the beams of the Gospel. The Word cries out to his Church through the windows, exhorting it to raise up what has been J.149 thrown down, saying, "Arise, now from your fall, you who have slipped and fallen into sin. You were tripped by the serpent and fell to the ground in disobedience. Rise up!"

"It is not enough for you," the bridegroom says, "to arise from your fall, but you must advance through progress in the good to finish the course in virtue." We learn this from the Gospel example of the paralytic. Not only does the Word bid the paralytic to take up his pallet; he also orders him to walk. I think that this text signifies advancement and progress towards greater perfection. Christ thus says, "Arise and come." What power lies in this command! Truly the voice of God is this voice of power. The psalmist says, "Behold, he will give you his voice, the voice of power." Again, "He spoke and they were made. He commanded and they were created." See, too, how the bridegroom now says to his reclining bride, "Arise," then "come," and immediately his command becomes a reality. Simultaneously J.150 she receives the Word's power, stands, approaches him and draws near to the Light, as the Word testifies when he summons her and says, "Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove."

What is the order of the words here? How does each word relate to the other? How is the sequence of thought preserved unbroken in a kind of a chain? The bride hears the command, is strengthened by the Word, arises, comes forward, approaches, becomes beautiful and is called a dove. How can one behold a beautiful sight in a mirror unless the mirror has reflected the image of a beautiful form? Human nature is also mirror, and it was not beautiful until it drew near to Beauty and was transformed by the image of the divine loveliness. Human nature had the image of the serpent as long as it lay upon the earth and beheld its image. But now that human nature rose up, turned to face the good, and turned its back on evil, it was conformed to what it beheld [i.e., the archetypal beauty]. M.869 By drawing near to the light, human J.151 nature becomes light. In this light it takes on the beautiful form of a dove, I mean the dove which indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Word has spoken to the bride and called her "beautiful" due to her proximity to him and "dove" because of her beauty. The text now goes on to say that winter's sadness no longer reigns in our souls because the cold cannot withstand the sun's rays. "For behold, winter is past, the rain is gone; it has departed." The text attributes many names to evil according to its different effects: it is called winter, rain, drops of rain; each signifies a different kind of temptation. The word "winter" symbolizes a variety of evils. In winter what once has flourished now wastes away. The beautiful foliage which naturally adorns the trees falls off the branches and is mixed with the soil. The melody of the birds' music is silenced; the nightingale flees; the swallow sleeps and the turtledove forsakes its nest. Everything imitates death's sadness. The blossom dies and the grass perishes. Like bones stripped of their flesh, the branches are bare, a sorry sight when compared J.152 to their glorious flowering.

Think too of the awful things which happen to the sea in winter. Rising up from the depths, and swelling into peaks, it resembles mountains with the water mounting up into the form of steep precipices. The sea breaks out of its own domain and makes war on the land, lashing it with wave after wave as if with engines of war.

Now it seems to me that the effects of winter and everything like them have a figurative meaning. What is it that withers and wastes away at this season? What is it that falls from the branches and is absorbed into the earth? What is the silence of the birds? What are the swelling waves? What is the rain? The dripping of rain? How does the rain pass away? These elements show the symbolic meaning of winter as if it were animate and possessed freedom of choice.

Although I cannot now explain each of these points one by one, I think that their meaning is clear enough. Human nature initially flourished while it was in Paradise and was nourished by the water of the fountains there. Instead of J.153 leaves man had the blossom of immortality adorning his human nature, but when the winter of disobedience dried up the root, the flower was shaken off and fell to the ground. Man was stripped of the beauty of immortality, the grass of the virtues withered and the love of God grew cold through the multiplication of iniquity. Hence the various passions were raised to a crest by adverse winds, resulting in shipwreck for the soul.

But later there came one who brought spring to our souls. M.872 When an evil wind roused the sea, he rebuked the winds and said to the sea, "Be quiet, be still.". Everything became still and calm, and once again our nature began to bud and was adorned with its own flowers. The virtues are the flowers in our life, now blossoming and bearing fruit in their own season. Therefore the Word says, "...winter is past, the rain is gone; it has departed. The flowers are seen in the land; the time of pruning has arrived."

J.154 "Do you see," the bridegroom says, "the meadow blossoming with the virtues? Do you see chastity, that splendid, fragrant lily? Do you see the rose of modesty and the violet which is the good fragrance of Christ? Why, then, do you not fashion a crown from these? This is the season in which to pluck these flowers and plait them into crowns and to adorn yourself with them. 'The time of pruning has arrived.' " The turtledove's voice testifies to this, that is, the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." John is the turtledove. He is the forerunner of this radiant spring who points out to mankind the lovely flowers of virtue and offers them to whomever wishes to gather them. It was he who showed us the "flower from Jesse's root," the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" and showed us repentance of sin and life according to virtue. The text says, "The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land." It calls "land" those condemned in their vice, those whom the Gospel calls tax collectors and harlots, the ones who have heard John's voice while the rest did not accept his preaching. As for the fig, the Song says "the fig tree has put forth its young figs." We should understand the J.155 text as follows. The fig draws moisture from deep within the earth during hot weather. When a certain amount of liquid has collected within the tree, it rejects by a natural process through the ends of its branches what is superfluous and impure. This process is repeated over and over until the tree puts forth pure, nourishing fruit at the proper time, having been cleansed of every undesirable quality. Before producing sweet and perfect fruit, the fig tree puts forth a kind of forerunner called a "young fig" which is sometimes edible for those who wish to take it. However, it is not the fruit itself, but its prelude. Still, it gives some idea of what the fully grown fruit will be like, for the early figs, which the text says the tree has put forth, are a sign of the edible ones.

The Song describes the spiritual spring to the bride, a season between the gloom of winter and the joyful fruits of summer. For this reason it proclaims in great detail the passing of the evils (of winter), but does not yet openly reveal the perfect fruits of virtue. These it will dispense at the proper time when summer arrives. Surely you know what is meant M.873 by summer from the Lord's saying, "The harvest is the J.156 completion of the age." Now the text shows the hopes that bloom by means of virtue whose fruit, as the prophet says, comes forth in due season. Human nature is like the fig tree mentioned above, and it gathers evil moisture during the "winter" of the spirit. And so, he who brings the spiritual "spring" to us and tends to our growth, first casts out of our nature whatever is impure and superfluous--not through branches but through our confession. Then he adds to our life certain distinctive marks of the blessedness hoped for by proper living, just as he proclaims

the sweet figs to come by the young figs. And this is what is meant by: "The fig tree has put forth its young figs."

This is the meaning of the flourishing vine, whose wine gladdens the heart and will one day fill the cup of wisdom. It will be freely offered to those who drink from the exalted reaching to enjoy a good and sober inebriation. I mean that inebriation through which men pass ecstatically from the material to the divine realm. Now the J.157 vine blossoms through its buds and emits a fragrant odor, sweet and delicate, which is combined to make an all-encompassing aroma. You are well acquainted with this fragrance from St. Paul, and you know how it applies to those who are saved.

The Word shows these things to the bride as tokens of the beautiful springtime of the soul. Then he urges her to enjoy what is before her, and he spurs her on by saying, "Arise, come, my companion, my fair one, my dove." What great teaching the Word reveals in these few words! The inspired writer does not repeat this verse word for word for no reason at all. The very repetition indicates that there is a very important teaching here. What the Song says is this: The blessed, eternal nature surpassing all understanding contains all things in itself and is limited by nothing. For no name or concept can impose limits to it: not time, place, color, form, image, bulk, quantity, dimension or anything else. Every good conceived as belonging to God's nature is present in infinite and unbounded measure. For evil has no place and the good is boundless.

J.158 In changeable human nature, good and evil exist by turns because we have the capacity to choose either one of two contraries. As a result, the good in us alternates with the evil, and the evil becomes a limit on the good. All the activities of our souls, insofar as they are opposed, define and limit one another. On the other hand, the divine nature is simple, pure, of one kind, unmoved, unchangeable, always the same and always self-contained. Because it is incapable of M.876 fellowship with evil, it remains unlimited in the good. It recognizes no limits because it contains no opposites in itself. So, then, when God draws a human soul to participate in himself, he always remains in equal measure superior to the participating soul because of his superabundant goodness. On the one hand, the soul continually grows through participation in what is beyond it and never stops growing so that the more the soul participates in it, the more she recognizes that it transcends her as much as before.

We now see the bride being led by the Word up a rising staircase by the steps of virtue to the heights of perfection. J.159 First the Word sends her a ray of light through the windows of the prophets and the lattices of the Law. He exhorts her to draw near to the light and to become beautiful by being transformed into a dove's image in the light. The bride at this point partakes in the good as much as she can. Then he starts again to draw her to participate in a higher beauty as if she had never tasted it. As she progresses, her desire grows with each step; because there is always an unlimited good beyond what the bride has attained, she always seems to be just beginning her ascent.

Therefore the Word says once again to the bride whom he has awakened, "Arise." And when she has come to him he says, "Come." For one who has been called to rise in this way can always rise further, and one who runs to the Lord will always have wide open spaces before him. And so we must constantly rise and never cease drawing closer. As often as the bridegroom says "Arise" and "Come," he gives the power to ascend to what is better. Thus you must understand J.160 what follows in the text. When the bridegroom exhorts the bride who is already beautiful to become beautiful, he clearly recalls the words of the Apostle who bids the same image to be transformed "from glory to glory." By glory he means what we have grasped and found at any given moment. No matter how great and exalted that glory may be, we believe that it is less than that for which we still hope. Although she is a dove by what she had achieved, the bride is bidden to become a dove once again by being transformed into something better. If this happens, the text will show us something better by this name (dove).

"Come by yourself, my dove, in the shelter of the rock, near the wall." What is the ascent to perfection which these words indicate? No longer must we look to things that attract and excite us. We must take as our guide our own longing for what is better. He says, "Come by yourself"—not out M.877 of sadness or necessity, but by yourself, confirming your J.161 desire for the good by your own reason and not led by necessity. Virtue must be

uncoerced, voluntary and free of all necessity. This was the case with David who realized that of all his deeds only what he did freely was pleasing to God, and he promised to offer sacrifice voluntarily. So it is with all the saints who offer themselves freely to God and who are not led by necessity.

Now you too must show a perfect disposition for desiring to rise to what is better. Once this is accomplished, the bridegroom says that you will come into "the shelter of the rock near the wall." If we try to clarify what is expressed in the symbols, the meaning is as follows: there is one shelter for the human soul, the sublime Gospel. The person who is in this shelter does not need to be taught by types and symbols, for the truth clarifies the obscure message of the Law. No one understanding our faith would deny that the Gospel can be called a rock because in many places Scripture teaches that the Gospel is a rock.

Now this means, "If you, oh soul, have been practiced in the Law and have looked with your mind through the J.162 prophetic windows at the bright rays, no longer abide in the shadow of the wall. The wall casts a shadow of the future good; it does not provide a true image of reality. You must pass from the wall to the rock which is next to it. The rock is near the wall since the Law was a wall that protected the faith of the Gospel, and the teachings of the Law are closely related to those of the Gospel. What could be closer to "Do not commit adultery" than "Do not lust?" Also, what could be closer to being undefiled by murder than not to defile the heart by anger? Since the shelter of the rock lies close to the wall, your passage from the wall to the rock is short. There is circumcision in both the wall and the rock; there is a lamb in both, and blood, and a Pasch. So, too, for almost everything else, for they are all related to one another. However, the rock is spiritual while the wall is earthly, for it has been fashioned of our earthly clay. The rock of the Gospel, on the other hand, has no fleshly clay in its teaching. A man is "circumcised," but he remains whole and suffers no mutilation in his physical nature. He keeps the Sabbath by not committing sin and does J.163 not rest from doing good because he has learned that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Such a man takes food without discrimination, yet he touches nothing unclean. He is taught by the rock that "nothing entering through the mouth is impure." The rock rejects all the corporeal observances of the Law and elevates the meaning of the words to the spiritual and intellectual realm. As Paul says: "The Law is spiritual." For he who truly rejects the Law comes under the "shelter of the rock" of the Gospel which is near the material wall.

