

**Qui Credit in Filium Dei\***  
("He Who Believes in the Son of God ...")  
[April 13, 1455; preached in Innsbruck]

[1] "He who believes in the Son of God has God's attestation within himself." ([Verse contained] in the Epistle of John).<sup>1</sup>

The Gospel of this same [writer]—[a Gospel] that is read today—states toward the end that the whole of the Gospel was written in order that we would believe that Jesus is the Son of God.<sup>2</sup> And [the Gospel] adds what we shall obtain as a result of our [believing]: "... in order that, believing, you may have life in His name."<sup>3</sup>

[2] Now, consider, first of all, that God's attestation is present in everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. "Faith comes by hearing";<sup>4</sup> and so, it needs an attestation. For certainty does not result from hearing. For unless that which is said is manifest either to the sensory eye or to the intellectual eye, it does not have within it a warrant for belief [*fides*]. For the statements made can be either true or false or doubtful. But faith, which unhesitatingly is supposed to affirm to be true the things it has heard, is, necessarily, free of the false and the doubtful. *Seeing*, then, is the certainty of all the senses, just as we are taught in the Gospel. For [Doubting] Thomas did not believe the report of the Apostles without his having *seen* and having *touched*.<sup>5</sup> For it happens that sight is sometimes mistaken—as when a stick [partly] in water seems broken but the sense of touch discloses the mistake. Moreover, sometimes *one* thing seems, to the sense of touch, to be *two* things—as when a pea is touched with two fingers that are crossed and to the sense of touch there appear to be two peas, though there is only one. Accordingly, touch discloses the mistake of sight, and vice versa.

Thus, [Doubting] Thomas wanted to see and to touch, in order not to be mistaken. But certitude is referred to as seeing. So Christ said: "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed."<sup>6</sup> Now, He does not say "[because] you have touched" but says "[because] you have seen." For to see is to apprehend in the highest degree of certitude. Believing (*fides*) that arises in this way, [viz., from seeing], is [but] small faith and is of little merit. For that which is seen cannot fail to be believed; and so, to believe to be true that-which-is-seen is of little merit. For what would the one [who sees] merit more than all others, since, like him, there is no one who, [upon seeing], would not

believe? This belief (*fides*) does not result from any strength, or victory, over what impedes [belief]. And so, Christ said: “Blessed are those who have not seen and [nonetheless] have believed.”<sup>7</sup> For great is that faith which is supported by no visible evidence; and so, those-who-[thus]-believe merit to obtain happiness.

[3] There are some things that are declared by a teacher, but yet the students do not believe the teacher unless [the bases for these declarations of his] are shown to the intellect. An instance would be when an inference is set forth—for example, that there is [only] one world—[and] the inference is not believed unless it is shown by evidential considerations to be true. The intellect sees in the evidential considerations the true inference and believes. There are other things which cannot be shown true either to the sensory eye or to the intellectual eye—e.g., the inference that the true man Jesus is the true Son of God. Now, although many evidences are educed for proving [this point], nevertheless it is not possible that all the evidences prove to be anything other than surmises.

In particular, in the Epistle [of John] there are said to be three<sup>8</sup> who give an attestation on earth and Three who give attestation in Heaven.<sup>9</sup> And although the Three in Heaven agree, so that there is [but] one attestation of all Three, nevertheless all of these attestations in Heaven and on earth do not establish the truth in such a way that faith is lessened because of certitude; rather, faith is increased because of the attestation. As regards Jesus: by means of *water* there came to be publicized that He was the Son of God. For John the Baptist baptized in water for the following reason: [viz.,] in order to get to know, and to make manifest, Jesus, who would come for baptism.

Moreover, *blood* likewise attests; for a knowledge of Him comes not only by water but also by blood. For He shed His blood in support of those claims which he asserted to be true. Among these claims was the following principal claim: viz., that He was the Son of God who was sent by the Father for the salvation of the world. Furthermore, the *Spirit* attests that Christ is Truth. For after the Apostles received the Spirit of truth, they became witnesses to Christ’s being the Truth.<sup>10</sup> And this is the case because in and through them there spoke only the Spirit that they [had] received and that the Father [had] sent in the Son’s name. And, hence, [that Spirit] is called the Spirit of truth because Christ, in whose name the Spirit was sent, is Truth. And in the case of all those who were baptized and who believe, the Spirit was the one who attested. Likewise, there are Three in Heaven<sup>11</sup>—the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Spirit*—who attest. And the attestation is [but] one—

as when the Father said from Heaven “This is my Son,” and the Spirit descended upon the Son and remained.<sup>12</sup> These are the attestations that cause faith to be greater and that rightly oblige us to believe that Christ is the Son of God.

[4] However, after faith has been received because of the foregoing considerations, the believer experiences *within himself* God's attestation. For as John the Baptist said, he who receives [divine attestation] knows that God is truthful.<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to the Father as regards His own believing disciples: “The words that You have given me I gave to them. And they received [them] and now know that I have gone out from You. And they have believed that You sent me.”<sup>14</sup> See how it is that after the reception of faith, which is preached by means of words,<sup>15</sup> there arises the knowledge that comes from faith. This fact is ascertained by experience. For example, believers who have born witness by means of their own blood possess within themselves God's witness; otherwise, they would not joyously have accepted death in order to declare their faith. For if they had not had within themselves God's attestation, how would they have been made witnesses by means of their blood? For a martyr is a witness.

[5] Moreover, consider that conscience is said to render an attestation, as Paul and John the Evangelist say. For if we who are believers seek to know for sure whether Christ is the Word of God, and if we see clearly with our inner eye Christ's commandments, then we discover that in all the commandments of Christ there is contained only that which the Lord speaks in our respective conscience. However, we do not doubt that the word that speaks in us who have a clean conscience is the word of the King of kings, who is Justice and Truth and who commands our reason and enlightens it so that it may see that that which Christ commands is true and just. Hence, each good man endeavors to conduct himself in such a way that he is found to be obedient and blameless before the word-of-God, which he hears in his conscience, which is the spirit of the intellectual ear.

[6] Many law-givers have endeavored to explicate the [divine] word by means of laws, so that laws are certain expressions of God's word, or of eternal reason. By means of laws [these expressions] command that conscience be in-formed as if by God's word, which is unfolded in the laws. Thus, by means of the written Law and as a testimonial to the fact that the Law is holy, Moses referred the people to the word-of-God that was within those to whom he made the Law

known. It was as if God's word were the judge of all laws and were not a word to be sought at a great distance either above or below or beyond-the-sea but were a word that in us speaks to the rational soul by means of the ears of conscience. However, although that [Mosaic] Law explicated the authority of [God's] word in many respects that have to do with the well-being of groups of people living in this world, nevertheless it did not explicate the highest happiness. For this latter is not of this world but is of the world of [God's] word. And so, with respect to Christ's law,<sup>16</sup> in which eternal life is promised, temporal life is counted as nothing. For [Christ's law] teaches not only that we ought patiently to bear mistreatment and to pray for those who persecute us but also that we ought to do good to our enemies, being, as they are, those whose persecution and enmity redound to our acquiring happiness.<sup>17</sup> And if anyone is a believer (i.e., is one who believes that Christ is the Son of God), then he has within himself God's attestation that Christ's commandments can be only God's word and the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law and the ultimate and consummate perfection of all the laws that could unfold our inner word. What faith is more perfect than is that faith which overcomes the world?<sup>18</sup> What law is more perfect than is love?<sup>19</sup>

[7] The Jewish people, if they kept the Law, believed that God is truthful. God promised to them the choice-land of Canaan and the goods of this present world. And in order that [the people] be made fit to obtain [the fulfillment of] this promise, the Law was given. On its observance depended the assurance of their obtaining that which was expected [by them] because of their belief in the promise. However, all the laws of the world, as well as the legalisms which Moses unfolded, do not suffice for eternal life, which we desire as our ultimate happiness. For our faith and expectancy, as regards the promise of the holy land, has not issued forth from this perceptible world, where there is nothing eternal but where all things are temporal. Therefore, in order to obtain this eternal life, it is necessary [for us] to have faith such as overcomes this world, so that the things of this world are trampled on and trodden under foot; and it is necessary that the [requisite] law be altogether perfect. Yet, what law is good except that law which proceeds from love?<sup>20</sup> And the more love that [that law] has, the better it is. Therefore, the law that is most perfect love is immutable and eternal and is not of this present world.

[8] Now, since [this latter law] can be observed always by a

rational spirit, the rational spirit can always live by means of observing it. Therefore, by faith the [rational] spirit is disposed to the grace of happiness and is formed by love. For that which is altogether unknown is not loved.<sup>21</sup> Faith removes ignorance so that love can have room. Therefore, the deeper and more certain our faith is, the more capable of love is our spirit. So if we believe that Christ is the Son of God, then we do not at all doubt that His words are the words of God the Father, who sent Him. And [we do not doubt] that, therefore, they are words of truth, so that heaven and earth shall pass away but not those words.<sup>22</sup> And [we do not doubt that] God, the Giver of life, has by means of His Son spoken to us only<sup>23</sup> life and words of eternal life.<sup>24</sup> If, then, we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, we have the faith that overcomes the world and the faith through which we are most certain that we shall obtain [fulfillment of] the promise of eternal life if we keep His commandments. And lest a multitude of commandments make it impossible for us to have faith in [the fulfillment of] the promise, there is only one commandment, viz., love, as said the Apostle.<sup>25</sup> That [commandment] concerns, first, *God* and, secondly, *one's neighbor*.<sup>26</sup> And as far as concerns one's neighbor, it is a commandment like the commandment to love God, as our Teacher has taught us.

[9] But the fact that all things proceed on the basis of faith is best considered by each person on the basis of the following [judgment]: If the faith that Jesus is the Son of God is great and perfect, so that there is no doubt at all in this regard (even as [such faith] was present in the holy Apostles and holy martyrs who declared their faith by their own blood): then because that believer does not at all doubt, he does not sin. For he knows with undoubted certainty that sin inflicts eternal death if [the sin] is mortal sin. Accordingly, the believer would sooner die a temporal death than sin mortally. Moreover, he very patiently endures with joy all the maltreatments of this world, knowing the following words of Christ to be free of doubt: "Be glad and rejoice, you who suffer mistreatment, for your reward in Heaven is very great."<sup>27</sup> And he knows that those who seemed in the eyes of the foolish to die, live in glory.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the true Christian overcomes the world. For poverty, which is an affliction to the sons of this world, is pleasing to the sons of light. For this world's poverty holds for him the riches of the other world, toward which he is hastening in order to remain there. Similarly, the troubles of this world hold, for the believer, the joy of the next world; and this world's death holds

the life of the other, eternal world. Lo, how wondrous is the power of faith, which in all hardship finds consolation!

[10] And one who considers the foregoing things says:

Who would not love God, who has given us such a Teacher, through whom God has revealed to us such great secrets, unknown for generations? Who would not love such a Teacher, who taught us by means of a single word, viz., “faith,” that we can ascend (even above all understanding) unto all things and can happily obtain the things that we desire? Who would not love supremely that Teacher who—since He could not disclose to us the things of faith except by means of our hearing [them]—assumed flesh and conformed Himself to our nature in order in this way to preach to us about faith and to transfer us from a corruptible life unto eternal life? Finally, who would not love that Teacher who—since He could not show to the eye the truth of the Gospel—resolved doubt by means of visible miracles and supernatural works and, at length, after all the signs and miracles by which He confirmed His preaching, furnished *such* an attestation to the truth, [an attestation] than which none more assuring could have been given to us? For to give His life for this purpose—[to give it] by means of a most shameful death—was the ultimate attestation.

If, then, He loved us to such an extent that He gave His own soul, or life, for us in order in that way to strengthen faith in us, how is it that we do not love that Teacher supremely? In that manner He loved us antecedently and above all other things. [This] Teacher died for us not only in order to remove from us all doubt about His teaching and to make us certain that He is the Word of God but also in order to cleanse us (who were unjust and incapable of happiness) by the merit of the shedding of blood, which [that] Innocent Lamb shed most abundantly in that sacrifice, when for our sakes He obeyed the Father on the altar of the Cross.

Wisdom is the life of the intellect. It does not enter into a soul that is intent on evil.<sup>29</sup> as is the soul of every man born from Adam—as we experience in the case of lust, which is a certain dark shameful-ness that is not capable of wisdom. Because of the merit of the Crucified One, we are freed, through faith, from this evil intent. How is it that we do not love Him by whose grace alone, we can be saved? For He merited exaltation not only for Himself but also for all those who are made partakers of His merit. But He willed that [the following] be made partakers: [viz.,] all those who received Him by faith—the sacramental sign of this faith being baptism.

[11] Today’s office begins: “As newborn rational babes, be

desirous (without guile) of milk.”<sup>30</sup> And in the epistle of Blessed Peter—from which epistle [today’s] introit is taken—there follows next: “... so that thereby you may grow unto salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is sweet.”<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, Blessed Peter desires that we Christians ought to be as is He who set aside all evil intent and all guile—as well as dissimulations and envies and evil-speakings—<sup>32</sup> [and become] as are newborn rational babes. We must take cognizance of this [point of Peter’s]. For infants, who do not yet have the use of reason, have none of these [failings]. Rather, rational men become as newborn infants when they set aside all evil intent and all deceit, etc. Accordingly, those who have become newborns-in-Christ are like newborn infants. But this [statement] refers to the fact that the newborn-in-Christ are *rational* infants. For where there is no use of reason there is no faith. Therefore, the faith by which we are born [again] as Christians converts us to the likeness of babes, or innocents. Hence, Jesus said: “Unless you become as a small child, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”<sup>33</sup> By the gift of original justice, or original innocence, as concerns his rationality: Adam was able to obtain eternal life in Paradise. But because he lost original justice, or original innocence: when presumptiveness arose in him (for he willed to become like God by means of knowledge, and he despised the pathway of innocence by transgressing against the precept): arrogance precluded him from attaining divine life. Thus, in Adam—[who was originally] a man perfect and having the use of reason—there was, prior to his sin, innocence with regard to reason. We see the likeness of this [condition] in the innocence (prior to actual sin) of those who lack the use of reason, [viz., infants].

[12] Moreover, note that we cannot be restored to being able to receive enlivening grace except by that very lofty faith which humbles, even to the point of death, the intellect and all the senses. For, in the case of [our having that faith]: if we come to taste the Lord’s sweetness, then we [come to] desire [this] Food-of-life<sup>34</sup> in order to grow. Now, a mother does not deny her baby milk; rather, she feeds the innocent child from herself as one who puts her own life into the food, while the child’s innocent-helplessness remains. Similarly, the Word of Life, through which we are reborn, nourishes our soul with itself in order that the soul may grow unto salvation. Analogously, a student desires his teacher’s instruction, which he has tasted and found to be pleasing. And as long as the teacher sees that the student is without evil

intent and without reluctance [and is] as an innocent child who is obedient and desirous of the milk of nourishment, the teacher nourishes the student's intellect by means of his own master-knowledge in order that the student may grow in learning and in wisdom. But whenever the teacher experiences that the student, through the arrogance of his own presumptiveness, becomes someone who contradicts him and resists him and under-rates him, then he permits the student to be governed by the student's own judgment, and he ceases nourishing him. In that case, [the student] becomes froward<sup>35</sup> and does not attain to the likeness of the teacher who is perfect; rather, his own presumptiveness leads him to [a state of] ignorance, which is the death of the intellect.

[13] Now, John's Epistle says: "Whatever is born from God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world: [viz.] our faith. But who is he who overcomes the world except him who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"<sup>36</sup> Note that if we are reborn, so that we are sons of God, then we have overcome the world. And this victory consists in faith. (How this [point] is [to be] construed is mentioned earlier.)<sup>37</sup> Note (as [I stated] on Easter Sunday)<sup>38</sup> that faith in the Resurrection has God's attestation, which, within ourselves, we experience to be true. For no one denies that God exists and that He is this Rewarder. So he who dies for God's sake can be rewarded only if he is enlivened with an intellectual life. For one who would be unaware of the reward would not be rewarded. To live is, for the intellectual nature, to understand. Therefore, the one [who is rewarded] understands that he is rewarded; and so, he lives by means of an intellectual life that is without end. Now, 'how it is that we merit by the death of Christ to be resurrected' was spoken of on Easter Sunday.<sup>39</sup> And [the following] is a lovely contemplation: [viz.] how it is that our soul—by discarding freedom of choice (which is the life of the rational spirit) by subjecting itself to the governance of God's word,<sup>40</sup> which was explained to us by Christ—dies unto itself. For in that [soul] there rules only the word of God, which enlivens and nourishes, [to the end] that through faith it happens that the word of God is made manifest to us by means of the Son. And by dying in this way, [that soul] enters into life.

[14] The Gospel [says]: "Now when it was late . . .," etc.<sup>41</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles we read that Christ showed Himself alive by many proofs.<sup>42</sup> For without various perceivable showings [the Apostles] were not able to have faith in His resurrection. Therefore, [Christ] showed that He was the one who [had] died on the Cross—[showed it]



first because of the fact that, although the doors were closed, He stood in their midst and said: “Peace to you.” And He showed them His hands and His feet. The proof of the Resurrection was wonderful. For He who entered when the doors were closed, i.e., He who stood in the midst of the disciples and spoke and showed His hands and feet: how He came into their midst without being seen—whether through the door or from elsewhere—they were not able to know. For God’s ways are without restriction.<sup>43</sup> As Mary said: “In what way shall this be done?”<sup>44</sup> The angel answered that [it would be done] by the power of the Most High. This [power] is omnipotent and is not restricted; rather, [God does] as He wills to. Free will is unrestricted when, as in the case of God, the will *is* power.

[15] Now, [as risen, Christ] spoke [to the disciples] those words which He was accustomed [to speak]. And [He spoke those words] in the way in which He was accustomed to—[doing so] in order to make Himself manifest by His speech. And lest [the Apostles] would think it impossible for one who was crucified to be alive, He showed His wounds, by means of which they would recognize that the same one who was alive was the one who was crucified. This is marvelous: [viz.] that He showed Himself to be alive, with His mortal wounds remaining. By means of death, Life showed that it was alive! And this [disclosure] is nothing other than a disclosing that death is nothing but the separation of the living soul from the body. Hence, wounds do not cause death, though they do remove from the body the fitness for a vital movement of harmony and connectedness. But the separation of the soul causes death in an incidental, [i.e., non-essential], way. So if the separated soul were to return to the body, the body would [once again] be alive because of the soul’s presence.

[16] [Doubting] Thomas did not believe the words of [those] Apostles who reported to him that they [had] seen Christ.<sup>45</sup> Instead, he wanted to have stronger proofs than [come] from the seeing of one who appears while the doors are closed. It is as if [Thomas] were to say: “Perhaps it was an apparition, which was deceiving the eyes. And so, unless touch judges together with the eye, I will not believe.” It is as if he were to say: “There can be no mistakenness if they both, [viz., sight and touch], agree in their judgment”—just as [I stated] above [that] Jesus rendered Himself palpable and visible in order that faith in the Resurrection might be instilled in the unbelieving. So there is resurrection; and the body of the resurrection is then of a nature [such] that it is

subject to that Godlike will, which is the spirit's power over it. For just as the spirit wills to, so it can [effect] in the body to which it is united. When [the spirit] wills [for it to be the case, then the body] will be invisible and impalpable; when [the spirit] wills [for it to be the case, then the body] will be visible and palpable. When [the spirit] wills, [the body] will have the form of a stranger;<sup>46</sup> when it wills, [the body will have the form] as of a gardener.<sup>47</sup> Or if it wills to appear in another form of light, it will so appear. These things are true at the time the soul is glorious. At that time, [the soul] has such a body [as was just described]; and at that time, it has obtained in Heaven its full power.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, it has that [power] even over its own "earth," viz., its body. And so, the body is moved according to the governance of the will. But if the soul has not obtained glory, then the body and its weight are not subject to the governance of the soul's will; rather, the heaviness of the body rules. This [heaviness] drags the soul down to the lower parts of the earth into a dark place, [far] removed from all joyous gladness of rational light.

[17] Furthermore, consider that before the showing of His hands and feet, Christ pronounced peace, which is the preaching (of peace and of grace) that precedes faith. (For the soul must be at rest and at peace prior to the reception of truth. For anger hinders the soul from being able to discern what is true.) Next, because of unobstructed faith in the Resurrection there arises joy in one's vision-of-the-Lord, which is a seeing, by faith, beneath the visible signs.

