

The Thirteen Homily

Mt 5.17: I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.

“Abolish and fulfill” or *kataluo* and *pleroo*. The former is literally a loosening in accord with (*kata*-) a specific plan or goal and the latter, a bringing to completion.

Mt 5.22: But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment.

Enochos is the adjective for “liable” or literally to be held (*echo*) in (*en*-).

Mt 5.28: But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

“Lustfully” is rendered as *pros to epithumesai* or literally as “in the direction of desiring upon.”

Zach 5.1-4: (vision of a flying scroll).

Megilah is the noun for “scroll” which often can refer to the Law or Torah.

Mt 5.33-7: (the necessity of saying “no” or “yes”).

2Cor 3.15-6: Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed.

“Turns and “removed” or *epistrepho* and *periaireo*: literally as to turn upon (*epi*-) and to take away from around (*peri*-).

Col 2.11: In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ.

“Putting off” is the verb *apekduomai* or literally a stripping off as a piece of clothing.

Sg 5.11: His head is as very fine gold, his locks are flowing black as a raven.

“Very fine gold and raven:” two opposite colors, if you will. “Finest gold” or *paz* derives from the root *pazaz*, “to refine” with the alternate meaning “to leap.” *Horev* derives from the root “to pledge,” “to set,” and from which comes “evening.” Note that in Gen 8.7 Noah in the ark “sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.”

Sg 5.8: I have charged you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the virtues of the field.

“Powers and the virtues of the field” are not in the Hebrew text. They two words are *dunamis* and *ischusis*. The former is strength in the sense of having authority and the latter more suggestive of force.

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.

Zach 9.17: Yes, how good and how fair it shall be! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the maidens.

Nuv means “flourish” and pertains to sprouting or germinating.

Ps 63.11: But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall glory; for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

Samach is the verb for “rejoice” and connotes a leaping for joy. *Halal* means “shall glory” which suggests a making show of something. The exuberance of both contrast with the stopping of liars’ mouths, *sakar* (to shut).

Mt 5.37: Let what you say be simply “Yes” or “No;” anything more than this comes from evil.

“What you say” is the noun *logos* or word as expression.

Heb 6.16: Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.

Bebaiosis is the noun for “confirmation” which means a strengthening or making steady and is used with the preposition *eis* (into).

Mt 13.31: The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field.

Sinapi is “mustard” which is considered the smallest of all seeds.

Ps 63.11: (cf. above).

Ps 132.2: How he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.

“Swore and vowed” or *shavah* and *nadar*. From the former is derived the number seven, considered as sacred and the latter refers to a voluntary act, both verbs being similar.

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

The Jerusalem below, if you will, is represented by Hagar. Nothing in this context is said of Sarah.

Prov 27.6: Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

“Wounds and kisses” or *petsah* (the verbal root means to make a fissure) and *neshyqah* (the verbal

root means to join, to arrange, to arm oneself).

Col 1.21: And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds.

Dianoia is the noun for “mind” also as intent, purpose; *dia* or through prefaced to *nous* or mind

Eph 2.4: But God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us.

“Love and loved” or *agape* and *agapao*.

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.

Gen 2.17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.

The tree is one of “knowledge” (*dahath*) with respect to good and evil, that is, having intimate knowledge of both.

Gen 3.6: So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

“Delight and desired” or *ta’awah* and *chamad*. The former can be desire in the sense of lust or otherwise and the latter desire in the sense of covert.

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-*).

Gal 5.6: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.

Ischuo is the verb for “any avail” and means to be strong, to prevail. *Agape* is the noun for “love.”

Sg 5.9: What is your beloved, O beautiful among women? What is your beloved, that you have so charged us?

Shavah is the verb for “charged” and as noted above, the number seven derives from it, often a sacred number.

2Cor 3.13-6: (Moses' veil).

Phl 3.21: Who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

“Change” or *metaschematizo* or literally, to put a *schema* (form, figure, appearance) *meta* or after.

Compare with *suschematizomai* just above. This is effected by the “Spirit” or *Pneuma* who raised Jesus from the dead dwelling within a person, *enoikizo* (the preposition *en* or in prefaced to the verb with another *en*, ‘you’).

Jn 1.1-3: (The Word of God).

The first verse has the preposition *pros* signaling direction towards-which, “the Word was God.”

Jn 1.14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

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

1Tm 3.16: Great indeed we confess is the mystery of our religion. He was manifested in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

“Religion” or *eusebeia* is presented as a “mystery” or *mysterion*. That is, it is a reverence which requires initiation.

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.

Jn 1.14: (cf. above).

1Tm 3.16: (cf. above).

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

Morphe is the noun for “form” and *huparcho* is the verb for “is” which means literally to begin under or more commonly to come into existence.

Rom 11.16: If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump.

Aparche means “first fruits” and refers to what is offered as sacrifice: the preposition *apo* (from) prefaced to the root *arche* (beginning).

Eph 5.29-32: (members of Christ's body).

1Cor 12.12-28: (cf. above).

Rom 12.4: For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function.

Praxis means “function” and often applies to the carrying out of business affairs.

Eph 4.11-3: (Fullness of Christ).

Eph 4.15: Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Agape is the noun for love. *Kephale* as “head” is more physical than *arche* as beginning.

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

Pselaphao as “touched” means to grope about as a blind man.

Jn 3.12: If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Epouranios as “heavenly things” has the preposition *epi* (upon) prefaced to it.

Sg 5.10-16: (description of bridegroom; bride's wound).

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

Noeo and *kathorao* are two verbs used to express “clearly perceived.” The first applies to perception and understanding and the latter to seeing in accord with (*kata-*) a specific plan, form or idea.

Eph 3.10: That through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Sophia or “wisdom” is “manifold” or *polupoikilos*, *poikilos* meaning many-colored or brodered.

Is 65.17: For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

“Create” or *bara'*, the same verb used at the beginning of Genesis, the one of Isaiah being “new” or *chadash*, the verbal root of which suggests polishing or cutting. Compare *chadash* with *kainos* as “new” creation in Christ. *Chadash* may be contrasted with “former things” and “things of old,” *ri'shon* and *qadmony* (the first suggestive of that which is of the beginning and the second as head).

Col 2.5: For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

A contrast between “absent” and “with you” or the verb *apiemi* and the preposition *sun*.

Heb 6.7: For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

Eulogia or “blessing” consists of the root *logos* (word as expression) prefaced with *eu-*, signifying anything done well.

1Cor 15.47-99: (First and last Adam).

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

“Knowledge and image” or *epignosis* and *eikon*. The first is literally “knowledge-upon” and the latter as is prefaced with the preposition *kata* suggesting being formed after a specific pattern or plan.

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. The next two verses are to be read in light of this one.

Phl 2.15: That you may be blameless and innocent children of God...among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Ps 147.4: He determines the number of the stars, he gives to all of them their names.

Lk 10.20: Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Hupotasso is the verb for “subject” and suggests not just obedience but an arranging in a certain order.

Mt 5.16: Let your light so shine before men.

The next two verses have the verbal root *lampo* whereas the latter has the preposition *ek* (from) prefaced to it.

Mt 13.43: Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Wisd 13.1-5: (Creation reflects invisible reality).

Wisd 7.25: For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty.

Atmis and *aporrhoeia* or “breath and influence:” the former suggests steam or vapor and the latter a flowing forth with some vehemence.

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.

Two uses of the adjective *pan* or “all:” Christ as such and in everything created.

Mt 1.2-17: (Christ's genealogy).

Sg 2.3: My beloved is white and ruddy.

Both the Hebrew and LXX do not have these words. The latter reads in full: “As the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my kinsman among the sons. I desired his shadow and sat down, and his fruit was sweet in my throat.”

ITm 3.16: Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion. He was manifested in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

“Religion” or *eusebeia* is presented as a “mystery” or *musterion*. That is, it is a reverence which requires initiation.

Lk 1.35: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

“Will come upon and “will overshadow:” both are in the future tense and have the preposition *epi* (upon) prefaced to them, *eperchomai* and *episkiazo*.

Lk 1.34: How can this be, since I have no husband?

“Have (no)” is rendered such by the verb *gignosko*, to know.

Is 66.7: Before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son.

“Pain came” is the verb *chyl* and can mean strength, ability and integrity. Compare with *hetsev* in the next verse which applies to heavy, toilsome labor.

Gen 3.16: I will greatly multiply your pain in child bearing.

Lk 1.28: Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!

“Favored one” is the verb *chairo* which also means to rejoice, to be glad.

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

“Image and first-born” or *eikon* and *prototokos*, the latter being part or integral to the former.

Rom 8.29: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

“Foreknew and predestined:” two verbs with the preposition *pro* (before) prefaced to them: *progignosko* and *proorizo*.

Col 1.18: He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

“Beginning and first-born:” *arche* and *prototokos*. The first is beginning as first principle and the second is situated in that *arche* by reason of the first person to have risen from the dead.

Acts 2.24: But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death.

Luo as “loosed” suggests dissolving gradually and gently.

Jn 3.5: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The piercing of Christ's side (blood and water) may be tied in with being born both of water and Spirit. Christ speaks of drinking the water he will give but at the time does not specify how he will do this.

Gen 1.2 has the *Pneuma* “moving over the face of the waters.” The garden which is “watered” prefigures the water of Christ, the word being a verb, *rawah* or to drink largely or be satisfied by drink. The waters also prefigured by Isaiah will not “fail” or *kazav* fundamentally meaning to lie, to deceive.

Mt 19.28: Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve tribes of Israel.

“New world” is *paliggenesia* or literally “birth again.”

Col 1.15: (cf. above).

Sg 5.11: His head is the finest gold (*kephaz*); his locks are wavy, black as a raven.

Pure, uncontaminated gold as Gregory points out in his **Commentary**.

Col 1.18: (cf. above).

Col 2.9: For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

Katoikeo is the verb for “dwells” which means to live in accord with (*kata-*) a specific plan or goal.

Rom 11.16: If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump.

Aparche means “first fruits” and refers to what is offered as sacrifice: the preposition *apo* (from) prefaced to the root *arche* (beginning).

Is 53.9: And they made his grave with the wicked.

The next verse can be read in light of the present one, of Jesus being unjustly condemned.

1Pt 2.22: When he was reviled, he did not revile in return.

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

“Sympathize” is the verb *sumpatheo*, literally as to suffer with. “In every respect” is rendered literally as “according to all according to likeness.”

Prov 30.17: The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.

“Mocks and scorns:” *lahag* and *boz*. The former literally means to stammer or to speak in a barbaric language. The latter is stronger, meaning to despise.

Sg 5.2: My locks are heavy with the dew of the night.

“Dew” or *tal* is moisture characteristic of early morning which forms spontaneously on grass and has a special freshness before the sun dries it up.

Eph 2.2: In which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Peripateo is the verb for “walked” meaning to walk around (*peri-*) which defines the following of the prince of the power of the air, this verb rendered by the preposition *kata* or in accord with the twistings and windings of the wind.

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-*).

1 Tm 1.13: Though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief.

Two words with alpha privative: *agnoeo* and *apistia*, “acted ignorantly and unbelief.”

Col 2.2: That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ.

Sumbibazo means “knit together” connotes reconciliation, here in “love” or *agape*.

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. Compare with *kephaz* of Sg 5.11 above.

1 Cor 12.21: The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you.”

Chreia means “need” which implies use, advantage.

1 Sam 9.9: For he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.

Ro'eh means “seer” or literally as one who sees and is used in the 1Chronicles quote below.

1Sam 16.4: Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said “Do you come peaceably?”

Shalom is a noun for “peaceably.”

1Chron 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.

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” compared with *ro'eh* above and derives from a verbal root meaning to behold, to contemplate. *Chozeh* is used in the next verse.

2Sam 24.11: And when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer.

Ezk 3.17: Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

Tsopheh is the noun for “watchman derived from a verbal root meaning to observe accurately as well as to overlay with a precious metal.

Ezk 33.7: (cf. above).

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.

Jn 1.32: I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him.

“Descend and remained:” *katabaino* and *meino*. The former is more transitional whereas the latter is permanent.

Mt 10.16: Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Phronimos or “wise” suggests having presence of mind in the face of adversities.

Ps 137.1: By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.

Zakar is the verb for “remembered” from which is derived the noun “male” as being responsible for the memory...the lineage...of a given family.

Jer 2.13: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Hazav is the verb for “forsaken” which fundamentally means to loosen bonds.

Ps 1.3: He is like a tree planted by streams of water.

Shatal is a poetic verb for “planted” used with the preposition *hal* or “upon streams of water.”

Mt 7.3: Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Karphos is the noun for “speck” applicable to a chip of wood and something which birds use to make nests.

Lk 6.41: (cf. above).

The Song of Songs, 5.8-12

I have charged you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the virtues of the field: if you should find my beloved, tell him that I am wounded with love. What is your beloved, O beautiful among women? What is your beloved, that you have so charged us? My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen from myriads. His head is fine gold, his locks are silver fir, black as a raven, His eyes are as doves by plentiful waters, washed with milk sitting by plentiful waters.

J.371 & M.1037 He who ordained the mysteries of the Law through Moses fulfilled the entire Law and prophets through his own person. As he says, "I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it." By taking away anger he abolished M.1040 murder and by banishing desire, he removed the guilt of adultery. He thus removed from life the curse that comes from breaking an oath by shackling the scythe in powerlessness: J.372 an oath cannot be violated if there is no oath. Therefore Christ says, "You have heard that it was said to them of old, 'You shall not swear, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

The soul testifies to perfection through the Song of Songs. The covering of its head is removed by stripping off the old tunic and by casting away the veil from its face which we understand as a doubtful, wavering mind. Thus the soul may look straight at the truth. The bride adjures the daughters of Jerusalem neither by God's throne in heaven, nor by the J.373 kings of God who hear the name of Jerusalem, nor by the honor of one's head, the hair of which can neither turn white nor black. Rather, the bride transfers her oath to the “field,” making her young maidens swear by its “powers.” “I have charged you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the virtues of the field.” The bride says that she is thoroughly beautiful and cleansed from every stain and that she utters nothing worthless—for this would be from the Devil—but following the example of Michaia], she speaks a word from God. If the Lord's statement above is valuable, the bride's oath in the Song must have more significance. Because she is free from every prohibitive kind of oath, she neither has her maidens take an oath by the royal city, nor by the great king's throne. (We are taught here to refrain from any rashness in oaths made to God because it does not lie within our capacity to pledge a throne nor a city in an oath.)