M.880 The Word cried out these words through the windows to his bride, and she, a dove, responds beautifully, having been illumined by a ray of comprehension and having recognized the rock that is Christ. She says, "Show me, your face, and let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your countenance is beautiful." The meaning of this verse is as follows: "No longer converse with me through the symbols of the prophets and the Law. That I may see, show yourself openly that I may come within the rock of the Gospel and leave behind the wall of Law. That I may hear let your voice resound in my ears. If your voice is so sweet through J.164 the prophetic windows, how much more lovable will be the sight of you face to face!

The bride comprehended the mystery in the rock of the Gospel to which the Word led her by many and various ways while he was at the windows. Now she desires his appearance in the flesh that the Word may become flesh and God may be seen in the flesh and speak about the divine promises of eternal happiness for those who are worthy. Notice how the words of Simeon agree with the bride's wish: "Now you may dismiss your servant, Lord, in peace according to your word. Because my eyes have seen your salvation." Simeon saw just as the bride desired to see. Those who have received Christ's sweet voice recognize the grace of the Gospel and exclaim: "You have the words of eternal life."

The pure bridegroom receives the just petition of his bride and is about to show himself openly. First he exhorts the hunters to catch the foxes to prevent them from spoiling the vines. "Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines." J.165 The vines will flourish if what destroys them is removed. "Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes." It is possible then, to do justice to the nobility of these thoughts? What marvel of divine greatness does the text contain? What effect of divine power underlies the meaning of the text? These words of the Song are spoken of that murderer, powerful in evil, whose tongue is a sharpened razor, of which the prophet says, "The sharpened arrows of the Mighty, with coals that devastate;" and "He lies in secret as a lion in his den." He is the great serpent, the apostate, hell with his mouth wide open, the ruler of the powers of darkness who has power over death. He is this and all the other things which the prophecies say

about him. He destroyed the boundaries between nations which had been clearly established by the Most High M.881 according to the number of his angels. He seized the world as one would a bird's nest. He carried it off as eggs from its nest. He said that he would place his throne above the clouds and be J.166 like the Most High. What the book of Job says of him is fearful and terrifying: his sides are brass, his back is molten iron, his entrails are of emery stone—all that and more Scripture says of him. This is the great and mighty commander of the demonic legions. But what does the sole, true power call him? A little fox! And all those who the devil, his entire host, are ridiculed. God calls them by the same name and urges the hunters on against them. Perhaps these hunters could be the angelic powers who escort the Lord when he appears upon earth. They go with the King of Glory into the world and manifest him to those who do not know him. "Who is this king of glory? He who is mighty and strong in battle." These hunters might also be the "spirits who are sent to minister to those who are about to inherit salvation." Or perhaps they are the holy apostles J.167 sent to hunt these beasts. The Lord said to them, "I will make you fishers of men." For they could not accomplish their task of fishing for men, capturing the souls of those who are being saved in the net of their words, unless they have first cast out these beasts from their lairs unless they had cast out those little foxes from men's hearts where they hid. Once the little foxes were no longer lurking in the dens of men's hearts, the apostles made a place for the Son of Man "where he might lay his hand."

Whoever the hunters may be according to the text, from the commands given them we learn the ineffable greatness of the divine power. For God does not say, "Hunt the wild boar of the forest which devastates God's vine, nor the solitary wild boar, nor the raging lion, nor the great whale, nor the serpent of the deep." The Word would show his hunters what power our adversaries have by such names as these. Instead he says that all these earthly powers against which we fight—the principalities and powers, the cosmic forces of darkness, the evil spirits—are all "little foxes," wretched and miserable creatures in comparison with your power. If J.168 you are victorious over such powers, you will win a grace that will be your own. The vine of our human nature will begin to hem clusters of grapes and the flowers of a life of virtue. "Catch the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines put forth tender grapes."

The vine has hearkened to the divine command like the woman of whom David says, "Your wife is as a fruitful vine." She beheld herself cleansed from the destructive power of these beasts by the power of him who commanded her, and she immediately committed herself to the husbandman who has taken down the intervening wall. No longer can the wall of the Law separate her from union with the one she desires. She says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds M.884 his flock among the lilies. Until the day dawns, and the shadows flee." That is, "I knew him face to face, the one who exists from eternity, and for my sake he rose up in human form from my sister the synagogue. In him I rest and I am his dwelling." For he is the good shepherd who J.169 pastures the flock not with grass, but nourishes his sheep with pure lilies. Truly they no longer feed on grass; grass is the proper nourishment for irrational beasts. Since man is rational, he is nourished by the true Word. But if man is satisfied with such grass, he will become grass: "All flesh is grass" as long as it is flesh. However, if a person becomes spirit being born from Spirit, no longer does he graze upon grass but his nourishment is the Spirit which the lily's purity and fragrance symbolize. He will be a pure and fragrant lily, having been changed into the substance of the good he eats. This is the day which has poured forth its rays, rather, it has "breathed forth," for the divine voice calls this diffusion of rays effected by the Spirit an "exaltation." By its light the shadows of life are removed. It is these shadows chased after J.170 by those who have not had the eye of their soul enlightened by the light of truth. They regard shadow and vanity as real, and true being they regard as non-existent. But those who are nourished by the lilies, that is, persons whose souls are fattened by a pure and fragrant nourishment, have rid themselves of every deceitful and shadowy appearance which people strive for in this life. They have become sons of light and day and will see the true substance of things.

The bride beholds these things and urges the Word to hasten the realization of her hopes: "Turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of the ravines." "Look as a gazelle which sees the thoughts of men and reads their hearts. Blot out the offspring of vice as a young stag destroys a serpent. You see the hollow mountains of man's life which are valleys more than ridges." Therefore the Word runs quickly upon the mountains which have J.171 become valleys, for whatever exalts itself against the truth is not a mountain but a pit, a ravine and not a height. If you run upon these, he says, "every valley will be filled and every mountain

shall be brought low." This is what the soul says whom the Word nourishes not on thorns or grass but on the good fragrance of the lilies of a pure life. May we too be filled and nourished on these same lilies by the Word, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

+

The Sixth Homily

Phl 3.13: But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

The verb for "forgetting" is *epilanthano*, literally a forgetting upon (*epi-*), the preposition suggestive of intensification, that the past is forgotten completely.

Sg 3.1-4: (bride seeks her beloved).

This relatively short homily begins with a whole series of quotes from the Song which have been mentioned earlier though not in such concentration.

Sg 1.9: I have compared you, my love, to my cavalry facing the chariots of Pharaoh.

This incident on Mt. Sinai came not long after Israel had left Egypt in dramatic fashion through the Red Sea. Ps 68 celebrates this victory by mentioning the Lord's own chariots when he came into his "holy place" or *qodesh*. Sixteen quotes from the Song now follow, the largest amount in Gregory's **Commentary** at one time.

Sg 1.10: Why are your cheeks beautiful as those of a turtledove, your neck as small necklaces?

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

Sg 1.13: My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh; he shall lie between my breasts.

Sg 1.14: My beloved is to me a cluster of cypress in the vineyards of En-Gadi.

Sg 1.16: Behold, you are fair, my beloved and beautiful, overshadowing our bed.

Sg 1.17: The beams of our house are cedars, our paneling is of cypress.

Sg 2.2: As a lily among thorns, so is my sister among the daughters.

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

Sg 2.4: Bring me into the house of wine, set love before me.

Sg 2.5-6: Strengthen me with perfumes, stay me with apples, for I am wounded with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me.

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

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

Sg. 2.9: My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bethel. Behold, he stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peeping through the lattices.

Sg 2.10-14: (Bridegroom says that winter is past).

Sg 2.14: Come, by yourself, 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 countenance is beautiful.

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

Sg 2.16: My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

Ps 84.7: They go from strength to strength.

Chyl is the noun for "strength" and can apply to ability and integrity. Such *chyl* can apply to the runners in the next two verses competing for the "prize" or *brabeion*, usually a wreath to be put on the winner's head. This running is to be done with "perseverance" or *hupomone*, literally, a standing-under.

1Cor 9.24: Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

"Receives and obtain:" *lambano* used twice, the second with the preposition *kata* (in accord with) prefaced to it.

Heb 12.1: Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Hupomone is the noun for "perseverance" literally meaning a standing or remaining under (*hupo-*).

Dt 6.5: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and with all your might.

Ahav is the verb for "love" and connotes a longing or sighing after, here with respect to God or literally "in" one's heart, soul and mind, the last reading literally "in all your excessiveness" (*me'od*).

Ex 20.21: And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

A contrast between “afar of and drew near:” *merachok* and *nagash*.

Ps 18.11: His canopy thick clouds dark with water.

Sukah means “canopy” which also refers to a booth, a temporary dwelling.

Phl 2.9: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

“Exalted” or *huperupsoo* with the preposition *huper* (above) used again separately; i.e., two uses of the same preposition. The same idea is in the next verse, “far above” or *huperano*.

Eph 1.21: Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named.

Sg 3.1: I called him, and he did not answer me.

The Hebrew text lacks this sentence.

Col 1.16: For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth.

Note two uses of prepositions: *en* and *epi*. The first pertains to heaven (also regarding Christ) and the second to earth.

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

“Have come” or *proserchomai*, the preposition *pros* suggestive of direction towards-which and therefore ongoing.

Lk 2.13: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.

Exaiphnes or “suddenly” is comprised of the root *aphno* (same meaning) prefaced with the preposition *ex* (from), suggestive of greater suddenness, if you will.

Dan 7.10: A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

Served and standing: two functions of the court to the “ancient of days,” the nature of which is not specified but perhaps angels.

Sg 3.4: When I passed them by a little.

The “a little” is suggestive of the preposition *min* (from) or literally “from them.”

Sg 3.1-4: (Bride seeking her beloved).

Sg 2.2: As a lily among thorns, so is my sister among the daughters.

Sg 3.6: Who is this who comes up from the wilderness as pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the perfumer?

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.

Metamorphoo, literally to change-after, to bring a form (*morphe*) after (*meta*), if you will, or into a new state, and that is an eternal dynamic, not static.

Sg 1.8: If you do not know yourself, fair one among women, go by the footsteps of the flocks and feed your kids by the shepherds' tents.

Sg 1.11: We will make for you figures of gold with studs of silver.

Ps 63.2: My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where no water is.

“Faints” or *shachar* connotes a breaking forth.

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

“Earthly” is rendered as *ta mele ta epi tes ges* or “limbs upon the earth.”

Rom 6.4: We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death.

The preposition *dia* is used with baptism, literally “through baptism.” In the next verse the preposition *en* or “in” is used.

Col 2.12: And you were buried with him in baptism.

Jn 12.7: Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial.

Aphiemi or “let (her) alone” refers to Mary anointing Jesus. He would have said the same to Nicodemus in the next verse as well who did more than anoint Jesus' dead body.

Jn 19.39: Nicodemus...came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight.

2Cor 2.14-6: (disciples as aroma of Christ).

Apostles as aroma are applicable in two ways: people being saved and people perishing, both in the present tense which means a certain insight into their condition, both of which can change. Christ is an offering which is “fragrant” *euodia* or a noun meaning a pleasant (*eu-*) scent.

Sg 3.7-8: Behold, Solomon's bed; sixty mighty men of the mighty ones of Israel are round it. They all hold a sword, being expert in war. Every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear by night.

The sixty soldiers comprising Solomon's bodyguard may apply to the implements of the temple such as the lavers of the ten stands on the south and north sides of the temple in the next section. The four supports in the verse afterwards relative to the "molten sea" (vs. 23). This verse is found several lines below.

1Kg 7.38-50: (pillars and vessels of the temple made by Solomon).

1Kg 7.34: There were four supports at the four corners of each stand; the supports were of one piece with the stands.

1Kg 10.14-29: (gold vessels for Solomon).

Rom 7.5: While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

"Living" is not in the text but the verb "to be." The verb for "aroused" is *energeo* or literally to work in.

Rom 7.18: For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.