[18] To repeat, there follow, [in the Scriptural passage, the words] "Peace to you." This [peace] is a confirming, or subsequent, grace and is a blessing for one newly born by faith—even as in [the Book of] Genesis a blessing ensued.<sup>49</sup> Subsequently: just as, in the Word of God, the Father speaks (or sends forth) His word, so in the believer the word of the Lord is present; and the believer is sent and moved by the word. Hence, of him who is supposed to be an envoy of [God's] Word, there is required that he be alive with the life of the spirit of God's word. And so, an in-breathing follows,<sup>50</sup> as in the case of Adam's being created.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, [God] breathes-in the spirit so that it is now born into a living soul in such a way that the believing soul is made alive; for faith without life is a dead faith. But [faith] is shown to be living faith when it pursues works of life, i.e., when it keeps the commandments of God's Word. And so [Jesus] said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Those whose sins you forgive are forgiven them; and those whose sins you retain are retained for them."<sup>52</sup> It is altogether true with regard

to every sin against one's neighbor that every believer can forgive a sin that [another] believer has committed against him. And if he who has sinned is [indeed] a believer, then because of that forgiveness, he obtains forgiveness with God. If [the believer who is sinned against] does not forgive [the other believer] but retains [the sin], then [the sin] is retained with God. But [in that case] he himself who retains does not obtain forgiveness of his own sins. For the Lord's Prayer makes clear that he who forgives will be forgiven.<sup>53</sup> But the foregoing [Scriptural] passage—insofar as it concerns those who are properly sent (i.e., concerns envoys-of-the-word who are sent), e.g., the Apostles and their successors—has a further interpretation: viz., that sinners are subject to the envoys' judgment and that [the envoys] cannot be mistaken [in their judgment]; for [the envoys] bind and loosen by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

[19] First, we must take cognizance of the fact that God worked all things for His own sake.<sup>55</sup> For He wanted to show the riches of His glory.<sup>56</sup> And for this reason He created a rational creature, or intellectual creature, so that He could show to it the riches of His glory. (Only this [creature] can perceive God's glory, by means of an intellectual tasting.) For true and incorruptible glory, or grace, can have a place of manifestation only in the intellectual nature. Analogously, he who is a noble king shows his magnificence only to those whom he deems to understand what royal magnificence is supposed to be. Moreover, no one who has precious pearls sets them before swine;<sup>57</sup> rather, he displays them where they [and their value] are known. Therefore, God created three natures: one that is altogether beyond time, viz., *angelic nature*; and another that is within time, viz., *animal nature*; and a third that is in between, viz., *human nature*, which through its intellect is associated with angels and through its animal nature is associated with beasts. Now, God willed that man, because of his intellect, be the goal of all corporeal natures and that He Himself be the Absolute Goal of all intellectual natures. And so, understanding is [given] only to the end that God be known—as if the imperial power of magistrates were present in a kingdom in order that the emperor's power would be known. And [suppose that] a king is known only by the imparting of his grace and mercy in a case where only out of grace and graciousness he elevates a faithful servant from the lowest rank to [the state of] co-reigning with him; and the more people to whom he can impart grace, the more he shows the riches of his glory. In similar fashion, God willed to create man, who is the lowest of the intellectual natures, in order to manifest in every possible way the riches of His most excellent glory

when He would elevate him unto partaking of His Infinite Kingdom.

[20] God was not pleased that man [viz., Adam] fell into sin (as is mentioned in Romans 3).<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, God permitted man, who was predestined to glory, to fall unto a very far separation from Him. [He permitted it] in order to be able further to show—in the most perfect way, to one returning—the riches of His glory and mercy, so that He might also recall this man unto a sharing of His Kingdom and might show him the unspeakable riches of His mercy. And so, God permitted predestined man to fall to such a depth that it was impossible for him, by himself, to rise again and to come to a tasting of divine mercy—[a tasting] by means of which he would be eternally delighted. And God permitted this [falling] in order that when He would restore man, He would show His infinite treasure of love and mercy. Thus, for the restoration it would be necessary that His Son put on—without any partaking of sin—the form of man the sinner and thereby restore [human] nature by means of a humiliating sacrifice even to the point of [undergoing] a most shameful death. Hence, in this way it happened that man, who was restored by a grace than which there is none greater, was justly made an heir of God on the basis of the merit of the Restorer. By way of illustration: if a king were to give his only son in order to redeem his opponents and if he were, by grace, to admit the redeemed to succession with the real son, then those who have been admitted would lay claim, justly, to the inheritance to which they would have come by grace. Therefore, being justified by grace is a manifestation of unspeakable riches. Understand [the point] rightly with regard to those who are predestined to glory. Now, in order to show His mercy, [God] does not permit-to-fall those whom He has foreknown;<sup>59</sup> but [in order to show His] justice, [He does permit to fall] those who are children of unbelief.<sup>60</sup>

[21] Hence, we must observe that through the Redeemer of nature man is made capable, by means of the Redeemer's merit, of tasting of the riches of God's glory. Now, these riches are eternal life. But for man to arrive at this [state], he must by faith be strengthened in his power. For faith makes the impossible possible; and it is necessary that faith lead [one] to [a state of] innocence, as [indicated] above. Next, we must consider that there is but a single faith by which it is possible for us to arrive at eternal life. And that [faith] is [the faith] which overcomes the world. Through it man is enlivened by dying. And so, he is raised up from death by a faith that mortifies—as [was

## NOTES TO *Qui Credit in Filium Dei*

- \* Sermon CLXXXVI.
- 1. I John 15:10.
- 2. John 20:31.
- 3. *Loc. cit.*
- 4. Romans 10:17.
- 5. John 20:24-29.
- 6. John 20:29.
- 7. *Loc. cit.*
- 8. "... are said to be three": viz., the Spirit and the water and the blood. I John 5:7-8.
- 9. *Loc. cit.*
- 10. I John 5:6.
- 11. Here (at 3:39) I am considering the word "qui" to be deleted (as does also the Paris edition).
- 12. Matthew 3:126-17. John 1:32.
- 13. John 3:33.
- 14. John 17:8.
- 15. Faith comes by hearing. Romans 10:17.
- 16. I Corinthians 9:21.
- 17. Matthew 5:43-44 and 5:10-12.
- 18. I John 5:4.
- 19. I John 5:3.
- 20. Romans 13:10. John 13:34.
- 21. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 8.4.6 (*PL* 42:951); 9.3.3, first sentence (*PL* 42:962); 10.2.4 (*PL* 42:974).
- 22. Matthew 24:35.
- 23. Here (at 8:14) I am correcting Nicholas's text (as does the Paris edition) so that it reads "non ... nisi".
- 24. John 6:69.
- 25. Matthew 22:36-40.
- 26. *Loc. cit.*
- 27. Matthew 5:12.
- 28. Wisdom 3:1-2.
- 29. Wisdom 1:4.
- 30. I Peter 2:2. Nicholas misremembers the Scriptural passage. In I Peter 2:2 "rational" goes with "milk", not with "babes".
- 31. I Peter 2:2-3.
- 32. I Peter 2:1.
- 33. Matthew 18:3.
- 34. John 6:48 and 6:51.
- 35. I Peter 2:18.
- 36. I John 5:4.
- 37. "... is mentioned earlier": viz., in section 9 above.
- 38. Sermon CLXXXV.

39. See n. 38 above.
40. Here Nicholas makes clear that by “discarding freedom of choice” he means ‘(freely) submitting one’s will to the will of God,’ so that he prays with Christ: “Not my will but Thy will be done.”
41. John 20:19: “Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you.” (Douay-Rheims Bible).
42. Acts 1:3.
43. *De Filiatione Dei* IV (77) – V (80).
44. Luke 1:34-35.
45. John 20:24-25.
46. Luke 24:18.
47. John 20:14-15.
48. “Omnis potestas” here does not signify that the soul obtains all power (the prerogative only of God). Rather, it signifies that the soul obtains all *its* power—i.e., all the power assigned to it by God, the Creator.
49. Genesis 12:1-3.
50. John 20:22.
51. Genesis 2:7.
52. John 20:22-23. Not an exact quotation.
53. Matthew 6:12.
54. Matthew 18:18.
55. Proverbs 16:4.
56. Romans 9:23.
57. Matthew 7:6.
58. Romans 3:10.
59. Romans 11:22-23. God does not permit the good angels to fall; and He brings it about that elect men do not remain fallen.
60. Ephesians 5:6.
61. See n. 40 above.

**Non in Solo Pane Vivit Homo\***  
("Man Does Not Live by Bread Alone ...")<sup>1</sup>  
[February 23, 1455; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Consider the fact that with respect to the intellect man is said to be fed by a word. Jesus said to Peter "Feed my sheep."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to feed is to enliven by means of the word of God. A teacher feeds his students with a word. A word is light from light. A vocal word is a lamp of light, as the Prophet says: "Your word is a lamp for my feet."<sup>3</sup> By means of the light that is in it the word illumines and gives understanding to children. Therefore, the intellect is fed by means of a word.

[2] Let us consider, then, the man who is fed with bread and the man who is fed with words. He who is fed with bread takes the bread and grinds it between his teeth. He sends it, once ground, into his stomach; and [the stomach] makes it moist and causes it to gurgle and to be parted, so that what is fine is separated from what is gross. And after the first parting is finished, another one subsequently occurs. And this [subsequent parting] casts off what is gross from that which is finely-textured, in order that the latter can become more finely-textured. Then a third time [the stomach] parts and separates. Fourthly, the food is prepared so that it turns into the nature of the one who is fed.

In a similar way there occur the separatings of the things that are supposed to nourish the intellect. For the first refining of things is done by the senses; for the [sensible] species<sup>4</sup> retain, once the gross materiality is detached, the immaterial aspect of the objects. A further refinement is done by the communal sense, or imagination. A third refinement is done by the faculty of reason, where the intellect finds its refined nourishment, viz., the intelligible form, or intelligible species,<sup>5</sup> which it turns into the intellectual nature. Therefore, the word, or logos, is form that nourishes. A vocal word is as a heaven in which reason, possessing all the things in [that] heaven, is seen to speak of all [these] things. And all things are present in [reason's] word as things signified are present in a sign. Furthermore, a certain religious man said that there is a sixth sense, and he named it speaking; for we speak of whatever things we conceive.<sup>6</sup> A word is bread for the soul and is a seed of life or a wheatan grain-of-life that contains the power of nour-

ishing. In the vocal word there is present the [intelligible] form, or the light of reason; and by means of degrees of abstraction<sup>7</sup> with respect to the perceptual and the imaginative powers the form is brought unto the rational power so that there it may be refined as is gold.

[3] Now, by means of abstractive “digestings” there are removed all the things that surround the [mental] food—things, that is, which are incidental features of it and are separable and corruptible. For [the intellect] is not nourished except by pure and simple, incorruptible and steadfast truth. The pure quiddity and incorruptible essence, having been abstracted by reflective attention, nourishes the intellect, just as the perceptual image of a beautiful color nourishes the eye. The perceptual image of a beautiful color delightfully nourishes sight. But the abstracted form-of-beauty—through which everything beautiful to sight or delightful to the senses is beautiful and which shines forth contractedly<sup>8</sup> in the senses—is the nourishment of intellectual sight. And unless beauty were free from, and separated from, everything beautiful, it would not be a simple and incorruptible and delightful meal for the intellectual, incorruptible soul. We are nourished by the things of which we are constituted. Corruptible food is not suited for that which is incorruptible. Hence, the reflection of beauty in beautiful things that are corruptible does not nourish [the incorruptible intellect]; rather, only the truth that shines forth [nourishes it]. Therefore, truth’s reflection is freed, [by abstraction], from everything in which its trace appears—[freed] in order that by means of a purified likeness [and] without a symbolism or a sensory image it can be seen by the intellect, which is not yet fully freed of all animating contractedness.

Analogously, if someone seeks to view his own true face amid multiple images and befigurings of it, then he frees from all material contractedness the form or figure [of it] that he finds in the different materials. For example, in a golden sculpture [of his face] he does not focus on the gold; and in a clay sculpture he does not focus on the clay. Nor does he look at the largeness or the smallness [of the portrayal] or at any such thing. Rather, from the different contracted faces he turns—as purely and simply as he can and by way of abstracting<sup>9</sup>—to the one face that is common [to the different images]. In this [one face] he reduces to a unity all the differences among the contracted images. And because the face of himself which he is seeking is only a true and *living* face, he does not find it—as he wanted to see it—in the purified perceptual image and symbolism. Rather, by means of a closer resemblance he beholds the *liveliness* of his face—just as from the configura-



tion of an image someone detects an unportrayable mirth or mourning.

[4] We must reflect on the fact that our intellect is nourished by intelligible species, just as sight is delighted by the seeing of what is beautiful. Bread, which is not alive, enlivens (as Christ here<sup>10</sup> says); and a word, which is not alive, enlivens. For just as the soul is aroused by a beautiful object so that it is gladdened and exhibits its gladness, so the intellect, [when aroused] by its most enjoyable object, exhibits its life. Hence, when the object that is loved is offered to thought, the object arouses gladness. So too, love enlivens, and the object that is presented in the word enlivens. Hence, the arousing of gladness is the infusing of life. Therefore, the intellect is moved continuously [and] vitally and gladly when its most desired object is ever-present to it. But this [state] cannot occur as long as the intellect is not free from its mortal body, a concern for which keeps the intellect back from such contemplation. Consider that the life of our intellect is an image and a likeness of the Life from which it exists. For there is as much difference between the intellect's life and the Divine Life as between the light of the sun and depicted light, or between real fire and depicted fire. For God is the Sun of Justice<sup>11</sup> and a Consuming Fire,<sup>12</sup> infinitely transcending an image. Therefore, in this world we are nourished in a way that befits our nature, viz., by a shaded light of truth, or a shaded word of truth.

[5] Consider carefully that because the intellectual nature is incorruptible it does not need food—as does a corruptible animal—in order not to perish. Now, a man, after all sorrow, returns to [a state of] gladness as to a form of life in whose absence he does not care to live. (For a man thinks it better for him not at all to exist than to exist amid continual sorrow.)<sup>13</sup> Similarly, I esteem gladness to be a sense of life, as it were. For through this spirit, or warmth, [of gladness] a man senses that he is alive. But to be alive and not to sense that one is alive, [i.e., not to have a sense of gladness], is<sup>14</sup> rather to suffer a wretched life. [A man] suffers in that he desires especially to feel good. Accordingly, consider a life that is without sensing or without gladness to be a life without form, i.e., to be lacking the form of life. [6] And because nothing except love (*amor seu caritas*) begets gladness, love is the spirit of life. Now, love proceeds only from a being-known; for that which does not exist or (if it does exist) is not known cannot be loved.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, knowledge is knowledge of a thing; knowledge of a thing is begotten from the thing; from both [the thing and the knowl-

edge of the thing] there proceeds love. Therefore, if the thing is love and if the knowledge [of the thing] is the knowledge of the love, then the love that proceeds from these two is a spirit that supremely and unfailingly gladdens and enlivens the spirit that tastes of that gladness.<sup>16</sup> And so, a love that never fails nourishes [that spirit]. And this nourishing is perfectly captured in a likeness: [viz.,] the way in which the sight of the beloved nourishes the [visual] sense of the lover. And so, the Teacher of truth says that eternal life consists in the eternal vision of God, who *is* Love.<sup>17</sup>

[7] And note that there can be only two [specifics] which are sought: viz., *whether it is* and *why it is*. For love that enlivens is love that proceeds. Therefore, the goal of every intellectual investigation is to arrive at love, i.e., at the enlivening spirit which derives from the aforesaid [love and knowledge of love]. *Whether it is* has to do with *being*, which is from the Father. Hence, in every investigation as to *whether* [something] is, only the Cause-of-beings, viz., the Father-Creator, is sought. And in every investigation as to *why* [something] is, only the Cause-of-knowledge—i.e., the Father's Son, Word, Form Wisdom, or Absolute Knowledge of things—is sought. But if we arrive at the Form of being and thereby at the Form of knowing, then there arises, by way of procession, the Form of delighting.<sup>18</sup> The Form of being, the Form of knowing, and the Form of delighting are not different forms; rather, that which is the Form of the forms of being is also the Form of the forms of knowing and is the Form of the forms of delighting. Nevertheless, the Form of being begets from itself the Form of knowing—[doing so] in the Form of forms. For knowledge is begotten from being, and the origins of being are the origins of knowing; and in the Form of forms the Form of delighting proceeds from the Form of being and the Form of knowing.

Hence, in order that our intellectual spirit may arrive at the Enlivening Spirit with respect to *whether* [that Spirit] is, [our spirit] needs only perceptual cognition, through which it senses in and of itself, without weariness, perceptible objects. And thereupon it turns in wonderment to seeking *why* that which it senses is. For example, [our spirit] uses sensory sight in order to see all that it senses. For example, if it senses an odor, then it hastens to see, with sight, what is disseminating the odor; and if it hears a sound, it endeavors to see from whence the sound originates—and so on. (In a similar way, sight inquires, out of curiosity, from whence an external perceptible object originates. And unless sight detects [this origin], it does not judge that

[it] senses as perfectly as could be sensed.) And so, [sight] is, as it were, the form of the senses. Therefore, as regards that which is sensed, we inquire by means of reason why it is. And the eye (or the sight) of reason is the intellect. Hence, [our spirit] is not content unless it sees with the intellectual eye why [the external perceptible object] is, even though that object be sensed and attained by means of many methods. But when there is seen the Quiddity of quiddities, or the First Cause, of that which by way of the senses has come to be known, then there follows an embracing on the part of the soul and an adhering and attaching, or a love. And from the ever-present object our spirit is enlivened with the motion of gladness, as is mentioned above.

[8] Note that you are supposed to conceive of a difference between our intellect and the Divine Intellect. For we understand only that toward which we turn [our attention]. For our actual power of understanding is only finite. And so, it can actually understand only that toward which it unifiedly turns—just as sensory sight [can see only that toward which it unifiedly turns]. For a finite power, because of its weakness, requires that it be unified; for a unified power is stronger than one that is dispersed. Now, the more unified a power is, the simpler and more acute it is. For example, a flame of fire comes together in a sharp tip; and where the fire is more unified, it is the stronger as regards heating. Now, because God's intellect is not finite but is infinite, it understands, in and of itself, each and every thing at one and the same time; and it sees in the way that is spoken of in [my] *De Visione Dei*.

[9] Consider that this [present time] is the acceptable time,<sup>19</sup> in which all things receive renewal. And at this time children are put into schools and those who wish to make progress in the requirements of the Christian religion ought now to pay attention to the day of salvation.<sup>20</sup> For man's life on earth is a warfare.<sup>21</sup> But for Christians [life on earth] is a contending with spirits, in order that through triumph Christians may be received into the place of the spirits and may possess, in the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>22</sup> the inheritance which had been possessed by those spirits who are adversaries of our salvation. Now, Christ's every action is our instruction. And so, He is the Way, through which we are to walk in following Him; He is the Truth, whose teaching is infallible; He is the Life, unto which we aspire.<sup>23</sup> And since He was the Son of God, He showed in Himself how we too could become sons of God. For as many as received Him, to them He gave the power

to become sons of God.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is first necessary to be renewed in mind and spirit and to be reborn. And this rebirth or renewal of the inner man is accomplished by faith through the cleansing of the outer man in the sacrament [of baptism]. For through faith we receive strength that is superior to the strength of unclean spirits. And this is the case because through faith the power of the Creator of the universe dwells in us and because through faith there is given to us a good spirit, which will lead us unto a good land where there is a joyous [and] incorruptible dwelling-place [and] where gladness is the food. Therefore, once we have been regenerated through the most sacred sacrament-of-faith, viz., baptism, by which we have made a profession [of our faith] and in which profession we ever persevere: then because of the old man<sup>25</sup> who clings to us, we must often purge away, and rid ourselves of, encroaching uncleanness—even as a tree, once planted in good soil, is every year pruned and trimmed and even as from our field, which of its own nature produces thistles and thorns, we must remove the weeds so that the field produces grain that is good and plentiful.

[10] Now, the Christian religion consists in the worship of one God, who is worshiped by every rational soul. [It is] a very stringent and very perfect religion, even though its precepts are but two: viz., to love God and to love one's neighbor.<sup>26</sup> For in love is contained the whole of the Christian religion's law. Nevertheless, in order that we may indeed fulfill this law, all the other prescriptions and the observances found in the Gospel have been written down. This religion was revealed to us from Heaven by the Word who put on our nature, [viz.] by our true Teacher, Christ Jesus. And just as the disciples of St. Benedict are those who embrace and keep his Rule, so [the disciples] of Christ [are those who embrace and abide by] love. But in love are included faith and hope; and love cannot be true love unless all the virtues are included in it.<sup>27</sup> The Rule of St. Benedict is not other than love; nor is the Rule of St. Francis, nor that of the regular canons, etc. Rather, all these rules are methods for more easily acquiring love.

[11] Hence, with regard to every rule there must be a leader or a chief among those who profess [the rule]. In him the observance of the regulations must especially be found. By word and example he is to preside over others and is to visit his subordinates every year. And such a one is the pope, who succeeds Christ, as an abbot is a successor of St. Benedict. There can be one general abbot over many other priories,

just as the pope is over the priests whom he takes unto himself so that they may be co-workers—as Christ, when He saw the great multitude and the few laborers, took the disciples as His co-workers. Now, the pope is a shepherd who, as the vicar of Christ, is obliged to visit the flock and his entire Church. In the pope the law of Christ is especially to shine forth by word and example. He is as the instrument of Christ—as a servant is the instrument of his lord. But the pope ought to be a faithful servant, knowing and complying with the will of the Lord. Accordingly, a bishop ought to be someone learned and someone who knows the Lord's will, which is written down in the holy Scriptures, viz., in the Old Instrument and the New Instrument<sup>28</sup>—which contain God's final will and testament.

This visitation through which individuals are visited individually occurs by means of the sacrament of penance, in which oral confession is necessary so that the [the priest] may know each's disposition and may reform each one. And these days [of penance, confession, and reformation] are days of visitation, i.e., of salvation, just as a physician or one who has a remedy visits in order to heal ..., etc.