The head's honor is spared—later described as being made of gold—whose hairs can turn neither white nor black (How J.374 can gold become black or change to white?). Indeed, this oath which the bride extends to the virgins is not contested by the Gospel's law but becomes an occasion for praise. As the prophet says, "Everyone who swears by him shall rejoice." That the sense of these words may be within our "yes or no" by which the Gospel wishes the truth to be confirmed M.1041 it says, "Let your word be, 'Yes.'" If it is prohibited to make a pledge by the king's throne, by the city of his rule and by the true head, only the "Yes" and "No" is allowed; through both words truth is equally seen is the necessary to confirm our souls' ascent: “I have charged you, Oh

daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the virtues of the field: if you should find my beloved, what are you to say to him? That I am wounded with love."

J.375 We have already considered these words as the sequence of ideas suggests. Now we can briefly state what we have found in the text. The Apostle says that an oath confirming the truth cannot be altered; it puts an end to all controversy by confirming what we know. Therefore the bride charges an oath upon her virgins that they may carefully guard it. Since every oath is sworn by something greater, as the Apostle says (no one would swear an oath beneath his honor), we must now consider why the oath enjoined upon the maidens by the bride is greater. She says, "I have charged you, Oh daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the virtues of the field." What do these words enjoined upon us mean? We certainly understand the "field" to be the world in a symbolic sense as the Lord explains it. What are the many "powers" and "virtues" of the world proposed in the oath? We should understand these powers and virtues greater than ourselves so that J.376 the oath may confirm us in the truth of these greater realities. It is necessary for the sake of clarity to give another interpretation of the words: "I have charged you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and harts of the field." These words teach us about the world's strength and its power which confirm the truth of an oath.

Man is united to God in two ways: one is not to have erroneous ideas about reality such as false notions about God as held by pagans and heretics. Indeed this is a "Yes." Secondly, one must have a pure mind which banishes every passion from the soul. This cannot be opposed to a "Yes." This two-fold notion of the good allows us to consider that which truly exists and to put to flight passions harmful to the soul. The mention of "roes and stags" symbolically represent the "power." He who truthfully examines these symbols has the consuming, destructive power of beasts. The bride then enjoins this "Yes" upon her maidens: they must J.377 & M.1044 faithfully look towards God and make their lives free from passion. Once this is accomplished, the "Yes" which cannot be changed will be confirmed in us. As the prophet says, this is the oath which strengthens truth in faith and is praised in everyone who takes it. A person truly establishes certitude within himself, that is, faith, when he looks steadily at the truth and lives by it after having been cleansed from every defilement of evil. This person who swears an oath to the Lord will not rest upon his bed, nor give sleep to his eyes, nor let his eyelids become drowsy until he finds a place for the Lord and a tabernacle within himself in which to live. If we too are children of the Jerusalem above, let us listen to the bride's teachings and see what she desires. What does the bride say? If we put ourselves under oath to the powers of the clear-sighted roes and to the virtues of stags which destroy evil, we will be able to see the spotless bridegroom, the archer of love. Each soul will say to him, "I am wounded with love." The wounds of love are beautiful as we learn from Proverbs: "Desirable are the wounds of a J.378 friend, but the kisses of an enemy are bad." Who is that friend whose wounds are better than the enemy's kisses? The answer is clear to anyone familiar with the mysteries of salvation. A true, steadfast friend does not cease to love us even though we are enemies; the foe, however, is both unfaithful and savage. He subjects us to death although we have not harmed him. The wound attributed to the first human beings came through the commandment which forbade evil (for this wound is thought to be a separation from what is sweet), while the kiss is a summons to that which is both pleasant and lovely. But experience shows that the honored wounds of a friend are more desirable than an enemy's kiss. Therefore the noble lover of our souls shows his love by which Christ dies for us sinners. The bride, in turn, is inflamed with love and shows the shaft of love deeply placed in her heart, for this represents fellowship with God. For God is love who penetrates the heart by the arrow of faith. If we must find a name for this arrow, we say with Paul that is faith produced by love.

J.379 Let the reader understand the text as best as possible while we now consider the question the virgins put to their teacher: M.1045 "What is your beloved, Oh beautiful among women? What is your beloved, that you have so charged us?" To me this verse resembles what we have considered earlier. The virgins saw the wondrous exits of the soul, that is, the bride, when she addressed the Word, "My soul went out at his word." They know that after the bride had gone out, she sought him who cannot be found by any signs and cried out to him who is not summoned by any name. Therefore the virgins say, "How can we know him who cannot be known by any name? He does not answer if you call, nor is he found when you seek him. Remove then, the veils from our eyes as the city guards did to you, that we may know where to seek him. Tell us of your J.380 beloved and of his nature. Give us, you who are filled with loveliness and 'beautiful among women,' a means to recognize him. Indicate to us the one whom you seek and teach us by what signs this unseen lover can be

found that we may know him by the shaft of love which wounded your heart and intensified your desire for him through a sweet pain."

It would be profitable to repeat this verse so that what we have set just forth may be in harmony with the maidens' words: "What is your beloved, Oh beautiful among women? What is your beloved that you have so charged us?" Let us attentively listen with our veils removed and gaze upon the truth with our soul's eye. How does the bride describe to her maidens the one whom she seeks How does she depict in words his form which she desires? How does she bring to the virgins him who is unknown to them? Christ is both uncreated and created (We say that part of him is uncreated. It is eternal, exists before the ages and is the creator of all; on the other hand, his created part administers to us since it has been formed according to the lowliness of our body. We get a better understanding of these divine words if J.381 we examine them in relation to scripture. We say that in the beginning was the Word. He was always with God and the Word was uncreated, without whom nothing was made. The Word was always with God and was God. Through him all things were made. Christ was created, that is, he became came flesh and dwelt among us. His incarnation clearly revealed his glory, namely, that God, the only-begotten God in the Father's bosom, appeared in human flesh. John said of him, "We saw his glory," Christ who indeed appeared as man. John adds that "the glory as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth" was also made known through Christ).

Since Christ is uncreated and before all the ages, eternally incomprehensible and totally ineffable, that which appeared to us through flesh allowed something of him to be known. Our teacher the Church looks at this aspect of M.1048 Christ and explains it as best she can to her listeners. I am speaking now of the great mystery of our religion through which God was manifested in the flesh; he was in the form of God and lived with men in the disguise of a slave. Once he took on by way of first fruits flesh's mortal nature through the incorruptible virgin, Christ continually sanctified the common mass of mankind by uniting it to himself in a J.382 mysterious fellowship. He nourishes his own body the Church and harmoniously arranges limbs begotten through faith to form the eye, mouth, hands and other limbs. Paul says "the body is one while the members are many."

All members are not the same. The eye does not despise the hand, and the hand does not spurn the feet but through its limbs the body is joined together by various functions in order that the members may be in harmony with the whole. Paul says that God established in the Church, "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.". And again, "May we grow up in all things into him who is the head, namely, Christ; from him all the body is joined and J.383 knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love."

He who sees the Church sees Christ who builds and increases it by the addition of the saved. With her veil now removed, the bride sees with pure eyes the ineffable beauty of her spouse and is wounded by a spiritual, fiery shaft of desire (*eros*). For love (*agape*) which is aroused is called desire. There is no shame present because the arrow is not from the flesh but from God; the bride boasts of her wound when she receives the point of spiritual desire in the depths of her heart. She makes this known to her maidens saying, "I am wounded with love."

The bride advances in perfection and is obliged to show her maidens the bridegroom's beauty; she does not speak of M.1049 what existed from the beginning (for she was unable to manifest the ineffable divinity), but she leads the virgins to God's manifestation in the flesh. (The great John did this too by remaining silent about him who was from the beginning. However, John carefully mentioned, "what we have J.384 seen, heard and our hands have touched regarding the word of truth"). The bride says to her maidens, "My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out from myriads. His head is very fine gold; his locks are silver fur, black as a raven. His eyes are as doves by plentiful waters, washed with milk, sitting by plentiful waters. His cheeks are as bowls of spices pouring forth perfumes; his lips are lilies dropping choice myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with beryl from Tarshish. His belly is an ivory tablet on a sapphire stone. His legs are marble pillars set on golden bases. His form is as Lebanon, choice as the cedars. His throat is most sweet, and altogether desirable. This is my beloved, and this is my companion, Oh daughters of Jerusalem."

All these elements constituting the bridegroom's beauty are made known for our benefit but do not show his invisible, incomprehensible beauty. He was seen on earth and conversed with men; He clothed himself with human nature as the Apostle says; He made the invisible visible by deeds and was manifested through the Church. The establishment J.385 of the Church is the creation of the world, and according to the prophet a new heaven is created in it (faith in Christ is the firmament as Paul says). A new earth is created which drinks the rain coming upon it, and another man is created who is renewed according to his creator's image through a rebirth from above. There is a new light of which Christ says, "You are the light of the world" "among whom you are seen as light in the world:" thus many stars rise in the firmament of faith. The multitude of stars numbered and named by God is not the only wonder about creation. Their names, the maker says, are written in heaven (I have heard the creator of the new universe say to his own luminaries, "Your names are written in heaven"). In addition to these stars created by the Word are many suns whose rays of good deeds illumine the world. The maker of these suns says, "Let your light shine before men," and "The righteous shall J.386 shine as the sun." Thus whoever looks at the visible world and understands the wisdom that has been made manifest by the beauty of creatures, can make an analogy M.1052 from the visible to invisible beauty, the fountain of beauty whose emanation established all living beings in existence. Similarly, whoever views the world of this new creation in the Church sees in it him who is all in all. This person is then led by faith through what is finite and comprehensible to knowledge of the infinite. For this reason the virgins approach the soul running on high to perfection that she may make known to them her beloved. She describes to them by the deeds of salvation some indications of whom she seeks. She shows that the entire Church is one body of the bridegroom and gives a meaning to each one of his members. The body is completed only by the unity of each member.

We have given an introduction to what scripture wishes to teach us. The Song begins its instruction with the human body as does Matthew's genealogy from Abraham and David when they both describe God's mystery according to the flesh. On the other hand, the great John speaks about the beginning of this mystery whose roots lie J.387 in eternity, and he announces the Word as present in the beginning. The bride initiates her maidens by similar notions because our mind does not first attain God's incomprehensible, invisible nature unless the visible or the flesh is grasped through faith. She says, "my beloved is white and ruddy." The mixture of these two colors describes the properties of flesh. This was touched upon earlier when the bride calls her spouse an apple whose form is composed by a blend of two colors. An apple is white and becomes red, the symbol of blood.

All flesh implies birth with marriage as the means for bringing it about. The person, however, who is not subject to a birth of flesh with respect to the mystery of religion does not submit to the actions effected by human nature nor to the passions arising from the mind. He understands that the generation of the flesh belongs to all mankind. The bride says that he who partakes of flesh and blood is white and ruddy. Yet by indicating the body's nature by these two colors, she does not say that Christ partakes of that birth common to mankind. Rather, God assumed our human nature J.388 from the multitude of men which he had begotten. From the passage of succeeding generations, Christ alone entered this life by a new form of birth. Nature did not co-operate in this birth but served it. Therefore the bride says that her spouse is white and ruddy; that is, he dwells in this present life through flesh and blood while having been begotten from virginal purity M.1053. His conception is virginal; his birth is undefiled and without pangs; his bridal chamber is the power of the Most High overshadowing the virgin like a cloud; he is a nuptial torch of the Holy Spirit's splendor; his bed is free from passion and his marriage is incorruptibility.

The bridegroom born under such circumstances as these is rightly called "chosen from myriads:" He was free from birth resulting from marriage because his existence does not come from marriage. No terminology pertaining to human birth can rightly pertain to Christ's incorruptible, painless birth because virginity and childbirth cannot apply to the bridegroom at the same time. As the Son is given to us without the Father, the child is begotten without birth. The virgin did not know how the divine body was produced in her body J.389 and did not undergo birth pangs. As the prophet Isaiah says, "Before she travailed she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child." Therefore Christ was chosen and was unfamiliar with any of birth's consequences. His mortal existence did not begin in pleasure nor did it come forth through pain. This happened in good order and time. Because woman brought death to human nature through sin, she was

condemned to give birth in pain and labor. It was indeed necessary that the mother of life conceive her child with joy and to perfect her act of giving birth in joy. The archangel said to her, "Rejoice, full of grace." His message banished grief which from the beginning we inherited through childbirth under sin. This, then, is he who alone was begotten by a new and special kind of generation "from all the myriads." Rightly is he called "white and ruddy" because of his flesh and blood and "chosen from myriads" because of his incorruptibility and freedom from birth pangs. For this reason his birth is distinct from any other birth. The bride adapts these words to her spouse because of his other forms of birth. You indeed know how often he, the first born of the new creation, the first born of many brothers, came to birth. He is the first J.390 born from the dead who first loosened death's pangs and prepared a birth from the dead by his resurrection. Christ was begotten in all these births while he did not suffer childbirth itself. He did not experience birth by a generation through water, nor a re-birth from the dead, nor a birth in his status of first born of this divine creation; rather, his birth is free from pain. For this reason the bride says "chosen from among myriads."

Now let us consider the bridegroom's beauty which is praised in each of his bodily limbs: "His head is fine gold M.1056 (*kephaz*). If the Hebrew is translated into our [Greek] language, *kephaz* signifies pure, uncontaminated gold which is free from any impurity. It seems to me that those translating Hebrew into Greek have left the term *kephaz* unexplained; they could not find any word to convey the Hebrew meaning. We have learned however, that *kephaz* represents uncorrupted purity because it is free from anything base. We have come to understand that this term pertains to Christ as head of his body the Church. We maintain that this word J.391 does not refer to Christ's eternal divinity but to that man who received the divinity. He was seen upon earth and conversed among men; He was an offshoot of virginity in which dwelt bodily the fullness of his divinity; He was the first fruit of the common mass of dough by which the Word assumed our nature; He restored it to purity and cleansed it from every inherent defect. The prophet says of him, "He did not commit sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth." "He was tempted in everything according to our nature and was without sin." Thus he is the head of his body the Church, the first fruit of our nature, is free from evil and composed of pure gold.