"(Nothing) good and flesh" here are equivalent, the connotations of the adjective *agathos* as that which is best and noblest and thus close to the concept of *arete* or virtue.

Rom 7.23: But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind.

Nomos or "law" is suggestive of custom and habituated action, "another" one being hostile to "mind" or *nous*, also as understanding.

Rom 8.7: For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.

Compare *phronema* or "mind" with *nous* just above, more as spirit, purpose or resolution.

2Cor 10.4: For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

Sarkikos is the adjective for "worldly" which more literally translates as of the flesh which contrasts with the adjective *dunatos* or having capacity (*dunamis*).

Rom 13.12: The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Night = "far gone" and day = "at hand" or *propokpto* (to put forward) and *eggizo* (to be near).

Ps 11.2: To shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.

Yashar is the adjective for "upright" which fundamentally means to be straight.

Sg 3.8: They all hold a sword, being expert in war. Every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear by night.

Ex 12.9: Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted.

Instructions with regard to eating the Paschal lamb.

Num 9.12: They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break a bone of it.

A verse used with regard to Jesus on the cross in Jn 19.36, the verb being *suntribo* or literally to rub together.

Jn 5.39: You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life.

The verb for "search" relative the scriptures is *ereunao* which connotes making an investigation.

Compare this verse with the positive sense of the numerous references in Ps 119 or the keeping of the Torah which may be taken as a different aspect of this searching, more along the lines of feeling as in hugging closely.

Num 17.2: Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them rods, one for each fathers' house.

Mateh is the word for "rods" which are twelve in number, one for each of Israel's tribes which pertains to a staff.

Jos 4.2-9: (crossing of Jordan River).

This and the next set of references occur at the beginning of the Book of Joshua and pertain to the beginning of the possession of Canaan after having wandered in the Sinai wilderness. The first begins with crossing the Jordan, an image of the Red Sea which Israel has crossed some forty years earlier. The second pertains to circumcision. While carrying this out Joshua must have had in mind Dt 10.16: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart."

Jos 5.2-9: (second circumcision).

Ex 23.1: You shall not join hands with a wicked man, to be a malicious witness.

"Wicked and malicious" or *rashah* and *chamas*. The former connotes unrighteousness and the latter violence.

Ps 104.20-1: You made darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey.

Ramas is the verb for "creep forth," often applied to what lives in the ocean as in Gn 1.21.

Rom 9.6: But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

Ekpipto is the verb for “had failed” or literally, to fall out (*ek-*).

Mt 6.24: No one can serve two masters.

Douleo as “serve” suggests more being enslaved to a master or *kurios*.

Lk 16.13: (cf. vs. above).

Mt 5.8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Katharos means “pure” and suggests having been cleared of something.

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

Panoplia as “whole armor” also applies to shield and sword.

1Cor 10.16: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?

“Blessing and bless” or *eulogia* and *eulogeo* have the root *logos* or word as expression as their root.

Eph 5.30: Because we are members of his body.

Melos as “members” refers to physical limbs and also can apply to a song, especially of lyric poetry.

Lk 11.7: Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed.

“Bother” is rendered such by two words, the verb *parecho* (to have beside, *para-*) and *kopos*, literally as a striking...to have beside a striking, if you will.

2Cor 6.7: With the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left.

Hoplōn or “weapons” can apply to any instrument or tool.

The Song of Songs, 3:1-8

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. I called him, but he did not hear me. I will rise now, and go about in the city, in the marketplaces, and in the streets, and I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen who go their round in the city found me. "Have you seen him who my soul loves?" It was a little while after I passed them, that I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and did not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me. I have charged you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and by the virtues of the field, that you do not rouse nor awake love until it pleases. Who is this who comes up from the wilderness as pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the perfumer? Behold Solomon's bed; sixty mighty men of the mighty ones of Israel are round about it. They all hold a sword, being expert in war: every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear by night.

J.172 & M.885 Once again we obtain some great, lofty teachings in the J.173 us by examples taken from her own experience, namely, of the necessity to teach lovers of transcendent beauty about God. We now learn what she means (I believe we must first draw out the sense contained in the text and then accommodate the divinely inspired words to what we examined earlier). If I may put it in a few words, the teaching presented to us says that creation is divided into two distinct classes, one sensible and material, the other being intelligible and spiritual. The sensible is grasped by sense, while the intelligible transcends sensible comprehension. The intelligible is infinite and unbounded, while the material is limited, for everything material is determined by quantity and quality. Anything with mass, form, appearance and shape limits our understanding so that the person who examines material creation can perceive nothing beyond these bounds through his imagination.

The intelligible and spiritual is free from constraint; it J.174 escapes limitation and is circumscribed by nothing. Furthermore, a spiritual nature has two aspects. First, the uncreated or Creator of beings always remains what it is, and always being itself; it does not admit an increase or diminution with respect to the good. The second aspect comes into existence through creation and always looks back to its first cause. By participation in the transcendent, it continually remains stable in the good; in a certain sense, it is always being created while ever changing for the better in its growth in perfection. Neither is it limited, nor can it be circumscribed in its growth towards the good; however, its present state of goodness, even if especially great and perfect, is only the beginning of a more transcendent, better stage. The Apostle's words are thus M.888 verified: stretching out to what lies before is related to forgetfulness of earlier accomplishments. The good which is superior to the one already attained holds the attention of those participating in it while not allowing them to look at the past; by enjoying what is more worthy, their memory of inferior things is blotted out.

J.175 This is the sense of the bride's words, but it is time to first recall the divinely inspired text and then adapt to it what we had previously examined: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. I called him, but he did not hear me. I will rise now and go about in the city, in the marketplaces, and in the streets, and I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen who go their rounds in the city found me. 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' It was a little white I held him, and did not let him go, until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me."

How, then, can we find here the text's spiritual sense as we had done with regard to other passages? We saw that each of the bride's earlier ascents had a meaning: she always made progress and never remained in the good attained as when she was compared to a horse which overthrew the Egyptian tyrant. The bride was compared to chains and a necklace, an J.176 ornament round the neck. Not being satisfied with these, she presses on to what is still higher. Through sweet nard she recognizes the divine fragrance; she does not stop here but takes what she desires and suspends it between her spiritual breasts like a fragrant sachet. Placed in the space of her heart, it issues divine teachings.

Next the bride brings forth a piece of fruit, the husbandman himself, calling him a cluster of grapes while she gives forth a sweet, delicate scent through her blossoms. In her growth through these ascents, the bride is called beautiful; she becomes the bridegroom's companion, and the beauty of her eyes is compared to a dove's. The bride goes even further; her vision is clearer, and she carefully considers the Word's beauty; she marvels how he descended in a shadowy form upon the bed of this life here below, and has been shaded over by the material nature of a human body.

The bride then describes the house of virtue. Its roof is J.177 made of cedar and cypress not susceptible to decay or corruption. By these terms she explains her stable, unswerving attitude for the good. Next she shows by a comparison her M.889 change for the better, appearing as a lily among thorns. Once again she discerns a difference between her bridegroom and others, for she calls him an apple in the midst of unfruitful trees adorned with the fresh fruit of spring. She comes under her bridegroom's shadow, enters his house, is supported by fragrances, is propped up by apples, receives his chosen arrow in her heart through a sweet wound and becomes an arrow once again in an archer's hands. With his left hand he aims the arrow's tip to the target above while his right hand draws the arrow back to himself.

Then, as if the bride has already attained perfection, she tells the other companions of her ardent desire and excites their love by an oath. Who would not say that the soul exalted to such a height has reached the limit of perfection? But the end J.178 of the bride's advancements becomes a beginning for further advancement. All these examples are like voices summoning the soul to contemplate the [heavenly] mysteries. The bride begins to see her desired bridegroom, but he appears to her eyes in another form, a roe and a young hart. Neither is the bridegroom within our vision, nor does he appear in the same place, but he leaps upon the mountains, bounding from the high summits to little hills.

Once again the bride is established in a better state when a second call comes to her urging her to forsake the wall's shadow and go into open sunlight, to take her rest upon the rock's shelter near the wall, to delight in the spring, to gather beautiful flowers ready to be cut at the time of full blossom and anything else this season yields for enjoyment with the melodious voices of the birds. Through all these things the bride becomes even more perfect saying that she is worthy to openly see her spouse's face and to listen to him directly instead of through intermediaries.

It is right for the soul to be glad since she has reached in her lofty ascent the summit of her desires. For what greater happiness can be conceived of than to see God? But this limit J.179 of her attainment is the beginning of her hope for what lies beyond. Again she hears her spouse exhorting the hunters to save the spiritual vines and to pursue the beasts--those little foxes--laying waste their fruit. Once this is accomplished, the two spouses are united: God is in the soul, and the soul once again dwells in God. The bride says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his who feed among the lilies," the same one who has transformed human life from shadowy phantasms

to the supreme truth. Observe the height to which the bride ascends, going from strength to strength, as the prophet says and appearing to have obtained the summit of her hope. What can be higher M.892 than being in the beloved and having him in oneself? The bride is perplexed and distressed because she does not have the object of her desire, and she makes known her soul's anxiety by describing how she found the object of her search.

By a contemplation of the words before us, we are clearly J.180 taught not to limit the greatness of God's nature. Neither can any measure of knowledge limit the comprehension of our objective and prevent us from moving further on. But the mind running on high through its understanding of transcendent reality should realize that all perfection of knowledge attainable by human nature is only the beginning of a desire for more lofty things. Diligently consider what is offered for our examination and be mindful that the description of the bridal chamber and marital elements is material for contemplation. Their meaning is transferred to a pure and spiritual level by which the text presents us doctrines. Therefore the text says that the bride is the soul; God is called a bridegroom whom the soul loves with her whole heart, soul and strength. J.181 Having reached, as she thought, the summit of her hope, and already thinking that she is united to her beloved, the bride calls "bed" this more perfect participation in the good and calls "night" the time of darkness. By "night" the bride shows us the contemplation of what is unseen and like Moses, she is in the darkness of God's presence]. Of him the prophet says, "He has placed darkness as a concealment round about him."

Having attained this, the bride is taught that, far from attaining perfection, she has not even come near to it. "Now that I have become worthy of these realities, I am resting upon the bed of all I have thus understood. When I enter the invisible realm after having forsaken sensual perception, I am embraced by the divine night, and I seek him hidden in the cloud. Then did I love my desired one, even though He escaped my thoughts. For 'I sought him on my bed at night' that I might know his substance, beginning and end, and in what his being consists but I did not find him.' I called him by name as far as it was in my power to find him who lacks a name, yet the meaning of a name would not help me attain him whom I sought."

J.182 & M.893 How can he who transcends every name be discovered by a name? She says, "'I called him, and he did not answer me.' I knew then that the greatness of his glory and sanctity has no end." Therefore, the bride rises again and goes about in spirit through the spiritual, transcendent realm which she calls a "city" where there are principalities, dominations and thrones assigned to powers. She calls a "marketplace" the solemn assembly of the heavenly host and names "streets" a multitude beyond counting as if in these she can find her beloved. While the bride went about all these places, she scrutinized the entire angelic rank. Not having seen him whom she sought among these good things, she reasoned with herself, "Can my beloved be comprehended? And she says to them, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' " They kept silent, signifying that the one sought after is incomprehensible. After the bride passed throughout that transcendent J.183 city and did not perceive her love among immaterial and spiritual beings, she forsakes everything she has found. She realizes that her sought-after love is known only in her impossibility to comprehend his essence and that every sign becomes a hindrance to those who seek him. Therefore the bride says, "'When I passed them by a little,' I left every creature and passed by every intelligible being in creation; having forsaken every manner of comprehension, I found my beloved by faith. No longer will I let him go once found by faith until he comes within my chamber." The "chamber" is indeed the heart which becomes an acceptable dwelling of God when it returns to that state which it had in the beginning made by "her who conceived me." We would be correct by understanding "mother" as the first cause of our being.