## NOTES TO *Non in Solo Pane Vivit Homo*

- \* Sermon CLXXIV.
- 1. Matthew 4:4.
- 2. John 21:17.
- 3. Psalms 118:105 (119:105).
- 4. A sensible species is a perceptual image.
- 5. An intelligible form or intelligible species is a mental concept.
- 6. Cf. Anselm, *Monologion* 10.
- 7. Here and in section 3 below, Nicholas attests to the fact that his view of perception is Thomistic. See also n. 24 of my Notes to Sermon XXXVII and n. 12 of my Notes to Sermon CLXIX.
- 8. "... shines forth contractedly ...": i.e., shines forth in a restricted way.
- 9. See n. 7 above.
- 10. "... as Christ here says": i.e., as is said by Christ in the text that Nicholas takes as this sermon's theme, viz., Matthew 4:4.
- 11. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
- 12. Hebrews 12:29. Deuteronomy 4:24.
- 13. This view of Nicholas's is opposed to Augustine's verdict as found in *De Libero Arbitrio* III, 7, 20-21 (PL 32:1280-1281).
- 14. This text of Nicholas's is corrupt, as the editors recognize. At 5:11 I am reading (with the Paris edition) 'est' in place of 'sed'.
- 15. See n. 14 of my Notes to Sermon CLXXII.
- 16. Here Nicholas is indirectly alluding to a trinitarian motif: God is trine, since He is: (1) Love, (2) Knowledge of Love, and (3) Love that proceeds from Love and Knowledge of Love.
- 17. I John 4:16.
- 18. See n. 16 above.
- 19. Cf. II Corinthians 6:2.
- 20. *Loc. cit.*
- 21. Job 7:1.
- 22. Nicholas holds Anselm's view that redeemed men replace the fallen angels. See Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* I, 16-18.
- 23. John 14:6.
- 24. John 1:12.
- 25. Romans 6:6. Ephesians 4:22-24. See n. 14 of my Notes to Sermon CLXXII.
- 26. Matthew 22:35-39.
- 27. See my article "Die Tugenden in der Sicht des Nikolaus von Kues. Ihre Vielfalt, ihr Verhältnis untereinander und ihr Sein. Erbe und Neuansatz," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 26 (2000), 9-37. [A diagram appears on the two unnumbered/misnumbered pages following p. 37.]
- 28. The allusion here is to the Old Testament and the New Testament.

**Beatus Es, Simon Bar Iona\***  
("Blessed Are You, Simon Bar-Jona")<sup>1</sup>  
[June 29, 1457; preached in Innsbruck]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona." [This text is contained] in the Gospel whose reading you have just heard in a certain measure.

"Simon" means *obedient*; "Bar-Jona" means *son of a dove*. For the soul that obeys with such obedience as results from dove-like simplicity is blessed—even as is the rational soul that obeys out of faith. *That* [soul] can be called *Peter*, i.e., *knowing*. For it is necessary that a happy soul be a knowing soul; for a soul that cannot be knowing—as [the soul] of a beast is [not knowing]—cannot obtain happiness. For happiness consists in knowledge. For example, a stone, even if it had incorruptible being, would not be happy, because it would not know that it had [incorruptible being]. Only a nature whose being is to understand and to know is capable of happiness.

[2] However, the knowledge that makes one happy does not arise from perceptible things or from the power of the created nature. For [the knowledge that makes one happy] is knowledge of the Beginning. Nothing can know its own beginning—i.e., know whence and how it came into existence—except by revelation. A child placed on an island during infancy would not in and of himself come to know his father and the manner in which he himself was born. [Similarly,] the intellectual nature knows its own beginning [only] by revelation. And its knowing is its being. And so, when it understands, it has within itself the beginning of its being; and so, it exists amid immortal happiness. By way of illustration: if a certain pond—being established within its own limits [and] having arisen from a living fount springing up within it centrally—were of an intellectual nature and were to know that within it there were the living fount from which it emanated, the pond would be happy, because it would know that it had incorruptible being.

[3] Now, we know from the Gospel that Christ is the Revelation of the Beginning, i.e., of the Father. [He is Revelation] not in the way that ordinary people conceive of seers and prophets as making revelations but in the way in which the Son, who is the Image and Form of the Father's substance,<sup>3</sup> reveals. John [the Baptist], the last priest of the Old Testament, first revealed Christ.<sup>4</sup> Peter, the first [priest] of the

New Testament, likewise revealed Christ but on the basis of revelation from the Father.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the whole of the Old Testament concludes with the revelation of Christ; and the whole of the New Testament begins with it. Hence, by means of John and of Peter, the Heavenly Father first drew all men unto a revelation of His Son. Jesus well said: “No man can come unto me unless my Father draw him.”<sup>6</sup> However, no one can come to the Father except by the Son’s revelation.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, if we accept the fact that Peter’s confession (viz., that Christ is the Son of the Living God)<sup>8</sup> was revealed to him by the Father, then we are blessed. For Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; [and] Christ says that this is a revelation from the Father.<sup>9</sup> If we admit the former, then the latter is certain—since the Son of God, who is Truth, has spoken it.<sup>10</sup>

[4] Now, if the Father reveals to Peter hidden truth, how is it that He would not reveal to His Son all things? Consider, then, as you very often have, [the following]: he who acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God surely believes in Him and believes that He was sent by God the Father and that He speaks God’s words. Surely, he does not sin, because he keeps [Christ’s] commandments. Who would not keep the Son of God’s commandments, which promise eternal life and promise that to die to this world is to live in the Kingdom of God?<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a sign that someone readily sins is that he does not believe in Christ as the Word of God. But if someone truly believes, then he has within himself the word of God, because there speaks in him only Christ, whom he obeys [and] who is the King who rules him and leads him to the promised inheritance of life.

Note that the Church is founded on Peter’s confession. For the Church is the mystical Body of Christ,<sup>12</sup> which has existing within itself Christ the Son of the Living God. In this Body is the full power of binding and loosening;<sup>13</sup> this power in Christ is from the Father. For just as Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, includes within Himself all the power of the Father, so the word of Christ in Peter includes all the power of Christ. I say “word of Christ” insofar as Christ is understood as existing mystically and really. For insofar as “Christ” is construed in a mystical sense, i.e., [is construed] as designating the Church, which is the mystical Body of Christ: in this Body Peter, being the Head, has all the power of the Body because [He is] the rector who governs by means of the revelation from the Word of God. Moreover, Peter has the full power of Christ in order to be able to build the Church, which was not yet built. Even as Christ said “Upon this rock



I will build my Church," so by the word of Christ Peter builds and governs the Church. This is to say that Christ builds the Church by means of Peter and that by means of Peter he governs the Church once it has been built. Furthermore, "Peter" stands for every believer, for every believer has only Peter's faith. Therefore, from Christ we are called Christians; from Peter we are called believers. In Peter there is the enfolding of all believers and there is every principality and there is all power of binding and loosening. And so, he is called blessed. And no one can be blessed unless he follows our patron saint Peter, who is the patron saint of every church and of this church of ours in Brixen.

**NOTES TO *Beatus Es, Simon Bar Iona***

\* Sermon CCLXXXVII.

1. Matthew 16:17.
2. This was the feast-day of the Apostles Peter and Paul.
3. II Corinthians 4:4. Colossians 1:15. Hebrews 1:3.
4. Matthew 11:13 and 3:13-17. John 1:35-37.
5. Matthew 16:15-17.
6. John 6:44.
7. John 14:6.
8. Matthew 16:16.
9. Matthew 16:17.
10. That is, if we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, then we will admit that Peter's revealing of this fact is from the Father, because Jesus (who is the Son of God) tells us that the revelation is from the Father.
11. See Romans 6:11.
12. Ephesians 1:22-23.
13. Matthew 16:19.

**Ecce Ascendimus Hierosolymam\***  
("Behold, We Go Up to Jerusalem.")<sup>1</sup>  
[February 27, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." Luke 18 and Matthew 20.

First of all, we may note (as does Tuscanellus, in a sermon for this day, [a sermon that concerns Christ's] summoning of His apostles),<sup>2</sup> that God does some things by Himself—for example, creating, healing, and judging. For He wills to be loved, to be desired, and to be feared—to be loved because He is the Giver of being, to be desired as Physician of the soul, to be feared as Judge. [God does] other things by intermediaries because, on account of orderliness, it is fitting that one creature depend on another. Thus, God governs corporeal creatures by means of immaterial creatures. We experience in our own case an example of this fact. For by itself (i.e., by its nature) the soul enlivens and in-forms the body; however, it imparts to [various] powers the moving of the body-parts. For example, by means of the visual power [the soul] moves the eye to seeing; and by means of the power to advance, it moves the feet to walking. Similarly, the pope does by himself some things that he reserves for himself [to do]. He does other things by means of envoys and ministers (1) so that the order of dependence is preserved and (2) for the sake of the union of different things and a sharing among different things. Likewise, Christ, as Head of the Church, took twelve apostles into a portion of His concerns; and through them, to whom He revealed secret matters, He visited the world.

[2] Secondly, according to this same Aldobrandinus of Tuscania,<sup>3</sup> we may note that Jesus foreknew whatever things were going to befall Him. Jesus foreknew all things because He had God's knowledge. Now, God [foreknows all things] because He is present in the universe analogously to the way the soul is present in the body (and the sensitive soul<sup>4</sup> senses all things, including even whether a hair is plucked out). And so, God, who is purest Intellect, knows all the things that are in the universe, since they are present in Him. Therefore, all things are open to His eyes.<sup>5</sup> [3] But God's seeing is His existing, with which living and understanding coincide. Therefore, whatever things either exist or live or understand are present in God's seeing, even as an animal's living members are present in its vital being. If whiteness were an intellect, would it not see and understand all white things,

which are present in it and which have from it their being white? The case is similar with Absolute Being, which is Intellect.<sup>6</sup> Since it is the Form of forms, which gives being to all forms: that which it gives by means of Intellect, it also understands; for Absolute Being's understanding is its giving being. For the Creator is like Sight that creates by seeing. Therefore, He sees all things, because His seeing is the creature's existing.<sup>7</sup>

[4] As Artisan of all things, God knows the species and forms of these things, even as a writer [knows] the letters formed by himself, of which he is the cause. God is the Life of all existing forms, since the forms of all existing things are alive in God; for the perfections of effects are present in their cause in a more noble way [than they exist in the effects]. Just as from God there proceed sensing, living, understanding, and reasoning (which are creatures' perfections), so in God there are present, altogether perfectly, every act of understanding of an angel or act of reasoning of a man [and] all sensing and being of a creature. Therefore, God knows, in a more perfect way, all that angels or men know or can know. He works all in all.<sup>8</sup> And so, He not only knows generally but also knows each thing individually; for otherwise His knowledge would not be perfect. Hence, in God's knowledge—from which proceed all general knowledge and all special knowledge—are enfolded all the modes of knowing.

[5] Hence, necessarily, God knows at once all things universally and each thing individually. For in God all perfections of knowing are *united*, even as in a human being the particular powers of sense, which are united in the communal sense, are *separated*. And if by a unique act the communal sense were—through itself and without a sense-organ—to reach to all the perceptible objects of the particular senses, then at one and the same time it would touch, see, hear, and taste all things. Similarly, God views all things by an incomposite viewing. He sees in the point-of-eternity all the things that are future to us. For all temporal things are enfolded in that [point], just as each number [is enfolded] in the simple power of oneness. The point-of-eternity is like a seed that enfolds in its own power all time. Hence, he who sees the [seed-of-eternity's] power sees in the seed each and every thing that can be temporally unfolded from it—just as he who views the power of a grain of mustard sees in that [power] all the things that can be temporally unfolded from [that] grain. Regarding this topic, enough is found elsewhere, including in the book concerning the Icon of God's vision.<sup>9</sup>

[6] You might assert: “Admittedly, God knows good things because He is good [and] because from Him come all good things. But since evil is nothing, and since oftentimes not to know evil is better than to know evil, it seems that God does not know things evil. For example, that Christ foreknew the bitterness of His death rendered Him heavy-hearted. But it seems that it would have been better that He would not have [fore-]known.”

I reply that the Glorious God knows [both] good things and evil things, because otherwise He would not know perfectly. Analogously, an eye knows [both] light and darkness; for it would not know light unless it also knew darkness. A painter recognizes his own painting; and if someone were to mar it with an ugly color, he would also recognize [this condition]. God, by the Hand of His Omnipotence, painted [into existence] all creatures; and on them all He impressed His likeness, as if [impressing] very beautiful colors. But the Devil marred [the paintings]. God knows of this [marring]. Just as He knew that after a man [sowed] good seed, the enemy oversowed tares,<sup>10</sup> so too [He knows of] sin and evil. Even though according to fact<sup>11</sup> [evil] is not anything, nevertheless it is known.

[7] Now, God knows future evils. I call [them] *future* with respect to us, for God’s knowledge, which is beyond time, is neither past nor future. We see that a skilled physician and a skilled astronomer make predictions about death and about eclipses—foreseeing future things by means of sure inferences. How is it that these things could be unknown to God, with whom the Form of all things is present?

Now, there might enter into someone’s mind the thought that God created man infirm in order, on account of the defect, to be desired as Physician—as was spoken of in the initial topic [of our sermon]. I respond that God did not create defect or infirmity or death but that—should these come about as a result of man’s freedom—He reserved unto Himself a remedy, so that man would not on account [of that defect] always languish as infirm, through his own fault. In a similar way, the father gave to the prodigal son the portion [of his inheritance].<sup>12</sup> And because without the father the son might possibly waste his portion and become destitute, the father reserved unto himself [resources] from which he could once again support the son if the son returned. The son, [having become] impoverished and famished, desired to be fed, and he did not know where [he could be fed] except in his father’s house. He returned and was received with joy. This

Gospel-story satisfactorily answers the objection.

[8] From the foregoing [considerations] and from our theme-text we can infer that Christ foreknew all the things that were going to befall Him (as John the Evangelist says<sup>13</sup>). Thus, Christ's suffering and death were so consummate that (1) they would enfold in themselves, intensely, the full bitterness of death and, consequently, (2) His merit would be consummate and would make satisfaction for all (as elsewhere I recall my having extensively discussed);<sup>14</sup> for the reward of death's bitterness is life. Now, there was consummate bitterness present in the death of Christ, who saw that the bitterness of death would come upon Him in the way it was going to come. (No one else can foresee the [distress of his death].) And so, [Christ's death] enfolds all the pain of all who die. Therefore, Christ's death is a reward for all those to whom merit is imparted. Therefore, take note of the mystery that the Savior was, for this reason, necessarily God and man. [He was] God in order that nothing of the future would be hidden from Him with respect to His suffering of a most horrible death; [He was] a human being in order that He would be able to die.<sup>15</sup> And, thus, Christ's death would be a meriting-of-life that would be sufficient for all who through His death could merit from God eternal life.

[9] Hence, the question (which is commonly raised) of whether God could have saved man by another means can be answered as follows: Since that thing is possessed more joyously which is acquired as one's due because of merit: eternal life, which ought to be obtained on the basis of merit so that nothing pertaining to happiness should be lacking to it, could have been obtained only as God ordained. And because He ordained in such a way that Christ would die, it was necessary that Christ die and in that way enter into glory—as Christ Himself informed two disciples (Matthew 16) before His death and on the day of the Resurrection on the Road to Emmaus.<sup>16</sup> For in such a way He was made to be our justification, so that the imparting of [His] merit through grace is our righteousness. And we can request of God our Father that He give us the Kingdom-of-life because of the merit-of-our-Christ that is reckoned as ours. And I regard this [transfer of merit] as the supreme mystery of the Cross and of [Christ's] death. For I believe that Christ has the Kingdom on the basis of merit. And those to whom Christ, out of grace, imparts merit [also have the Kingdom]—[having it] both because of the grace of association<sup>17</sup> and because of the merit of Christ's suffering. Therefore, in everyone who is to be

saved grace concurs with justice. Analogously, when the pope confers a benefice on someone, he does this out of the fullness of grace, because he can confer it or not confer it; however, the one on whom he confers it has the benefice by entitlement. (About this matter you have elsewhere heard more extensively.)<sup>18</sup>

[10] Nevertheless, note one [more] thing: [viz.,] that only the death of Christ was able to merit eternal life, because [only] a consummate death merits immortal life. No other martyrs merit by their death eternal life; for each death of each [of the martyrs] falls short of the maximum and is infinitely distant from being a consummate death, which alone merits maximal life, viz., eternal life. However, the death of martyrs attests (1) that they are Christ-like and (2) that they exist in the grace that makes one pleasing [to God] and (3) that therefore they are justified and sanctified by the merit of Christ's death—[merit] imparted to them by way of grace.

[11] You might ask, in addition: "Given that Christ's death explains all things, how does it show that Jesus, who is Son of man, is the Son of God?"

I reply that a certain very eminent ancient teacher, an expounder of Paul's letters ([but] whose name I still have not been able to discover),<sup>19</sup> has taught me that Christ's death thereupon showed Christ to be the Son of God. For Christ died for His enemies and in order to strengthen in us, by the witness of His blood, the words of life. And since God is Absolute Goodness itself, then He who is so good that He dies for the salvation of His enemies is rightly called—since a better man cannot be posited—the Son of *Goodness*, which is God. [12] Christ Himself said that no one has greater love than does he who lays down his life for his friends.<sup>20</sup> And so, he who [dies] for his *enemies* exceeds all [others in love], so that there cannot be a greater [love]. Now, love than which there cannot be a greater is unqualifiedly maximal and, hence, is divine. Thus, Christ's works, which issue from maximal love, show which spirit—because it is divine—is of Christ. Therefore, since the spirit of a Christian is of the Spirit of Christ, it does not render evil for evil but renders good for evil [and] love for hatred. Christ rightly reproved His disciples who wanted to requite, with fire, an affront.<sup>21</sup> He asked: "Do you not know of whose spirit you are?"<sup>22</sup> And so, keep in mind that Christ's death on behalf of His enemies is an attestation that Christ is the Son of God.<sup>23</sup>

## NOTES TO *Ecce Ascendimus Hierosolymam*

\*Sermon CCLXX.

1. Luke 18:31. Matthew 20:18.
2. Nicholas here refers to the sermons of the Dominican lector Aldobrandinus de Toscanella (Aldobrandino of Tuscania, Italy), who flourished during the second half of the thirteenth century and whose monastery is presumed to have been in Viterbo. He is also sometimes referred to as Aldobrandinus Lombardus. See Tommaso Käppeli, "La tradizione manoscritta delle opere di Aldobrandino da Toscanella," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 8 (1938), 163-192. Josef Koch, pp. 55-67 of his *Cusanus-Texte. I. Predigten. 2.15. Vier Predigten im Geiste Eckharts* [Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1936/37. 2. Abhandlung]. Heinrich Pauli, "Die Aldobrandinuszitate in den Predigten des Nikolaus von Kues und die Brixener Aldobrandinushandschrift," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 19 (1991), 163-182.
3. See n. 2 above.
4. Nicholas here alludes to the Aristotelian-Thomistic distinction between vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls.
5. Hebrews 4:13.
6. Here the allusion is to God, the Supreme Intellect and Divine Mind.
7. Cusanus, *De Visione Dei* 12.
8. I Corinthians 12:6.
9. Cusanus, *De Visione Dei* 7 and 12.
10. Matthew 13:24-30.
11. Nicholas here seems to be distinguishing with Anselm (*De Casu Diaboli* 11) what is said *secundum rem* and what is said *secundum formam*.
12. Luke 15:11-32.
13. John 18:4.
14. The printed edition of the Latin texts here cites Sermons XXVII, XXVI-II (3-4), and CLXXXV (4-8).
15. Although here (as also in other sermons) Nicholas is influenced by Anselm of Canterbury, he here takes an importantly different tack. See also the text marked by n. 23 below. As regards, more generally, the relationship between Nicholas and Anselm, see my "Nicholas of Cusa's Intellectual Relationship to Anselm of Canterbury," Chapter 3 of Peter Casarella, editor, *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2005).
16. Matthew 16:21, John 12:23-33, Luke 24:13-27.
17. Cf. John 15:15. James 2:23.
18. The printed edition of the Latin text here cites Sermon CLXIX (3).
19. The printed edition of the Latin text here cites Origen, *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos*, IV, 10. For an English translation by Thomas P. Scheck, see Vol. 103 in the series *The Fathers of the Church*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001.
20. John 15:13.
21. Luke 9:52-54.
22. Luke 9:55.
23. This argument is interesting because it is very uncommon.



**Confide, Fili. Remittuntur Tibi Peccata Tua\***  
("Be of Good Cheer, Son. Your Sins Are Forgiven You.")<sup>1</sup>  
[October 31, 1451; preached in Trier]

[1] "Be of good cheer, Son. Your sins are forgiven you." Matthew 9 and in the Gospel-reading [for today].

[2] As Hilary says,<sup>2</sup> whatever things Christ did He did to the end that He might show Himself to be [both] God and a man. Now, here in this Gospel-passage we are clearly taught that Christ healed the man with palsy—[healed him] to the end that He might show Himself to be God. Now, take note of the words and of the symbolical meanings. For the Scribes maintained that Christ had blasphemed because He said "Your sins are forgiven you." And for that reason Christ arranged the course of events in such a way that from them the people would understand that he who ascribed to himself the forgiveness of sins and was not God would be a blasphemer. For elsewhere the text states that the Jews said of Christ "He blasphemed" because He called Himself the Son of God. For it is blasphemy to ascribe to God that which does not befit Him. It does not befit the Creator that He be a creature. [The Jews] saw the creature; and they knew that the creature whom they saw with their eyes could not be God. And so, it is blasphemy that what is visible be ascribed to the Invisible God.