The bridegroom's locks of hair are dark and black like a raven (I mention a raven which plucks out eyes. It uses these mutilated eyes as food for its young). The bridegroom's locks are the lofty trees of heaven extending from J.392 earth to heaven. They add to the bridegroom's beauty by being fixed upon his divine head. The reader is indeed aware of the locks' function which teach us of the bridegroom already mentioned: "My locks are heavy with the dew of the night." These locks laden with dew are named "clouds" by the prophets. From them come the rain of teaching to water the lifeless land and to make the fields of God fertile. The Word symbolically names Apostles "locks." Their lives were first dark such as a tax collector, a robber, a persecutor and anything else black and carnivorous like a raven which destroys our eyes. I am speaking of that prince of the power of darkness in the same way Paul turned from a raven into a fir and became a "lock" of the divine head. Paul had first been a blasphemer, persecutor and source of violence, that is a raven. He was transformed into a lock pregnant with heavenly dew for the entire body of the J.393 Church and distilled the hidden, obscure mysteries of God's M.1057 word. Therefore the locks hanging from the bridegroom's head of gold add to his beauty and are aroused by the Spirit's breeze. They become crowns to enhance the bridegroom's pure head by being fashioned into a circular kind of adornment. To me, the following words convey meanings of these locks: "You have placed on his head a crown of precious stone." Thus what we have spoken of here makes the locks fitting, precious stones to adorn the bridegroom's head.

Let us now consider what the Song says about the bridegroom's eyes: "His eyes are as doves by plentiful waters, washed with milk, sitting by plentiful waters." The meaning of these words is beyond our comprehension (for whatever we may understand of them would, I believe, fall short of the truth), yet after diligent consideration, we offer our interpretation. The divine Apostle somewhere says that the eyes should not say to the hands, "I have no need of you." He teaches us here that the Church's body must use both the eyes and hands to function properly: the power of J.394 sight must be united with truth to effect action. Contemplation by itself cannot perfect the soul unless accompanied by actions which direct a morally good life nor can an active way of life suffice unless guided by true piety. The eyes, therefore, must be joined to the hands. Perhaps the Song may point out to us the meaning of the eyes, and we can then see why they are praised. However, we will discuss the significance of the bridegroom's hands in another place.

The eyes' natural function is to see. For this reason they are situated above all the sense organs and are ordained by nature with the guidance of the entire body. We hear of persons named by divine scripture for guiding us into the truth such as "he who sees," "he who looks" and "watchman;" The prophets bestow names to such persons. "Eyes" represent those commanded to watch, to observe and to carefully pay attention. We learn about their J.395 qualities by comparing their beauty to something better. The bride says, "Your eyes are as doves." The spouse's eyes are indeed praised, for they live by the Spirit's direction and are thereby innocent and undefiled.

The spiritual, pure life is expressed by a dove, the form which John saw as the Holy Spirit flying upon the waters. Thus he who is M.1060 established by God as eyes for the Church's body must wash away anything blocking his vision if he is to watch and oversee as he should. God says that there is not only one kind of water to wash our eyes but many different kinds. There are as many virtues as fountains of purifying water by which our eyes become ever purer. One such fountain of purifying water is temperance. Another is humility, along with truth, righteousness, fortitude, desire for the good and aversion from evil. These waters and others like them flow J.396 from one fountain, merging their streams into a single one by which the eyes may be purified from any discharge of the passions.

But the eyes "upon the fullness of waters" are compared to doves because of their simplicity and innocence, and the Word says they have been washed in milk. A quality of milk is that it does not reflect any image. Every other liquid is like a mirror whose smooth surface serves to reflect the image of those gazing in it. However, milk lacks such reflective capacity. This is the best praise for the Church's eyes: they do not reflect deceptive, shadowy pictures of non-existent things which are erroneous, vain or contrary to the true J.397 nature of reality; rather, they look at Being itself and do not reflect the false visions and fantasies of life. Thus the perfect soul bathes her eyes in milk to keep them pure.

The Song now offers something for which its readers should strive, the eyes "sitting by plentiful waters." By praising these pure eyes, the Word requires that we must assiduously apply ourselves to the divine teachings. It teaches us that we can acquire the bridegroom's own beauty by always sitting by the "plentiful waters." Indeed, many who have been designated as eyes have renounced their diligence; instead, they have sat by the rivers of Babylon and have been condemned by God himself: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water and have hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, which hold no water.". Thus the eye is to become beautiful and fitting for the bridegroom's golden head, that is, pure as a dove, true and J.398 undeceptive as milk and never deluded by insubstantial fantasies. M.1061 We must patiently sit by the "plentiful (divine) waters" like a firm tree planted by flowing waters. Then we will bring forth fruit in due season, and the branch will always be kept verdant, embraced by the lovely color of its leaves.

Now many persons let their spiritual eyes neglect these waters and pay scant attention to the Word of God. Rather, they hollow out for themselves a well of greed, serve their own vain-glory, make wells of arrogance and diligently dig other wells of deception which by nature cannot forever hold the waters they so eagerly desire. Thus honor, power and glory for which many eagerly strive will at once leak out when gathered; no trace of all their vain effort will be left for those persons who have been deceived. The Word desires that such guardians and protectors set up a defensive wall (their eyelids), the certainty of divine teachings. With continence they must hide the purity and splendor of their lives by their eyelids, so to speak, that the ray of conceit may never fall on their vision. We may later examine the bridegroom's other members, J.399 provided that God grants us time by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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The Fourteenth Homily

1 Pt 2.2: Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk.

Logikos is the adjective for "spiritual" fundamentally as agreeable to reason.

1 Cor 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.

Epios is the adjective for “gentle” as *en meso humon* or literally “in the midst of you.”

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

Stereos as “solid” can apply to anything hard or harsh. *Diakrisis* is the noun for “to distinguish” and means literally to judge through (*dia*).

Rom 8.22: We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now.

Two verbs with the preposition *sun* (with) prefaced to them: *sustenazo* and *sunodino* (‘groaning in travail together’).

1Cor 2.6: Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

Laleo is the verb for “impart” meaning to speak, the object being *sophia* (‘wisdom’).

Heb 5.14: (cf. above).

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

The verb for “eat” (*lacham*) is the verbal root for “bread” (*lechem*).

Sg 5.12: His eyes are as doves, by the pools of waters, washed with milk, sitting by the pools.

Aphyq suggests a narrow, controlled (and hence manmade) course of water such as a tube although its expanded meaning applies to a stream.

1Cor 10.16: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it now 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.

Is 40.9-12: (Isaiah announcing coming of the Lord).

Ps 69.1: Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.

Yashah is the verb for “save” and is the verbal root for the proper name Jesus. *Nephesh* is the noun for “neck” or more accurately, “soul.”

Ps 19.8: The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

“Precepts and command:” *piqud* (plural) and *mitswath* (singular): the former applies to mustering as with troops and the latter is the more common term for this gesture.

Sg 1.3: And the smell of your ointments is better than all spices; your name is ointment poured forth. Therefore do the young maidens love you.

Note the parallel between “ointments” and “name,” *shemen* and *shem*, as though the latter were poured out from the former.

2Cor 4.2: We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

Apolegomai and *doloo*: “to practice cunning” and “to tamper with.” The former literally means to speak off or away from and the latter, to deceive.

Acts 9.18: And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight.

Lepis is the noun for “scales” and can refer to something like eggshells.

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.

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.

“Chosen instrument:” *ekloge* meaning an election or choice and *skeuos* is a utensil of any kind.

Gal 1.16: Was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood.

Prosanatithemi or “confer with” consists of the root *tithemi* (to set, to place) prefaced with two prepositions, *pros* and *ana* (toward and motion upwards).

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

1 Cor 12.13: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

“One” (*hen*) is used twice to stress the singleness of the Holy Spirit or *Pneuma* as well as persons participating in him. This applies to the verse above and the one below.

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.

Sg 5.13: His cheeks are like beds of spices yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, dropping choice myrrh.

“Bed” derives from the verbal root *harag*, “to desire.” “liquid myrrh,” that is, *nataph*, is a verb encountered in Sg 4.11 where the bridegroom speaks, “Your lips drop nectar.”

Gal 6.14: But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Kauchomai means “to glory” or to speak loudly of oneself.

Acts 10.34-48: (Peter at Cornelius' house).

Col 2.12: And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Two verbs with the preposition *sun* (with) prefaced to them: *suntapto* and *suyegeiro* or “buried with” and “raised with.” The former is found in the next verse, also with baptism.

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

Sg 5.14: His hands are as embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl); his belly is an ivory tablet on a sapphire stone.

“Set with beryl,” that is, *tarshyth* from which comes the proper noun Tarshish. *Mehy* or “belly” is a figure of one's inmost being; it bears a relationship to the verb *rachaph* as found in Gen 1.2: “and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters,” that is, the Spirit expressing what is closest to God when bringing creation from these “waters” or chaos.

1Cor 12.21: The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

Chreia or “need” also can apply to having an advantage.

2Cor 5.19: That is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Katallasso means literally to change or to exchange (as with money). *Logos* is the noun for “message.”

Sg 5.11: His head is as very fine gold, his locks are flowing black as a raven.

Gen 8.7 has Noah in the ark who “sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.” This raven indeed became a *horev* or “pledge.” Its back and forth flight, almost like the drying action of a fan, was responsible for the flood waters to recede. Compare this raven with a dove: Noah “sent forth a dove...but [it] found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark” (vss 8-9).

1Pt 2.22: It has happened to them according to the true proverb. The dog turns back to his own vomit, and the sow is washed only to wallow in the mire.

Reference is to Prov 26.11.

1Cor 9.9: “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned?

Reference is to Dt 25.4. *Melo* is the verb for “concerned” and also means to have as an object of care.

1 Cor 10.13: God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Hupophero is the verb “to endure,” literally as to carry away under (*hupo*).

1Cor 4.2: Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

Oikonomos is the noun for “stewards” as in the next verse, literally as one who dispenses things belonging to a household (*oikos*).

Lk 12.42: Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?

Kairos means “proper time.”

Jn 12.4-6: (reference to Judas).

Mt 27.5: And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.

Acts 1.19: And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.

Jon 1.3: He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish.

Ps 48:7: By the east wind you shattered the ships of Tarshish.

Acts 2:1-3: (Pentecost).

Ezk 1:16: Their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite (*tarshish*).

“Gleaming” is the noun *heyn*, literally as “eye.”

2Cor 4:18: Because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Seen = transient and unseen = eternal. The verb *blepo* is used referring to the capacity for sight.

Proskairos is the adjective for “transient” or the noun *kairos* with the preposition *pros* signifying direction towards-which.

Sg 5:14: His hands are as embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl).

(cf. vs. above).

Ex 24:12: Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tables of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.

The stone tables contain both “law and commandment” or *Torah* and *mitswah*. Note singular of the latter.

Hab 2:2: Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets so he may run who reads it.

Ba’ar is the verb for “make plain” which means to engrave or expound and is the verbal root for the noun “well.”

2Cor 3:3: Written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

The preposition *en* (in) is used for “on tablets of human hearts.”

Ezk 11:19: And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.

“One heart” reads in Hebrew “heart one” which here emphasizes the unity of the people with regard to the Lord.

Prov 7:3: Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.

“Bind and write” or *qashar* and *katav*. The former also means to conspire.

Mt 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

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

Ezk 2:8-3:2: (Ezekiel eats the scroll).

Jer 4:19: My anguish, my anguish! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent; for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

Meh is the noun for “anguish” but means bowels or intestines used for “heart.”

Jn 7:38: He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.”

“In me” more literally reads “into (*eis*) me.” *Koilia* is the noun for “heart” and refers to intestines or bowels.

Rom 2:15: They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them.

“Requires” is the noun *ergon* or work also as deed or transaction. Note the preposition *sun* (with) prefaced to two words: *summartureo* and *suneidesis* (bears witness and conscience).

2Cor 3:3: And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Phaneroo is the verb for “show” which means a manifestation or disclosure.

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 wise and prudent.

Mt 6:21: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Lk 12:34: (cf. vs. above).

Sg 5:15: His legs are pillars of marble set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

Shesh is the noun for “marble” which also means fine line” as well as the number “six. Moses constructed the tents of the tabernacle from this material, for example, “You shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff; with cherubim skillfully worked shall you make them” (Ex 26:1). Such curtains have the appearance of *legs* standing guard before the entrance to the Holy of Holies.

Prov 9.1: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars.

Chastav as “set up” means to cut or to hew.

Ex 37.4: Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’

The adjective “dry” is not used in the Hebrew text. *Davar* is the noun for “word,” more an expression.

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

Anastrepho is the verb for “behave” which literally means to turn back (*ana-*).

Ex 35.30-3: (Wisdom of Besalel).

Ex 37.4: (cf. vs. above).

Sg 5.11: His head is as very fine gold, his locks are flowing black as a raven.

Horev is the noun for “raven” and also means a pledge.

Gal 2.9: And when they perceived that grace was given to me, James, Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Gignosko is the verb for “perceived.” *Koinonia* is the noun for “fellowship.”

1Tm 3.15: (cf. vs. above).

1Cor 3.11: For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Keimai is the verb for “laid” and connotes a setting up.

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

Pros or “to” signifies direction towards-which, continuous movement.

Mt 22.40: On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

Kremannui is the verb for “depend” which fundamentally means to hang.

Mt 22.37-9: (cf. vs. above).

1Tm 3.15: (cf. vs. above).

Gal 2.9: (cf. vs. above).

1Tm 3.15: (cf. vs. above).

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

Houtos is the word for “so” which makes the connection between one physical body and one body of Christ.

Ps 29.5-6: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

Shavar is the verb for “breaks” and suggests being done so into many small pieces.

Eph 6.12: For we are not contending against flesh and blood.

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.

Mt 26.53: Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

Parakaleo is the verb for “appeal” which literally means call to one’s side (*para-*).

Mk 5.9: And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

A Roman legion consisted of some four to six thousand troops.

Lk 8.30: (cf. vs. above).

Mt 9.34: But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

Archon is the noun for “prince” also meaning chief or captain.

Eph 2.2: Following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Peripateo is the verb for “following” which means literally to walk around (*peri-*). Applied to the “power of the air,” perhaps this walking-around can be associated with the swirling of wind.

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-*).

Eph 1.21: Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

“Rule, authority, power and dominion:” *arche* (also as beginning), *exousia* (suggests the exercise of power), *dunamis* (strength in the sense of power and authority) and *kuriotes* (lordship).

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

kings and Lord of Lords.

Kairos is the noun for “proper time.”

1Cor 15.24: Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

Telos or “end” in the sense of completion.

Ezk 10.1: Then I looked, and behold, on the firmament that was over the heads of the cherubim there appeared above them something like a sapphire, in form resembling a throne.