It is time to state once again the divine words so that they may agree with what is now under consideration: J.184 "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. I called him, but he did not hear me. I will rise now and go about in the city, in the marketplaces, and in the streets, and I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I did not find him. The watchmen who go their rounds in the city found me. 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' It was a little while after I passed them that I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and did not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me."

After these words the bride speaks lovingly to the daughters of Jerusalem whom the text had earlier called

"thorns" when comparing the bride to a lily. By an oath of M.896 the "powers" in the world she makes the daughters rise to an equal measure of love so that the bridegroom's will might be fulfilled in them. What was stated above is the world in which are "virtues" and "powers" and the will of a person J.185 loving with his whole heart and soul. We have no need to speak at length of these matters, for we have sufficiently examined the sense of these words. If we can somehow ascend with the perfect dove flying to the heights, we can hear the voice of the bridegroom's friends marveling at his ascent from the desert. He creates an especially great astonishment for those seeing him since the desert itself produced it as in imitation of beautiful trees cultivated in the desert by the smoke of incense. This incense was myrrh and frankincense. By their smoke something like a cloud rises from the ground-up particles of spices. It ascends, so that in place of dust mingled with air, we have a subtle diffusion of fragrances forming an upright, high cloud of dust.

The Song now reads, "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness as pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the perfumer?" If anyone should carefully pay attention to these words, he will find the truth of what we have already set forth. In J.186 theatrical displays those acting the designated plot are reckoned as other persons because they change their appearances by a variety of masks. The actor appearing now as a slave or a private citizen is seen a little later as a prince and a soldier; taking off the role of a commoner, he becomes a commander or is clothed with the garb of a king. Thus it is among persons advancing in virtue; being transformed from glory to glory, they do not always remain in the same character but according to the degree of perfection established in each person, a different character will shine in their lives: a different one succeeds the other because of their increase in the good.

The bridegroom's friends are astonished at what they behold. At first they perceive the bride as beautiful but beautiful as a woman; later they glorify her loveliness by comparing it to gold with studs of silver. They no longer gaze at her previous characteristics but attribute to her a greater sublimity; not only do they marvel at her ascent but the depth from which she arose. This is what constitutes the intensity of their amazement: she alone is seen ascending and is J.187 compared to grove of trees, for a pillar is though to be seen rising from the desert and becoming larger. The nourishment of this pillar is not fertile, irrigated land but a parched, arid wasteland. Where are these pillars rooted, and how do they grow? The roots are the perfumes' powders irrigated by M.897 the smoke of incense bedewing this grove with its fragrance. The text abounds with such praise of the bride. The bride's companions ask each other about her as if she appeared in a form different from her first one. The praise with respect to her progress in virtue is especially perfect, testifying to her great change and transformation for the better.

Those amazed at the unusual manner her form has blossomed say that this is her coming up from the desert whom we first saw as black. How has the bride washed off her dark form? How does her face now gleam as fallen snow? It seems that the desert caused these things and made her shoot rise J.188 up and change into such beauty. For not by accident nor by chance did she run on high, but she obtained her beauty by her own efforts through continence and diligence. Thus did the prophet's soul thirst for the divine spring: because his flesh was like an arid, unwatered desert, he has this divine thirst. The bride's ascent from the desert testifies that she rose to such a height through her diligence and continence to make her spouse's friends marvel. They tell of her beauty through many images because not even one of them can adequately express it. They first compare her beauty to pillars. She is compared not to just one tree but to a multitude of trees as if her varied, manifold virtues can be described by a grove.

Next the bride's beauty is compared to the smoke of incense; not simply this, but incense mixed with myrrh and frankincense as if her beauty can only be described by the combination of these two fragrances. Another praise comes J.189 from the mixture of these fragrances: myrrh is used for burying the dead whereas frankincense in a certain sense is consecrated for God's honor. Whoever is about to dedicate himself to God's worship cannot wholly be frankincense consecrated to God unless he first becomes myrrh, that is, unless he mortifies his members on earth by having been buried with him who experienced death for us, and by taking that myrrh used for the Lord in the tomb for mortifying his members in his own flesh. Once this has been accomplished, every perfume from virtue in life's course is ground into a fine material to produce that sweet powder. Whoever inhales it becomes fragrant and filled with the spirit of the perfume.

After bearing witness to the bride's loveliness, the bridegroom's friends who prepare a pure wedding chamber and J.190 are escorts for the chaste bride, show her the beauty of the M.900 royal bed because they want to excite in her a desire for the divine, immaculate marriage. This is the description of the royal wedding bed offered to the bride in the Song: "Behold, Solomon's bed; sixty mighty men of the mighty ones of Israel are round about it. They all hold a sword, being expert in war. Every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear by night." Because history does not mention this bed, its meaning might become clear through the physical objects written about Solomon: his rule, table, and other things which the text describes in detail. Nothing new or unusual is said regarding the bed. We do not have to stay with the text's literal meaning, but by more careful consideration we should shift our attention from the material appearances to a spiritual contemplation.

Who was adorned about the nuptial bed by sixty armed men trained in the fearful deeds of war? What are the swords fastened at their sides, J.191 the terror they strike into our dark thoughts? (For the text tells of a frightful terror resulting from certain nocturnal fears, and this refers to the armed soldiers.) The sense of these words must be examined in consequence of what we said earlier. What then is their meaning? Perhaps the loveliness of the divine beauty has something fearful about it as characterized by elements contrary to corporeal beauty. Hence, what attracts our desire is pleasant to the sight, soft to the touch and not associated with anything fearful or terrifying. On the other hand, that incorruptible beauty is fearful, terrifying and not easily frightened. Since our desire for carnal things in the body's members is subject to desire for carnal things in the body's members is subject to the mind, captivates it and carries away the will. Therefore it becomes God's enemy; as the Apostle says, the wisdom of the flesh arises from what is inimical to God. It J.192 follows that the love of God arises from what is opposed to carnal desire. If carnal desire consists of weakness, laxity, and laziness, the love of God is made up of a fearful, terrifying fortitude. An unrelenting anger scares and puts to flight the ambush resulting from pleasure, thus revealing the soul's beauty as pure and no longer sullied by a desire for carnal pleasure. The king's nuptial bed is therefore surrounded by armed men expert in battle. The sword at the thigh terrorizes and causes fear against dark, nocturnal thoughts and against those who lie in ambush to shoot arrows in the darkness at the upright of heart.

M.901 The weapons of those standing guard around the bed destroy impure desires which is clear from the text, "They are expert in war; every man has his sword upon his thigh." They truly know how to wage war against flesh and blood with swords fastened on their thighs. The person familiar with J.193 scriptural concepts and mysteries understands this from the term "thigh" and knows that the sword signifies the Word. He who has girded himself with this fearful weapon--I mean the sword of temperance--is the beloved lying upon his incorruptible bed, one of "the mightily ones of Israel" worthy to be numbered among the sixty. We have no doubt that this number has a mystical significance, but it is clear to those alone whom the Spirit's grace reveals his hidden mysteries. We rightly say that the literal understanding of the text suffices as in the case of Moses who legislated for the Pasch. Visible flesh is eaten while the obscurity in the bones is left hidden. If anyone desires the text's hidden marrow, let him seek it from the One who reveals the hidden mysteries to those who are worthy. Nevertheless, we should not give the impression of leaving the text unexamined nor of neglecting God's precept exhorting us to search the scriptures. Let J.194 us now consider what pertains to these sixty armed men. At God's bidding Moses received twelve rods in accord with the number of Israel's tribes, but one which blossomed was found more worthy than the rest. Again, Joshua, son of Nun, took stones from the Jordan River, the same number as the tribes of Israel. Not one was rejected, but all equally bore witness to the mystery that occurred at the Jordan.

The significance of these words is great, for the text shows that the people made progress in perfection. In the beginning of their legislation, one rod was found living and blossoming while the rest were rejected as dry and barren. When time had passed and the people had become more diligent in understanding the Law's precepts, they understood and accepted the second circumcision instituted by Joshua], for the stone knife cut away everything unclean (The perceptive listener will certainly grasp the significance of the rock and knife). As the life of virtue according to the Law was strengthened in the people, not one of the stones with the name of the Israelite tribes was rejected. Since we expect J.195 an increase of the good with time's progression, the virtue of Israel indeed became stronger. The Song of Songs now tells us that a stone or a rod is not taken from each of the tribes of Israel. Instead, we have five warriors expert in battle from M.904 the "mighty ones of Israel" bearing swords standing around the divine bed. None, therefore, are rejected because the choice of each tribe is

five: five multiplied by twelve, gives us the number sixty. It is necessary, then, to have five fearful men from each tribe armed as guards for the royal bed. If this were not possible, we would not have the number of sixty.

How can we dare to consider the rest of this text? Why are there five armed men from each tribe guarding the royal bed? How does each of these five armed warriors become a fearful adversary with his sword at his thigh? Is it not clear that one man is the same as these five armed warriors? They J.196 symbolize each of the five senses, for each warrior exposes his sword to terrorize the enemy. The sword of the eye always looks upon the Lord to see correctly and is never defiled by the sight of anything unclean. Likewise, the sword of hearing listens to the divine precepts and never receives a vain word. Similarly, we can arm taste, touch and smell by the sword of temperance, sheathing each of the senses in armor. They defend us against the shock and panic of our dark enemies since night and darkness is the time when plots are hatched against our souls. The prophet says that at this time the beasts of the field are intent upon making their wicked food from God's flocks. "You have made darkness, and it was night; in it all the wild beasts of the forest go out; the young lions roar after their prey."

Israel, therefore, represents all the saved (for "not all Israelites are from Israel" but only those who look J.197 towards God are rightly called this name by reason of their title). The person looking towards God does not pay attention to sin with his senses. (No one can regard two masters, but he must hate one if he is to love the other). Therefore the one bed of the king is for all who are saved. If the pure of heart will see God, they are rightly called Israel. This name for the twelve tribes is, in a mystical sense, marvelously summed up by the number sixty. One warrior taken from each of the twelve is divided into five according to the number of the senses. Therefore all who have put on the divine armor surround the king's bed and are one Israel. Because the twelve M.905 tribes are the most valiant, the full number of these valiant men comes to the sum of sixty. There is one battle-line, one army, one bed, that is, one Church and one people who will J.198 become one bride united in harmony in the fellowship of one body under one commander, one leader, and one bridegroom.

On the other hand, the bed signifies rest for the saved. We learn from the Lord who says to the one shamelessly knocking on the door at night, "The door is already shut, and my children are with me in bed." Rightly does he call "children" those who have achieved a state free from passion through the weapons of justice. By this example we are instructed that the good attained by our own diligence is none other than the one implanted in our nature at the beginning. When a person has his sword girded upon his thigh by devoting his life to virtue, he has rejected passion and becomes a child undisturbed by passion; the state of infancy is not subject to passion. Therefore the lesson of these warriors about the royal bed and the children in bed have one meaning: both are free from passion, the children have not experienced it while the warriors have driven it away. The children have not known passion, while the warriors have returned to their first state by becoming children through J.199 freedom from passion. Blessedness is found in all three: the child, warrior and Israelite. As an Israelite, he sees God with a pure heart; as a warrior, he guards the king's bed, that is, his own heart, in a state free from passion and in purity; as a child, he rests upon the couch of blessedness in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

+

The Seventh Homily

Heb 7.2: He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

Hermeneuo is the verb for "translation" which means to interpret, that is, referring to Melchizedek.

1Kg 5.9-10: (Hiram supplies Solomon with rafters).

The rafters consist of cedar and cypress for the temple at Jerusalem.

1Kg 10.1-13: (Visit of queen of Sheba to Solomon).

Vs. 5 says that for the queen "there was no more spirit (*ruach*) in her after having seen Solomon's wealth and having listened to his wisdom.

1Cor 10.11: Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they written down for our instruction.

"Warning" is the adverb *tupikos* which means by way of example.

Eph 2.16: And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross.

“Reconcile” or *apokatalasso*: two prepositions, *apo* and *kata* or from and according to which brings an end to “hostility” or *echthra* (enemy).