[3] Thereupon Jesus said: "What is easier to say ...," etc.<sup>3</sup> Behold, He implied that he who of his own power can command a malady to disappear can also forgive sins. Therefore, He said: "in order that you may know ...," etc.<sup>4</sup> Lo, we must take note of what was said. For no one was healed except in order that we might know that the Son of man has [power on earth to forgive sins], etc. Therefore, He commanded the man with palsy: "Arise, ...," etc. And note that not only was [the man with palsy] healed at Christ's command but that at Christ's command he was strengthened: he who had been accustomed to be carried on a bed [now] carried his bed! Etc.

[4] "And the multitude, seeing [it], feared and glorified God who gave such power to men."<sup>5</sup> Note: The man with palsy was healed to the end that it might happen that the people would come into a fear of God and would, as a result of the fear, come unto glorifying [God] because of the fact that He gave such power to men. [The text] says "to men." But note [what is said] there: only Christ

was present [as Healer]; yet, [the Scriptures] say “to men.” And this [usage occurs] in order that we may know that human nature can be united to divine power. For in Christ the human nature is united to the Divinity. [Human] nature is [essential] humanity [*humanitas*],<sup>6</sup> which encompasses all human beings. Therefore, when [God] gave [power] to the nature [qua nature], He gave [it implicitly] to all human beings. [5] Hence, note that “just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive.”<sup>7</sup> Insofar as our nature is from Adam it is not uniteable to Divinity—even as darkness is not uniteable to light, [the two] being unable to be mutually compatible. With respect to Adam the nature is said to have originated from the earth, which is opaque and dark; with respect to Christ [it is said to have originated] from lustrous Heaven. With respect to Adam [human] nature is a seed of death and of infirmity; and as such it is not uniteable to life, because ashes return to ashes.<sup>8</sup>

[6] Now, in its own eyes [human] nature is not weak, because it does not perceive itself to be weak. A man is not weak who in his own judgment does not deem himself to be weak—even as a man born paralytic or blind has no knowledge of [having] an infirmity. No one can be acquainted with *what blindness is* unless he is acquainted with *what seeing is*. Hence, with respect to Adam [human] nature is like a blindness in which we are born and from which there can result dangers that can betake those who are blind (e.g., a fall into a ditch, etc.). With respect to Christ there is the possibility of seeing. [7] But note that human nature—insofar as it is like *rationality's being present within animality*—is like a light in a lamp. Thus, the rationality works by means of the animality, just as a lit and shining candle [works] by way of a lamp. And when reason follows [the lead of] the animality, [then the situation] is as if (1) a lamp were [made of] transparent but colored glass and (2) as if the candle-light were to shine accordingly.<sup>9</sup> Thus is [human nature] with respect to Adam. However, insofar as the *animality is present in the rationality*—as a wick is present in a lit candle—so is [human nature] that way with respect to Christ. For Christ is only Word and Reason and Light-that-enlightens, etc. Human nature with respect to Adam uses reason as it uses a candle in a lamp, and it inquires by means of discursive reasoning that befits it in accordance with the animality. Human nature with respect to Christ uses animality—in order to reason—as the flame of a candle uses the wick in order to burn and to give off light.

[8] Note that within our reason there is present an intellectual power. It is the power by means of which a man can know the mechanical arts and the liberal arts. This power has always been present in the soul. However, the soul was ignorant of its own power—e.g., [ignorant] that it could come to possess the art of planting crops.<sup>10</sup> There came [one day] a person who in the first place had this art from himself and who passed it on to others. And the people said: “Blessed be God, who gave this power to men.” A similar thing holds true of the art of healing, of the art of writing, etc. [9] Thus [it was that] Jesus came, who had from Himself all knowledge—and every art—of all knowable things. Among these arts is the art of enlivening. For all other arts—[both] mechanical and liberal—are ordered toward life. Therefore, the art of enlivening includes all [other arts]. And Christ had from Himself this art of healing and enlivening and of imparting Himself to others.<sup>11</sup> And just as He was the Son of God, so too all those who received Him, in and through His teaching, were made sons of God. “For as many as received [Him] ...,” etc.<sup>12</sup> And this art is faith, so that you will *obtain* in the measure that you are able to *believe*. In this world right faith is the perfection of all unwavering [faith].

[10] Furthermore, take note of [the following]: that just as when a blind man bumps his head against a wall, he experiences that pain has befallen him because of his blindness, so because of the power of seeing, he experiences joy when he not only avoids danger but also sees light that is delightful to all. Accordingly, human nature of itself is as an eye. With respect to Adam it is like the eye of a mole; with respect to Christ it is like the eye of an eagle.

## NOTES TO *Confide, Fili*

- \* Sermon CVIII.
- 1. Matthew 9:2.
- 2. Hilarius, *De Trinitate*, IX, 5 (PL 10:284B).
- 3. “What is easier to say?” : ‘Your sins are forgiven you’ or ‘Arise, and walk’.” Matthew 9:5.
- 4. “But in order that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins ...” (Matthew 9:6).
- 5. Matthew 9:8.
- 6. Christ had a particular human nature. But his human nature was a perfect human nature, was the perfection of human nature. Nature and person are distinct. A person has an individuated, numerically distinct human nature. However, this individuated nature belongs to the species human nature, to human nature as such. Accordingly, Nicholas writes in Sermon CCLX (2 8): “quilibet homo est modus totius naturae humanae, quae in sua unitate omnes modos complicat.” See my n. 51 in the endnotes to my translation of Sermon XXII [*Nicholas of Cusa’s Early Sermons: 1430-1441* (Loveland, CO: Banning, 2003), p. 375].
- 7. I Corinthians 15:22.
- 8. Genesis 3:19.
- 9. That is, the light that shined through the glass would be colored in conformity with the color of the glass.
- 10. Cf. *Cribratio Alkorani*, II, 2 (9 3).
- 11. Here (at 9:6) I am reading, with the Paris printed edition, “vivificandi et communicandi se” in place of the manuscripts’ wording: “vivificandi se et communicandi”.
- 12. John 1:12: “But to as many as received Him He gave the power to become sons of God—to those who believe on His name.”

**Ubi Est Qui Natus Est Rex Iudaeorum?\***  
(“Where Is He Who Is Born King of the Jews?”)<sup>1</sup>  
[January 6, 1456; preached in Brixen]<sup>2</sup>

[1] “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?”

In addition to what I have elsewhere<sup>3</sup> indicated in regard to this feast-day, when on this feast-day I preached in various places, I will now add a further explanation of the theme-topic. The wise men did not doubt that the King of the Jews was born, but they asked where He was. *That [Jewish] people* had the King of kings (who dwells in Heaven) as their King: He governed the same Jews through Moses and the Prophets. And subsequently He who spoke to the people through Moses and the Prophets said: “Here I am.”<sup>4</sup> And He was seen on earth, and He conversed [with men],<sup>5</sup> according as He had foretold that He would come. Hence, the Magi, who because of the star did not doubt that He who was going to come was already born, asked where He was. [2] Certain men who study the religious sects say that the sects can be foreseen from important and rare combinations of the planets (especially of Saturn and Jupiter). Among these sects, they call the Christian sect (which is of hidden wisdom) the sect of Mercury; for it is possible (1) that a combination that signifies a sect occur in regard to the configuration, or constellation, of the nature of some planet and (2) that in accordance with this [occurrence] sects are made. For example, one sect is that of Saturn; another is that of Venus. For [the astrologers] say that the sect of the Jews is of Saturn, the sect of the Arabs is of Venus, the sect of Christians is of Mercury, etc. And they say that the Magi were able to foresee, from the configuration of the important combination [of planets], that a King and Leader of a sect was born and in what region He was born. Nevertheless, [they did not foresee this] exactly or [foresee] in what town or in what house. Likewise, Messahalla<sup>6</sup> writes that the ancients noted with respect to the first appearance of [the constellation] *virgo* that a virgin ascends who suckles a child whom the nations would worship. And according to those [who study the sects] these astrologers [i.e., the Magi] came in order to see on earth, with their sensory eyes, Him whose constellation they had previously seen in the East, from whence they had come.

[3] However, we [Christians] do not take seriously these conjectures. [Rather,] we consider the Magi to have been led by a visible sign

(in the form of a star) that preceded them. By means of this sign they were made certain that there was born He from whom comes all wisdom, He who is to be sought, known, and worshiped by all the wise of this present world. [4] Now, the words of our theme—[words] which are presently to be expounded—can (according to Meister Eckhart, [in his Commentary] on John) be construed first of all attributively.<sup>7</sup> [It is] as if there were said: the King of the Jews, who has been born, is, in an unqualified sense, *Where* or *Place*. [It is] as if the wise men had said: that King who has been born is God, who is the Place of all things. For, similarly, all who are wise have seen that God is Place. For all things are at rest in their own place; and outside of their own place all things are in a state of unrest because they are not at the place toward which they tend. Just as Solomon saw that all rivers return to the place from which they go out,<sup>8</sup> so all things return to the Place from which they have gone out. Now, all things, insofar as they *are*, are from *being*—even as white things are from whiteness, and good things are from goodness, and true things are from truth. Therefore, the Being from which all existing things have gone out is the Place to which all things tend. For from the fact that all things, when outside their own place, are in a state of unrest and tend toward their own place and return to their own place and in their own place are safeguarded and are safe and are at rest: God can be called, not unfittingly, *Place* (not simply in the way in which the meaning of the word is understood [by us] but above the mode of our weak power-of-conceiving). Thus, John, in the Apocalypse, mentions that the Word of God said: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.”<sup>9</sup> But End, Rest, and Good are the same thing.

Now the Psalmist in many places, and Augustine throughout the course of his *Confessions*, and other men as well, state that God is the Locus of the soul.<sup>10</sup> Now, God is the one from whom all things receive their existence. For those-things-which-are-not God calls unto Himself in order that they *be*. But being is that to which all things are called in order to *be*; and outside of *being* things are in a state of unrest. For things that do not exist desire only to exist—[which is a state] in which they are at rest. Therefore, because [of the foregoing truths], *being*, which is the beginning of all the things that exist, is [also] the end—the place (or the resting-place) of all things. As we see in the case of all things made by art or by nature: they are then, [when once made], at rest in being. For example, when a house is brought into existence by the art [e.g., of carpentry], it remains and rests without changing.

But if it lacks having been colored or painted, then although it is unchanging qua house, it is moved toward the being that it lacks, viz., toward being colored; after it has received color it is at rest, and all prior changing ceases.

[5] And consider that the locus of time is eternity, or the *now*, or the present moment, and that the locus of motion is rest and that the locus of number is oneness, etc. For what except the present is seen to indwell time? For time flows, and its flow is only from being unto being. This being is the present, or the *now*—even as we say that we have the *now* from time alone. There are not many *nows*, but there is only one. For *now* does not pass over into the past; nor can “now” be predicated of the future. Therefore, the *now*, from which and to which all time flows, is the being (*essentia seu esse*) of time that we name “today,” or “eternity,” or “now,” which always remains in an unchangeable way. Hence, the *now* of eternity is eternity itself, or being itself, in which there is the being of time. And God is eternal: He is His own eternity. For we give the name “eternity” to the beginning and the end of being and, likewise, to the locus of time. [6] And it seems to me that when we look at motion, we find therein only rest. For everything that moves is moved from a state of rest unto a state of rest, just as time [is movement] from *now* to *now*. Moreover, rest (with respect to which motion occurs) is only singular—just as there is not more than one *now*. Therefore, rest is the permanent being of motion. Therefore, whatever is moved is moved from being-at-rest unto being-at-rest.<sup>11</sup> But this permanent and sempiternal being of motion is Rest, which is God. For he who takes cognizance of the coinciding of beginning and end and of the fact that, in the Absolute End, the end-from-which and the end-to-which coincide—he sees the truth of this [claim].

[7] The case is similar with respect to number. For number proceeds from the *one* unto the *one*; and there is no other being of number than the *one*. And there is not a plurality of *ones*; rather, there is [only] one *one*. Therefore, oneness—which is also being (*entitas seu essentia*)—is one: it is the beginning, and the end, and the locus, of all beings and of every numerable number. Hence, God—insofar as He is the being of numerable beings—is called Being or Oneness or the one God, who is His own Oneness. [8] Likewise, reasoning is the movement of the rational spirit from truth unto truth. And there is only one Truth; and God is called Truth, because He is the Rest, or Locus, of the forms of reasoning, i.e., of the forms of intellectual inferences.

Likewise, conceive in a similar way of other things; and you will find in the variety of names only that this same God is the Locus, or Rest, for all things. He is the Beginning of all creatures—[a Beginning] which coincides with the End of all creatures. But with regard to these modes of speaking you must always beware lest you believe these terms to be precise when we speak of what is ineffable.

[9] Now, Paul said that in God we exist and move,<sup>12</sup> for we are pilgrims. Now, a pilgrim (*viator*) takes his name from the pathway (*via*) and is a wayfarer (*viator*). Therefore, as regards a wayfarer who walks along, or moves along, an infinite pathway: if it is asked where he is, it is replied “on the pathway.” And if it is asked where he is moving along, it is replied “on the pathway.” And if it is asked from where he moves, it is replied “from the pathway.” And if it is asked to where he is headed, it is replied “from the pathway to the pathway.” And in this manner the infinite pathway is said to be the Locus of the pilgrim and is God.<sup>13</sup> Hence, that Pathway in the absence of which there is no pilgrim is that beginningless and endless Being from whom the pilgrim exists and has all that he is as a pilgrim. But the fact that a pilgrim begins to be a pilgrim on the Pathway adds nothing to the Infinite Pathway and makes no modification in the perpetual and unchangeable Pathway. [10] Accordingly, take note of the fact that the Word of God says that He Himself is the Way.<sup>14</sup> You can understand this to mean that a pilgrim on the Pathway (i.e., in the Word of life) is a truly living intellect; the pilgrim is, and is called, a pilgrim from reference to this Pathway, and on it he moves. For if movement is a being alive, then the pathway of movement is life. Thus, the Pathway of the living pilgrim is a Living Pathway. From the Living Pathway a living pilgrim has the fact that he is a living pilgrim. And the Living Pathway is his Locus; and he moves on it and from it and through it and unto it. Hence, the Son of God rightly says that He is the Way and the Life.<sup>15</sup>

[11] But note, furthermore, that that Way which is also Life is also Truth. For a living pilgrim is a rational spirit that takes living delight in his own movement. For he knows to where he tends. For he knows that he is on the Pathway of life. But this way is truth. For truth is the immortal and very delicious food of the pilgrim’s life; for the living pilgrim is nourished from that from which he has his being. Therefore the Living Way, which is also Truth, is the Word of God, which is also God and is the Light of men who walk on the Pathway. For the one who is walking needs no other light in order not to walk in dark-



ness, as if he did not know where he were headed. Rather, the Way that is the Life and the Truth is also the Light that illumines; and the Light is a Living Light, because it is the Light-of-life that manifests itself.

[12] There is one entrance of all men into this world; but men do not all live in equal ways. For although men are born naked as are other animals, nevertheless by means of the human art-of-weaving men are clothed, in order to live better. They make use of cooked foods and of a house and of horses and of many such things that art has added to nature for the sake of living better. From inventors we have these arts as a great present and a great gift, or favor. Hence, since many men live miserably and in sorrow and in hovels, suffering many things, whereas others live happily and nobly in abundance: we rightly infer that man, by means of some grace or art, can arrive at a quiet and joyous life in excess of what nature grants. And many men by their own intelligence or by divine illumination have invented various arts for living better. For example, [there are] those who have invented the mechanical arts and the arts of sowing and of planting and of engaging in commerce. And [there are] others who have drafted the rules of statecraft and of buying-and-selling and who have learned the ethics of habituating themselves—through *mores* and customary practices—up to the point of taking delight in a virtuous life and up to the point of governing themselves<sup>16</sup> peacefully. Nevertheless, not all these arts are of service to the spirit; rather, they hand down surmises about how in this world a virtuous life and a life worthy of praise can be led in peace and quiet.

[13] To these arts there is then added religion, founded on divine authority and divine revelation. Religion prepares a man for obeying God out of fear of Him and out of love for Him and for one's neighbor. [It prepares us] in the expectation of our obtaining friendship with God, the Giver of life, so that we may obtain a long and peaceful life in this world and may obtain in the future world a joyous and divine life. Yet, in the midst of all the kinds of religion that fall far short of true life there is revealed to us the way to eternal life—[revealed] by Jesus, the Son of God, who has taught us what the Heavenly life is which the sons of God have and has taught us *that* and *how* we can arrive at sonship with God. For just as the art of living well in this present age has been handed down in various ways by various men-of-talent, and just as an art that has been produced from keener reason is a more perfect art, so too religion that has regard for the future life and that arranges the present life in relation to the future life was handed

down in various ways by the prophets who foresaw the future from afar. And because no one saw the future life except by way of surmise, only He who came to us from God or from that future, Heavenly life— [only He who came] with our nature—could perfectly teach [us] religion or the way to Heavenly life. This individual is our Jesus, who came from Heaven in order that we might have life and might live through Him more abundantly than through nature. [For] He began to show by His works, and to teach, how this [obtaining] could occur. And He said: “He who follows me does not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, He who was also the Way of nature was the Way of obtaining grace.

[14] And so, Jesus is the place where all movement of nature and of grace find rest. Christ’s word, or teaching, or commandment, or pattern-of-movement, is the way unto the vision, or the apprehension, of eternal life, which is the life of God, who alone is immortal.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, it is a life that is more abundant than is a created nature’s life. Hence, by himself no one can come to the way-of-grace that leads to the Father; rather, one must go unto that life by way of the door. Now, Christ says that He is the Door<sup>19</sup>—He who is also the Way. A Christian (who is a believer, having faith that works through love<sup>20</sup>) has entered through the door and is on the pathway. The door is faith; the pathway is love. Hence, faith in Christ—faith in-formed [by love]<sup>21</sup>—is both the door and the pathway. And so, the Word of God the Father summons from *not-being* to *being* and, in the end, to such being as lives with an intellectual life, because it understands itself to exist. But through grace the Word-made-flesh summons this intellectual being unto fellowship with Himself, so that [this being] may taste, in the Paternal Fount, the agreeableness of its own divine life, which is imparted to the sons of God.

[15] Let us construe the words “Where is He who is born?” in another way, interrogatively<sup>22</sup>—[construe them] in such a way as to mean that the wise men sought the Child-King (a) in order to worship Him, because He is God, and (b) in order to see Him, because He is a human being. Let us, then, first ask: “Where indeed is the God who was made a human being?—where with respect to His divinity?” And since we know, to begin with, that God is He of whose magnitude there is no end<sup>23</sup> and know that, for this reason (as Solomon says in II Kings 8), the heavens of heavens cannot contain Him,<sup>24</sup> then [we know that] He is not located in any place. [16] Since we wish to investigate where

He is, let us first note, in accordance with Meister Eckhart, that we can see better where He is not.<sup>25</sup> Let us say that He is not present in anything that contains defect, deformity, evil, privation, or negation. For [these features] are privative and deny that something is the case (even though they affirm something to be the case in addition to their depriving and denying). But God is Complete Being; of His fullness all existing things partake in order to exist. (For God is Being itself, to which no being can be lacking—even as to whiteness nothing white can be absent or lacking. And so, God is not a part of the universe but is prior to, and superior to, the universe. For to a part of the universe the being of the other parts is lacking.) Thus, no negation or privation befits God; rather, to Him, and to Him alone, the negation of a negation is proper. This [double negation] is the quintessence and peak of very pure affirmation, in accordance with the [Scriptural text] “I am I who am” (Exodus 3).<sup>26</sup> Now, God cannot deny Himself (Timothy 2).<sup>27</sup> But if something were lacking to Him or if He were lacking to anything, He would be denying Himself to be *Being*. Hence, God is present in all things and in no thing. For He is present in each thing insofar as the thing is *something having being*; but He is present in no thing insofar as the thing is *this being*.

[17] This [latter claim] seems to me to be nothing other than [to say] that God is, as it were, the Form of forms, the Absolute Form (or Absolute Being), which gives being to forms. Thus, Moses calls Him the Former of heaven and of earth. For God is not heaven or earth or any such thing. For heaven has its own proper form, which gives to it celestial being; this form has being from the Form of forms. Thus, God, who forms all things, is Being, which gives *being* to all forms. These latter forms give *this being* or *that being*.<sup>28</sup> But God cannot be the form of the heaven—[a form] which is constituted by the differences of the heaven from what is not the heaven. Hence, to that form, so constituted by differences, there is absent the being that does not constitute it [to be the form of the heaven]. However, to Absolute Being, which is God, no being is lacking. Therefore, God is the Being of all being, just as the being of oneness is the being of all number. But just as oneness is not either the number two or the number three, so God is neither heaven nor earth. Oneness is the beginning and the end of the number two. For two is terminated in oneness; if oneness is removed, two ceases to be. Likewise, God is the Beginning and the End of all things; that is, He is the End of which there is no end; i.e., He is an Infinite End.