Raqyah means “firmament” and connotes that which is spread out.

Jn 14.2: In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Oikos and *mone* or “house and mansions.” The former is the general term for any house and the latter applies to a staying or abiding as well as a stopping place. This latter is contained in the former.

Rom 9.22: What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction?

“To show and to make known” or *endeiknumi* and *gnorizo*. The former is a showing-in (*en-*) and the latter connotes discovering or acquaintance.

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

Exaiphnes in the adverb “suddenly” consisting of *aphno* (connotes being unaware) prefaced with the preposition *ex* (from).

Ps 78.49: He let loose on them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation and distress, a company of destroying angels.

Charon is the noun for “fierce anger” which means a burning here in the form of angels who destroy which is the verb *rahah* (to destroy; connotes breaking into small pieces).

Ps 29.5-6: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

(Cf. vs. above).

Ex 32.20: And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it upon the water, and made the people of Israel drink it.

Tachan is the verb for “ground” which means to spread out or to expand and is not unlike *zarah*, the verb for “scattered.”

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:” *gnosis* and *noema*, the latter applying to perception.

Ps 92.12: The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Parach is the verb for “flourish” and means to break out, to burst forth.

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

Anastrepho is the verb for “behave” which literally means to turn back (*ana-*).

Lk 16.9: And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations.

“Fails” is the verb *eklino*, literally to incline from (*ek-*). “Habitations” is the noun *skene* meaning tent.

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.

Apokeimi is the verb for “laid up” and applies to laying in storage which was heard earlier through the gospel. That implies some of it may be taken from the storehouse as needed.

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

Houtos is the word for “so” which makes the connection between one physical body and one body of Christ.

Is 10.34-11.1: (fall of Lebanon).

Is 11.6-8: (wolf and lamb, etc.).

Is 9.5: For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

Ma'akolet is the noun for “fuel” which literally means something to be eaten.

Is 10.34: He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.
Adyr is the adjective for “majestic” which applies to something large and mighty.

Sg 5.16: His legs are alabaster columns set upon bases of gold. His appearance is as Lebanon, choice as the cedars.

Mar’eh is the noun for “appearance” and derives from the common verb to see.

Prov 16.24: Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

“Sweetness and health” belong to the soul and body respectively, *matoq* and *marpe’*. The latter derives from a verbal root meaning to droop.

Jn 1.23: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.

John the Baptist quoting Is 40.3. *Euthuno* is the verb for “make straight” where the preface *eu-* suggests anything done or prepared well.

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.

Dokime is the noun for “proof” and can also be applied to a character which has been tried.

Prov 6.8: She [ant] prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest.

“Sustenance” is the common word for food.

Sg 5.16: His throat is most sweet, and altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my companion, O daughters of Jerusalem.

“Most sweet and “desirable” or *mataq* and *chamad*, the latter suggestive of something which is coveted.

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.

Prosdelos is the adjective for “evident” where the preposition *pros* as preface suggests direction towards-which.

Lk 10.30-5: (Parable of good Samaritan).

Lk 10.25: Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

The idea of inheriting suggests that the person asking this question has a right (perhaps as a Jew) to eternal life.

Lk 10.29: But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Plesios is an adjective for “neighbor” and means something or someone who is nearby.

Is 1.11: What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?

Heb 9.12: He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Ephapax as “once for all” can also mean at the same time and refers to that which is definitive.

Heb 11.16: But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.

Oregeo is the verb for “desire” which means to stretch out and indicative of intense, passionate desire.

Jn 6.56: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

Meno is the verb for “abides” and implies a permanent dwelling.

Lk 10.35: And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."

Lk 10.27 (Dt 6.5): You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

With regard to the Deuteronomy reference, *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*). *Ahav* is *agapao* in the quote at hand.

Rom 2.13: For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

The preposition *para* is used for “before God” suggestive of being at his side.

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.

Cf. vs. above.

The Song of Songs, 5.13-16

His cheeks are as bowls of spices pouring forth perfumes; his lips are lilies, dropping choice myrrh, His hands

are of embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl); his belly is an ivory tablet on a sapphire stone. His legs are marble pillars set on golden bases; his form is as Lebanon, choice as the cedars; His throat is sweet; and altogether desirable. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, Oh daughters of Jerusalem.

J.399 & M.1061 As the Apostle says, he who nourishes a newly born infant with pure milk during its early spiritual life cares for those newly born in the Church. He dispenses the bread of wisdom to the perfect according to the inner man. J.400 "We speak wisdom among the perfect," that is, we train with good doctrine the soul's senses to receive the bread of wisdom. The jaws of these persons receive as food reflections upon wisdom and reduce it to small pieces. Such jaws in Christ's body must no longer attend to the teats of the Word, but go after firmer food of which the bride says, "His cheeks are as bowls of spices pouring forth perfumes." She speaks of her spouse's cheeks after his eyes, a M.1064 fact evident to everyone attentive to her words. The eye situated by the fullness of spiritual waters must be washed by unmixed, pure milk like an innocent dove in order that the bridegroom may share his own goodness with all the members of the Church. For this reason the great Isaiah ascended a lofty mountain and was commanded to cry out with a clear voice to make known the Lord who comes with power. He wields authority over creation by his arm, nourishes his flock, leads his lambs, tenderly consoles the tender J.401 lambs with hope, embraces heaven in the palm of his hand, holds the entire world in his grasp and utters proclamations for the person ascending his mountain. If recognition of the truth comes from washing one's eyes with these waters and this milk, the bridegroom's cheeks rightly follow. Their task is to break up food for maintaining the body. Let us examine the bridegroom's cheeks and listen to the bride who speaks of them: "His cheeks are as bowls of spices pouring forth perfumes." If the text signifies a drinking cup, this bowl is neither very deep nor high, and if the bridegroom's cheeks represent this bowl, they are praised because they resemble its shape. Should anyone praise a simple, open and pure kind of teaching like this bowl, its J.402 depth cannot be defended. As the prophet says, "Let me be delivered from those who hate me and from the deep water." We therefore say that truth in its simplicity has no part in any deceitful hollowness as signified by the bowl used for holding spices which give forth perfumes. The bridegroom's cheeks are as bowls of spices. Not being made of silver, gold, crystal nor of any such material, his cheeks produce instead these spices from which come his perfumes.

It is clear that the Song speaks of the pure eyes of those in the Church. They prepare food for the body by reducing it to small pieces with their jaws so that nothing hidden nor deceitful may be seen in their words. Their eyes are radiant, free, lack deceit and are found in children. The prophet M.1065 says "The testimony of the Lord is faithful, instructing babes. The ordinances of the Lord are right, giving light to the eyes." If the "bowls" of the Word are like this, they are clearly not made of any earthen material but from the bridegroom's spice mentioned at the beginning of the Song, J.403 for it is better than all spices. Paul was a bowl who proved himself by manifesting truth, not deceit. He rejected earthly material through baptism which removed the husk of his bodily eyes, and he became a child of the Holy Spirit by being made a good fragrance. After this vessel was constructed with choice copper, it became a bowl for pouring out the wine of the Word. Filled with the knowledge of mysteries, the bowl no longer needs human works (Paul does not ascribe his knowledge to flesh and blood) but produces the divine drink and pours it out while the various virtues resemble perfumes by means of the fragrance of Christ. They are adapted according to the different persons who receive God's word--Jews, Greeks, women, men, lords, slaves, parents, children, both those subject and not subject to the Law. The loveliness of this manifold teaching is combined with every virtue. The bowl compounds the perfume according to each person's need who receives God's word. Therefore the beauty describing the bridegroom's body also serves to praise his cheeks.

The praise attributed to these cheeks is testified to by the J.404 bridegroom's lips which yield spice: "His lips are lilies, dropping choice myrrh." The two examples here suggest two qualities. One is truth which shines in his words (for a lily symbolizes purity and truth). The other is the spiritual, immaterial way of life set forth by his teaching and by contemplation of the spiritual realm which mortifies the world, that is, the life of flesh and blood. Myrrh, a symbol of death, flows from his body and fills souls docile to him. Quite often the divinely inspired scripture uses myrrh as referring to death. Therefore the perfect, pure eye makes its cheeks a bowl which pours forth spices. Adorned with divine splendor, it buds with the lilies M.1068 of his words from his mouth. In this way the Word names those who are pure and fragrant with virtue; from them drop myrrh which continuously fills the minds of those who receive it. As a result, they have contempt for a simply

material life. Out of J.405 desire for the transcendent good, the cares of this life are nullified and put to death. Paul pours this myrrh from his mouth. It is mixed with the pure lily of temperance and fills the ears of that holy virgin Thekla (was her name) who received in her soul these flowing drops. She put the outer man to death and quenched every carnal thought and desire. After Thekla received this salvific teaching, her youth and external beauty died along with all her body's faculties. The Word alone lived in her. Because of him the entire world was dead for her, and she the virgin had died to the world.

Also the great Peter poured forth the shining lilies of the Word when he was at Cornelius' house, filling his listeners with myrrh. As soon as they received the Word they were buried with Christ and became dead to the world. A multitude of examples can also be found in the lives of the saints. They became the Church's common mouth and filled their listeners with myrrh which mortified their passions and bore fruit with the lilies of the Word. They became great champions J.406 of faith. By a good confession at their time of witness, they were drenched with myrrh in their struggle on behalf of their religion. There is no need to dwell at length on these matters now that my understanding of the text has become clear: we have considered how the Church's mouth became a lily, how the lily can drop myrrh and how such drops fill the souls of those who receive them.

Let us now move on to the next verse of the Song. "His hands are of embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl). The eye's function for the body of the Church is imperfect if not joined with the hands' service. We clearly understand this from the great Paul who says "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" A person's actions testify to a sharp eye and reveal a virtuous life out of his longing for true beauty. Since we must praise the divine body, let us consider what place the eyes have in relation to the Church's hands. By offering the divine words of the Song to our listeners, we attempt to gather what God intends for us as far as it is possible. "His hands are of embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl)."

Up to this point we clearly understand that the bridegroom's J.407 head is praised, and this praise is fulfilled in his hands. M.1069 The head is Christ according to the flesh in whom God was present reconciling the world to himself. According to Paul, he manifested himself in the flesh through virtues and miracles. If the bridegroom's head is of pure gold, it lacks sin ("He committed no sin, nor was there deceit in his mouth"). In like manner, the text says that the bridegroom's hands are gold, signifying that he is completely pure, undefiled and without evil. The "hands" are members who administer to the Church's common need at the divine command. Their praise resembles that of the head's; that is, both hands and head are pure and sinless. The hand will become pure when stripped of anything carved in J.408 gold which hinders its beauty. In the case of chiseling a certain form in marble, sculptors chisel and remove material to represent the model's form. Thus the many hands of the Church's body must be fashioned into something beautiful by the chiseling effected through much reflection so that their hands may be pure gold. It is evident that anything removed from the hand destroys its beauty, that is, what pleases men, love of glory, greed, looking to externals, notoriety, concern about one's glory and satisfaction with luxury and pleasure from giving orders. Things such as these must be removed by the instruments of reflection so that the pure, unadulterated gold of free will might alone remain which has been compared to a pure head of gold.

The Apostle's own words will help clarify the Song's text. After calling God faithful, Paul sought among his stewards only worthy and faithful persons. He writes, "Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." Thus the faithful and prudent master takes the place of the Church's hand and manifests his golden hand in imitation of his wise Lord which, in the Song's words, consists in following the example of the "head of fine gold." Judas was certainly not a golden hand in the body of the apostles; he was wretched and miserable or better, loathsome J.409 and abominable. Being entrusted with care for the poor, Judas did not remove the stone of avarice from his hand but stole from the apostles' money bag; like a thief. Judas held the bag and secretly stole from it without regard for God's command. What became of his pleasure? Judas freely hanged himself, removed himself from this life, brought ruin upon his soul and was put in a tomb for evildoers which endures for all time. Thus it is necessary for our hands to be M.1072 carved and hollowed out for the removal of our connatural evils. Only gold which conforms to the head's beauty must remain.

The word "Tarshish" (Beryl) has many meanings as commonly used in scripture. It is often used in a negative way while on the other hand, it frequently takes on a divine, noble significance. When the prophet Jonah fled

from God's face, he sought a boat going to Tarshish. The great David said that the boats of Tarshish were destroyed by a powerful wind. Such a wind, I believe, appeared J.410 to the disciples gathered in the upper room. It was first recognized by a violent, rushing wind; afterwards it appeared to them like a shining fire in the form of tongues. The multiform wind which destroyed the evils warring against human nature is called ships of Tarshish. These ships signify evil, yet the great Ezekiel, expresses one form of this divine vision when describing God's theophany: "His form was like that of Tarshish." Those who know Hebrew say that "Tarshish," as used here in prophecy signifies anything spiritual and incorporeal which lacks color. Therefore we have two meanings of the Song's text: "Tarshish" is taken in a better sense (for anything negative is not praised) if we apply it to the bridegroom's hands. One must carefully remove everything superfluous and corporeal in order to pass over into the divine, spiritual realm and shake off whatever is material, heavy and pertaining to this life. Sculptors working on J.411 emeralds also follow this procedure. They remove dark, earthy material by a whetstone. The material not removed is pure, bright and green like olive oil. It seems to me that the divine Apostle explains this process more clearly by counseling us to remove everything external out of desire to see the invisible. "Because we look not to the things that are seen; for the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal." We understand these words as applying to the hands. By carving away any material attractions, our hands might become pure and transformed by our free will into what is immaterial and spiritual. "His hands are as embossed gold, plentiful from Tarshish (Beryl)."

M.1073 Let us now look at the Song's words pertaining to the bridegroom's belly: "His belly is an ivory tablet on a sapphire stone." The Lawgiver of human nature gave to Moses the Law inscribed on stone tablets and called them J.412 small stone tablets on which were engraved the divine letters. When he was about to transmit the Law, God said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there; and I will give you the tablets on stone with the Law and the commandments." Since the Gospel's clarity removed everything corporeal and earthly, no longer were the letters inscribed on stone tablets but upon brightly polished ivory. The location of the commandments and laws is called "belly" which is an "ivory tablet on a sapphire stone."

An example from the human body better helps us to comprehend these words of the Song. Boxwood (*puxos*) is a solid, white material used for writing tablets, so whenever we hear of an instrument made of this light material, we understand it as something used by scribes for writing on. Since the J.413 general name of these tablets is *puxion*, the Song says that its material is boxwood, not ivory. Because of its great solidity and firmness, the tablet is incorruptible like a bone's substance: no damage is done to it over the course of time.