Col 2.14: Having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Exaleipho for “canceled” means literally to wash out (*ex-*) or to blot out entirely from memory.

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

Luo is the verb for “has broken down” which is more a loosening as by dissolving.

Eph 2.15: 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.

Compare the dissolving action of *luo* in the last verse with *katargeo* or “abolishing,” the verb *ergo* (to shut in) prefaced with the preposition *kata* (in accord with or suggestive of anything down).

Eph 2.17: And he came and preached peace to those who were far off and peace to those who were near.

A quote from Is 57.19 suggestive of preaching at home and abroad, *euaggelizomai*, *eu-* suggestive of that which is done well.

Eph 2.20: Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

The verb for “builds” is *epoikodomeo* with the root *oikos* (house) and verb *demo* (to build, construct), prefaced with the preposition *epi* (upon). Both apostles and prophets are “living stones” as in the next verse and using the verb *epoikodomeo*.

IPt 2.5: And like living stones be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.

Zach 9.16 (LXX): For holy stones are rolled upon his land.

Eph 2.21: In whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Sunarmologeo for “joined together” applies to all the pieces (mostly stone) laid out before they are assembled. This assembly is organic, *auxano*, “grows.”

1Kg 5.9-10: (cf. above).

Col 1.16: Whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

These four comprise heavenly or spiritual powers used with regard to Christ: *dia* and *eis* (through and into).

Mt 27.37: And over his head they put the charge against him which read, “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.”

Aitia is the noun for “charge” and involves the admission of guilt.

Lk 23.48: (cf. vs. above).

Jn 5.22: The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son.

The Son as doing the judgement does so (next verse) as he hears which can apply to the persons involved as well as evidence brought against them as well as being attentive to the Father who is not engaged in judgment.

Jn 5.30: I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just.

“On my own authority” or *apo emautou* is rendered literally as “from myself.”

Rom 9.5: To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ.

Two uses of the preposition *kata*: “of their race” and “according to the flesh.”

1Kg 10.1-13: (Queen of Sheba visits Solomon).

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

“Coming” (*erchomai*) into the world: note present tense or a continuous process. The same may apply to the next verse. Compare with “guide” or *kateuthuno* or to make straight according to a given purpose (*kata-*).

Lk 1.79: To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Eph 2.17: And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. (Cf. above)

Is 1.18: Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Although there is a change of color, there is nothing as to changing the essence of sin.

Sg 3.9-10: King Solomon made himself a litter of the woods of Lebanon. He made its pillars silver, its back gold, its step purple, its interior is lovingly laid with stones by the daughters of Jerusalem.

‘Apiryon or “litter” is the only use of this word in the Bible.

Hab 3:8: When you rode upon your horses, upon your chariot of victory?

“Victory” is *yeshuah* and usually translates as salvation.

Gal 2:20: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

“Live” or *zao* is a fuller word, of living life to the full, than *biao* which connotes being alive. Compare this living with speaking in the next verse, the two being the same.

2Cor 13:3: Since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me.

“Proof” or *dokime* can also applied to a character which had been tried.

1Cor 3:12: Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.

The verb for “builds” is *epoikodomeo* with the root *oikos* (house) and verb *demo* (to build, construct), prefaced with the preposition *epi* (upon).

2Tm 2:20: In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble.

Time and *atimia* are two nouns for “noble and ignoble” prefaced with the preposition *eis* (into).

Gen 3:1-7: (serpent tempts Adam and Eve).

Nachash is the word for “serpent” derived from a verbal root meaning to hiss, to whisper.

Ps 29:5-6: The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf.

Lebanon is the source of timber for Solomon’s temple given by King Hiram.

Rom 12:3-8: (body has many members).

Melos is noun for “members” and refers to physical limbs and also can apply to a song, especially of lyric poetry.

1Cor 12:4-31: (gifts of Spirit; different role of members in a body).

Gal 2:9: And when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars.

Gignosko is the verb for “perceived” and commonly applies to knowing.

Rev 3:12: He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.

1Tm 3:9: They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

Musterion or “mystery” suggests being initiated into a rite. *Suneidesis* literally means a knowing-with (*sun-*).

1Cor 12:28: And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.

“Appointed” or the common verb *tithemi*, to set, to place.

1Cor 10:33: Just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

“Please” or *aresko* also means to conciliate as well as to flatter.

Phl 3:7: But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

“Gain and loss” or *kerdos* and *zemia* which alternately mean advantage and damage.

1Cor 11:1: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

“Imitators” or *mimetes* first of Paul and then of Christ though in reality the order is reversed.

Ps 21:3: You have set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

“Pure gold” or *paz* refers to gold which has been purified.

Gal 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female.

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

“To one another” has the preposition *eis*, literally, “into one another.”

Mt 22:30: For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Note that the angels in heaven does not exclude interacting with persons, their very function being to convey messages from God.

Ps 21:3 (cf. above).

Col 1:13: He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

Methistemi is the verb for “transferred” or literally a placing (*tithemi*) after (*meta-*).

1Pt 2:5: And like living stones be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.

The preposition *eis* is used with “holy priesthood” or literally “into a holy a priesthood.”

1Jn 4:8: He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

1Jn 4:16: God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Meno is the verb for “abides which means more to remain on a permanent basis.

Sg 3.11: Go forth, daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

Simchath is the noun for “gladness” whose verbal root connotes a leaping.

1Tm 2.4: Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“Desires” is the verb *etheleo* and “knowledge” is *epignosis*, literally as a knowing-upon (*epi-*).

Sg 4.1: Behold, you are fair, my companion, behold you are fair.

Gen 12.1: Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Three intimate things Abraham is to forsake: country, kindred and house of his father.

1Cor 12.12-27: (Church as one body).

1 Sam 9.9: “Come, let us go to the seer,” for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.

Ro’eh is the word for “seer” derived from the common verbal root to see.

1Chr 29.29: Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the Chronicles of Samuel the seer, and in the Chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the Chronicles of Gad the seer.

Ezk 3.17: Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.

Tsopheh means “watchman” derived from a verbal root meaning to observe accurately as well as to overlay with a precious metal.

Ezk 33.7: So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel.

Amos 7.12: O seer, go flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there and prophesy there.

Chozeh is the noun for “seer” (cf. *ro’eh* above) which more precisely pertains to insights received by prophets.

Ex 7.1: See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.

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

“Healing” or *marpe’* which derives from a verbal root also meaning to droop.

Rom 13.12: The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Prokopto is the verb for “far gone” which means to advance, to go forward (*pro-*).

Eph 5.11: Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Sugkoinoo or “take (no) part” consists of the root *koinos* (common) prefaced with the preposition *sug* or with).

2Cor 4.18: 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.

Seen = transient and unseen = eternal. The verb *blepo* is used and applies to the capacity for sight.

Col 1.5: Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel.

Note the two prepositions prefaced to verbs, *apo* and *pro* (from, away from and before): *apokeimai* (‘laid up’) and *proakoueo* (‘heard before’).

Rom 8.24: For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope.

The verb *blepo* (‘seen’) is not the same as hope, that is, the capacity of sight.

Dt 6.5: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and with all your might.

Ahav is the verb for “love” and connotes a longing or sighing after, here with respect to God or literally “in” one’s heart, soul and mind, the last reading literally “in all your excessiveness” (*me’od*).

Ps 139.22: I hate them with perfect hatred.

“Perfect” is a noun (*taklyth*) which derives from a verbal root meaning to complete.

Ps 97.10: The Lord loves those who hate evil.

A contrast between “loves” and “hate” or *‘ahav* and *sana’*, the latter verb being used in the preceding verse. Love may be equated with holding fast in the next verse, *kollao* (to cling, to glue to).

Rom 12.9: Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.

Sg 4.1: Your eyes are as doves.

Yonah is the noun for “doves,” here a term of endearment; the proper name for Jonah (the prophet).

Mt 10.16: So be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

“Wise and innocent” or *phronimos* and *akeraios*: unmoved, discreet and unmixed or unadulterated.

Mt 6.4: So that your alms may be in secret.

En to krupto with *tahalumah* of the next verse. The giving or alms may be said to come from the heart.

Ps 44.21: For he knows the secrets of the heart.

Tahalumah means “secrets” from the verbal root *halam* which suggests a turning away.

Ps 139.15: When I was being made in secret.

Seter is the word for “secret” and is derived from a verbal root meaning to hide.

1Cor 11.15: For her hair is given to her for a covering.

Peribolaion or literally, that which is thrown around (*peri-*).

1Tm 2.10: but by good deeds as befits women who profess religion.

Theosebeia is the noun for “religion” which means more like piety as well as devotion to one’s family and nation.

1Cor 11.5: But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head.

Kataischuno as “dishonors” also means to put to shame.

Rom 6.11: So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Dead = sin vs. alive = God.

2Kg 1.8: He wore a garment of haircloth with a girdle of leather about his loins.

Reference to Elijah which immediately brings up the image of John the Baptist.

Sg 4.2: Your teeth are as flocks of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing. All of them bearing twins, and there is not a barren one among them.

Shakulah is the adjective for “barren” derived from a verbal root meaning to be bereaved or to be childless.

1Cor 9.9 (Dt 25.4): “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

Reference to not muzzling an ox while treading grain is in the larger context of Deuteronomy’s precepts. Within the same context is the reference to a man not being permitted to take back a wife he had divorced. This has some shades of the Hagar-Sarah example.

Gal 4.22: For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman.

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

The “law” is the Torah which Paul calls “spiritual” or *pneumatikos*.

1Tm 3.1-7: (Description of episcopate).

2Cor 7.1: Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

“Promises” or *epaggelia* derives from a verbal root meaning to proclaim, to announce.

Sg 4.3: Your lips are as a thread of scarlet.

Chut or “thread” is used in Gn 2.18, a sign given by Joshua to the woman in Jericho who sheltered him and his fellow spies.

Gal 5.6: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor un-circumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.

Ischuo is the verb for “any avail” and means to be strong, to prevail.

Rom 10.9: If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Homologeō is the verb for “confess” which literally means to speak together.

Sg 4.3: (cf. above).

Rom 2.29: He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal.

“Inwardly” as being a Jew (*en to krupto*) or literally in that which is hidden. “Spiritual and (not) literal:” the two nouns being *pneuma* and *gramma* (letter).

Mt 6.4: So that our alms may be in secret.

This and the next verse are cited above.

Ps 44.21: For he knows the secrets of the heart.

1Cor 10.11: Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction.

“Warning” is the adverb *tupikos* which means by way of example.

Gn 12.1: Go from your own country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.

Erets is the noun for “country” and also means land but as the place with which a person is identified.

So to leave it is in a sense to leave one’s own identity.

1 Pt 2.5: And like living stones be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.

The preposition *eis* is used with “holy priesthood” or literally “into a holy a priesthood.”

Sg 4.4: Your neck is as the tower of David that was built for an armory (*thalpiath*); a thousand shields hang upon it, and all the spears of mighty men.

Thalpiath is a Hebrew word for “armory” which Gregory uses in the original and derives from an adjective meaning that which is deadly or destructive.

Eph 4.16: From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Two verbs with the preposition *sum* (with) prefaced to them: *sunarmologeō* and *sumbibazo*.

Oikodome is a noun meaning a building and used for the verb “upbuilds.”

Acts 9.15: Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

Paul is an “instrument” or *skeuos* (a utensil of any kind) which is “chosen” or *ekloge*, a noun which means choice or election.

2Cor 13.3: Since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you.

“Proof” or *dokime* can also applied to a character which had been tried.

Eph 4.14: So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

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

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

Phroneo is the verb for “set (your) minds” which means to be both wise and prudent.

Eph 6.11: For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Four objects needing resistance: “principalities, powers, world rulers and spiritual hosts:” *arche* (also as beginning or first principle), *exousia* (also as authority), *kosmokratē* (those with strength in/over the *kosmos*) and *poneria* (baseness, a wicked state) which are *pneumatikos*.

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

Chalats is the verb for “delivers” which connotes a drawing out or a departing.

Ps 68.17: With mighty chariotry, twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands, the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place.