[18] Therefore, if God is present only in being, then it is the case, as Meister Eckhart says, that He is not present in time or in division or in succession or in quantity or in anything having more or less or in anything differentiated or in any created thing insofar as it is *this* or *that* or in any property—although He is present in *all* things insofar as they are beings, just as whiteness is present in all things insofar as they are white, but it is not present in them insofar as they are temporal, quantitative, differentiated, or this or that (e.g., are pieces of wood, are stones, etc.). For God is He-who-is, and “Being” is His name, and He is Being itself, which all things seek. [19] And it seems to me that to say that all existing things, insofar as they exist, are in Being, which is God,<sup>29</sup> is nothing other than to say that God, who is Being itself, is in all existing things insofar as they exist. For how could [these things] *be* if Being were not present in them? But Being, which is present in all existing things, is present in each existing thing uncontractedly to this or that. Thus, through Being all existing things are that which they are. For if Being were present in the heaven contractedly—i.e., were in the heaven qua heaven—it would not be in the earth. And how could the earth *be*, [if it were] without Being? So Being is present in all things and in no thing—in all things insofar as they *are*, and in no thing contractedly insofar as the thing is *this* thing.

Now, the heaven is this thing and not that thing; for it is not Absolute Being but is something contracted and delimited. For if it were uncontracted and undelimited, if it were infinite, then it would no more be *this* than *that* but would enfold the being of all things in equal measure, because it would be the power-of-being of all things existing and possible to exist. God is present everywhere and nowhere, as Augustine (in *On True Religion*) says about truth.<sup>30</sup> God is present everywhere, i.e., in every place—but is not present locally and contractedly. Rather, while He is in every place, He remains free from all place, because He is in every place non-spatially. [20] For He is present in the *being* of place, because the *being* of place is present in Him; and He is not present in place, although He is not absent from the *being* of place. By comparison, the being of a hand is present in the being of all the fingers. For all the fingers take their being from the fullness of the hand’s being; and unless the being of the fingers were in the being of the hand, the fingers would not *be*. For a finger that is separated from the hand’s being is not a finger. A finger is not the hand; yet, the finger’s being derives from the hand’s being. Therefore, the hand’s being is not in the finger qua finger or in the thumb qua thumb or in

the index-finger qua index-finger. For if the hand's being were in the thumb qua thumb, the index-finger would not be from the hand's being. For the hand's being would not enfold the being of all the fingers if it were contracted to the thumb. Hence, in order that the hand's being can furnish being to all the fingers, it is uncontracted to any [particular finger]. By means of this example of the hand's being you can help yourself pass over [reflectively] to the being of the universe and from the universe unto the Cause of the universe's being—just as if you were to look from the hand's being unto the cause of the hand's being, viz., the intellect, which is the beginning and the end of the hand's being.

[21] By means of the foregoing illustration you will be able to assist yourself in many respects as regards the familiar question where-with one asks: "Where was God before He created heaven and earth?" The question presupposes something false: viz., that *where* or *place* existed when it did not exist and that there was a time before time existed. For since place and time do not exist prior to the creation or prior to heaven and earth,<sup>31</sup> the question presupposes what is false. Hence, if to the question "Where was God before He created heaven and earth" the answer were given that 'it is not the case that He was' (meaning thereby that if He had been, He would have been in time, for *was* is a mode of time which did not yet exist): then the answer would not be absurd. For it is as if one were to ask: "Where was eternity when there was no time?" The question is foolish, because it implies the contradiction that eternity is not eternity because it is temporal. For if eternity would have been somewhere, it would have been at a place and at a time. [But] place and time cannot contain what is immense and eternal; and they did not exist prior to heaven and earth.

[22] Thus, to the question "What was God doing before the creation of the world?" (a question that Augustine treats in Book XI of the *Confessions*) and to the question "Why didn't God create the world earlier?" one may reply: the question presupposes something false, viz., that when the world did not exist, there was an earlier. For without time there is no *earlier*, since earlier and later are temporal differentiations. And because there was no *earlier*, God did not create at an earlier time. If it is asked "Did not God exist earlier than the world?" the answer is given: "If 'earlier' is a temporal differentiation, then the question implies a contradiction." Likewise, the question "Why didn't God create time earlier?" presupposes a genuine contradiction, viz.,

that there both was and was not time. Similarly, if someone were to ask “Where was God prior to the world?” this [question] presupposes something false, viz., that outside of being there is being, that outside of God there is uncreated location.

[23] Moreover, if it were asked “Did the world, then, exist from eternity?” we could answer, in one way, that God and the world were present in the same *eternal now*. For the world began not in another eternal now but in the same eternal now in which God is present; for that *now* is without beginning and end and is God. Furthermore, we can say that because God is Eternity, then insofar as time derives from Him (and, thus, the temporal world is, and always was, from Eternity, i.e., from God), the world was *always*, i.e., *at every time*. Indeed, it was never true to say that the world *did not* exist. For at any time that it could possibly be said that the world was not in existence, the world *was* at that time. And although *was* is from Eternity, it is not eternal, because it is time. Moreover, it is a case of false imagination [to imagine] that between the *eternal now* (from which time flows forth) and time a certain delay intervenes. For it implies a contradiction [to assert] that there is a delay without there being time. Between eternal being and temporal being no delay intervenes. This [statement] is the same thing as if we were to say: between God’s Being and the world’s being there is no intermediary. And if you consider the matter rightly, [you will see that] the question as to whether the world existed from eternity implies a contradiction. For it presupposes that what is temporal and originated can be non-temporal and without a beginning.

[24] You might assert: “The temporal world is not eternal, even though it flows forth from eternity. How is it, then, claimed by the wise that the world has *always* existed?” I answer:<sup>32</sup> “[It is so claimed] because ‘always’ is taken to mean ‘for all time’.” You might respond: “So there was always time?” I answer: “Yes. For [to say] this is not to say anything other than that time was at all times or that time was always time.” You might ask: “If the world has existed always, why is there said that 7,000 years have not yet elapsed since the world began?” I answer that *always* is not eternal<sup>33</sup> and is not without quantity; for it is not without time, and its measure is said to be comprehended by 7,000 solar revolutions. You might say: “I imagine that more years [than 7,000] have passed.” I reply that the imagination does not get beyond quantity and that there cannot be posited a quantity than which a greater quantity cannot be imagined. Now, the imagination

errs when it imagines the quantity of the heavens to be something convex in such a way that someone sitting on the convex perimeter could extend his arm. So, too, I say to be similarly false the act of imagination by means of which someone imagines the world to be capable of being larger. For he conceives that between God's greatness, of which there is no end, and the finite magnitude of the world there can be an intermediate magnitude—something that is false. Similarly, I call false the imagination by which you imagine that there is time prior to *always* and that prior to *time* there is motion, which cannot exist except temporally. Hence, the prophet, who, as regards the past, expresses a determinate quantity of time, discloses to us that our imagining [there to have been] a period of time longer [than 7,000 years] is in error.<sup>34</sup>

[25] You might ask: "Wasn't God able to create the world earlier?" I reply that this question, like the others already posed, implies a contradiction, viz., that it was possible for there to be a creature prior to creation. Hence, just as no quantity, however great, exhausts infinite magnitude, so no time, [however great, exhausts] eternity. Accordingly, God's infinite and eternal power, which can accomplish that which God wills to, is not rightly conceived when such a question is formed. For the question presupposes (a) that one who is omnipotent cannot accomplish whatever He wills to and (b) that God is not God. Hence, to the [foregoing] question the Prophet rightly responds: "He did as He willed to."<sup>35</sup> And in prayer we acknowledge that His will is done in Heaven and on earth.<sup>36</sup> So, then, say: "If He had wanted to, He could have." Likewise, if you were to keep on asking "Why didn't He will to create earlier?" you will say that the question implies a contradiction. For it presupposes that free will is not free. Hence, there is no other [correct] reply than that the will of God is free and that His freedom counts as a reason. As regards these questions, see Augustine, *Confessions*, XI. These questions are to be left aside because they do not edify.

[26] Returning, then, [to the principal issue], let us ask: "Where is, or where dwells, God?" For as regards this question, being and dwelling coincide in God. Now, God is said to dwell in the highest places (Ecclesiasticus 24)...<sup>37</sup> He dwells in Heaven, as the Psalmist says: "I have lifted up my eyes unto You, who dwell in Heaven."<sup>38</sup> And He dwells in our midst (Exodus 25: "He dwells in their midst.")<sup>39</sup> He dwells in a cloud or in a dark cloud (Exodus 20: "Moses approached the dark cloud in which God was present.")<sup>40</sup> He dwells in holy

[places] (The Psalmist: “You, O Praise of Israel, dwell in the holy place.”)<sup>41</sup> He dwells in light inaccessible (Timothy 6).<sup>42</sup>

[27] Let us now ask in a moral sense:<sup>43</sup> “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?” And let us draw our answer from the things that we have said. For grace imitates nature (grace is super-added to, and super-imposed upon, nature), just as art imitates nature, as best it can. To begin with, God is not in time. Therefore, those who embrace temporal and ephemeral things—as if in them were present He whom all things seek—are deceived. Thus, being divided among themselves and clinging to (a) what is successive and (b) to corporeal quantity and (c) to an image that does not go beyond the bounds of quantity and (d) to things that admit of more and less, they do not attain God, who is infinite and who is free of all these things. But he who desires to come unto God must seek Him in lofty places<sup>44</sup> and in most lofty places, in the heavens, in the place in-between, in very secret places, viz., in a dark cloud and in dark mist. And he must become holy and free of the earth and of earthly affection; he must become saintly and a son of Israel, [a people] that dwelt<sup>45</sup> in the light, casting aside works of darkness.

[28] Moreover, Tusculanus<sup>46</sup> (in his sermon on this feast-day [of the Epiphany], the theme of which is the one we have set forth) says that each corporeal creature, since it is finite, has a place in which it is conserved; for example, a plant [is naturally found] in the earth, a rose in a thorn-bush, fish in water, birds in the air. But an immaterial creature is not in a place, because it is neither circumscribed nor conserved by place. (Understand [this point] with respect to physical place.) Thus, [even] if the material world did not exist, an immaterial creature could, nonetheless, exist. Things eternal—as are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are not in a place but rather surround and encompass all places. For just as that which is located at a place is conserved by the place, so place is conserved by God. [29] Now, God is said to be in a place because of certain effects that He causes there. Thus, He is present in the world on account of the [good] deeds of pilgrims and is present in Hell on account of the punishment of the damned and is present in Heaven on account of the joy of the blessed and is present in the mind on account of the consolation of companions. Accordingly, He is said to be in the world.

That which is originated cannot exist without its origin. A branch does not yield fruit independently of the root. A bodily member does not have movement in the absence of the heart’s beating. The heavenly



bodies do not shine in the absence of the sun. In this [same] way, no creature can function apart from God. “Without me,” says the Son of God, “you can do nothing.”<sup>47</sup> And John says: “Without Him nothing was made.”<sup>48</sup> So, then, [God or the Son of God] is said to be in the world insofar as He causes in creatures their power-of-activity. “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him.”<sup>49</sup>

[30] God is present in Hell for the torment of the damned; but He is not afflicted by Hell’s fire, which operates by divine power. For [that fire] is the instrument of the Judge’s justice, and the capability of suffering from that fire is present in no one except in him who is guilty—even as the servants of a judge have power only over wrongdoers. Hence, the fire of Hell does not act except against sin. And so, the penalty corresponds to the guilt, in which there are three things: the fervor of sin, to which the fire corresponds; the stench of sin, to which brimstone corresponds; and the disorderedness, to which the fury of the torment corresponds. Regarding these [three features] the Psalmist [says]: “fire, brimstone, and storms of winds . . .,” etc.<sup>50</sup>

[31] In Heaven [God] is always the joy of the blessed; and unless they were to see God through their essence, they would not have the glory of happiness. Hence, their entire happiness consists in [that] vision. And St. Peter says that the angels desire to gaze upon God.<sup>51</sup> And of this joy Christ says, “No one shall take your joy from you.”<sup>52</sup> [32] Likewise, [God] is in the mind because of the solace of friends. For although friends exist in a certain equality,<sup>53</sup> nonetheless the Son of God, who was exalted in His majesty, emptied Himself and humbled Himself<sup>54</sup> and was made humble in His humanity. Accordingly, He says: “I will now call you not servants but friends.”<sup>55</sup> Now, friends associate with one another. Thus, the Son of God associates with us and dwells in our flesh and is at rest in our mind. Our association with Him does not have bitterness or boredom but has, rather, gladness and joy.<sup>56</sup>

#### NOTES TO *Ubi Est Qui Natus Est Rex Iudaeorum?*

- \* Sermon CCXVI.
- 1. Matthew 2:2.
- 2. This was the feast-day of the Epiphany.
- 3. Sermon CLXXI and elsewhere.
- 4. Isaias (Isaiah) 58:9.
- 5. Baruch 3:38.
- 6. The editors of the printed Latin text point out that Nicholas's reference should be not to Messahalla but to Albumasar. See their note for 2:16-19.
- 7. That is, instead of asking a question ("Where is He who is born King of the Jews?"), the verse ascribes an attribute ("He who is born King of the Jews is *Where*"). Nicholas goes on to treat the text as an interrogative (1 5:1-2) and as having a moral sense (2 7:1-2).
- 8. Ecclesiastes 1:7.
- 9. Apocalypse (Revelation) 1:8 and 22:13.
- 10. Psalms 70:3 (71:3) and elsewhere. Augustine, *Confessiones*, I, 1, 1: "... fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te" (PL 32:661).
- 11. Here (at 6:9) I am reading, with the Paris edition, "quietis" in place of "quietum".
- 12. Acts 17:28.
- 13. John 14:6: "Jesus saith to him: I am the Way (*via*) and the Truth and the Life."
- 14. *Loc. cit.*
- 15. *Loc. cit.*
- 16. Here (at 1 2:25) I am surmising "ipsos" in place of "ipsum".
- 17. John 8:12.
- 18. I Timothy 6:16.
- 19. John 10:9.
- 20. Galatians 5:6.
- 21. *Loc. cit.*
- 22. See n. 7 above.
- 23. Psalms 144:3 (145:3).
- 24. III Kings (I Kings) 8:27.
- 25. Meister Eckhart, *Expositio Sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, 1:38 [Die lateinischen Werke, Vol. III, edited by Karl Christ and Joseph Koch (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1936), paragraph 206 (p. 173, lines 12-16)].
- 26. Exodus 3:14.
- 27. II Timothy 2:13.
- 28. See Cusa's *De Dato Patris Luminum*, 2 (98).
- 29. The expressions "Being," "Being itself," "Absolute Being," "Pure Being," are capitalized in the English translation in order to indicate that Being is God, that God is Being. Nicholas takes this point from Eckhart.
- 30. Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, 32, 60 (PL34:149). Augustine makes this point about oneness and not directly about truth.

31. Augustine, *Confessiones*, XI, 10, 12 – XI, 14, 17 (PL 32:814-816). Meister Eckhart, *Expositio Sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, 1:38 [*Die lateinischen Werke*, Vol. III, edited by Karl Christ and Josef Koch (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1936), paragraph 214 (p. 180, lines 3-9, and pp. 182-183)].

32. Literally: “It is answered [by me] ...”

33. Nicholas is here distinguishing *existing eternally* from *existing forever*, i.e., from *existing for all time*, *existing everlastingly*. Likewise, the Scholastics distinguished between *aeternitas* and *sempiternitas*.

34. See, for example, the definite periods of time mentioned in Genesis 6-11. Cf. Luke 3 and Matthew 1.

35. Jonah 1:14.

36. Matthew 6:10.

37. Ecclesiasticus 24:7.

38. Psalms 122:1 (123:1).

39. Exodus 25:8.

40. Exodus 20:21.

41. Psalms 21:4 (22:3). Not an exact quotation.

42. I Timothy 6:16.

43. See n. 7 above.

44. Ecclesiasticus 24:7.

45. Here (at 2 7:19-20) I am reading “habitabant”. In the printed edition of the Latin text: in the note for this line, but not in the text itself, the spelling “habitabant” needs to be corrected.

46. That is, Aldobrandinus of Tuscanella (late thirteenth century).

47. John 15:5.

48. John 1:3.

49. John 1:10.

50. Psalms 10:7 (11:6).

51. I Peter 1:12.

52. John 16:22.

53. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 12 (1171<sup>b</sup>33-34).

54. Philippians 2:7-8.

55. John 15:15.

56. Wisdom 8:16.

**Hoc Facite in Meam Commemorationem\***

(“This Do in Remembrance of Me.”)

[May 30, 1456; preached in Brixen]

[1] “This do in remembrance of me.”<sup>1</sup> (The sacrament of [our] remembrance of Christ.)

We are obliged to have Christ with us in memory. And this [Eucharistic] sacrament, in which Christ is present, has to do with this precept. Hence, just as we are obligated to have Christ in our memory not in the way that perceptual forms are repositied in memory (for we have neither seen Him nor heard Him nor touched Him) but only insofar as we have received Him by faith as the true Son of man and the true Son of God, so He is truly present in the sacrament [but] not<sup>2</sup> spatially or extendedly or as having color. And just as by faith He is truly seen to be present in our memory, so [by faith He is] also [seen to be present] in the sacrament.

[2] By way of introduction, [we can say] that after man was created, then at length—where the light was [shining] in darkness without being comprehended—<sup>3</sup>a people was chosen from the seed of Abraham. This people was oppressed in the darkness of Egypt, from which region it was led through the Red Sea into the wilderness. *There* [this people] entered into a covenant with God; and a promise was made to them that if they kept the law of the tablets, they would be led to a land where there was an abundance of all the foods that they could wish for. They received many sacred signs of this promise. But manna was the consummation of the sacred signs. By means of it the delights of the Land of Promise were prefigured. And that which under the form of manna they foretasted by faith, they obtained in reality in the Land of Promise. In an analogous way this [Eucharistic] sacrament is the true manna, and the Kingdom of Heaven is the Heavenly Jerusalem, where indeed all things are [delightful] to the eye, because the vision of God [is present there], as is also the happy enjoyment of the Good.

[3] Let the reflection that can be made in regard to this sacrament be touched upon, to some extent, for the sake of our devotion—even though the reflection cannot be fully conceptualized or written down. And first of all we need to note that Christ’s entire teaching is [directed toward] saving the soul. And because the rational soul has a weakened intellect and has corrupted affections (since men love the

darkness of sensuality more than the light of reason), Christ taught that the intellect is saved by faith and that the affections are saved by love. Now, the faith that frees the intellect is that than which there can be no greater faith, viz., [the belief] that God exists, who spoke to us most recently in His Son, Jesus, as Paul states.<sup>4</sup> The love that repairs the affections is the love than which there can be none greater—[a love] which [God] manifests in His Son, Jesus. And because God the Father is truthful, the words of His Son, Jesus, are true, for they are [the words] of the Father.<sup>5</sup> But the words of Jesus contain the gospel, for they declare to us that for God (since He is the Omnipotent Creator) nothing is impossible<sup>6</sup> and that He is a bountiful Rewarder of believers, giving what is eternal in place of what is temporal.

Now, Jesus's love is [manifest by His] willingly undergoing the most horrible of all horrors on account of His love for God and love for His neighbor. The sacred sign of this love is obedience. For to obey [God's] commandments is a sign of love; to obey unto death is the sign of perfect love. Therefore, obedience is a sacrament of love, because it is a sign of a sacred thing. Accordingly, the Apostle said to the Philippians: Christ "became obedient unto death."<sup>7</sup> And Christ Himself said that He died out of love, because no one has a greater love.<sup>8</sup> But the fact that Jesus is He who is Truth and is such that he who does not believe Him will not see life (as He says in John 3)<sup>9</sup>—this fact Jesus showed by means of many miracles, which were sacraments, or sacred signs, that He is the one in whom is God the Father.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, He says: "if you do not believe me, believe my works."<sup>11</sup> [It is] true that the ultimate witness to this fact was His shedding of blood, when He bore witness by means of His blood. For example, He said in the presence of Pilate that He was born for this purpose and had come into the world in order to bear witness to the truth.<sup>12</sup> And His witness strengthens and nourishes the truth.

[4] Hence, the Eucharist is a sacred sign of this [witness]. For it is the remembering of His death insofar as His death nourishes and strengthens the truth. Moreover, it is a sacred sign of His supreme love. For Christ loved His own unto the end,<sup>13</sup> as He showed at the Last Supper. Therefore, because all [the other] things would not have measured up to most perfect love were He not to give Himself for all men, Christ in this way handed Himself over [to death] for us—as if Life,<sup>14</sup> by dying, were to impart Himself in order to enliven us. Of His [love and death] this is the wondrous sacrament; for He took His own [Eucharistic Body] in His hands and broke it and distributed it. It was

as if the Living Bread<sup>15</sup> broke itself and distributed itself in order that those to whom He distributed Himself would live and that He Himself in distributing Himself would die. Hence, the Apostle said that the eating of the Body of Christ in the sacrament is the declaration of His death.<sup>16</sup> For by thus dying He remade us by means of His death. According to the Gospel His death merited the reward of life (with respect to [our] condition of death). For to lose in that way one's temporal life, or soul, is to find it in the Kingdom of Heaven, or of Immortality. But His death was consummate: it merited as much as all [other] men could have merited by dying. Therefore, He acquired merit for all men. Similarly, by dying, He imparted life to all who were capable of receiving it. Moreover, the [Eucharistic] sacrament is [a sacrament] of sonship, which is attained by means of perfect faith. For in the truth of this sacrament all doubt about sonship with God is removed. For if bread can pass over into becoming the Son of God, then so too [can] man, who is the purpose of the bread.