The dark-blue color of sapphire provides relief for the weary eyes of persons diligently reading the letters on a tablet because sapphire's splendor naturally makes one's eyes relax. This example may be applied to the "belly" of the Church. I have heard the prophet exhorted by God say, "Write this vision which you have clearly seen on a tablet." I take the word "belly" as a convenient term to praise our Lord's body. If the text exhorts Habakkuk to inscribe his vision on a tablet, we could call the tablet purity of heart on which our memories have inscribed the divine visions. Similarly, when the great Ezekiel opened his mouth, he put in it the book's scroll full of letters on each side: "Eat with your mouth, and your belly will be filled." The rational part of the soul in which is placed the divine teachings is J.414 named "belly." We may also call the great Jeremiah's heart M.1076 a belly which was afflicted by sad thoughts: "My belly grieves me, and the senses of my heart disturb me." If a greater authority must be given from the divine scriptures we state what our Lord said to those who believed in him: rivers of living water will flow from whoever believes in him. "He who believes in me, as the scriptures said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'." We further add that the term "belly" signifies a pure heart; it becomes a tablet of the divine law, as the Apostle says. It shows the effect of this law written in the heart not by ink but by the Spirit of the living God who fashions these letters in the soul: not upon stone tablets as the Apostle says, but upon the tablet of the heart which is pure, light J.415 and shining. The guiding faculty of the soul must be engraved with the clear, pure memory of the divine words and be made clear by conspicuous letters. Indeed, sapphire is included to praise the bridegroom's belly alone with the tablet whose gleam resembles the sky. This image counsels us to be attentive to heavenly matters, the place of our treasure. By not growing weary in keeping the divine precepts, the vision of our divine hope refreshes our soul's eyes.

Next the bride praises her spouse's legs: "His legs are marble pillars set on golden bases." Wisdom's house has many columns adorned with various materials, which support the tent of witness. The column's capitals and

bases are gold, whereas their middle sections are sheathed with silver. The bride says that the Church's columns are marble firmly set upon golden bases (The Church is a house as the Apostle says, "How should one behave in the household of God"). J.416 Thus the bride's words concur with the wisdom of Besalel when he describes her spouse's beauty. Both the column's head and bases are adorned with gold, making it clear that these words refer to the tent of witness. Each of the column's heads rest upon gold pillars. Hence the bridegroom's head is pure, undefiled gold to whomever gazes upon his beauty with pure eyes (the Song designates such pure gold by the term *Kephaz*), while his legs are founded upon golden bases. This statement compels us to interpret the symbolism of the pillars, and we do not err if we are disciples of the holy Paul who applies the term "pillars" to his fellow apostles Peter, James and John. It is to our benefit M.1077 to learn from Paul that we may become worthy of being called a pillar. Again, Paul's wisdom teaches us that a pillar must rest on the foundation of truth. Truth is golden J.417 and its bases are the bridegroom's legs adorning his hands and head. The foundation may be interpreted as marble. We understand by the Song's words that the body's legs are marble pillars (that is, those persons who support and bear the body of the Church by exemplary lives and sound words. Through them the base of our faith is firm, the course of virtue is completed, and the entire body is raised on high by our longing for God's promise). Truth and stability guide the Church's body. Gold represents truth which, according to Paul, is called the foundation of the divine edifice ("For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ." Christ is the truth upon whom is founded the "legs" or the Church's pillars).

Marble represents the splendor of a life which is firm and unmoved in its desire for the good. Many columns compose the tent of witness and support wisdom's house, while two columns suffice to support the human body. We must apply this mystery to something else, that is, the various J.418 means to obtain virtue by means of the Law. Many instructions in wisdom can be obtained by looking at the meaning of the words. The concise word of the Gospel leads us to a short, condensed way of perfection for a virtuous life. Thus our Lord said, "On these two commandments depend the entire Law and the prophets." It is wholly within your power to bear this burden placed on you, for both commandments have one meaning. A person bears the load whether it is suspended or carried by hand. Our Lord says that the entire Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments, while the bride says that her spouse's body is carried by two columns fixed upon gold foundations. We should correctly understand the mystery of his legs as these two commandments, for the Lord says that the first commandment resembles the second: to love God with one's whole heart, soul and strength is the first one; to love one's neighbor as oneself is like it.

J.419 & M.1080 However, in preparing the great Timothy to be a house of God, Paul sets these two pillars in him: faith and conscience. Faith leads to loving God with all one's heart, soul and strength; a good conscience consists of a loving disposition towards one's neighbor. Such an understanding of columns is not contrary to our earlier considerations because each of these columns represents Peter, James, John and anyone else worthy of the same name both now and in the future. According to the Apostle, the person perfected by these two commandments is made into a column and support of truth. Thus the entire body of truth is set aright on these two columns which are supported by legs. The foundation is made of gold, that is, the base of faith which is unmovable, constant and firm in every good with the proper dispositions.

The bride now proceeds to sum up her spouse's beauty by saying: "His form is as Lebanon, choice as the cedars. His throat is sweet and altogether desirable. This is my kinsman and J.420 this is my beloved, Oh daughters of Jerusalem." I think that she points out her spouse here more clearly because the beauty she praises is visible. This visibility follows the Apostle's consideration of the Church as a body with its respective limbs. The bride says that his form composes the infinite number of cedars hewn from all over Lebanon. Nothing humble nor base composes his bodily form but it is made of the lofty cedar which raises its head on high.

Let us examine the first of the bridegroom's comparisons: "His form is as Lebanon." A choice is made by comparing opposites. Since the good alone has one name in reference to what truly exists, anything not partaking of it is false and does not exist. The person who exercises good judgement does not choose what is false in place of the good. Since the bridegroom's form is composed of choice Lebanon cedars, scripture J.421 suggests two ways of understanding "Lebanon:" one is bad and to be rejected. According to the prophesy, it is

like a calf which must be destroyed. The other form is honorable, fitting for God and like him. These words teach us that one king is creator of the universe. On the other hand is the lord of this world who calls himself king of darkness. Legions of angels attend the true king while legions of demons attend the prince of the power of darkness. Principalities, powers and virtues belong under the King of kings and Lord of lords. The former has, according to the Apostle, principalities, powers and virtues which will be abolished with evil's destruction ("He will destroy every principality, power, and virtue").

The prophet Ezekiel sees the king of glory sitting upon his exalted, lofty throne. His throne is set above the stars and resembles the throne of the Most High. The Lord of all has his chosen vessel in his great house as well as the vessel of wrath ready for destruction. Furthermore, J.422 the Lord of the angels provides both life and peace for his saints. He sends fury, wrath and affliction to the wicked by the had angels. We have no further need to speak of how the adversary sets himself up against the good.

The mountain Lebanon perceptible to our senses is visible from round about. Its slopes are thickly shaded and bristling with forests. For this reason the different notions about the mountains of Lebanon in scripture are at variance, so we must deal with each one individually. The prophets see Lebanon in its different manifestations, praise and condemnation. The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon and reduces Lebanon in its entirety with its cedars into little pieces like the calf worshiped in the desert (This prophesy teaches us that every evil raising itself high against the knowledge of God will be brought to nothing). A better meaning may be applied J.423 to Lebanon: "The just man will flourish as a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The Just One arises as a lofty palm tree for he is truly just (The Lord is the Just One who rose from the earth for us). He is a palm tree with much foliage. In our human nature, Christ became a mountain which filled with cedars those rooted through faith in him; when planted in God's house, they will flourish in the courts of our God.

According to the Apostle, the Church is this house in which the plants are God's cedars. The courts are the tabernacles of eternity in which our hopes flourish and will become manifest in their proper season. Therefore the body of Christ is made whole through each of its limbs ("Although there are many members, the body is one"). For this reason the bride calls her spouse's beauty the "chosen one of Lebanon." This is distinct from the Lebanon that is rejected. According to Isaiah this second Lebanon falls with the lofty ones when the blossom from J.424 & M.1084 Jesse's root springs up. When his rod of authority grows up, it will change a lion, leopard and serpent into a tame, gentle animal. Thus the lion will dwell together with the calf and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and that little child born for us will have charge over them. He will place his hand in the asp's hole and touch its offspring, thereby blunting its poison. As the prophet says, Lebanon will fall with the lofty ones. Prophecy reveals these things by symbols. It would be superfluous to explain them all carefully since they are clear to everyone. For who does not know that the child born for us touched the asp? His authority destroys beasts; dwelling under the same roof with tame beasts, he has blotted out their harsh nature. Because Lebanon, that is, wickedness, falls by this child's actions, that which exalted itself against the truth will fall along with the very beginning of evil. Therefore the bride compares her Lord's beauty to that of choice cedars of Lebanon: "His form is as Lebanon, choice as the cedars."

Praise is fittingly bestowed upon the bridegroom's throat: "His throat is sweet, and altogether desirable." We J.425 understand these words as follows: what lies under the chin is called the throat and sound emanates from the windpipe by wind whirling about inside. Since the bridegroom's words are lovely with honey from the comb, his voice is the organ of the Word. His voice originating in the throat may be called ministers and interpreters of the Word in whom Christ speaks. We will not fail to understand the bridegroom's throat in this way. Upon being asked his identity, the great John calls himself a voice, a precursor of the Word. And blessed Paul offers proof of Christ speaking within him by whom his voice became sweet. All the prophets offered themselves as vocal organs of the Spirit and became sweet by fixing the divine honey in their throats. Kings and commoners used this honey for their health. Its enjoyment does not slacken desire by satiety; rather, by intense desires it heightens our longing. Therefore the bride calls her spouse J.426 "altogether desirable," a definition of him whom she seeks. How blessed are those limbs which made the bridegroom so desirable! Perfect in every good, the bridegroom's limbs form a desirable beauty composed from all his members. Not only is he desirable in his eyes, hands and locks, but also in his feet, legs and throat. No member is of less account because of another's superiority.

M.1085 "This is my beloved and this is my friend, Oh daughters of Jerusalem." After the bride set before her maidens the characteristics by which they could recognize the one J.427 whom she sought, she points him out by saying, "This is he, the sought-after one, who rose from Judah to become our brother. He became the companion of him who fell in among robbers; he healed his wounds with oil, wine and bands; he placed him upon his own ass; he gave him rest at the inn; he offered two denarii for staying there; and upon his return, promised to pay for any extra service". Each of these deeds is quite evident. When the lawyer wished to test the Lord and set himself above the others, and in his haughtiness despised any equality with them he said, " And who is my neighbor?" Then the Word of God explained in a story the full dispensation of God's love for mankind. He told of man's descent from heaven, the ambush of robbers, the removal of the garment of incorruptibility, sin's wound and the progress of sin over half of man's nature while the soul remained immortal. Our Lord also spoke of the passing by of the Law which was of no avail; neither priest nor Levite tended the wounds of the man who fell in among robbers, for the blood of goats and bulls are unable to take away sin. However, Christ put on our full human nature as the first fruits of the dough J.428 which included a part of each race: Jew, Samaritan, Greek and all mankind. With his body, that is, the ass, he hastened to the place where evil had befallen man, healed his wounds, put him upon his own beast and made for his loving providence a resting place in which all those who labor and are burdened can rest. Whoever enters him receives him, as the Word said, "Whoever remains in me, I will remain in him."

Man receives within his own capacity the one who cannot be contained. He takes two denarii: the love of God with one's whole heart, and the love of one's neighbor as oneself in response to the lawyer's question. Since those hearing the Law are not just before God but only its doers, we must receive these two coins (faith in God and a good conscience with regard to our fellow men), and J.429 fulfill these two commandments by our deeds. Our Lord says to the innkeeper that all the care needed for the wounded man will be paid back at the Lord's second coming according to the degree of his care. He who became our companion through such love became our brother by rising for us from Judah; it is he whom the bride makes known to the M.1088 daughters of Jerusalem saying, "This is my companion, Oh daughters of Jerusalem." By understanding these characteristics of the bridegroom, we will find and receive him by the holy Spirit's guidance for the salvation of our souls, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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The Fifteenth Homily

Jn 1.44: Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

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

Idou is the expression for "behold," usually in order to gain someone's attention.

Jn 1.37-42: (Calling of Andrew and Simon).

Gen 17.5: No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham.

"Abraham" means father of nations compared with "Abram" which means exalted father.

Gen 32.29: Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?"

Compare this request for a name with Ex 3.13 when God asks the same of the Lord.

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

Pneumatikos is the adjective for "supernatural."

Jn 1.43: And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

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.

Jn 1.45: Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, " We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Three references apply here: Dt 18.18, Is 7.14 & 9.6 and Ezk 34.23.

Jn 1.46: Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Mic 5.2: But you, O Bethlehem Ephratha, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel.

Mashal is a verb for "ruler" and also means to be like, to compare.

Mt 2.23: And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Reference is Judg 13.5, Is 11.1 & 53.2.

Jud 13.5: No razor shall come upon his head, for the body shall be a Nazirite to God from birth.

Lk 2.7: And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.

Is 8.23: He will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

Kavad is the verb for "make glorious" which fundamentally means to be heavy and here intimates Israel's crossing of the Red Sea.

Mt 21.19: And seeing a fig tree by the wayside he went to it and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!"

Eis ton aiona means "again" or literally "into eternity."

Gen 25.27: When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.

Tam is the adjective for "quiet" meaning upright.

Jn 1.47: Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Dolos means "guile" and fundamentally means bait for catching fish.

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.

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).

Sg 6.1: My beloved is gone to his garden, to the beds of spice, to feed his flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

The bridegroom "goes down" "to the beds of spices" or *harogah* from the verbal root, *harag* as in Sg 5.13, "His cheeks are like beds of spices yielding fragrance." Keeping in mind the association of this verse with the burial of Christ mentioned in the last chapter, it is not difficult to surmise that the spices chiefly consist of myrrh which is used for burial of the dead (cf. Jn 19.39).

Sg 5.9: What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us?

Shavah is the verb for "adjure" meaning to swear and from which comes the (sacred) number seven.

Ps 80.3: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

The three verbs are *shuv*, *'or* and *yashah*. The last is the verbal root for the proper name Jesus which, if you will, is the result of the first two actions.

Jn 1.46: Nathaniel said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Sg 6.2: I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, who feeds among the lilies.

Rahah is the verb for "feeds" and connotes taking delight. It is the verbal root for evil.