Qodesh is the noun for “holy place” meaning that which is set apart, referring to the Jerusalem temple. Mention of chariotry suggests a triumphal or military procession from the Sinai wilderness to Jerusalem.

Ps 119.72: The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Torah is the noun for “law” which here comes from the divine mouth suggesting that Torah is being spoken continuously.

Sg 1.9-10: I have compared you, my companion, to my horses in the chariots of Pharaoh. Your cheeks are beautiful as those of a dove, your neck as chains.

This incident on Mt. Sinai came not long after Israel had left Egypt in dramatic fashion through the Red Sea. Ps 68 celebrates this victory by mentioning the Lord’s own chariots when he came into his “holy place” or *qodesh*.

Mt 5.14: You are the light of the world.

This was uttered immediately after Jesus delivered the beatitudes on the mount and that this light is to be set on the same mount.

Sg 4.5: Your two breasts are as two twin fawns of an antelope that feed among the lilies.

Hapharym or “fawns” has the verbal root *haphar* from which also comes “dust,” suggesting that the swiftness of this young animal kicks up dust while running (cf. Sg 2.9). Another image that comes to mind here is that the bride’s breasts bounce like fawns when she walks.

Ps 90.5: Like grass which is renewed in the morning.

Chalaph is the verb for “renewed” connotes a gliding motion and also refers to passing through or by.

Jn 3.8: The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes.

Pneuma is the noun for “wind,” also as spirit, which creates a sound without our knowing its source or

destination, just that it is passing us by.

Sg 4.5-6: cf. four verses above.

1Ths 5.5: For you are all sons of light and sons of the day.

Both light and day are of the same substance, the latter in contrast to the night.

Jn 3.8: cf. three verses. above.

Lk 8.15: And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Hearing the “word” or *logos* is followed by holding it fast, *katecho*, which connotes restraint as well as possession (*kata* + *echo*).

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

Apostles as aroma are applicable in two ways: people being saved and people perishing, both in the present tense which means a certain insight into their condition, both of which can change. Christ is an offering which is “fragrant” *euodia* or a noun meaning a pleasant (*eu-*) scent.

2Cor 4.16: To once a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

“Fragrance:” or *osme* used with two prepositions concerning death and life: *ek-eis* or from-into. The latter use of *osme* can apply to healing the psalmist’s wounds.

Mt 7.16: You will know them by their fruits.

Epignosko is the verb for “know” and means literally a knowing-upon (*epi-*).

Heb 6.8: But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned.

Note use of “cursed” here and in the next verse, the former using the latter: *adokimos* (literally, not standing the test) and *arar* (connotes abhorrence).

Gen 3.17-8: Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.

1Cor 12.10: To another the ability to distinguish between spirits.

Diakrisis is a noun for “to distinguish” meaning literally to judge between (*dia-*).

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

“Spiritual men and men of the flesh:” the adjectives *pneumatikos* and *sarkinos*, the latter as “babes” or *nepios*, literally as not yet speaking.

1Ths 2.7: But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children.

Teknon or “children” which more specifically refers to those who have just been born.

Heb 2.14: Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

“Share in and partook” or *koinoneo* and *metecho*. To have *koinonia* or fellowship and literally to have-with (*meta-*).

Sg 4.6: I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

“Mountain and hill” or that which is very high compared with that which is smaller. If height is a standard of importance, myrrh is of greater significance than frankincense.

Sg 4.7: You are all fair, my companion, and there is no spot in you.

Mum or “spot” is a defect of blemish and can have liturgical implications as with cleansing, etc.

Jn 10.18: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

Exousia means “power” and connotes authority compared with *dunamis*, the capacity to do something.

Eph 2.8: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Compare “grace and “gift” (*charis* and *doron*). The former connotes something more intangible as favor and kindness, whereas the latter, more as a present. “Your doing” is rendered as “from you.”

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

Agape or “love” is shown “for us” or literally “into (*eis*) us.” The verb for “shown” is *sunistemi* or literally to stand together (*sun-*).

Jn 1.29: Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Idou or “behold,” a means of getting the attention of people, equivalent to something like “see there!”

Rom 8.17: And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Teknon or “children” as in 1Ths 2.7 above (those who have just been born). Three words with the preposition *sun* (with) prefaced to them: *sugkleronomos*, *sumpascho* and *sundoxazo*.

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.

“Present” or *paristemi* which literally means to stand around (*peri-*), this verb intimating Jesus making the bride stand around him as opposed to the customary father of the bride.

The Song of Songs, 3.9-4.7

King Solomon made himself a litter of the woods of Lebanon. He made its pillars silver, its back gold, its step purple, Its interior lovingly laid with stones by the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. Behold, you are fair, my companion, behold, you are fair. Your eyes are (as) doves apart from your being silent. Your hair is as flocks of goats which have appeared from Galaad. Your teeth are as flocks of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing; all of them bearing twins, and there is not a barren one among them. Your lips are like a thread of scarlet, and your speech is lovely. Like the skin of a pomegranate is your cheek apart from your being silent. Your neck is as the tower of David that was built for an armory (Thalpiath); a thousand shields hang upon it, and all spears of mighty men. Your two breasts are as two twin fawns of an antelope that feed among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows depart I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. You are all fair, my companion, and there is no spot in you.

J.201 & M.908 In many ways king Solomon is taken as the pattern of the true king; in many ways, I say, scripture speaks about Solomon with reference to better things. For Solomon is called peaceful; he built the temple, had wisdom without measure, ruled over Israel, judged the people in justice and was born from the seed of David; even the queen of Ethiopia came to visit him. All these and similar examples are symbolically spoken of Solomon and depict in advance the Gospel's power. Who, then, is peaceful, has destroyed the enemy and nailed it to the cross, we who were his enemy? Rather, he reconciled the entire world to himself and tore down the partition wall which acted as a hedge in order that he might create two persons into one new man in himself; he proclaimed peace to those far off and to those nearby by announcing good tidings.

J.202 Who is this builder of the temple, who laid its foundations on the holy mountains, that is, on the prophets and apostles? He built it, as the Apostle says, upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, who are living, animated stones. Such stones are rounded with a view to the harmony of the walls themselves, according to the prophet, so that fitted together into the unity of faith and growing in the bond of peace, they might become a holy temple, a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Because Solomon in his wisdom signifies true wisdom, no one may contradict this fact while considering history and the truth. History testifies that Solomon transcended the bounds of human wisdom, having held the knowledge of all things in the breadth of his heart; he surpassed those before him and was unable to be matched by those after him. However, the Lord who is truth, wisdom J.203 and power, is their essence. Therefore, David says "He made all things in his wisdom." The divine Apostle interprets the prophet by saying that all things were created in him, namely, through wisdom.

The enemies of the Lord testify that he is the king of Israel by writing on the cross an admission of his reign: "This is the king of the Jews." We accept this testimony even if it is understood as weakening the vastness of his power and limiting his lordship over the Israelites. The title over the cross bears witness not only to Christ's sovereignty over the Jews but over all peoples.

He is king of the entire earth and rules over all its parts. J.204 & M.909 Solomon's zeal for righteous judgment signifies true judgment of all the earth: "The Father judges no one but has given all judgement to his Son..And, "I am able to do nothing of myself, but I judge as I hear, and my judgment is righteous." This is the most accurate definition of judgment: not to yield to one's own whims or contenders, but to first hear those on trial and then pass sentence. Otherwise, the power of God could not be effective, for truth cannot unjustly pervert judgement. But he who is from David's seed is the Lord according to the flesh; he was foretold by the one [Solomon] born from David as we learn from Scripture.

J.205 The mystery about the Ethiopian Queen who left her domain, traveled to meet Solomon because of the

report of his wisdom and honored him with precious stones, gold and sweet smelling perfumes, is evident to whoever understands the marvels of the Gospel. Who does not know that at the beginning the assembly from among the nations was dark from idolatry before it became the Church? It lived far from knowledge of the true God and was separated by a great gulf of ignorance. But when God's grace and wisdom shone, and the true light sent rays to those in darkness and sitting in death's shadow, Israel then closed her eyes to the light and refused any participation in the good. The Ethiopians, however, hastened to the faith from among the nations, and those far off drew near, having washed off their darkness by a mystical mashing. They were led to God and offered gifts to the king: the spices of piety, the gold of the knowledge of God, the precious stones of the commandments and works of virtue.

J.206 I will now offer for consideration the Song's words as follows: "King Solomon made himself a litter of the woods of Lebanon. He made its pillars silver, its back gold, its step purple, its interior is lovingly laid with stones by the daughters of Jerusalem." As Solomon anticipated the mystery of the Lord, God's care for us is similarly indicated for us by the chariot's construction. In many ways God is in his saints according to each one's capacity and worthiness. A certain locality can be attributed to God: in one person he is a house; in another, a throne and yet in another, a footstool. Let anyone becoming a chariot or a well-tempered horse receive this rider (God), even while completing his course while M.912 being directed by God to what lies ahead.

J.207 We now learn something about this chariot which in Solomon's wisdom is not only fashioned from the wood of Lebanon but is fittingly decorated in each part with gold, silver, purple and stones with love as the maker. Everyone does not attain the capacity for love unless he is recognized through his life as a daughter of the Jerusalem above which is free. It is clear by our earlier words that the person thus bearing God in himself is a litter where God sits. According to the holy Paul, no longer does such a person live for himself but he has Christ living in him and gives proof of Christ speaking in himself. This person is rightly called a litter who is borne about by Christ and carried by him.

But this is not the object of our investigation, rather, our task is to consider diligently the diverse material before us and to see how wood is combined with gold, silver, purple J.208 and stones to construct a chariot. Even Paul the wise architect judges wood, along with grass and reeds, as worthless for constructing a house because it is consumed by fire's destructive power which proves the material. We know that wood does not endure but changes into gold, silver or anything else of value. The Apostle says that in the great house of God are vessels of gold and silver, hinting through these things at an incorporeal, spiritual creation. Wood and earthenware may signify for us what disobedience created and made into earthenware vessels; through wood, sin made us wooden vessels instead of golden ones. The use of vessels is determined by the material's worthiness, for while more worthy material is ordained for honorable purposes, the unworthy is cast aside for common use. But what does Paul say of these matters? By its own free choice, the vessel has the capacity to become either gold from wood or silver from clay. "For if anyone purifies himself, he will be a worthy J.209 vessel for the Lord, a vessel prepared for every good deed." These words thus help us to gain a better understanding of scripture.

In many places of holy scripture Mount Lebanon designates a hostile force as when the prophet says, "The Lord will break the cedars of Lebanon, and he will beat them small, even Lebanon itself like a calf." In the desert Moses broke (the golden calf) into small pieces, and the water became potable for the Israelites by this calf having been broken into small pieces. It is clear, as the prophet says, that not only are evils produced by the enemy's power but the primary root of evil, Mount Lebanon, which nourishes the wood of these cedars, is reduced to nothing. At one M.913 time we were all these trees of Lebanon while rooted in them by an evil life and the deception of idolatry. But since we were cut off by a spiritual axe and were in the artisan's hands, God made us into a litter. He transformed our wood by a rebirth into silver, gold, rich purple and gleaming stones. Thus the J.210 Apostle says "God has assigned to each respectively the gifts of the Holy Spirit," and to each person the Spirit gives prophecy according to the proportion of his faith. To another person is bestowed a different function according to his nature and his ability to receive grace, whether as the eye of the Church's body, as a hand or as a prop instead of a foot. Thus in the chariot's construction one person is a column, another a step; still another is a rest for the head while others are designated for the litter's interior.