[5] Next [comes our] reflecting on a final consolation that we mortals can receive by means of this transubstantiation by which, through death, we are transferred through death from mortal nature unto immortal [nature]. For death will not have dominion over us, who have put on Christ.

The difficulties concerning the way in which the bread is turned into the Body of Christ are seen to be able to be conceptually cleared up, to some extent, as follows: Christ said that the words which He speaks (in John 6) are spirit and life.<sup>17</sup> But that which He says—[viz.] “This is my Body”—must be construed in a spiritual sense. A spiritual, [i.e., immaterial], body is not attained by any of the senses. A material body is seen to be distinguished from a spiritual body as *body belonging to the category of quantity* and *body belonging to the category of substance*.

[6] Dionysius affirms that in each thing there is *essence, power, and activity*.<sup>18</sup> In the essence are enfolded the power and the activity. Now, Dionysius calls essence *ousia*, which we call *substantia*. And so, I construe essence as substance, just as also in the new translation<sup>19</sup> of Dionysius's [works the word] “substantia” is placed where in the old [translation<sup>20</sup> there is the word] “essentia”. Now, to begin with, from the essence is begotten the power; and [from these] there proceeds the activity. Hence, the essence, or substance, even of a material nature—for example, of earth or of water or of fire—is like [that] of a spiritual,

[i.e., immaterial, nature]. For [the essence] is not attainable by any of the senses.

Next, we must consider that in the turning of one thing into another thing, first [the one] essence is transformed into [the other] essence; subsequently [both] the power [is transformed] into [the other] power and the activity into [the other] activity. For instance, when Christ by the word of His power turned water into wine,<sup>21</sup> the essence of the water was first turned into the essence of the wine; subsequently [both] the power of the water [was turned] into the power of the wine and the activity of the water [was turned] into the activity of the wine.

[7] Therefore, let it be the case that water is turned into wine— i.e., that the essence of the water is turned into the essence of wine— without the power of the water being turned into the power of the wine and without the activity of the water being turned into the activity of the wine. It is true that after the transformation there is not water but there is wine, even though the power and the activity remain as they were before the transformation. And in each part of that water's power and activity there will be present the real body-of-wine. I am speaking of body insofar as it is the essence, or the substance (insofar, that is, as it belongs to the category of substance). And if the real wine could speak, it would say: "This is my body." And that body-of-wine would enfold all the things that are of the essence of wine.

In a similar way I consider the Body of Christ to have an essence, a power, and an activity; and, likewise, I consider the bread to have an essence, a power, and an activity. And [I consider] the essence, or substance, of the bread to be turned by the Word of God into the essence, or substance, of the Body of Christ— with the bread's power and its activity remaining as they were prior to the transformation of the essence. And because the bread's essence is in each part of the bread (because each part of the bread is bread), then after the transformation of the bread's essence into the essence of the Body of Christ, the essence of the Body of Christ will be in each part of the bread. Accordingly, the essence will be present in each part in such a way that it is true to say that there are present there all the things that belong to the real essence of the Body of Christ. Hence, whatever the real essence, or substance, of the Body of Christ enfolds within itself is present there essentially and really. Now, substance is prior to accident. Therefore, since the Body of Christ is present there only substantially, it is not there extendedly (as Henry of Ghent [rightly] main-

tains in his *Quodlibeta*.<sup>22</sup> Hence, that essence is incorruptible and is inaccessible to any of the senses. Here [on earth] it is apprehended by the eye of the intellect only by means of the light of faith. But by means of the light of glory it is seen as it is—[seen] by those who have obtained [eternal] happiness.

[8] And in a certain way there is seen to be a difference between the Body of Christ as it is present in Heaven and the same Body as it is present in the sacrament—just as [there is a difference] between fire that is giving off light and heat and fire into which the essence of earth has been turned. For example, if the essence of a flintstone were transformed into the essence of fire, then fire would be hidden invisibly beneath the coldness and opacity of the earthy nature of the stone. Now, the essence of fire insofar as fire gives off light and heat is not a different essence from that of fire insofar as fire lies thus hidden [within the flintstone]. Rather, [they are one and] the same essence and are equally real. Nevertheless, in the first way fire is present in its own kingdom together with its power and its activity; but in the second way it is not [present in its own kingdom] but is outside its kingdom. Hence, just as fire hiding beneath the form of a stone does not do the works of fire unless it is separated, by an intellectual nature, and joined to what is ignitable: so also the Body of Christ does not work works of life unless by an intellect with faith-informed-[by-love] it is separated from the signs (beneath which it lies hidden) and is joined to a spirit that is capable of being enlivened. Now, *that* spirit can be enlivened which is prepared for *receiving*—even as wood that is free of mud and freed from cold water is ignitable, or capable of becoming inflamed.

Furthermore, by means of this [Eucharistic] sacrament you will be able to see, to some extent, that the Word, or Power, of the Heavenly Father is united to the human nature without the Father's being united to the human nature. For the Father is like unto essence, the Son is like unto Power, and the activity is like unto the Holy Spirit—as says Dionysius.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, in the bread there are essence, power, and activity—in the likeness of the Trinity. Now, the power of the bread is found in the sacrament, which is composed of quantity, and [this power] is united to the other accidents; but the essence of the bread is not present. Likewise, the Power-of-God, which is the Word of God, is united to the human nature; the Father [is] not [united thereto].

[9] Moreover, at this point, you will be able to see that [a believer's] human nature (*homo*) passes over into Christ, because the essence



of the body of a blessed man [i.e., of a redeemed man in Heaven] passes over into the essence of the Body of Christ,<sup>24</sup> just as a grain of wheat passes over into bread. For [in Heaven] believers are like grains of wheat that pass over into Living Bread. And since the humanity (*humanitas*) of each [believer] is one [and the same in species] but Christ is no longer dead, then when the mortal nature becomes immortal in Christ,<sup>25</sup> it is transformed. By way of illustration: the essence of a finger passes over into the living essence of the body; yet, the finger's power and activity remain. (For it is not the case that because of the [passing-over] the finger does the works of the eye or of the foot rather than of the finger—even though the finger is alive with the life of the eye and of the foot, since there is [but] one life of all [the bodily members].) In a similar way, the blessed man's [i.e., the Heavenly man's] power and activity do not pass over into being Christ's power and activity; rather, these remain [as themselves], just as in the sacrament [the power and the activity of the bread and the wine remain as themselves]. Nonetheless, the essence [of a redeemed individual in Heaven] passes-over in such a way that it becomes [one and] the same Body with Christ (even as the essence of a grain of wheat passes over into bread) and in such a way that it is enlivened by the same spirit. Yet, the power and the activity remain (even as the power of each grain of wheat remains in the bread), so that [each believer will] experience in himself—in accordance with his power and activity—his happiness differently from other [believers]. For each one is to receive his own reward according to his own doings.<sup>26</sup> In accordance with the passing over of the essence, there is one essential reward for all [believers]; in accordance with the power and the activity, there is a different reward for each [believer].

[10] A certain learned<sup>27</sup> man understood the matter in the foregoing way. In my judgment he was unfairly criticized by others.<sup>28</sup> For [even] Blessed Ambrose understood Paul in the foregoing way—[understood Paul thusly] in his Letter XVII to Herennius, which begins [with the word] “*Poposcisti*”. In this letter Ambrose makes, among other very lovely [statements], [the following] inference:<sup>29</sup> “Therefore, we are not seated in Heavenly places<sup>30</sup> but are seated in Christ and in the flesh of Him who alone is seated, as the Son of man, at the right hand of the Father.” By way of [further] illustration, you have understood Augustine similarly. He said that Christ is the Food of grown men. This Food is not changed into the partaker, but rather it changes partakers into the Food.<sup>31</sup> I understand in a similar way the

Gospel-passage about the Living Bread—in particular, where Christ said, “He who eats of me lives by me.”<sup>32</sup> And Paul says, “We many who partake of one bread and of one cup are one body.”<sup>33</sup> Hence, even as many hosts, or pieces of [consecrated] bread, are transformed into the one Body of Christ<sup>34</sup> through the same Word by which God made even the ages<sup>35</sup>—[the Word] that alone can transform nature—so the same [Eucharistic] Body is present in the many men who partake of it. For just as the same life of the soul is present in the many [bodily] members that partake of it, so the same life of the Food-of-life is present in the many who partake of that Food-of-life.

[11] Certain men have said that in this sacrament are present [both] the Body of Christ *and* bread—[a view] that [we] moderns do not admit.<sup>36</sup> For in that case Jesus would not have said “This is my Body” but [would have said]: “This [bread] is [my] Body.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the understanding of the Ancients can be admitted, for “bread” names a thing which is such that it has essence, power, and activity. And although [in the sacrament] the essence does not remain: from the fact that the power and the activity remain, the name “bread” still befits it. Hence, with respect to the fact that the essence of the bread becomes the essence of the Body of Christ, we speak of the *Bread of Life* or of *Living Bread*. It turns a partaker into itself, making him to be possessed of its own Life, which is immortal; and the partaker is assumed [into this Life]. For the essence of the bread is not destroyed; rather it passes from being a mortal nature into being an immortal [nature]. And insofar as the power and the activity remain, the name “bread” is used. Hence, if someone were to name the sacrament, [i.e., the host], consecrated *bread*, he would be seen not to veer [from the truth]. Accordingly, when a man is beatified [in Heaven], his mortal body becomes an immortal body, viz., the Body of Christ, wherein death is swallowed up in victory.<sup>38</sup> But the [body’s] power and the [body’s] activity remain. Therefore, in view of the aforesaid understanding, that man is named as he previously was (e.g., “Peter”), supplemented by [the name] “Christian”.

[12] Therefore, Christ is not present in the sacrament extendedly and, hence, not spatially. For substance, considered qua substance, is not at a place.<sup>39</sup> Hence, it does not remain present there with the corrupted forms under which it is contained. (Yet, as says the Solemn Doctor [of the Church],<sup>40</sup> the substance is not corrupted.) For “there” indicates *place*. And since the substance is not at a place except by

means of the forms: then after the forms become corrupted, it is not present *there*, i.e., at a place. Consider that Paul said: “You will show the Lord’s death until He comes.”<sup>41</sup> And Christ says: “I will raise him up on the last day.”<sup>42</sup> And elsewhere [He says]: “I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me ...,” etc.<sup>43</sup> Note that by means of this present sacrament the death of Christ is declared to be our enlivenment. And the truth of this fact will be evident at His coming. For, as Paul says, “It does not yet appear [what we shall be] ...,” etc., “but when He shall appear, we shall be like Him,”<sup>44</sup> since we, as resurrected, shall pass into immortality. As [Jesus] says, they shall go unto life.<sup>45</sup> This going [unto life] is a being changed from a mortal nature into an immortal [nature]. Therefore, as long as Christ does not appear, we shall not obtain in our body resurrection unto life. Therefore, this present sacrament of the remembrance of [Christ’s] death prefigures [our] resurrection unto life. Accordingly, we pray after the communion-celebration of the mass: “Cause us, we ask, O Lord, to be filled with the eternal enjoyment of Your divinity—[the enjoyment] which the temporal reception of Your precious Body and Blood prefigures.” And if you rightly consider [the matter, you will see that] this sacrament is a sacred sign of that regeneration about which there is said: “When in the regeneration the Son of man is seated ...,” etc.<sup>46</sup> That is, [Christ] will then co-enliven us and will conform us to Himself.

## NOTES TO *Hoc Facite in Meam Commemorationem*

- \* Sermon CCXXXV.
1. Luke 22:19, I Corinthians 11:24.
  2. Here (at 1:11) I am supplying the word “non,” which is missing from the printed edition of the Latin text but is found in *Codex Latinus Vaticanus* 1245.
  3. John 1:5.
  4. Hebrew 1:2.
  5. John 12:49-50 and 14:10.
  6. Matthew 19:26. Mark 10:27. Luke 18:27.
  7. Philippians 2:8.
  8. John 15:13.
  9. John 3:36.
  10. John 10:37-38.
  11. *Loc cit.*
  12. John 18:37.
  13. John 13:1.
  14. John 11:25.
  15. John 6:48 and 6:51.
  16. I Corinthians 11:26.
  17. John 6:64.
  18. Pseudo-Dionysius (Dionysius the Areopagite), *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, XI, 2 (PG 3:284). *Dionysiaca*, Vol. II, p. 930.
  19. “... the new translation”: i.e., the translation by Ambrose Traversari. See *Dionysiaca*, Vol. II, p. 930.
  20. “... the old translation”: i.e., the translation by Eriugena. See *Dionysiaca*, Vol. II, p. 930.
  21. John 2:1-11.
  22. Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, I, Quaestio 6. (Paris edition, 1518. Reprinted in Louvain, Belgium by Bibliothèque S. J., 1961. See Vol. I, f. 3<sup>v</sup>.)
  23. See n. 18 above. Nicholas seems to assume that the order in which Dionysius mentions *essence*, *power*, and *operation* is meant by him to correspond to the order Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—whom the former concepts symbolize. Dionysius does not explicitly make such a correlation.
  24. Nicholas makes the point that the resurrected bodies of believers will be like the resurrected Body of Christ—will be one in essence with Christ’s Body. Similarly, each believer’s human nature will be assumed into Christ’s human nature, though without losing its individuality. All human natures are of one and the same species. See especially Nicholas’s *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 8 (227-228). See also Romans 12:5, I Corinthians 12:27, and I Corinthians 15:44.
  25. I Corinthians 15:53-54.
  26. Matthew 16:27. II Corinthians 5:10.
  27. “... a certain learned man”: viz., Meister Eckhart. See Eckhart’s *Rechtfertigungsschrift*, IX, 39. In particular, see p. 54 of A. Daniels, editor, *Eine lateinische Rechtfertigungsschrift der Meister Eckhart* [Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, Vol. XXII, Issue 5 (1923)].

28. Nicholas is aware that he himself is venturing into a theologically difficult area, so that, as he realizes, he must exercise special caution in articulating his points.
29. St. Ambrose, *Epistola* LXXVI, 8 (PL 16:1261C). Not meant by Nicholas to be an exact quotation.
30. Ephesians 2:6.
31. Augustine, *Confessiones*, VII, 10 (PL 32:742). Not meant by Nicholas as an exact quotation.
32. John 8:58.
33. I Corinthians 10:17. Not meant by Nicholas as an exact quotation.
34. Romans 12:5.
35. Hebrews 1:2.
36. See Nicholas's Sermon CLXXXIII (1 2).
37. In the Latin text that corresponds to the present English sentence Nicholas uses the masculine pronoun "*hic*" ("this") to stand for the masculine word "*cibus*" ("*bread*"), whereas in the previous clause the neuter word "*hoc*" ("this") stands for neuter noun "*corpus*" (*Body*).
38. I Corinthians 15:54.
39. A thing's place, according to Aristotle, is an accidental feature of the thing.
40. Henry of Ghent is called *doctor solemnus*. Regarding the present passage, see the reference in n. 22 above.
41. I Corinthians 11:26.
42. John 6:40 and 6:44.
43. John 11:25.
44. I John 3:2. Nicholas seems here to misremember the location of the text, which is not Paul's but John's.
45. Matthew 25:46.
46. Matthew 29:28.

**Qui Manducat Hunc Panem\***

**Vivet in Aeternum**

(“He Who Eats of This Bread Shall Live Forever.”)

[June 5, 1455 (Feast-day of the Sacrament); preached in Bruneck]

[1] “He who eats of this Bread shall live forever.”<sup>1</sup>

We must note, in addition to the other things that are contained in [my] other sermons for this feast-day,<sup>2</sup> that the Bread of Life<sup>3</sup> is an incorruptible food. Now, it is God alone who inhabits immortality, as Paul says<sup>4</sup> in I Timothy 6. But we say that God is in Heaven; yet, we ought to understand His habitation to be *immortality*. Hence, because, in the case of God, inhabiting and having are *being*, God is Immortality. [The notion of] infinite life cannot be better expressed than by “immortality”; for not to be able to die is maximal life, which cannot be greater or cannot be lesser; and so, it is infinite. God is the Infinite Treasure of Life.

An intellectual nature is not alive unless it has wisdom. The Intellect that is Wisdom itself is alive with an infinite life. Now, the All-Wise One nourishes by means of His own Word those whom He calls to fellowship and to a partaking of enlivening wisdom. Christ is the Bread of Life<sup>5</sup> and the Word of the Father.<sup>6</sup> And so, He nourishes with eternal life because He is the Eternal Word of God-the-Enlivening-Father. Christ is the Enlivening Word of the Enlivening Father, who enlivens by the sending of the Enlivening Spirit that proceeds from the Father. In the Books of Wisdom<sup>7</sup> it is shown that wisdom is glorious and never fades and that it gives immortality and is better than all riches and that it incomparably surpasses whatever can be thought of. Wisdom furnishes right judgment. Justice is perpetual and immortal (because it is the fruit of wisdom); thus spoke the wise man in Wisdom 1; and in Wisdom 5 [he said] that the just shall live forever.<sup>8</sup>

[2] Accordingly, wisdom furnishes immortality—a fact that you will be able to pursue, in the following way, by means of a likeness to sight: The intellectual eye is to the sensory eye as a real object is to its likeness. None of the senses are more noble than is sight, even as no power of the soul is more noble than is the intellect. Sight lives from light and by means of it: for if light is removed, sight cannot see; and its seeing is its living. Likewise, whatever sight seeks comes to it by means of light. Wisdom is related in a similar way to the intellect.

Hence, the wise man says in Wisdom 7 that he esteemed wisdom in preference to light, since the light of wisdom cannot be put out;<sup>9</sup> for [wisdom] is the brightness of eternal light and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty and the image of His goodness.<sup>10</sup> [And he says] that together with wisdom there came to him likewise all goods.<sup>11</sup> And just as light that is pleasing to sight descends from the fount of perceptible light, viz., the sun, so wisdom [descends] from the Creator of the sun. Hence, the wise man says: "Send me wisdom that is seated by Your throne."<sup>12</sup> Just as without perceptible light sight is altogether without the activity of life and cannot arrive at the truth that it even has being,<sup>13</sup> so without immaterial, or intellectual, light the intellect cannot have the activity of life or cannot taste of life, for without the activity of its life—viz., [the activity of] understanding—the intellect cannot understand that it is alive. Wisdom is the light of truth. Just as what is visible is not seen without light, so truth [is not seen] by an intellect [that is] without wisdom. Sight says that nothing is comparable to light; for if in sight's purview all objects were visible, still without light they would be, for sight, as if they did not exist. A parallel point holds true for all intelligible objects in the absence of intellectual light.

The Word of God conveys truth to the believing soul; the Word is Wisdom; truth is the nourishing object. Similarly, light conveys color to sight, and color is the object that nourishes sight. Colors derive only from light; similarly, the truths about things are only from Eternal Wisdom, for Wisdom<sup>14</sup> is the Mother of all [truths] (Wisdom 7).<sup>15</sup> Truth is a perpetual food that remains forever—[a food] that is seen only by means of wisdom. Therefore, Wisdom enfolds within itself all that our spirit desires. And just as color in and of itself is light, so too truth, in and of itself, is Eternal Wisdom. Hence, light is the true nourishment of sight, and whatever nourishes sight is, in its origin, only light. And Wisdom is the true nourishment of the intellect; whatever nourishes the intellect is in its origin only Wisdom. Without light sight is in darkness in the distress of death; similarly, without intellectual light the intellect is said to be in darkness and in the distress of death.

[3] The Christian faith in the soul is like sight. But if a Christian is separated from God by sin (for our sins separate [us from God], as says the Prophet),<sup>16</sup> then his sight is in darkness. Unbelief is as blindness in the soul. Hence, a pagan without actual sin<sup>17</sup> does not suffer as much as does a Christian who is a sinner. For [the unbeliever] does not have sight but is as one who is born blind, who does not suffer from a longing for sight, which he has never had—as does the Christian [suf-

fer, who cannot see because of the darkness].

You have healthy sight; and so, you judge yourself to be, in comparison with the man born blind, rich. For you would not want to lack the power to see any given thing whatsoever; for you have experienced the pleasantness of sight's life and the delightfulness of light, and you cannot prefer to light any of the objects which you have ever seen. (Ecclesiasticus 11: "Light is sweet, and to see the sun is delightful to the eyes.")<sup>18</sup> Similarly, he who has tasted of wisdom with his intellect knows that wisdom surpasses all that can be understood; and he knows that to understand wisdom is, for the intellect, supreme delight and immortal life. No man is found who would choose to lack intellect in exchange for all the things of the world. And because without wisdom an intellect is not a living intellect, an intellect cannot be happy without wisdom. Wisdom alone is the life that enlivens the [intellect]. Every man is satisfied with his [having] intellect, so that he can be made happy. But he seeks wisdom in order to be happy; for he who discards wisdom and learning is unhappy (Wisdom 3).<sup>19</sup> Wisdom is unitary; it makes happy every intellect [that possesses it, and] from it each intellect takes as much as satisfies it. By analogy, there is a unitary sun, whose light is sufficient for all eyes; and there is one Fountain<sup>20</sup> from which many who are thirsty drink as much as satisfies each of them. The Word of God, which speaks about itself in the Gospel, is the Father's Wisdom, which nourishes *qua* Living Bread, so that one who eats of it lives eternally.