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, *dikaioo*, *horo*, *kerusso*, *pisteuo*, *analambano* are the verbs used here in conjunction with Spirit, angels, nations, world and glory.

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.

Prodelos is the adjective for "evident" with the preposition *pro* (before) as preface to intensify its meaning.

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

A quote consisting of references from Is 9.2, 58.8 and 60.1-2.

Lk 10.30: A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers.

Peripipto is the verb "fell among" where the preposition *peri* suggests a falling in-around these robbers.

Ps 80.9: You cleared the ground for it, it took deep root and filled the land.

Panah is the verb for "cleared" which fundamentally means to turn. "Ground" is not in the Hebrew text.

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

Oikodome is the noun for "building" consisting of *oikos* and *domos*, house and part of a house such as a room.

Ps 80.14: Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine.

Two verbs relative to sight: *navat* and *ra'ah* to behold in the sense of having respect for something and the common verb to see.

Sg 5.13: His cheeks are as bowls of spices pouring forth perfumes. His lips are lilies, dropping choice myrrh.

"Bowls" derives from the verbal root *harag*, "to desire" as in Ps 42.1-2: "As a hart longs for flowing streams so longs my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." The (unused) verbal root to "cheek" (*lechy*) is *lachach*, "to be moist,"

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.

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

Wine = gladden (*samach* connotes leaping for joy), oil = shine (*tsahal* connotes crying or shouting out) and bread = strengthen (*sahad* connotes propping up).

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

Kalos is the adjective for "good" meaning more specifically beautiful.

Ps 23.2: He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Lie down" is *ravats* implying a four-legged animal folding its legs under its body.

Ezk 34.14: I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture. There they shall lay down in good grazing land and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

The verbal root "pasture" (*rahah*) is used as a noun and with the noun *shamen* ('fat') which connotes oil.

Is 40.6-8: (withering of grass).

1Pt 1.24: All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.

A quote from Is 40.6-8.

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).

Phl 4.8: Finally, brethren, whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Logizomai is the verb for "think" and often connotes a calculating mind but also refers to reckon, to consider.

Sg 6.3: I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he pastures his flocks among the lilies.

The preposition *l* is prefaced to "beloved" reading literally "I am to my beloved."

Rom 8.29: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

"Foreknew and predestined:" two verbs with the preposition *pro* (before) prefaced to them: *progignosko* and *proorizo*.

Gen 1.26: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

"Image" or *tselem* connotes a shadow as well as an idol. For the former, cf. Ps 73.20: "They are like a dream when one awakes, on awaking you despise their phantoms." The LXX has *eikon*, a central insight developed by the Greek Fathers of the Church. "Likeness (*demuth*) connotes an appearance, connoting a "lesser" reality than image.

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.

Wisd 7.26: For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God.

Wisdom consists of the following three: a "reflection" or *apaugasma* (an effulgence), a mirror which is "spotless" (*akelidotos*, free from soil) and "image" (*eikon*).

Rom 6.11: So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Dead = sin vs. alive = God. The latter consists of the verb *zao* which connotes living life to the full.

Gal 2.20: I have been crucified with Christ; 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. The same holds for the next verse. Compare this living with speaking in the next verse, the two being the same.

Phl 1.21: For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Kerdos is the noun for “gain” suggests an advantage as well as a certain cunning.

Ps 90.17: Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us, yes, establish the work of our hands.

Noham is the noun for “favor” which fundamentally means pleasantness. *Kun* is the verb for “establish” meaning to set up, to found.

Phl 4.8: (cf. above).

1 Sam 2.30: I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever; but now the Lord declares: “Far be it from me; for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

“Honor and despise” or *kavad* and *boz*. The former fundamentally means to be heavy and the latter suggests holding in contempt.

Sg 6.4: You are fair, my companion, as pleasure, beautiful as Jerusalem, terrible as (armies) set in array.

The literal reading lacks “army” and has just “banners,” *degaloth* from the verbal root *dagal*, “to cover.” This word occurred in Sg 2.4: “And his banner over me was love.”

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

Exaiphnes in the adverb “suddenly” consisting of *aphno* (connotes being unaware) prefaced with the preposition *ex* (from).

Mt 5.35: Or by the earth, for it is his footstool or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Reference here is to the swearing of an oath and refers to Is 66.1.

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.

“Bosom” or *kolpos*, also as a fold in a garment used with the preposition *eis*, literally as “into the bosom.”

Rom 9.3: For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race.

“Accursed and cut off” is rendered by the noun anathema, that which is devoted to destruction.

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.

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

“Became poor and poverty:” *ptocheuo* and *ptucheia*, both intimating abject poverty or destitution.

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

Paneguris or “festal gathering” consists of the noun *agora* and *pan*, a public meeting place with the adjective for “all.”

Ps 45.4: For the cause of truth and to defend the right; let your right hand teach you dread deeds!

“Cause” is the noun *davar* which is the basic term for word as expression.

Col 1.16: For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities.

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

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

“Rule, authority, power and dominion:” *arche* (also as beginning), *exousia* (suggests the exercise of power), *dunamis* (strength in the sense of power and authority) and *kuriotes* (lordship).

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.

Ps 103.20-22: (the heavenly realm praising God).

Is 6.2: Above stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Seraphym (usually plural) or “seraphim” is related to a verbal root from which derives *saraph*, a species of venomous snakes, an image of which Moses put on a rod to heal the people who had been bitten.

Ezk 10.15: And the cherubim mounted up. These were the living creatures that I saw by the river Chebar.

Keruv or “cherub” is a celestial being compounded of a man, ox, lion and eagle.

Sg 6.5: Your teeth are as flocks of shorn sheep, that have gone up from the washing, all of them bearing twins, and there is none barren among them. Your lips are as a thread of scarlet, and your speech is comely.

The verbal root for “bear twins” is *ta’am* as in Sg 4.2, “Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins.”

Ps 17.8: keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.

“Apple” more precisely refers to the eye’s pupil or *eyshon* which literally means little man, for objects are reflected in miniature within the eye’s pupil.

Ps 91.4: He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge.

“Cover and find refuge:” *sakak* and *chasah*. The former fundamentally means to weave, so one takes cover under this weaving. The latter connotes a fleeing.

Dt 32.11: Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions.

The verb for “flutters” is *rachaph*, the same used of the Spirit hovering over the face of the waters in Genesis.

Mt 23.37: How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

“Gathers” is *episunago*, the root *ago* (to lead, to carry) prefaced with two prepositions, *epi* and *sun* (upon and with). It has some similarities with *rachaph* in the previous verse.

Gen 1.26: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

“Image” or *tselem* connotes a shadow as well as an idol. For the former, cf. Ps 73.20: “They are like a dream when one awakes, on awaking you despise their phantoms.” The LXX has *eikon*, a central insight developed by the Greek Fathers of the Church. “Likeness (*demuth*) connotes an appearance, connoting a “lesser” reality than image.

Tit 2.11: For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men.

Epiphaino is the verb for “has appeared,” literally, to shine upon (*epi*).

Ps 17.2-3: From you let my vindication come! Let your eyes see the right! If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress.

“Try” or *bachan* also means to keep watch which also implies a sense of making a choice. “Visit” or *paqad* generally means to set anyone over anything or to put in charge. “Test” or *tsaraph* suggests refining or purifying gold.

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

Shakan is the verb for “be at rest” which means to sit down or to dwell permanently.

Gen 2.2: And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day.

Shavath or “rested” is similar in sound with *shevah*, seven(th). From this word comes the Sabbath, the Day of Rest. The primary idea is a kind of sitting still, of sitting down after having been in a standing position. Sg 6.5-7: (Description of bride's hair, teeth, lips).

1Cor 11.15: But if a woman has long hair, is it her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

Doxa is the noun for “pride” and usually means glory or opinion.

Prov 10.14: Wise men lay up knowledge, but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near.

Tsapphan for “lay up” implies to hide or to conceal knowledge compared with the fool’s “babbling” or literally “mouth” causes ruin to approach.

2Kg 1.8-17: (Elijah's garment; fire consumes fifty men).

Heb 11.37: They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated.

“Destitute, afflicted and ill-treated:” *hustereo* (literally means to be behind), *thlibo* (connotes being under pressure) and *kakoucheo* (the adjective *kakos* or evil is in this verb).

Lev 4.23: If it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer for the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish.

Chata' is the verb for “sins” which also means to miss the mark as in target practice.

Lev 9.3: Take a male goat for a sin offering and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish for a burnt offering.

Two types of offerings: “sin offering and burnt offering” which is echoed in the next verse.

Num 7.16: One male goat for a sin offering.

Prov 30.29: Three things are stately in their tread, four are stately in their stride (lion, cock, he-goat and king).

“Stately” is the verb *yataw*, to be good, to do well.

Gen 4.22: Zillah bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron.

“Forger” is the verb *latash* meaning to hammer and to sharpen.

Gen 4.2: And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground.

Gen 10.9: He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord."

Gen 9.20: Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard.

Gen 4.26: To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Ps 141.3: Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips!

“Guard and door:” *shamrah* and *dal*. The former derives from *shamar* which connotes keeping watch and the latter, the exit point, if you will, from which anything kept by the Lord in a person is expressed.

Zach 2.1: And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand!

“Measuring line” consists of *qeranoth* ‘*arbah* is the noun for “four” or the latter which modifies the former which often refers to a horn.

1Pt 1.18: You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold.

Mataios is the adjective for “futile” (also as vain) which modifies *anastrophe* or “ways” which literally means a turning upside down.

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.

“Weak and powerful” or *asthenes* and *dunateo*. The first is an adjective can also mean dull or stupid and the second is a verb meaning to have *dunamis* or power as well as authority.

Mt 6.20: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Thesaurizo is the verb for “lay up” which applies to keeping some form of treasure or valuables. From this verb derives the noun “treasure” two verses below.

Lk 12.42: Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?

Kairos means “proper time.”

Mt 12.35: The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

Mt 7.17: So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit.

Agathos is the verb for “sound” which basically means good but in a full sense.

Lk 6.45: The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Prophero is the verb for “produces” meaning to bring before. *Perisseuma* is the noun for “abundance,” the preposition *peri* suggesting that which is around or surrounding. Such *perisseuma* may be applied to the bride when she is speaking in the next verse.

Mt 7.19-23: (doing Father's will).

Gen 29.2-10: (A well with heavy stone over it which Jacob removes by himself. Compare with the question asked in Mk 16.3 below).

Sg 6.8-9: There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother.

In 1Kg 11.3 we have an account of the actual number of concubines, etc, in King Solomon's court: “He had seven hundred wives, princesses and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.”

Mk 16.3: And there were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"

1Cor 1.5: That in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge.

“Speech and knowledge” or *logos* and *gnosis*.

Jn 5.39: You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear

witness to me.

Ereunao or “search” is suggestive of the Jews reading scripture which is far deeper than conventional reading.

Gen 1.26: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

“Image” or *tselem* connotes a shadow as well as an idol. For the former, cf. Ps 73.20: “They are like a dream when one awakes, on awaking you despise their phantoms.” The LXX has *eikon*, a central insight developed by the Greek Fathers of the Church. “Likeness (*demuth*) connotes an appearance, connoting a “lesser” reality than image.

Wisd 2.23: For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity.

Aptharsia is the noun for “incorruption” and *eikon* the noun for “image.” The LXX lacks “eternity.”

Jn 14.2: In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Oikos and *mone* or “house and mansions.” The former is the general term for any house and the latter applies to a staying or abiding as well as a stopping place. This latter is contained in the former.

Rom 12.6: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our serving.

The preposition *kata* (‘according to’) is analogous to the noun *analogia* (‘in proportion to’).

1Cor 15.23: But each in his own order: Christ, the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Tagma or “order” suggests that which has been arranged beforehand.

1Pt 2.2: Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.

Logikos is the adjective for “spiritual” fundamentally as agreeable to reason.

Heb 5.13-4: For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

Stereos as “solid” can apply to anything hard or harsh. *Diakrisis* is the noun for “to distinguish” and means literally to judge through (*dia-*).

Mt 25.34: Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Katabole means “foundation” or literally that which has been cast in accord with something (*kata-*).

Lk 12.5: But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell.

Mt 25.36: I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.

Episkeptomai is the verb for “visited,” also as *episkopeo* and literally means to look upon (*epi-*) in the sense of inspecting.

Mt 25.14-21: (parable of the talents).

Lk 19.13-7: (cf. vs. above).

Lk 19.16: The first came before him saying, “Lord, your pound has made ten pounds more.”

Ps 6.2-3: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is sorely troubled. But you, O Lord, how long?

“Be gracious and “heal” or *chanan* and *rapha*’. The former suggests being favorably inclined and the latter, to droop.

Ps 6.4-6: (prayer to be healed).

Mt 8.12: While the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

“Weep and gnash” or the nouns *klauthmos* and *brugmos*.

Ps 77.4: I consider the days of old, I remember the years long ago.

“Consider and remember” or *zakar* and *hamah*. The later fundamentally means to hum, signifying an internal emotion. The Hebrew order of these two verbs is reversed.

Ps 6.9: The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer.

“Supplication and prayer” or *techinah* and *tephilah*. The former also means grace or mercy and the latter often applies to intercession.

Ps 34.14: Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Shalom is the noun for “peace” which is to be sought and pursued, *baqash* and *radaph*. The former suggests touching and the latter to pursue intently and connotes persecuting.

Lk 19.16: (cf. above).

Gen 21.10: Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my

son Isaac.

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

Agape is the noun for “love” which here is “perfect” or *teleios*, that which tends toward perfection.

Jn 17: (Jesus' prayer to his Father).

Eph 4.3-4: Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.

“Unity and bond” or *henotes* and *sundesmos*, the latter literally as a bond (*desmos*) together (*sun-*).

Jn 17.21: That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Jn 17.22: The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one.

Jn 20.22: Receive the Holy Spirit.

Jn 17.5: And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

The preposition *para* (beside, in company with) is rendered as “in (your own) presence.”

Jn 17.22-3: (cf. 3 vss. above plus:) I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one.

*Teteleiomeno*i as “perfectly” is a perfect passive participle of the verb *teleioo* (to be perfect, to complete fully) with the preposition *eis* or literally “into one.”

Eph 4.13: Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Katantao as “attain” means to arrive with the preposition *kata* being suggestive of advancing with a plan or goal in mind. The preposition *eis* (into) is used with unity, “into the unity.”