The architect does not intend all the elements used in decoration for one purpose but all parts are tastefully adorned, and the beauty of each part is intended to be different yet harmonious. Thus the litter's pillars are silver with a purple steep; the head support is made of gold on which the bridegroom reclines his head while the litter's interior is embellished with precious stones. The pillars may be understood as belonging to the Church to which the Song's text carefully applies pure, fire-tried gold: they have ascended to the loftiness of the kingdom. (The special characteristic of J.211 this kingdom is purple.) The most important component, that is, where he who constructed the litter reclines his head, is the gold of pure teachings. What lies hidden and unapparent is adorned by a pure conscience of precious stones which the daughters of Jerusalem put together. Applying this litter to the universal Church, its arts may be divided among persons according to their different functions. As we said earlier, the chariot's parts can be adapted to each order within the Church. (The Apostle says, "God has placed in the Church first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" then every person for the perfection of the saints). The names of these parts contributing to the litter's construction are priests, teachers and the venerable state of virginity gleaming with the rays of stones inside the litter by the purity of virtues.

So much for the litter's description. The text which follows contains an exhortation from the bride to the daughters of J.212 & M.916 Jerusalem. The great Paul offers himself to be condemned if he fails to share all his goods. (He says to his congregation, "Be as I am" for I was once like you, and "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ"). Thus the lovely bride was made worthy of her bridegroom's divine mysteries. When she saw the bed, that is, the king's litter, she cries out to her young companions (who may represent the souls that have been saved), "How long will you remain shut up in the cave of this life? Go beyond the veil of human nature and see this marvelous sight. As daughters of Sion, see the crown on the king's head which his own mother placed on him according to the prophet, 'He has placed on his head a crown of precious stone.'"

No one can adequately grasp the terms pertaining to God. For example, "mother" is mentioned (in the Song) in place J.213 of "father." Both terms have the same meaning because there is neither male nor female in God (for how can anything transitory like this be attributed to God? But when we are one in Christ, we are divested of the signs of this difference along with the old man). Every name equally indicates God's ineffable nature; neither can "male" nor "female" defile God's pure nature. Because of this, the father mentioned in the Gospel parable prepares a wedding. The prophet says of God, "You have placed on his head a crown of precious stones." Hence the Song says that a crown is placed upon the bridegroom by his mother. Since the nuptials and bride are one, one mother places the crown upon the bridegroom's head. Neither does it make much difference whether one calls the Son of God the only begotten God, or J.214 the Son of his love. According to Paul, each name has the capacity to be a bridal escort which leads the bridegroom to dwell in us. "Go then," the bride says to her companions, "and become daughters of Sion, that from a high peak (for this is what Sion signifies) you will be able to see that marvelous sight, the bridegroom adorned with his crown." His crown is the Church encompassing his head by living stones; love is the plait of this crown, for whether anyone calls it "mother" or "love," does not err: God is love, as St. John says.

The bride says that her spouse rejoices and delights in his crown of nuptial adornment, for the bridegroom rejoices when he takes the Church as his own dwelling crowned with the virtues of distinguished members. Perhaps it would be better to apply these divine words to the following: "Go forth daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him, in the day of his M.917 espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart." J.215 The Word receives his bride's love because in imitation of the Lord, she wishes all men to be saved and come to the recognition of truth. The proclamation of her beauty is made more solemn and is clearly depicted in the Song, for the praise of the bride's beauty does not simply pertain to her loveliness but to each member. The Song thus says, "Behold, you are fair, my companion, behold, you are fair." The bride has imitated the Lord's love for mankind, and a young maiden is summoned to go out like Abraham--each maiden from her respective land and family with regard to the senses--that she may see the chaste bride. groom crowned with the Church. Truly the bride becomes a companion of the Lord's goodness since she drew near to God through love. The text says of her that "you are beautiful by having drawn near to beauty by your own noble choice." Here the repetition of praise demonstrates the truth of the bridegroom's testimony because according to the divine law, the J.216 testimony of two persons confirms the truth. Therefore

the Song says, "Behold, you fair, my companion, behold, you are fair."

Although the universal Church is the one body of Christ, there are many members in this one body. All do not have the same function, but God created one person to be the body's eyes, while he implanted another as the ears. Some perform the function of hands, and others which bear loads are the feet. The faculty of taste, smell and other senses constituting the body may be found in the common body of the Church: lips, teeth, tongue, breasts, stomach, and throat. As Paul says, "All these parts of the body are not presentable." The discerning observer of beauty attributes a fitting praise to the members of the entire body which are attractive to him.

We must now consider the praise bestowed upon the more honorable limbs. What is more honorable among our bodily members than the eyes? Through our eyes we perceive light. By them we recognize friends and enemies, discern between J.217 what is our own and what belongs to other persons. Eyes are instructors and teachers for every purpose and are congenial, indispensable guides for a safe journey through life. Their location above the other sense organs shows a more honorable use in our life. It is indeed clear to my listeners to which limb of the Church this praise of eyes refers. The eye of Samuel was M.920 watchful (for thus he was called); the eye of Ezekiel was ordained by God for guarding the safety of those entrusted to him; the watchful eye of Micah and the gazing eye of Moses which was called "God" were ordained for the people's guidance: for this reason they are called men who see. They are correctly named "eyes" fulfilling that function in that Church's body if they look directly at the sun of justice and are never blinded by the works of darkness. If they discern between what is their own and foreign elements, they know that everything alien to our nature is apparent and transitory J.218 while what is offered as our own through hope abides forever.

The function of our eyes is to discern friend and enemy, that we may love the true friend with our whole heart, soul and strength and may show perfect hatred to our enemies. But the eye is also a guide for our activity, a teacher of correct deeds and a leader on our journey to God. The function of a purified, healthy (spiritual) eye, like bodily eyes, is clearly manifested to the other members by its exalted manner of life. Because of this the text (the Song) begins to praise the bride's beauty by saying "Your eyes are as doves." Seeing those persons before him in the eyes' position as purified from evil, the bridegroom acknowledged their simplicity and purity of life. He names them "doves," for purity is proper to doves while the Song praises their eyes.

Images of visible reality striking the purity of the eye's pupil effect the act of seeing, that is, a form impresses itself J.219 upon the eye like a mirror. When a person has this power of sight in the Church, he never looks to what is material and corporeal; a spiritual and immaterial life is effected in him, and his life is formed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the best praise is attributed to the eyes when they conform their way of life to the Holy Spirit's grace, for the Holy Spirit is the dove. Both eyes are praised so that the entire person may share this praise, both his visible and spiritual aspects. The bridegroom adds another excellent praise: "apart from your being silent." A good life is evident to every one, while what is hidden and secret belongs only to God. The person who looks to the uncreated and gazes into what is hidden testifies that silence is more praiseworthy than any thing external. As the text says, "Your eyes are doves apart from your being silent." The bride's exterior beauty has already been praised by silently marveling at it.

M.921 Praise of the bride's beauty follows next: "Your hair is J.220 as flocks of goats which have appeared from Galaad." It is appropriate first to consider the nature of hair that we may understand the praise bestowed upon the bride. Paul calls the glory of a woman's head her hair and says that it is given to her instead of a veil that respect and modesty may act as a fitting veil. Paul says, "As it befits women who profess to worship God, they should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly." Respect and modesty (that is, "hair") pertain to reverence of God. If the soul lacks hair, its head is subject to shame, as the Apostle says.

If Paul teaches these things about hair, his thoughts may J.221 apply to praise of the Church. The Song says, "Your hair is as flocks of goats which have appeared from Galaad." The text presents an excellent way of living here, but adds that hair is completely devoid of a living sensation. In no small way does this text enhance the bride's praise, for hair lacks the sensation of pain and pleasure. Hair growing from the body feels pain if plucked out but lacks feeling if cut, scorched or groomed by fastidious care. To lack sense perception is a sign

of being dead. Therefore, the person without feeling for this world's values is neither swollen up from glory and honor, nor sad on account of injury or disgrace, but he guards himself when confronted with any of these adversaries. Such is the noble praise of the bride's hair: it shows itself completely dead and unmoved by things of this world in every circumstance.

J.222 The excessive amount of hair is compared to the goat herds which have appeared from Galaad, an obscure point we should not leave unconsidered. We surmise that just as the king made a litter for himself by changing the trees of Lebanon into gold, silver, purple and precious stones, the good M.924 shepherd of the flocks of goats knows how to change the herds on Mount Galaad. The name of this mountain revealing such a marvel pertains to the nations. Those following the good shepherd from out of the nations share in the beauty of the bride's hair which, as we said earlier, signifies chastity, modesty, abstinence and bodily mortification. Perhaps Elijah corresponds to our consideration of the goats when he practiced the ascetical life for a long time on Mount Galaad. In an outstanding way, Elijah led a life of abstinence and wore a thick cloak of goat hair instead of a soft garment of goat's skin. Thus persons following the prophet's example become J.223 an adornment of the Church; holding fast to a philosophic way of life, they gather in herds to perform virtue among themselves. The revelation of these herds from Galaad intensifies their praise because our conversion brought us from a Gentile way of life to one of philosophy with regard to God. Holy Mount Sion did not prescribe this kind of life but the Gentiles, though being devoted to idols, adapted it in order to adorn the bride's head with its superior virtue.

The Song next sets before us the bride's teeth while omitting praise of her mouth and lips, a fact worth examining. Why are her teeth praised before her lips? Perhaps it is because a person wishing to show a more subtle kind of beauty indicates a smile on the mouth by a slight outline of teeth. However, I look at it in another way: beauty pertaining to teeth should be praised for a different reason than that of the mouth. The bride's lips by no means lack praise when the bridegroom says they are as a "thread of scarlet" and her "speech is lovely."

What can I gather from this? The best procedure is to J.224 first be taught and then speak. He [Plato] when says that teachings are food for the soul does not swerve from the truth. Just as material food is reduced into small pieces for our stomach, there is a certain capacity in the soul which reduces teachings into small pieces, enabling it to comprehend them. The Song symbolically names "teeth" discerning and perceptive teachers who enable us to learn and profit from such teachings. For this reason, praise bestows loveliness upon teeth only if the praise of lips is joined to them: the lips cannot blossom in spiritual praise unless the teeth, by diligent care, bestow grace upon these lips when they speak. We will examine the teeth's beauty by the praises which follow.

Now is the time to examine the beauty attributed to the M.925 teeth of shorn sheep: "Your teeth are as flocks of shorn J.225 sheep which have come up from the washing: all of them bearing twins, and there is not a barren one among them." If we look at the literal meaning of this verse, I do not see how teeth can be compared to prolific sheep. Praise of teeth applies to their firm, well ordered position which is rooted in the gums. The flocks had been scattered in the valleys and now come up from the washing. They describe the beauty of the bride's teeth, but we cannot easily comprehend what this means. Her teeth are set beside each other in rows while these flocks are scattered from each other and have become lost in their need for pasture. But a wool-bearing animal does not compare well with sheep having their teeth bared. It is indeed worth investigating how the beauty of teeth can be harmonized with flocks hearing twins whose wool is shorn off and whose bodies are cleansed from dirt.

What can we gather from these words? Persons reducing the divine mysteries into small fragments for a clearer interpretation of the text make spiritual food more easily acceptable for the body of the Church. They perform the function of teeth by receiving the thick, dense bread of the text J.226 into their mouths; by a more subtle contemplation, they make the food delectable (It is better to give the sense of these words by some examples). Such food the blessed Paul simply and without elaboration now offers us as an unworked-over morsel of the Law's precepts: "Do not muzzle the ox when treading out the grain." Again, Paul softens the Law's meaning by an explanation of the text to make it acceptable: "It is for oxen that God is concerned; are not all things written for our sake?" And again, "Abraham had two sons, one from a slave girl and one from a

freed woman." This bread is not worked over for us. But how does he reduce it to small pieces for eating? He transfers the story into two Testaments, "one born into slavery, the other free from bondage." Thus Paul reduces the dense body of the Law (let us not dwell on each example) into fine pieces and makes it spiritual J.227 through contemplation: "We know the Law is spiritual." What we understand from Paul is the need for teeth in the Church to clarify its teachings by breaking them into small pieces. We say this in imitation of Paul who clarifies for us the mysteries (of Scripture). The teeth of the Church thus make the unworked-over grass of the divine words light and small for us. In the same M.928 way the divine Apostle describes the life of those desiring the noble office of the episcopate. He speaks of the qualifications pertaining to one who accepts the office of priesthood and includes the grace for teaching with all the other gifts. Thus the Song first wishes those ordained for the ministry of teeth in the Church to be shorn, from every material burden. Then with their conscience cleaned in a bath from every defilement both of body and of spirit, they constantly rise by progressing and never slip back into the depths from which they came. They are heralded as pregnant with a two-fold offspring of the good, that is, every kind of virtue and J.228 are fruitful in good actions. This double conception is a symbol of our good repute that we may be these teeth hearing twins which beget freedom from passion and dignity in our life.