[4] Moreover, we must consider (1) that Christ said "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed"<sup>21</sup> and (2) that elsewhere there is said: "She fed him with the bread of life and of understanding; and with the water of wholesome wisdom she gave him drink."<sup>22</sup> For all the ways of feeding our bodies ought to be understood spiritually with regard to the feeding of souls. For all these [Scriptural] words [about taking nourishment] are spirit and life if they are understood in a spiritual sense. Hence, whatever refects the body—whether meat or bread or honey or blood or wine or water—is said to be the word of God if [the signification] is applied figuratively to the refection of the rational soul. For Truth says that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.<sup>23</sup> [Both] material bread and the word of God feed a man, who consists of a body and a rational soul. The Word of the Lord is the Lord's wisdom. Thus, the wise man says in Wisdom 9: "O God of our fathers and Lord of many mercies, [You are the One] who has perfected all things by means of



Your word; and by Your wisdom You have appointed man.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, by the word of God, i.e., by His wisdom, there is nourished the part [of us that is] capable of receiving wisdom, viz., the rational soul. Now, Christ is an Envoy, who spoke not His own word but the word of God. And because He *is* the Word of God, He is also our soul’s Living Bread and the Image of God-the-Father’s Goodness.

[5] The wise man teaches us that we ought to seek to obtain wisdom. He states in Wisdom 6: “The beginning of wisdom is a very real desire for learning. The care, then, of learning is love; and love is the keeping of wisdom’s laws. And the keeping of her laws is the firm foundation of incorruption, and incorruption brings [one] near to God. Therefore, the desire for wisdom brings [one] to the everlasting kingdom.”<sup>25</sup> Thereafter, in Chapter 7, he says (1) that he desired wisdom so fervently that he esteemed all else, in comparison to it, to be as nothing and (2) that he loved wisdom more than health and comeliness and (3) that he purposed to have wisdom instead of light.<sup>26</sup> And he called unto God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon him.<sup>27</sup> And then together with wisdom there likewise came all goods, although he did not know that wisdom is the Mother of all [goods]<sup>28</sup> For wisdom’s treasure is infinite; those who have availed themselves of this treasure have become partakers of God’s friendship.<sup>29</sup> From these [texts] we are taught how it is that one comes to wisdom, which is not obtained except by the gift of God. Furthermore, [we are taught] that God gives wisdom only to one who seeks it with utmost desire and that such desire can be present in a man only if he desires wisdom’s learning and only if he loves wisdom and keeps wisdom’s laws. Moreover, [we are taught] that observance of [wisdom’s] laws keeps the soul from corruption so that the soul may be fit for receiving wisdom. For [wisdom] will not enter a soul that has evil intent, as says Wisdom 1. And he who keeps her laws and loves her more than health and beauty, or comeliness—unto him she descends, once invoked. For, as [the wise man] says in Wisdom 6, “she is readily seen by those who love her, and she is found by those who seek her.”<sup>30</sup>

[6] Furthermore, we must consider the fact that St. Dionysius, in his *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, speaks of this sacrament [of the Eucharist]. And he calls it both the sacrament of *communion* (i.e., *synaxeos*) and the *consummate sacrament*. It is called the sacrament of communion because it is a fellowship, a communing, a gathering. For, as he says, “every sacrament is instituted to the end that it gather our

lives (which are splintered in many directions) into that unitary state in which we are joined to God. And by means of that divine gathering of our divided affairs God bestows on us [that gift] of His which is truly one: [viz.] undivided fellowship and oneness. And so, we say that other sacramental signs by which fellowship of this [kind] is bestowed on us are, assuredly, made perfect by means of divine and consummate gifts.”<sup>31</sup> And after many [other statements the wise man] adds (1) how it is that this sacrament is conducted and (2) that one bread broken by the priest is distributed to many, so that many are gathered into unity with, and fellowship with, the Body of Christ. Something similar is the case with the one chalice, which is distributed to each [partaker]. (On this topic see that very divine teacher.)<sup>32</sup> And you will find this sacrament of communion to be a sacrament *because* it makes us members of unitary Jesus, if only we abide by His teaching and imitate His life. Hence, this is the sacrament of the mystical Body of Christ, which was freed from the power of the Prince of this world<sup>33</sup> and which put on Heavenly comeliness in order to obtain an incorruptible life.

The Word of God, who assumed our nature, nourishes us if we arrive at participation in His mystical Body, of which this [eucharist] is the sacrament. For so great is the power of the Word of God’s union with the humanity of Jesus<sup>34</sup> that it can admit all Christians to participation and partnership and can unite them to itself. And the ones capable of [this] union are believers who have faith [in-]formed by love.<sup>35</sup> For Christ prayed that just as His humanity was united to God, so too [we who are] His own would remain united to Him, so that all believers might be one with Him and so that this [togetherness might occur] by means of a consummate and very perfect union.

[7] Now, this is a sacrament<sup>36</sup> of consummate union with respect to eternally enlivening life. In the foregoing regard, note the conclusion of the mass, which indicates that this temporal reception of the sacrament prefigures that eternal [reception]. And if you consider the matter more deeply, [you will see that] the passing from this world to eternal life is a passing from faith to sight. For faith is a symbolical beholding of [that] vision which [in Heaven] occurs in truth and face-to-Face. And so, it is evident that this [sacrament of the eucharist] is the sacrament of sacraments and that with respect to it there is consummation of faith. For by means of it the future life, which is signified by all the sacraments, is received, although [this reception] is not apparent as long as the soul is present in [this] mortal body. Wherefore, Christ said that the one into whom He is incorporated by faith does not

die. This incorporation is expressed [symbolically] by the eating [of the eucharistic bread]. Indeed, Christ says that the [partaker] lives even if he has died and that he passes, in the course of temporal death, from death unto life. For faith is potentiality; seeing is actuality. Faith is of this present world; actuality is of the future world. And in the actuality there will be found only that which was present in potentiality.

Faith is received in the soul by means of the word,<sup>37</sup> and it *conveys* by causing the intellective soul to pass from death unto life. The death of the intellect is ignorance, since for the intellect to be alive is for it to understand. For when the word of wisdom enters the intellect, it causes the intellect to pass from ignorance to wisdom, from death unto life, and it slays ignorance in order that in the intellect there may live only wisdom, imparted by the word of wisdom. This wisdom is life that remains, for wisdom does not die by virtue of the body's death (as not only our saints teach but also Plato, in the *Phaedo*, and other philosophers). Similarly, faith—which holds that the word that is received is God the Father's word, as uttered by the Son—causes the soul to pass from an ignorance of God unto God's wisdom. And so, faith puts to death those things which are of the flesh and are of an ignorance of God; and it conveys the sensual life unto its own spiritual life.

[8] Most sweet Jesus, I—a humble sinner who am present on this holy [eucharistic] feast-day on which is celebrated the remembrance of the mystery [*sacramentum*] of our enlivenment—contemplate how it is that nothing can be more desirable than life. I call *true life* [life] which is not without gladness. We supremely love (*diligimus*) true life, which life can be called love (*caritas*). For what is more lovable than love [*amor*]?<sup>38</sup> If, then, life is loved above all [other] things, it is assuredly lovable above all [other] things. Hence, a life that is not lovable above all [other] things is not loved. Therefore, the life that is lovable above all [other] things is a life full of gladness. For true gladness-of-life is always and forever lovable. Now, if someone were to ask me whether I would prefer not to live rather than to live with the life by which irrational animals live, I would sooner choose not to live. For such a life is not the life of a rational spirit. And so, [a rational spirit] does not deem life that is without reason to be true life. Therefore, I desire only a perpetual rational, or intellectual, life.

But how can a rational, immortal life be given to me unless I am fed? For I see that nothing can live delightedly unless it is fed. For that which does not have from itself its *being* cannot from itself have the

fact *that it is conserved in being*. My rational life does not have from itself the fact that it exists, for it is neither infinity nor eternity.<sup>39</sup> For if it were infinite, it would not have received an increase. But I was once a child in understanding, and my use of reason increased. Because I know that I have [the power of] reason, I am aware that I have free will and great desire but little power. (Reason does not have from itself the fact that it exists, for how could it have given to itself *being*?) Therefore, O my God, my rational spirit was created only in accordance with the will of Your omnipotence. Therefore, my rational life must be nourished by You, my God, from whom it has the fact that it is life.

[9] But what reflects the rational life except intellectual food, which is undiminishing Wisdom, viz., that Word which has called my spirit into being? Therefore, that Word is Infinite Reason; it has called my reason from nothing into rational being. Therefore, only Wisdom—through which I am that which I am—can conserve my reason from all corruption and death. So when You, O Wisdom, call me in order that I may live, You speak in me. And when, in order to discern the voice, or word, I turn toward the one who is calling me: I am turning toward my Life, and I am nourished by Enlivening Wisdom. For what is it to see Creating Wisdom speaking in the intellect except to apprehend within oneself the Fount of Life by means of a tasting of unspeakable sweetness? O Lord, just as by means of Wisdom<sup>40</sup> You have called all rational spirits into being, so You call and speak to them all so that they may live. One Word speaks to them all and calls them to partnership with that Eternal Wisdom, through which they have that which they are. And those who hearken (to the one who calls) turn, so that they all discern that Word which speaks unto them. Therefore, all [those] rational spirits hear one Word, and they turn toward seeing and apprehending the Fount of Life.

[10] O Most Sweet Jesus, You have taken on my nature in order that I, who have not heard You speaking Your word and wisdom in Heaven, might hear you on earth and might see that in Heaven You are calling to me on earth. I was unable to hear the word<sup>41</sup> of God in this world, which does not apprehend truth. But the Word of God *is* Truth. The Word put on the passible human nature of this world in order to summon me and in order that I could hear the word of God in the voice of a man. Now, You, O God, are not able to be seen in this world. And so, You declared to me by means of Your word that if here below I will

hearken to Your word, I shall in Heaven, where Truth reigns, truly apprehend You and see You. But this seeing is nothing but a tasting within oneself of Uncreated Wisdom, which alone is Enlivening Life. Therefore, a man who arrives at seeing within himself the Word of God will be Your partner. One-who-believes-You will discover this fact because by the Father You were sent as one declaring and preaching what is true. And no one who trusts in God will be able to be deceived. You have left us this sacrament as a memorial of this promise—viz., [the promise] that one who believes You and follows You will arrive at partnership with You. By means of this sacrament we come into partnership with You. We believe that You, who are one, are partakable by many. By faith we see—beneath the perceptible signs—the nourishment for our rational life, and by faith we consume the food of eternal life. We know that faith is, in this world, that which seeing will be in the next world; for truth that is the object of faith and truth that is the object of the seeing are a single Truth. Here below [that single Truth] is obscured by sensory signs; in Heaven it is bright and face-to-Face. To You be praise and glory forever.

[11] Moreover, I say that this sacrament is a new testament through which the covenants of peace between God and man are confirmed. In this regard we must note that Hermes Trismegistus<sup>42</sup> writes that by man a spirit is bound to a graven image and inhabits it. And he says that the Egyptians discovered that art, and he maintains to be very highly wondrous the fact that man makes gods for himself. Eusebius, in Book 5 of his *Preparations for the Gospel*,<sup>43</sup> addresses here and there the topic of this encapturing. Surely, it was done by faith. Likewise, similar things are done by means of certain incantations that magicians believe in. For by faith a magician is strengthened in his own spirit with power over the created spirit that he commands. Analogously, through words an enchanter commands the soul of a serpent; and since the serpent knows that it must obey the command of the enchanter if it hears his words, it stops up its ears in order not to hear—as the Prophet David says.<sup>44</sup> [It happens,] then, [that] by faith the spirit of a man prevails over the spirit, and prince, of the air,<sup>45</sup> so that it binds that spirit with respect to a material object—[binds it] by virtue of the fact that the man submits himself to that spirit as to a god, and the spirit does not do its own will but does the will of the man. For the spirit obeys in order thereby to possess him whom the spirit is seen to obey and in order to receive honors as a god. In that case, it is evident that if an evil and deceiving spirit is by faith thus summonable, then an

enlivening spirit is by faith more (and more truly) summonable into our spirit than is a slaying spirit. The enlivening spirit lives and speaks in us, [and] the spirit of our soul will cling to it more strongly than a graven image [clings to] an evil spirit.

[12] Moreover, this union [of our spirit with God] occurs by means of an evoking, or invoking, when we abide by the art handed down by Christ, viz., the pacts and the observances of His commandments [and] a love also of purity. Magicians who wish to summon a spirit to instruct them enter into a covenant with the spirit by means of certain pacts (as in Judges 8, where they struck an agreement with Baal),<sup>46</sup> and they abide by the precepts of that spirit, and they do not transgress the physical purifications, the ceremonies, and the regulations—on the grounds that these are things sacramental. Thus, we are taught throughout the entire course of the Bible (1) that God is summoned by certain covenants and pacts and (2) that as long as these covenants, ceremonies, and sacred [regulations] were observed, God kept His word and, when invoked, was present and hearkened. But when [the people] did not keep the covenants, the Spirit of God turned away from them—as [we read] in Deuteronomy 29 and in many passages of the Bible and throughout almost all of the Prophets. After these [goings on] Jesus, the Son of God, came. He taught us that we can call forth unto ourselves an abiding and eternally enlivening Spirit. And He gave us, by His word and example, precepts and the manner in which this [summoning] can be done. Thus, if we have faith-of-attaining such as He had it,<sup>47</sup> and if we do as He taught and did, then without doubt we shall obtain such an indwelling Spirit.

[13] Furthermore, consider the fact that the covenants, pacts, promises, and oaths concerned a certain unnamed contract: “I give [this] in order that you give [that]”; “I do [this] in order that you do [that].” And [these contracts] had to do with the goods of this perceptible world. For all worship of the gods or of the God of gods was brought under a pact, so that by reason of the worship men obtained the goods of the earth. Hence, the worship consisted in certain sacred objects that were material because material things were expected in return (as is shown by the pacts between God and Abraham (in Genesis 17) and by other, later, pacts made [by God] with Abraham’s seed [and] written about throughout the whole of the Old Testament). Christ alone, when He came, declared that God is Spirit and that He is to be worshiped in spirit.<sup>48</sup> Hence, He disclosed the meaning of the Scrip-

tures and a spiritual understanding [of them]. And He instituted spiritual worship and promised a spiritual reward, viz., eternal life, which is given to our spirit by the Spirit that is God. And Christ preached that the Kingdom of Heaven is not of this world. For He taught that man can, by undoubted faith, arrive at all that his spirit desires, so that faith prepares our spirit's capability of receiving God's Spirit.

[14] Therefore, God's promise, revealed by Jesus, is that by faith believers obtain the blessing that was on Abraham and obtain [God's] Spirit (Galatians 3).<sup>49</sup> And these [gifts result] from God's legacy, in which we are called unto an inheritance and, hence, unto sonship, because a son is an heir. And [all of] this [occurs] through Jesus, the Son [of God]. John 1: "But as many as received Him" (viz., Jesus, who is also the Word of God—i.e., whoever receives God's word,<sup>50</sup> preached by God's Son, Jesus), "to them God gave the power to become His sons (viz., God's sons) if they believe in Him."<sup>51</sup> Therefore, he who believes that the man Jesus is the Son of God has faith that a man can be a son of God and that he himself, since he is a man, can obtain sonship with God.

But as for a believer's obtaining that for which he hopes: [Christ] said that this [obtaining] comes about through love; for love on the part of such a believer occasions the Spirit-of-God's descending upon the zealous soul. Now, faith ought to be consummate faith;<sup>52</sup> and, likewise, love [ought to be consummate love]—as ought also love for one's neighbor, [a loving that reaches] to the extent that it does good to one who does injury [to it]. [This love of neighbor] is to the end that it may merit to possess the Spirit of the Father,<sup>53</sup> even as Christ possessed this Spirit, which is the Spirit of spirits and which is consummate virtue. (Colossians 1: "It was pleasing [to the Father] that in Him [viz., Christ] all fullness of the Godhead dwell.")<sup>54</sup>

About the immediately foregoing [topics I will speak] at another time. But, [for now], keep [the following] in mind: When a fleshly man becomes regenerated in spirit (and [this transformation] happens on the basis of that spiritual law which is consummate law), then through renunciations and through covenants [made] through the intermediary of a priest, acting as Christ's representative, [the regenerate man] makes a contract with God. And in the sacrament of baptism this faith and these pacts are accepted, so that if the baptized individual abides by the pacts, he obtains the promise: viz., "Where I am, there will be also my servant."<sup>55</sup>

[15] But [in Scripture] we find, first of all, God's revelation. Next, we find that mediator (between God and men) to whom the revelation was made for the purpose of making a contract and covenants. Next, we find signs of the pacts and of the covenant. For example, God first manifested Himself to Abraham (Genesis 17), saying: "I am God Almighty. Walk before me, and be perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly."<sup>56</sup> And a sign of the pact, viz., circumcision, is added in the same text. Hence, the pact was that (1) God would be the God of Abraham, and (2) Abraham would have Him as His God and would worship Him and (3) would carry the sign of this pact (viz., circumcision) in his flesh. Abraham and his seed [would keep this pact], under penalty of death [for not keeping it]. Behold, the penalty of not keeping the pact between God and Abraham and his seed was the penalty of death! Abraham believed that the one who spoke to him was God; and so, he believed Him and received revelation. And he was made a mediator between God and his whole household and family, since [these latter] entered into that covenant and all the males were circumcised. In this way Moses received revelation and was made a mediator between God and the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 5).<sup>57</sup> So, too, Christ is the Mediator between God and men, as Paul says<sup>58</sup>—[the Mediator] not of a single people but of all [peoples].

[16] The Tables of the pact between God and the people—the pact made by means of Moses [and] about which things [we read] in Deuteronomy 9—are in the ten commandments, or ten articles, that are written on the Tables. And the writing is called the old testament and also the instrument of the pact. In that contract there was introduced into the written pact that which was natural. For *reason*, from itself, has all the [same] articles, with the exception of the commandment about the sabbath day.<sup>59</sup> And because the law of nature was neglected and was effaced through abuse (for men followed their lustful passions and by sensual motion were led in accordance with the desires of the flesh), it was renewed through the Tables and introduced into the explicit pact.

To Abraham it was commanded that he walk before God and be perfect. And in these few words are enfolded the laws of nature; for [the command] to walk [uprightly] before God, and in this respect to be perfect, contains everything. For he who walks before God and is perfect is moved by reason and does not deviate from it. He knows that God (who declared that He is the Almighty) is one God, that He is to



be believed and worshiped, and that to another individual there is not to be done that which one would not want done to himself.<sup>60</sup> These things—which were of the law of nature—were incumbent on Abraham and his seed on the basis of the pact. However, the pact added a special obligation, [assumed] by choice, which was free. And because of the pact [choice] was restricted to an observance of the law of nature, so that it would no longer use its freedom-of-transgressing. And [the requirement of] circumcision was put into the pact as a sacred sign of the foregoing professing [of God on Abraham's part].

Now, Moses received nothing but this same [covenant]; yet, [he received it] explicitly in the Tables of the pact.<sup>61</sup> And [the requirement concerning] the sabbath is seen to have been added as a sacred sign of that pact, as Ezekiel 20 [states]: "I gave them my sabbaths as a sign between me and them."<sup>62</sup> Hence, Moses himself and the prophets after him caution that the observance of the sabbath is in every respect to be kept. Thus, circumcision and sabbath-[keeping] are seen to have been instituted as a confirming sign of the pacts between God and Abraham's seed.

[17] Now, Christ the Mediator between God and men, affirmed that the pacts between God and man exist in the way in which Abraham and Moses [attest]. But through Christ a spiritual understanding was made manifest. In this respect He became the Mediator of a new testament. For God willed that all the pacts-of-nature—which were unwritten but which were renewed in the Tables [given to Moses]—be received with a spiritual understanding. This understanding is an enlivening spirit and a word of God that nourishes [our] soul with perpetual life. Hence, the sacred sign of this new testament, or new pact, is seen to be the eucharist. For Jesus says: "This chalice is the new testament in my blood."<sup>63</sup> For in this sacrament the Word of God is *by faith* taken into our nature as a way of nourishing our rational soul, even as after death the Word of God is expected [to be apprehended] in person. Therefore, the covenant of the new testament is between the soul and the Word of God. It was not a different covenant from<sup>64</sup> the covenant between God and Abraham (and his seed), but it was concealed. For in the motion of the sensual nature and in the promise of happiness from temporal things there was concealed and veiled the motion above nature and the promise of an eternal, supra-temporal, happiness—even as in the corruptible writing of the Tables there was concealed<sup>65</sup> the incorruptible spirit-of-understanding of God's word, [a spirit] which no one can investigate on his own [or] without that

Teacher in whom the Word of God is present.