Jn 1.32: I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him.

“Descend and remained:” *katabaino* and *meino* where this remaining imitates the remaining in heaven, as it were, the presence of the Spirit dwelling there.

Sg 6.9: My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother, she is the choice of her who bore her.

Echad or “one” is attributed to the bride, that is to say, the bridegroom recognizes in her the same qualities of his own mother to whom reference is made in Sg 3.11: “Behold king Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.”

1Cor 15.28: When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone.

Three uses of the verb *hupotasso* or “subjected:” first “all things” or creation followed by the Son to his Father and finally the Father in the first place as being responsible for this *hupotasso*.

The Song of Songs, 6.1-9

Where has your beloved gone, Oh beautiful among women? To where has your beloved looked aside? We will seek him with you. My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spice, to feed (his flock) in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, who feeds among the lilies. You are fair, my companion, as pleasure, beautiful as Jerusalem terrible as (armies) set in array. Turn away your eyes from before me, for they have given me wings. Your hair is as flocks of goats which have appeared from Galaad. Your teeth are as flocks of shorn (sheep), that have gone up from the washing, all of them bearing twins, and there is not one barren among them. Your lips are as a thread of scarlet, and your speech is comely; your cheek is like the rind of a pomegranate without your silence. There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother, she is the choice one of her who bore her.

J.431 & M.1088 The Gospel says that the Apostle Philip comes from the same town as Andrew and Peter (I think that Philip is praised because he is a companion of those two brothers first admired in the Gospel. It was Andrew, who after the Baptist pointed out the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, understood this mystery and followed Christ. Andrew learned where he dwelt and brought to his brother Simon Peter the good news proclaimed long ago in prophecy. But hearing must precede faith. A person who unites his whole heart to the Lamb becomes divine by a change of names: instead of Simon, the Lord called him Peter, and he became

Peter. A change of names applies to Abraham and Sarah, who after many theophanies, received a blessing from the Lord with the passage of much time: Abraham became a father and Sarah the head [of many nations] by a change of names. J.432 Similarly, Jacob became worthy of the surname and dignity of "Israel" after his all-night struggle with an angel. The great Peter also grew by a similar grace; he heard his brother, believed in the Lamb, was perfected through faith, and was made a rock). Therefore, Philip was worthy of being a fellow M.1089 companion of Peter and Andrew after Jesus had found him. As the Gospel says, Jesus found Philip who was made a follower of the Word: "Follow me." After Philip approached the true light, he drew Nathaniel to partake of this light and lit up for him faith's mystery as with a torch. Philip said, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." J.433 Nathaniel attentively received the Gospel whose prophetic mystery about the Lord resounded in his ears. He knew that Bethlehem was the location of the first theophany of God in the flesh but that by his life in Nazareth, Christ was called a Nazarene. Therefore Nathaniel carefully considered both that God's birth according to the flesh must be in Bethlehem of David and that this mystery must occur in a cave with swaddling clothes and a manger. Nevertheless, Galilee was named by scripture as the home of the Gentiles (for it means "place of the peoples"). The light of knowledge was shown to Nathaniel who said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Thereupon Nathaniel left the fig tree of the Law whose shadow hindered participation in the light, and he laid hold of the One who caused the fig tree's leaves J.434 to dry up because of its unfruitfulness. The Word testified that Nathaniel was a true, genuine Israelite in whom was no deceit since he showed himself pure like the patriarch Abraham. "Behold, Christ says, "an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

These introductory remarks are clear to anyone who has studiously paid attention to the Gospel's words which are in accord with the Song of Songs. Just as Andrew was led by John's voice to the Lamb and Nathaniel was guided by Philip's light who left the Law's shadow and entered the true light, the young maidens led to discover the good revealed to them have used the soul perfected through beauty and said, "Where has your beloved gone, Oh beautiful among women? To where has your beloved looked aside? We will seek him with you." The virginal souls question their master but first utter the question "What?" as they had earlier questioned, "What is your beloved, Oh you who are beautiful among women?" When the maidens learn that the bridegroom's appearance is described as white, ruddy and so J.435 forth, they go on to inquire, "Where"? They say, "Where has your beloved gone?" or "to where has he looked aside?" M.1092 By knowing his location, the maidens might worship in the place where he stands and learn where he looked aside that they might see his glory whose manifestation is salvation to those beholding it. As the prophet says, "Show us your face, and we shall be saved." The Teacher, like Philip, says "Come and see." He leads the virgins to lay hold of him they seek instead of saying "See." He thus indicates the location of the sought-after One and the direction of his gaze. The bride says, "My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spice." So far she has shown the location of her bridegroom. She then shows what he sees and to where, looks as the mistress demonstrates: "he feeds in the gardens and gathers lilies." Thus the literal sense of these words shows the maidens the bridegroom's location and to where he looks.

J.436 We come to know the usefulness of the divinely inspired Scriptures through spiritual contemplation. When we hear that "My beloved has gone down to his garden," we learn about the Gospel's mystery whose each word reveals its mystic sense to us. The God made manifest in the flesh and who arose from Judah and received the nations sitting in darkness and the shadow of death is appropriately called "beloved" by the bride betrothed to him for everlasting union. She is a sister of the people of Judah. "He descended" refers to the One who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. He followed the descent of the one who fell among enemies which signifies his descent from his ineffable majesty to the humility of our human nature. We learn from the symbol of a garden that the true husbandman plants a field for himself, that is, us (For we are his field as Paul says). J.437 In paradise Christ initially cultivated human nature which his heavenly Father had planted. However, that special field, the garden we possessed, was devastated, so God came down again to adorn the garden with the plants of virtues, for it had become a desert. With the care of his Word, he irrigated these plants by the pure, divine fountain of his teaching.

The bowls of perfume describing the bridegroom's beauty fittingly praise his cheeks ⁷ which grind up the

7 *Siagon*: Gregory uses this term to mean both "cheeks" and "jaws."

spiritual wheat for nourishment. Hence, the bridegroom's location and dwelling teaches us that he does not dwell in a soul deserted of virtues. If anyone becomes a bowl of perfume which pours forth choice myrrh, he will become a cup of wisdom which receives the pure wine of gladness.

M.1093 The following words of the Song teach us about the nourishment which the good shepherd feeds his flocks. He does not let his sheep enter a desert or thorny place for pasture J.438 but offers them the garden's spices as food. In place of pasture are lilies gathered by the shepherd for nourishment. The Word teaches us by these examples because we see that the nature and power encompassing all things arranges a place for those who receive him in purity. They have a garden of many different plants cultivated by virtues. The bridegroom makes them thrive by the flourishing of lilies and teem with the fruitfulness of spices. Lilies are symbolic of a bright, pure mind, and their scent is alien to sin's foul odor. The bride says that the master knows his spiritual flocks. He nourishes them in his gardens and gathers lilies as sustenance for the sheep. The great Paul brings out for us from the divine storehouse lilies as food: whatever is true, righteous, honorable, pleasing, holy, auspicious, virtuous and worthy of praise. In my opinion, these are the lilies with which the good teacher J.439 and shepherd nourishes his flock.

The following words come from the pure, unsullied bride: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Such is the measure and bond of perfection in virtue. We learn here that the purified soul must have God alone and never look at anything except him. Thus it must cleanse itself of every material deed and thought and be transformed into that which is spiritual and immaterial, a splendid image of the archetype's beauty. When a person sees a picture upon a board which accurately conforms to its model, he exclaims that one form exists in both: the model's beauty is in the likeness and the archetype is clearly seen by the imitation. Similarly, the bride says, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." In her conformity to Christ she receives her proper beauty, that primal blessedness of our nature, according to the image and likeness of the original beauty which alone is true and worthy J.440 of adoration. This resembles a mirror expertly fashioned by hand which accurately reflects the image of a face. When the soul has prepared itself and has rejected every material stain, it represents the image of that pure, unstained beauty.

M.1096 The soul, a living mirror possessing free will, says, "when I look at my beloved's face, the beauty of his form is reflected in me." Paul clearly imitates these words by saying that he lives for God and is dead to the world, and that Christ alone lives in him. When saying that "For me to live is Christ," Paul cries out that no human, material passions live in him, neither pleasure, grief, anger, fear, timidity, strong passions, pride, rashness, ill-will, jealousy, vindictiveness, love of gain nor any such habit that ruins his soul. "I have him alone, and he is none of these things. I have stripped off my exterior, visible nature; I do not have in J.441 myself anything which is not Christ." Indeed, "for me to live is Christ," or as the bride says, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." This is holiness, purity, incorruptibility light and truth which nourish my soul. He does not pasture my soul with dry grass or bushes but with the splendor of his saints. Lilies suggest splendor by the radiance of their good color. Because of this, he "who feeds among the lilies" leads his flock to the meadow of lilies that "the splendor of the Lord our God may be upon us."

We become like the food we have eaten. Let us take the example of a hollow vessel of crystal; anything put in it is clearly visible. Similarly, by placing the lilies' splendor in our souls, they become radiant and show from outside the forms within. Let us clarify this point. The soul nourishes itself by the virtues which are symbolically called "lilies." The person J.442 formed with these by a good life becomes radiant by showing in his life each form of virtue. Let your pure lily be continence, righteousness, fortitude, prudence and whatever the Apostle says is true, honorable, worthy of love, just, holy, gracious, virtuous or worthy of praise. All these virtues are in the soul by a pure life, and they adorn the soul which possesses them.

Thus the bride gives herself to her beloved and receives the beauty of him whom she loves. In the text which follows we will hear about the glory from God bestowed on those who glorify him. The Word says to his bride, "You are fair, my companion, as pleasure, beautiful as Jerusalem, terrible M.1097 as (armies) set in array." The fact that glory was given to God in the highest by the heavenly host for his good pleasure with men within the hearing of shepherds when they saw peace born on earth, and that the city of the J.443 great king is called Jerusalem by the Lord of all creation is clear to anyone familiar with the Gospel text. Thus we should not be

unaware of the beauty praised in the bride who is compared to pleasure and Jerusalem. By these terms the Word clearly reveals the correct manner of ascent until the soul is exalted and reaches out for her Lord's glorious deeds. For if God is on high, then the One in the Father's bosom is united with men of flesh and blood for bringing peace on earth to please his Father. It is clear that the bride compares her own beauty to such divine benevolence by imitating Christ in her works; she is to others what Christ was in his human nature. Paul imitated Christ by cutting off his life that he might give Israel salvation in exchange for his suffering. "For I wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race." These words may be adapted to the bride: such is the beauty of your soul J.444 and such is the benevolence of the Lord who emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave and who gave himself for the life of the world. Being rich, he became poor for us, that we might live by his death. By his poverty we might become rich, and by his form of a slave we might reign.

God's majesty appears like the beauty of the heavenly Jerusalem to be the city of the great king by the Lord's own words. It contains within itself the uncontainable. God dwells and walks about in it; He adorns it by his presence, thereby making the heavenly Jerusalem receive his beauty, the beauty of the great king's city. The psalm speaks of this loveliness as follows: "in your majesty and beauty, direct, prosper and reign because of truth meekness and righteousness." The divine beauty is thus characterized by J.445 truth, righteousness and meekness. The soul formed by such embellishments becomes lovely like Jerusalem which is adorned by the king's beauty.

M.1100 We have no doubt that the bride's praise is now mentioned, yet we cannot easily learn how her praise is honored, even though its dignity is enhanced. The text reads, "terrible as (armies) set in array." Perhaps the bride's praise may be enhanced with regard to our earlier considerations when she was compared to the transcendent powers. Those forces in battle array are the Powers perpetually holding sway; Dominations rule over everything; Thrones are firmly established; Principalities remain free from servitude; the Powers praise God without interruption. The flying Seraphim do not remain still, and their position does not change; Cherubim do not cease to bear the lofty, elevated throne J.446 of God; and the ministering spirits do not cease their work nor to hear God's words. Since these powers are established by God, the order of spirits and transcendent powers remain distinct and constant, for their order is not upset by evil. In imitation of this array the soul arranges everything in order and marvels at these forces set in array. Fear signifies consternation, and we will not err by attempting to understand the wonder created by this fear.

It is difficult to know to whom and by whom the following words are spoken: "Turn away your eyes from before me, for they have given me wings." It seems that the Lord addresses these words to the pure soul, although I think they can apply to the bride. Anyway, I will now present their meaning J.447 as they appear to me. I have often heard in scripture that wings are attributed to God as when the prophet says, "You will hide me in the shadow of your wings." And, "You will hope under the shadow of his wings." Again, Moses in his great canticle suggests this when he says "He received them, having spread his wings." And the Lord says to Jerusalem, "How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!" Such expressions are not irrelevant to what we have been considering. If for some mysterious reason, the divinely inspired text says that the divine nature has wings, then the first man made according to God's image and J.448 likeness was in every way like its archetype. But according to scripture, M.1101 the prototype has a wing; hence human nature was created with wings so that it may be in the divine likeness. It is clear that the term "wings" may be symbolically applied to God. They represent God's power, blessedness, incorruptibility and anything else. All these divine attributes were in man as long as he resembled God in everything, but the inclination towards evil robbed us of our own wings (Not being under the protection of God's wings, we were stripped of our own wings). Therefore God's grace became manifest to us and enlightened us. By rejecting impiety and worldly desires, we might again grow wings through holiness and righteousness.

If these words do not overstep the bounds of truth, it is J.449 fitting that the bride mentions the grace she received from the divine eyes. In the same way, God looked upon us with benevolence and furnished us with wings according to his pristine grace. I think these words become clear in David's prayer to the Lord, "Let your eyes see the right," that is my own, "for you have proved my heart and visited me by night; you have tried me by fire and have not found iniquity in me." This is as if David said, "Your eyes do not behold what is contrary." For the person who sees correctly does not see crookedly, and he who does not see crookedly always sees

correctly. By removing what is contrary, David points out the good to God's eyes, the manner by which the soul regains its wings lost through the disobedience of our first parents. We understand these words as follows: "When your eyes behold me they turn away from what is contrary, for they will not see anything of the sort in me. Therefore I am winged once more by your eyes, and I take up the wings of a dove through the virtues which give me the power of flight. J.450 I can now fly and rest in the same repose which God had when He rested from his works."