The text next adds a fitting praise to the bride's lips by comparing their beauty to a "scarlet thread," the interpretation of which further adorns her lovely speech. This point was already considered where the lip's beauty is adorned with the ministry of teeth, for by the teeth (that is, the teeth are first shorn, washed, are not sterile and bear twins; then the bride's lips are adorned with a scarlet form when the entire Church has one lip and one voice in harmony with the good. The bride's beauty has two aspects. Not only do her lips form a thread, but they have the lovely color of a flower. Both thread and scarlet retain their own loveliness and functions as they adorn the Church's mouth. The thread's example teaches us to be of one mind, that is, one cord formed J.229 from different threads. The scarlet color reminds us to be attentive to the blood by which we are delivered and to always have a confession on our mouths by the blood which redeemed us. The comeliness of lips fills out those of the Church when the faith of our confession shines forth and when love is entwined with faith.

To understand this analogy better, we offer the following remarks. Faith is the scarlet thread made through love, for scarlet is signified by faith, and the thread is interpreted by love. Truth bears witness that the lips of the bride are adorned by these two elements. Her beautiful lips do not need more detailed explanation, for the Apostle clarified their symbolism saying that this speech is the word of faith we proclaim: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and M.929 believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Faith in the heart leads to righteousness and confession in the mouth to salvation." This is the lovely speech adorning the Church's lips with that scarlet thread.

The bridegroom is pleased with the beauty of his bride's mouth and redness of her cheeks. That part of the face is customarily called an apple because of its characteristics. For this reason the bridegroom compares the apple of his spouse's J.230 cheeks to a pomegranate's skin as follows: "Like the skin of a pomegranate is your cheek apart from your being silent." The fact that the bride's modesty is praised can be easily understood from the sequence of the text. The Word who fashions the Church into an image of a bride and who appropriately distributes virtues to each member by a description of her face's loveliness now praises temperance by the flushed ruddiness of the bride's cheeks which adorn her like a pomegranate. This fruit is tart and its skin lacks nourishment. Therefore the exercise of temperance rightly partakes of contemplation, for just as the pomegranate's tart skin is nourishing and guards the fruit's sweetness by completely surrounding it, so is a harsh, austere life of self-control a guardian for the benefits of temperance. Hence, this virtue's praise has two aspects: the external appearances of a well-ordered life and correct actions of a soul free from passion "Whose J.231 praise is not from men, but from God," as the Apostle says. Modesty illumines these persons and has its own praise in external conduct, while "apart from your being silent" and hidden wonders are seen by that eye alone which beholds hidden things.

By the following examples we learn that everything done by the divinely inspired saints becomes a type and lesson for persons who act virtuously. Marriage, migrations, wars, and tools for building all prefigure the life to come. "These scriptures are written for your understanding to which the end of ages reaches." War against

enemies counsels us to be strong against foreigners, and earnestness in opposing matrimony mysteriously suggests dwelling with a life of virtue. Just as migrations suggest the foundation of a virtuous life, care in the construction of buildings exhorts us to show concern for our house built through the virtues. Therefore it seems to me that the tower viewed from all around and to which David fixed the choicest booty, looked for the coming J.232 of the Church and prefigured those striving in virtue. Once the M.932 alien tribes were reduced to servitude, the king acquired this height with the rest of the tribes' possessions. The king showed through his wisdom the good of human life which David foresaw through the tower's construction, that is, a symbol of our future life. The beauty of the entire Church's body will, in the future, be glorified in each member through some kind of comparison and likeness. Consequently, the text describes those having the place of neck among the people by mentioning the tower of David which is recognized by its parapets. The parapets are called "Thalpiath."

"Your neck is as the tower of David that was built for an armory (*thalpiath*); a thousand shields hang upon it and J.233 all the spears of mighty men." The tower's physical construction and conspicuous position seen from all sides is the work of King David. The number one thousand shows the great number of shields and spears. Our aim, however, is to consider the value of this divinely inspired text. Why is the neck, a member of the Church, compared to this tower? First it is worthwhile to examine that part of our body, the neck and then apply, the name of this bodily member to the Church. What is rooted between one's shoulders upholds the head, acts as a base, and is called a neck. It is supported by bones located in our back while at the same time it is free from the encompassing structure of hones. However, this type of bone is not like the forearm or leg bone, unbroken and not separated, but it is divided into vertebrae which form nerves, marrow and ligaments. Their unity is formed by each of these elements, and by means of the pipe-like structure of marrow in the neck's center there is space for membranes whose wrappings contribute to make up the head. The neck J.234 has a windpipe situated in front. It is a receptacle for the outside breath to be inhaled by which the heart's fire is fanned. The neck also has passages for food in the throat; all food enters the stomach through the gullet. The neck has another important role, namely, speech, which originates from our vocal chords. Sound is generated here by a breath whirling around inside the windpipe. Thus it is easier to understand M.933 the neck of the Church's body after having examined the anatomy of a human neck which the Song compares to a tower of David.

If anyone bears the true head of all creation (Christ, from whom the entire body is put in harmony and brought together), he rightly desires to be called a neck. If our heart is capable of understanding these things, the Spirit warms it J.235 like fire, provided that it complies to his word through the sound of his voice. God does not fashion the human voice for any reason except to be an instrument of his word whose movements pass through the heart. The neck has the function of nourishing, I mean teaching, which gives strength to the entire body of the Church. The intake of food constantly maintains the body in existence without which it weakens and wastes away.

Let a person imitate the harmonious setting of vertebrae which taken singularly are persons joined in a bond of peace to form one member which binds and keeps itself erect and can easily move from side to side. Paul was such a neck. If anyone follows the example of Paul, a chosen vessel for the Lord and bearer of the Lord's name, and whose head has brought all the limbs fully into harmony, whatever this person speaks, it is no longer him but the head, Christ, speaking and talking as Paul showed the Corinthians. J.236 Thus the windpipe articulates the word of truth with a sweet and pleasant sound from the Holy Spirit. The upper part of the throat always sweetens the windpipe with divine words and nourishes the entire body by these life-giving teachings. The vertebrae effect harmony in the body by the bond of peace and love. Who teaches the neck to bend down in humility, turn all around, raise itself up again to perceive those things on high, look sideways, to turn away gracefully and beware of the devil's various deceits? David constructed such a neck.

The king sprung from David his father prepared man to be the tower secure from falling. By grace David built it up with many shields so that the enemy could not easily approach it. The shields are suspended, not lying on the ground, and are viewed held in the air; with them are the javelins which strike fear into the enemy so that they may not attempt to assault the tower. I think that this tower with a multitude of shields and J.237 spears signify the angelic guard. The text does not simply M.936 mention spears but shows by the addition of mighty

men fighting on our behalf that the Song concurs with the Psalm's words: "The angel of the Lord will surround those who fear him and will rescue them." The number "one thousand" does not accurately represent to me the number ten times one hundred but shows a multitude. Scripture usually shows a multitude by this number [one thousand]. As David says, "Ten thousand-fold of rejoicing ones," and "better than thousands of gold and silver."

We have just considered the neck rooted upon the shoulders. We understand these shoulders on which the neck is set as strong, effective means by which our arms bring about salvation. He who carefully pays attention to the sequence of the Song's words understands the growth of the exalted soul in the good with respect to God. He knows that when the bride was first loved, she was compared to a horse which fought the Egyptian tyrant and had a lovely neck adorned J.238 with chains. Now the text hears witness to the greatness of the bride's perfection because her neck's beauty is not compared to chains and necklaces but is said to be a tower due to its greatness. The tower is viewed from round about and looked at from afar because of its magnificent structure rising on high and its location above the neighboring area. When this tower, the work of the king, attains the lofty commonwealth of heaven, it shows the truth of the Lord's words, "A city situated upon a mountain cannot be hidden." I ask you to understand the tower as this city.

Let us now consider the "two fawns of the antelope" which live near the bride's heart and are called "breasts." J.239 "Your two breasts are as two twin fawns of an antelope that feed among the lilies." The heart situated between these two breasts does not have grass and thorns for pasture but lilies whose blossom endures during the entire time of pasturing. The lilies do not flower nor fade away at certain times but provide food for the fawns that the shadows of error may no longer dominate this life; rather, the light now brightening every place, illumines all things by the day, breathing light wherever it wishes. For the Song says, "Until the day breathes and the shadows depart." You know from the Gospel that the Spirit is holy: it blows where it wishes and illumines those who know from where he comes and to where he goes. The Song says, "Your two breasts are as two twin fawns of an antelope that feed M.937 among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows depart." But the "day" is called the Holy Spirit who J.240 breathes light into whomever he begets. I do not think we should doubt the meaning of these words. If the Holy Spirit begets sons of light and day, should we not understand the Holy Spirit as light and day whose breath expels the vanity of shadows? Shadows must not remain but depart and withdraw once the sun appears. It would be opportune to add to our examination of the text the mystery of the antelope's two fawns which bear twins; they have lilies for food and a good, fertile land for pasture. The place of pasture is the heart according to the Lord's parable; those pasturing and gathering pure thoughts from it are fattened. The lily's blossom has two benefits: their fragrance, combined with color, makes them desirable for plucking either for their scent or for the loveliness of their beauty which delights the eyes. However, their scent is filled with the good odor of Christ while purity and undefilement appear through their form.

Perhaps the obscurity of the Song's text can now be J.241 clarified for us. When two people separately consider the text, the literal and spiritual meaning, these two persons going through life together have a birth with two aspects: neither does the soul come before the body, nor is the body created before the soul but both are simultaneously brought into life. Their nourishment is purity, a good scent and whatever else the virtues bring forth abundantly. There is, however, something more eager to destroy than to nourish, whose blossoms are not nourished by the virtues but delight in thorns and burrs. We have heard the Gospel's parable naming sins what the serpent's curse made into an evil shoot. Since a critical eye is needed to discern carefully between the lily and thorn, to choose what is salvific and to reject what is corruptible, J.242 the person with such an eye becomes a breast for infants like the great Paul, and he nourishes the newly born of the Church with milk. The Song named the two breasts twins born together which are compared to an antelope's fawns, testifying to the excellency of this bodily member for the Church. Because a person is led to the pasture of pure lilies by each breast through accurate discernment and distinguishes the thorn from that which is nourishing, he is guided by the governing principle symbolized by the heart which nourishes the breasts. A breast does not shut grace up in itself but gives the teat of the Word to those in need, thereby M.940 providing nourishing food to its children.

Up to this point the bodily members of the Church are praised, and in the words which follow, praise is bestowed upon the entire body when through death, Christ destroys death's power and when he ascends to his

own glorious divinity which he had before the world's creation. J.243 For when the bridegroom says, "I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense" through the sufferings of myrrh and frankincense, the Song adds the glory of divinity indicated by the words, "You are all fair, my companion, and there is no spot in you." These words teach us that no one takes his own life from himself: Christ, however, has power to lay it down and take it up again. He goes to the "mountain of myrrh" not by his own power in order that he may boast but by his own grace after he had submitted to death for sinners. Human nature cannot be purged from the stain (of sin) unless the Lamb who takes the sin of the world destroys evil. Therefore the Song says, "You are all fair, my companion, and there is no spot in you." And adding to this the mystery of the Passion by the symbol of myrrh, frankincense is then mentioned which manifests Christ's divinity. He who partakes of myrrh with Christ will indeed partake of frankincense, for he who suffers with him will be glorified with him. Once in the divine glory, he will be completely beautiful, far removed from any offensive blemish. By Christ J.244 and through Christ, we have been separated (from sin). He died and rose for us, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

+