After these words the description of the bride's beauty is resumed; each aspect of her beauty is honored by an appropriate comparison. Her hair is praised, the evenness of her teeth, the blossom of her lips, her sweetness of speech and ruddiness of cheeks. Each aspect of the bride has an appropriate comparison. Her hair is compared to flocks of goats appearing from Galaad; the flocks of shorn sheep bearing twins complete the praise of her teeth by way of comparison; M.1104 her lips are compared to a scarlet thread and her cheeks are adorned by comparing them to a pomegranate's skin. "Your hair is as flocks of goats which have appeared from Galaad. Your teeth are as flocks of shorn (sheep) that have gone up from the washing, all of them bearing twins, and there is none barren among them. Your lips are as a thread of scarlet, and your speech is comely; your cheek is like the rind of a pomegranate without your silence."

Since all these words were sufficiently examined above, it would be superfluous to repeat them. If anyone who did J.451 not hear them now seeks to understand them, let us briefly examine their symbolic content. The body's hair differs from other parts of the body. Sensory powers govern the entire body without which it cannot live (the body's life consists in sense perception). We see that hair, a part of the body, lacks sensation. Hair displays its uniqueness by feeling no pain from burning nor from cutting when compared with other bodily parts. Paul therefore says that a woman's glory is her hair which is adorned with braids. The bride's hair teaches us that those persons seen around the bride's head must be of greater value than the senses, for they conceal sensation with wisdom. Such persons give glory to the Church. As the book of Proverbs says, "The wise conceal sensation."

The wise do not judge beauty by sight, nor the good by taste; neither is assessment of beauty entrusted to smell, touch or any other sense organ. When each sense is dead, the soul J.452 alone lays hold of and stretches forward to the good with respect to the mind. Such wise persons glorify that woman, the Church. They do not puff her up by honors nor cast her soul down in sorrow by manifesting scorn. Even if they must be killed due to faith in Christ, cast to beasts, thrown in the fire or must bear any other pain, these persons assume the insensitivity of hair when experiencing pain. Such was Elijah who came from Galaad. He had a hairy, squalid body covered with goat skins and was undaunted by the tyrant's threats. Those who imitated the prophet's nobility have raised themselves above this world while they remain indigent, oppressed, afflicted, dwell in mountains, caves and holes in the earth. The world is not worthy of them. Seen as herds around the head of the universe, they glorify the Church and ascend with that Galaadite [Elijah] to celestial beauty.

M.1105 A goat is honored because its thick coat provides an image of beauty for the bride. Another reason for praise is that a J.453 goat can pass over rocks with a sure foot, agilely turn on mountain peaks, courageously pass through difficult, rough places and can go safely on the road of virtue. Some would maintain that this animal is suitable for the comparison to the bride because Moses the lawgiver uses it for many of the Law's sacred functions. I know that a goat leading the herd along the right path is mentioned among the four kinds of animals in the book of Proverbs. We may suppose this to mean that every task begun by one person is shared by many. Scripture says that Thobel was the discoverer of things fashioned with iron, and all those who practice the making of iron implements attribute it to him.

It is the same with Abel as shepherd, Cain as farmer, Nimrod who first knew about hunting, Noah as dresser of vines and Enoch who first hoped in God. Holy Scripture teaches us here to follow the example of one person. Elijah stands out as an eminent guide in his zeal for God. Those who imitate J.454 his zeal follow in the footsteps of his boldness; they become a herd of goats whose leader is the master of this life. They are the glory and praise of the Church set as an ornament in the hair; their lives have nothing to do with the senses.

The teeth of the bride are likewise praised, for they nourish the Church's body. The bridegroom always wishes

these teeth to be clean from all filth, lack hair by having been recently shorn, bear twins according to the birth of virtues and be seen as having destroyed by their teeth everything defective with respect to soul and body. The scarlet thread upon the bride's lips symbolizes the function of a speech which the prophet calls a guard and door of meaning. Such is the case when one's mouth opens to speak and then closes, with each activity occurring at its proper time. We learn from the prophet Zachariah that this thread is a measure which an angel holds as a rod. A measuring line is especially J.455 appropriate since it happens to be colored red, a symbol of our redemption. If anyone, like Paul, has Christ speaking in him, who redeemed us by his own blood, he imitates this thread upon his lips as a kind of measure made lovely by being dipped in blood.

M.1108 The words which follow explain what we said earlier. The bride's beautiful speech is a scarlet thread. It signifies suitability and temperance, for her beauty which is neither immature nor untimely, is manifested at the time of its vigor. Her ruddy cheeks are adorned like a pomegranate's skin. They testify to the bride's perfection in the good, because she herself is a treasure of every good. As skin surrounds the edible part of a pomegranate, so does the beauty of her outward life manifest her inner treasure. Therefore something like a pomegranate's skin surrounds the hidden treasure of the bride's longings, the fruit of her own soul produced from J.456 a virtuous life.

To me, the phrase "outside your silence (or veil)" means that the bride's praise is not made known by words; rather, her silence withholds information. Silence is opposed to speech, and we are silent when we cannot express anything through words. If silence is opposed to speech, the opposite holds true: speech is "outside silence." Thus the Song reads "outside your silence." This clearly means that anything not manifested by speech and belonging to silence is beautiful; it is ineffable and more wonderful than words.

Genesis depicts a well with a heavy stone over its mouth which makes it difficult for the female shepherds to draw water. But Jacob removes this stone, fills their jars J.457 with water and lets the sheep take as much water as they need. To what can we compare this well? "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number. My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother." Who will roll back the stone of this obscure passage is beyond our comprehension? It seems that the knowledge of these things alone refers to the Apostle's words: "that in M.1109 every way you were enriched with all speech and all knowledge." Our poverty is incapable of grasping the treasures lying in these words of the Song but in order not to be condemned for laziness, we will not hesitate to explain the scriptures as ordained by law.

We say that the bride's praises are lessons which teach about more refined matters, for example, beings are created and renewed not in accord with the same order and system. Because creation exists from its very beginning by the divine power, the end of each created being is J.458 linked with its beginning: everything created from nothing comes into existence with its beginning. Human nature is also created but does not, like other created beings, advance towards its perfection, but right from the beginning it is created perfect: "Let us make man according to the image and likeness of God." Here is the very summit and perfection of goodness. What can be more exalted than similarity to God? The end of the first creation is simultaneous with its beginning, for human nature originated in perfection. Since this human nature became subject to death because of its disposition to evil, perseverance in the good was destroyed. Human nature takes up its perfection not at once, as in the beginning, but progresses towards the good by an order which gradually gets rid of our inclination towards evil. In the first creation there was no impediment present with the birth of our human nature, for it was perfect and lacked evil. But in the second restoration, an interval of time necessarily accompanies those pursuing the first good. Because our J.459 minds incline towards evil, our association with evil is removed like bark which is gradually scraped off by a more becoming life.

We have learned that the Father's house has many mansions. This analogically corresponds to the good state of each person and to the rejection of evil prepared as a remedy. For example, one person with a better inheritance from the beginning has recently emerged from the depths of an evil into the truth, whereas another has done it by diligence and progress in the good. Still another person has grown by a desire for the good; yet another remains firmly in his ascent to on high, while another person goes further; some even pass these while others press forward in their upward course. God accepts each person according to his free will; He allots the choice according to each one's worthiness, bestows compensations J.460 & M.1112 to nobler persons

and measures out rewards to those of a lesser account.

By the words set before us we undertook the task of learning about the different kinds of souls who behold the bridegroom as we distinguished above. The bridegroom mentions young maidens beyond number; others are concubines and still others are queens. There are eighty concubines plus sixty queens, and placed above all these is the bride seen in her uniqueness as a "perfect dove, the one of her mother, the chosen one of her who bore her." Right from the womb some persons lie in the depths of error. As newly born, they cannot yet articulate anything. Because of their inability to assent to the faith they are considered to be infinite in number. They believe that the Word of mystery is salvific, yet it does not establish truth in them by knowledge and certainty. Such persons are called "young maidens" because they have attained spiritual youthfulness. Begotten by the Word of faith, they do not advance further to marriage or attain perfection. Instead, they are pregnant with fear of the Lord and beget the J.461 spirit of salvation; however, they still have an infantile, imperfect understanding or a somewhat brutish disposition. Nevertheless, they are among the saved as the prophet says, "You, Lord, will save both man and beast." He calls the more irrational among the saved "beasts."

Persons who have outgrown childhood may be divided into two kinds: some grow by studious application of their minds while others are of one body with the Word and cling to him affectionately (Such a soul resembles David and Paul. They say, "For me, it is good to cling to God," and "No one can separate us from the love of Christ; neither life, nor death, nor the present, nor the future nor anything else which exists"). On the other hand are persons who flee any contact with adultery through fear of punishment; J.462 they remain incorruptible and holy, but trained by fear instead of desire, they reject evil. Those of a more perfect disposition are united in incorruptibility to God's purity; they are called "queens" by their associations with the king. Persons who cultivate virtue out of the threat of fear are called "concubines." For neither are the concubines the M.1113 king's mother, nor are they worthy to share his dignity. How can a person lacking a master and a mind governed by virtue dissociate himself from evil expected by servile fear? The word "queens" is an example of persons made worthy to stand at the king's right side. He says to them, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." To those in an inferior and lower rank, the Lord says, "Fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into the fire of Gehenna."

To me, this difference in numbers makes clear through symbols the distinction of the groups. How do I express this? There are six commandments which prepare the kingdom of master offers to the good and faithful steward. It is to be J.463 multiplied ten times through good works in order that we may enter the Lord's joy after being found faithful in small matters and that we may be set over many things. If the soul becomes associated with the king by these six commandments, the talent put to work multiplies the commandment tenfold. As the good servant says, one talent effects the work of ten. Thus we find that the one queen is multiplied to sixty of them. She is associated with the kingdom by the tenfold multiplication of the six commandments. This one commandment is divided into many by the manifold nature of the commandments, and the perfection of each one is expressed individually. One queen becomes sixty according to the distinct, enumerated forms of the commandments. The bride associates herself with Christ's kingdom; while being one of the queens, she grows through these honors according to the commandments.

The six commandments multiplied by ten which are cultivated in one soul may symbolize the sixty queens. Similarly, we say that the number eight is suggested by these eighty J.464 concubines or persons educated by fear who do not associate with evil. The psalms with the inscription eight admonish us out of fear for things hoped for and bend God's ears to us in mercy. The number eight speaks of a fearful judge: "Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor chasten me in your wrath. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am languishing; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled." And what is offered to the judge is not subject to bribery as when anything offered to the judge is not subject to bribery as when it is lamented that there is no remembrance of God in death M.1116 (For how can those condemned to wailing and grinding of teeth be happy when remembering God?). In another place the prophet says that remembrance of God produces gladness. The prophet offers the person fearing the number eight similar words when he partakes of God's mercy: "He has heard the weeping of my voice." Holy Scripture expresses many examples of such fear, hence, we J.465 have a tenfold increase similar to the six commandments. Thus the fear of the Lord might succeed in turning the person taught by the psalter away from evil toward doing good. Their fear, like a mina or a talent, might then

he multiplied through good works. The soul obtains a secondary position after the queen; its beauty comes from fear, not love, and is multiplied to the number eighty. Each one's deeds done through fear are manifest with regard to the number eight which increases ten-fold. Because a person attains the good by servile fear and not out of love for the bridegroom, he is compared to a concubine, not a queen. By fear of the number eight which increases ten-fold by good actions, such a person attains the number eighty.

The story of Hagar says that a concubine is illegitimate and not suited for someone well born; this person may not partake of what belongs to the queen and cannot share the royal inheritance because of his birth as a slave." Cast this slave woman out with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with the son of the free born." If J.466 our consideration of the numbers mentioned above seems farfetched, one should remember that a person cannot attain the truth contained in the Song's words. We have only examined those symbols in a general way that we may not leave them unexamined.

If love perfectly casts out fear, as it is written, and if fear changes into love, then unity follows, the result of salvation, for all have been united in the sole good through that perfection symbolized by a dove: "My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother, she is the choice of her who bore her." The Lord's words in the Gospel explain this more clearly. In bestowing all power to his disciples through his blessing, he gives other blessings to his saints by his prayer to the Father. He adds the crown of such blessings, that in the diversity of their lives' activities, they should not be divided in their choices of the good; rather, they should all be one, united into a single good through the M.1117 unity of the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle says, joined in the J.467 bond of peace, all might become one body, one spirit, through the one hope to which they have been called.

It would be better here to state the divine words of the Gospel: "That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us." Glory is the bond of this unity. The Holy Spirit is said to be this glory which cannot be denied by anyone prudently examining the Lord's words. He says, "The glory which you have given me, I have given to them." Indeed, Christ gave this glory to his disciples when he said "Receive the Holy Spirit." He received this glory which he already had before the world's beginning when he clothed himself with human nature. Because his human nature was glorified by the Spirit, such a relationship in the glory of the Spirit is distributed to everyone united with Christ, beginning with the disciples. Therefore, Christ says, "The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one." He who quickly grew from a youth to a perfect man arrived at the measure of that spiritual age; even though he was born of a slave and a concubine, he received a royal dignity and the J.468 Spirit's glory by detachment and purity. Such is the perfect dove to which the bridegroom looks when saying, "My dove, my perfect one is one; she is the one of her mother, she is the choice of her who bore her."

We know the mother of the dove, for the tree is known by its fruit. With regard to man, we do not doubt that he is born from man; by seeking the mother of the chosen dove, we will know her as no one other than that dove already mentioned because the nature of the parent is recognized in the child. Since what is born of the Spirit is spirit, the offspring is a dove. Indeed, the mother is the Dove which descended from heaven at the Jordan River, as John testifies. This is the Dove which the young maidens call blessed and whom the concubines and queens praise. For a way lies open to all souls from every rank to that blessedness. Thus the Song says, "The daughters saw her, and bless her; the queens and concubines praise her." Everyone is drawn to desire what they bless and praise, so the daughters praise the Dove and J.469 desire by all means to become doves. And the fact that they praise the dove shows their zeal to attain what they praise until all become one. All will look to the same goal, and every evil will be destroyed. God will be all in all, and all persons will M.1120 be united together in fellowship of the Good, Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

+ The End +

A brief observation at the end of this document...

After the reader has gone through the multitude of verses listed here, some of which were repeated, he or she

will always find room to expand them. This was noted briefly in the Introduction. However, too much expansion of the verses makes this document run the risk of becoming bloated. It is up to the reader to expand the biblical verses according to his or her own inclination but with one condition, namely, to follow the verses of the Song of Songs itself as given by Gregory of Nyssa in each of his homilies. Surely the results of each person's commentary would be different yet guided by the same biblical texts.