Accordingly, we must believe of Jesus that He is the Word of God, or Son of God. For he who does not believe the Son will not see eternal life (John 3).<sup>66</sup> For the Son is the Mediator of a better testament, of a new testament (Galatians 3 and Hebrew 8 & 9 & 12)<sup>67</sup>—the Mediator, i.e., between God and man. [He is the Mediator] by means of the covenant by which the soul believes that He has the words of eternal life.<sup>68</sup> The soul which receives this [covenant] as the word of God obtains all perfection—I mean the soul which receives it in the way in which someone very hungry [receives] very tasty food with respect to which he does not doubt that he will have life and gladness. The sacrament of this covenant is the eucharist, which was instituted in memory of the Mediator and of the covenant, when our Teacher and Mediator said (as the Apostle Paul tells us): “Do this in memory of me.”<sup>69</sup>

[18] Consider how it is that God gave to our intellectual nature two gifts: viz., the ability to hear about his glory and the ability to see it. The ability to hear about his glory befits us insofar as we are inhabitants of this world, where darkness reigns and where we are as far distant from God as Heaven [is distant] from the earth—[where we are] in a region far from the Kingdom of the glory of Light and Truth. To-be-able-to-see befits us insofar as we are approaching Heaven and are translated from earth unto Heaven, i.e., translated from this world unto the Kingdom of Glory. But because the ability to hear about the Kingdom of God is in us, then—because that which we hear is a word—we can hear a word about the Kingdom. But only God can speak to us about His Kingdom, which is known only to Himself,<sup>70</sup> since no one else knows the glory of His Kingdom except Him who is His own glory. (Similarly, no one knows what is in a man except the man himself and one to whom he discloses it.) Therefore, God gave us the ability to believe. For unless we had the ability to believe the word of God, we would not be able, through hearing, to apprehend His glory. Therefore, without faith [on our part] nothing of God’s invisible glory could be revealed to us. Accordingly, God gave our intellect the ability to believe, in order that by means of belief the intellect might, through our hearing, apprehend the revelation.

[19] Now, one-who-is-unwilling-to does not believe; rather, only he-who-is-willing-to [believes]; moreover, the will is free. Therefore, it is in our power to be able to believe or not. So when we choose to believe, we submit ourselves to the word—[doing so] in the

case both of the intellect (which we reduce to servitude) and of the will. Therefore, to believe is (as Augustine states in *On the Predestination of the Saints*)<sup>71</sup> to think with assent. For in believing, the intellectual eye assents to the ears; i.e., sight assents to hearing. By analogy, in a true relation with a beauty that is not seen, I think of the beauty with assent. But it seems that believing is not simply a hearing or a seeing on the part of the mind. Rather, it is inferior to sight and superior to hearing. For we do not assent to all that we hear; nor do we see everything to which we assent. Instead, when we believe things that we have heard, we assent to things that we have not seen.<sup>72</sup>

And note that only by faith was glory able to be revealed to our intellectual nature, which is incapable of having a vision of the glory. Hence, every intellect, if it has something of the light of reason, is able to believe. For *acute* sight is not required for this [believing]; rather, a *modicum* of [sight] suffices. And so, those individuals who are simple are suited for [the act of] believing, for they have more ready hearing [but less acute sight]. (We experience in ourselves that those who are more focussed on seeing are less fit for hearing, and vice versa. But it is necessary that every student first of all listen attentively; next, he must consider attentively the things he has heard—in order, lastly, to view in himself the truth of what he has heard. He who altogether lacks the light of reason cannot believe, because he cannot think and assent.) Therefore, to small children and to the simple-minded—who are more suited for believing than are the wise and knowing ones of this world—are revealed those things which are of the Kingdom of God. But [these things] remain hidden to the wise, as Jesus says.<sup>73</sup> Hence, in order that the revelation be apprehended, a man must become as a little child,<sup>74</sup> and one who is wise must become as one who is foolish.<sup>75</sup> That is, it is necessary that he deem all knowledge by which he presumes to know something about the Kingdom of God to be foolishness. (For there has never entered into the mind of man anything like the Kingdom of God.)<sup>76</sup> And at this point, the man submits himself to the Kingdom of God, in order to apprehend.

[20] The word of God is His Omnipotent Word, of which Moses and all the prophets spoke and wrote.<sup>77</sup> For what else is found in all of holy Scripture other than the power of God's word? For all the holy writers and prophets attested that the word of God is that through which God works all things; and they acknowledge that they are messengers of the word for the sake of revealing it to the people that was called unto a vision of God—a people named Israel. But Jesus is the

Messenger, or Envoy, of God. In Him is the word of the Father; in all other messengers there is the word that comes from the Word of God. [These] other messengers and prophets spoke in conformity with what they heard; for none of them saw God in the way that the Only Begotten [Son] revealed Him. But Jesus [spoke] in conformity with what He saw. Therefore, all the other prophets give testimony of the greatest Prophet, Jesus, that His word is the word of the Father. (For “prophet” means “one who sees.”) Among the prophets one is greater than another. Therefore, we were bound to arrive at one who is the greatest of the prophets (whom Moses foretold that God would raise up). For in all things that admit of more and less we come to a maximum.<sup>78</sup> But Jesus, the highest of the prophets, spoke of the things that He saw of the Kingdom of God; [He spoke] not through revelation (as did the others) but through Himself [i.e., through direct knowledge]. But the others, who [spoke] by means of revelation, [spoke] only by revelation on the part of the Word of God that dwelt bodily in Jesus. Therefore, through the Incarnate Word, who is named Jesus, they were all appointed to be prophets. Therefore, let us praise the marvelous graciousness of God, who gave us the ability to believe that His Word put on a human nature in order to preach to us of His Kingdom and [in order]<sup>79</sup> that we might be able to apprehend this Word within ourselves and in this way obtain the happiness [*felicitas*] that comes from seeing.

[21] Hence, since happiness (*felicitas*) is only a grace that is added to nature—[a grace] that was not known and that was preached by Jesus and His apostles<sup>80</sup>— it is evident that the philosophers were deficient in [their understanding of] happiness. Nevertheless, it can seem to someone that Aristotle [rightly] touched a bit upon [this notion] in Book 10 of the *Ethics*, where he said that the happy life is higher than the human life. As he says:<sup>81</sup>

It is not the case that a man *qua* man will live [happily]; rather, [he will live happily] insofar as something divine is present in him. And the more this [divine state] differs from something composite, the more this activity [viz., happiness] differs from that activity which accords with another virtue. Therefore, if mind is something divine in relation to man, then the life that accords with mind is divine in comparison with [purely] human life.

These things Aristotle [says]. And *there* he seems to mean that the activity in accordance with mind is a most joyous happiness. This [activity] is contemplation, with respect to which we are like God.

Now, he calls this [contemplating] mind *divine*, *immortal*, and *incorruptible*; it excels, in value and in virtue, whatever things are of man. It is true that Aristotle speaks of other *virtues* that accord with what is composite and that he speaks also of another *happiness* that accords with what is composite. And he says that all these virtues (except for the mind's virtue, viz., contemplation) accord with man and with what is composite. But he speaks of another happiness that accords with mind and with separation [from the body]; in that passage he understands happiness to accord with the activity-of-mind that is contemplation. Now, he understands (1) that our mind is divine with respect to our other [properties] and (2) that our mind has a distinct and natural activity, viz., contemplating, and (3) that our mind, by means of its natural functioning (viz., its very joyous contemplating), obtains ultimate happiness.

In this [latter regard Aristotle] errs. For just as it is delightful to see light with the sensory eye but, nevertheless, light cannot be seen except by means of its ray's entering into sight that is strong and capable (by means of which power-of-sight it is seen): so also Absolute Truth, which is Infinite Light, is not contemplatable apart from the Light of its glory. Hence, since happiness is a perfect [state], and since all the things that belong to [the state of] happiness are perfect (as Aristotle himself admits in that passage), then there is no happiness without perfect contemplation of Truth. But that Light will be seen perfectly only by means of its own light. And this light of its glory is given, by grace, to a mind capable of receiving it.

How our mind becomes capable of receiving this grace, and how our mind can obtain it, we know from the revelation of Jesus, our Teacher.

## NOTES TO *Qui Manducat Hunc Panem*

\* Sermon CLXXXIX.

1. John 6:59.

2. This was a feast-day of the eucharist.

3. John 6:48.

4. I Timothy 6:16.

5. John 6:48.

6. John 1:14.

7. I. e., in the books of Proverbs and of Wisdom.

8. Wisdom 1:15 and 5:16.

9. Wisdom 7:10.

10. Wisdom 7:26.

11. Wisdom 7:11.

12. Wisdom 9:4.

13. Here (at 2:21) I am *not* following the editors of the Latin text in adding “nec”. Nicholas is distinguishing between a thing’s existing and its both existing and living. (Stones, for example, exist but do not live.) A man may have sight but not be able actually to see because there is darkness. In that case, his power of sight exists, or has being, but is not active, is not “alive”—to use Nicholas’s terminology.

14. Cf. n. 5 of Notes to Sermon CLXXXVII. See also n. 40 below and n. 51 of Notes to Sermon CLXXXIII.

15. Wisdom 7:12.

16. Isaias (Isaiah) 59:2.

17. Actual sin is distinguished from original sin. The former is personal sin; the latter relates to inheriting a sinful human nature. The comparison in the text above is purely hypothetical and rhetorical, since Nicholas does not believe that there is any human being (except for Christ and for infants) who has not sinned actually and personally. Indeed, an unbeliever’s unbelief is itself a sin, since it is a failure to acknowledge God as Creator and Redeemer. With regard to small children there may be a very brief time-span, maintains Nicholas, between the child’s reaching the age of accountability and his actually committing sin. See Sermon CXC (9:15-20).

18. Ecclesiastes 11:7 (not Ecclesiasticus, as Nicholas writes).

19. Wisdom 3:11.

20. Psalms 35:9-10 (36:8-9).

21. John 6:56.

22. Ecclesiasticus 15:3.

23. Matthew 4:4.

24. Wisdom 9:1-2.

25. Wisdom 6:18-21.

26. Wisdom 7:8-10).

27. Wisdom 7:7.

28. Wisdom 7:11-12.

29. Wisdom 7:14.

30. Wisdom 6:13.
31. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia (Dionysiaca, Vol. II, pp. 1162-1164)*.
32. *Loc. cit.*
33. "... the Prince of this world": viz., the Devil. John 12:31 & 14:30 & 16:11. The Resurrection freed Christ's Body from the Prince of this world. Acts 2:24-30.
34. N.B. Nicholas speaks of the Word of God's union with Jesus's humanity, not with universal humanity (i.e., not with human nature as such). When he speaks of one human nature in all men, he means one specific nature (i.e., one nature in species). See Sermon CCXXX (1 0:8-9): "... ut ... una natura specifica inveniatur in multis hominibus."
35. Galatians 5:6.
36. Here (at 7:1) I am reading, with the Paris edition, "sacramentum" in place of "sacramenti".
37. Romans 10:17: faith comes by hearing; and hearing, by the word of Christ.
38. Nicholas does not here distinguish between his use of "*caritas*" and his use of "*amor*". As often, he uses these words interchangeably.
39. See n. 2 of Notes to Sermon CLXXXVII and the text that it references.
40. Christ is the Wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:24) and is the Word through which God created all things (Colossians 1:16). Christ's word is supposed to dwell in believers in all wisdom (Colossians 3:16).
41. See the references in n. 14 above.
42. Hermes Trismegistus is an enigmatic figure who was sometimes regarded as a god, sometimes as the son, or grandson, of the Greek god Hermes. Not only was he sometimes regarded as a Greek but also sometimes as an Egyptian. Some stories make him a contemporary of Moses. In the Middle Ages a series of writings (the *Hermetica*) came to be grouped under his name. The best-known of these is perhaps the *Asclepius*. Trismegistus was known for his interest in magic. Nicholas may have borrowed from Augustine much of what is said in the passage above. See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, VIII, 23-24.
43. Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 269-340 A.D.) wrote *De Evangelica Praeparatione (Preparation for [Believing] the Gospel)*. Book V deals with beliefs in magic. See the translation by Edwin H. Gifford, *Eusebii Pamphili Evangelicae praeparationis libri XV* (Oxford, 1903).
44. Psalms 57:5 (58:4).
45. Ephesians 2:2.
46. Judges 8:33.
47. Here (at 1 2:24) I am reading, with the Paris edition, "eam" in place of "eum".
48. John 4:24.
49. Galatians 3:14.
50. See the references in n. 14 above.
51. John 1:12.
52. James 2:22.
53. According to Nicholas, however, believers do not have the Spirit of the

Father (i.e., the Holy Spirit) in the same way as does Christ, who, as Son of God, is He from whom (together with the Father) the Holy Spirit proceeds.

54. Colossians 1:19.
55. John 12:26.
56. Genesis 17:1-2.
57. Deuteronomy 5:4-5.
58. I Timothy 2:5.
59. Here Nicholas endorses the concept of there being a natural law. And he indicates clearly that the natural law is the law of reason (since by nature man is a rational animal).
60. Tobias 4:16.
61. Exodus 20.
62. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 20:12. Not (meant by Nicholas to be) an exact quotation.
63. Luke 22:20.
64. Here (at 1 7:17) I am supplying “quam”, which I regard as tacitly implied by “aliud”.
65. Here (at 1 7:23) I am reading, with the Paris edition, “occultabatur” in place of “occultatur”.
66. John 3:36.
67. Galatians 3:19-20. Hebrews 8:6 & 9:15 & 12:24.
68. John 6:69.
69. I Corinthians 11:24.
70. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 26 (8 8). What God is is known only to Himself. We “know” only symbolically what He is.
71. Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, II, 5 (PL 44:963).
72. Hebrews 11:1.
73. Matthew 11:25.
74. Matthew 18:2-3.
75. I Corinthians 3:19.
76. I Corinthians 2:9.
77. John 5:46.
78. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 6 (1 5).
79. Here (at 2 0:32) I am adding “ita” before “quod”.
80. John 13:17.
81. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 7 (1177<sup>b</sup>27-31).



**Erunt Primi Novissimi, et Novissimi Primi\***  
("The First Shall Be Last and the Last First.")<sup>1</sup>  
[February 6, 1452; preached in Louvain]

[1] "The first shall be last and the last first." Matthew 20 and in the Gospel-reading [for today].<sup>2</sup>

[2] Christ said to Peter that those who have left behind all things and have followed Him will in the renewal [of the world] be seated as judges. And their judgment will be that each one will receive according to his [proper] reward. And [Christ] said that a reward is what [each rightly] expects as compensation for leaving behind—for His sake—the things that are of this world. And so, one man has left behind a field; another, his father. And according to what he left behind he will receive [a reward] in corresponding measure; nonetheless, [the reward is] always one hundredfold.<sup>3</sup> And because everyone who has left something behind has left behind that which he possessed, he will receive—in place of the possession that he left behind in the sensory life—an eternal possession in the intellectual life in place of the temporal [possession].

[3] "And the last shall be first." For he who is last is at the rear. He who for Christ's sake is found in *this* world to be at the rear will *there*, in the renewal, be first. And so, the judgment of these [believers] is said to be that [each] one [of them] will receive—in proportion to what he has left behind—that which is eternal, in lieu of that which was temporal. And out of love directed toward Jesus he has come to leave behind, for Jesus's sake, his love for this world. Therefore, since he loves greatly, many sins are forgiven [him].<sup>4</sup> [4] And because Christ said that the last shall be first and the first last, He added an illustration—according as He says in the Gospel-passage that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner . . . , etc.<sup>5</sup> And consider the fact that Christ gives an example of this [teaching]—[an example] with respect to time. (In terms of time we understand [the notions of] *earlier* and *later*.) He offers as a lesson [the teaching] that lateness of time does not militate against [one's receiving] the compensatory reward, since the places [reserved] for the elect are not removed because of the multitude of those who are called—even as, among the elect, many who are later in time will be prior in terms of reward.

[5] Consider [Jesus's] illustration of those laboring in the vine-

yard—how it is that preachers and purifiers-of-the-Church who come at the last hour can deserve to be rewarded together with the first ones, who planted the vineyard. And this [arrangement holds true] even though it is not to their credit that they were among the first ones. [Jesus] compares with the first-comers these [late-comers], who have as an excuse for their lateness that they were not hired [earlier]. For no one is supposed to engage in cultivating a vineyard unless he is sent to cultivate it and is hired. And so, since<sup>6</sup> it is not his fault that he cultivates [the vineyard] less, the landowner cannot give him less of a wage. And in [not] doing so, [the owner] does no injury to the others, to whom he gives what is owed them by mutual agreement.

[6] We must take note of the fact that the Kingdom of Heaven is a reward. As God said to Abraham: “I will be your Reward.”<sup>7</sup> Now, Abraham is the father-of-faith for all believers who believe in God. As the Apostle James says: they, not wavering in faith, will receive that which they seek.<sup>8</sup> That which is desired will be received in accordance with the measure of faith and not in accordance with the expending of physical labor. But since God is the Reward of believers, God is seen to be likened, in the Gospel-passage, to the silver coin, [the denarius], that is given to them all. In the case of the denarius we pay attention only to its value; indeed, [the denarius] is an object-of-value that is stamped [with an insignia]. With this denarius we purchase eternal life; for in the Kingdom of Heaven there is only this currency. And whoever does not have it cannot enter into [the Kingdom] or purchase [eternal life].

[7] The number ten (*denarius*) is a number that enfolds within itself everything numerable.<sup>9</sup> The value of the denarius is the measure in terms of which the value of all things is assessed. The value of a horse, the value of corn, the value of wine are assessed in terms of the value of the denarius. The denarius is the implicit enfolding of number, weight, and measure.<sup>10</sup> The text [of the Gospel-passage] speaks of [a wage of one] denarius per day. The denarius per day has the value of the labors for a day. It is necessary to consider the wages in terms of that daily denarius that is asked for the labors.

Now, note closely that, [symbolically speaking], a denarius is given to us for conducting our own affairs. When we are created, we receive a nature that is able to receive impressions and that is an image of the Father’s omnipotence. When we are regenerated in Christ, we receive the imprint of Christ—the image, that is, of Christ. When we

are called, we receive [His] inscription. And, accordingly, we are from the beginning a malleable and teachable nature.

[8] Hence, we are as gold with respect to our intellectual and incorruptible spirit. And we are gold that is alive with an intellectual life—[gold] that can conform itself to all things. (By analogy, if a piece of wax were alive with an intellectual life, it would conform itself to the letters and shapes of things. But because [the wax] is not alive in this way, it is brought into this [state of conformity] by means of a man's outer-directed intellect.) We have this nature from the Omnipotent Artisan, who is all in all.<sup>11</sup> He gives us His own living image in accordance with which we cannot *form* all things, as can He, but can [only] *liken* ourselves, and *conform* ourselves, to all things. Yet, the power-of-likening is oriented only toward the power-of-forming, because the power-of-likening is such insofar as it is a power-of-forming. Thus, the power-of-likening comes to rest only in the power-of-forming.

[9] Moreover, from the [Gospel-]text there can be inferred that we too are hired early in the morning and are likewise sent into the vineyard of this world. Thereafter, this nature of ours arrives at the third [hour of the day] when the sun is then higher. The sun shines upon our power and upon the idleness that accords with our nature when we do not act in conformity with that nature. And thereupon we are brought into the state of putting forth intellectual efforts by means of that power. And [this stage of development] can be called the time when discernment begins to appear. And subsequently, as children who are placed in schools, we begin to make progress in grammar. And there begins to appear in us a rational power. And at the sixth hour [we come to possess] higher mental skills such as logical reasoning. And at the ninth hour [we arrive at] philosophical reasoning and at the eleventh hour [we come to] theological reasoning.

[10] Likewise, “early morning” [refers] to the first period of time, from after [the birth of] Adam down to the Flood. The “third [hour]” [refers to the subsequent period] down to Abraham. The “sixth [hour]” and the “ninth [hour]” [refer to the period] from Moses, through the Prophets, down to Christ. “Evening” [refers to the period] from Christ down to Christ's second coming. Furthermore, consider the fact that “early morning” can refer to the sensory power; the “third [hour],” to the imaginative power; the “sixth [hour],” to the rational power; the ‘ninth [hour],’ to the intellectual power; and “evening,” to

the intellectible (or divine) power. Or again: “first [hour]” can be said of creation; “third [hour]” of re-creation in Christ; “sixth [hour]” and “ninth [hour]” and “evening,” of progressive works of supererogation.

First you are a human being; secondly, a Christian. Then you are called to this or that [vocation]. (For example, you are a farmer or a vineyard-keeper, or [you are called] to doing something else). [You are called] in order that you not be idle or in order that you be a member of a religious order. [Etc.] [11] Moreover, it can be said that first you are something gold; next you are something minted; then you are something inscribed. For a denarius is valid and true [currency] if it has all these [three] features: viz., true gold, a true image, and a true inscription. Now, God is the Truth of the [human] denarius. A denarius that is a true denarius in accordance with the nature of incorruptible gold is from the Truth that is the Father. With respect to the image [the denarius is] from the Son, who forms all things. With respect to its “roundness” [the human denarius is] from the Holy Spirit, who contains all things within His eternity; for the Spirit is that which contains all things.

[12] Note that God can be considered to be the Worth of all things that have any worth. In this way He is a Reward and is as the Value of money. Next, God gives to his servants a denarius each day; to some of them, because He wills to,<sup>12</sup> [He gives an equal amount, though they have come later], etc. And in His Kingdom only that money has value [as currency]. With that money each person in the Kingdom can live and can purchase an inheritance of the Kingdom— [an inheritance] that is [constituted by] the King’s love [for him] and the King’s grace [toward him].

And at this point [in our reflection] we must rightly consider the fact that individual [members of the Kingdom] receive individual denarii as concerns what is basically essential. However, individuals differ [from one another] as one star differs from another star in its accidental features, etc.

**NOTES TO *Erunt Primi Novissimi, et Novissimi Primi***

- \* Sermon CXVIII.
- 1. Matthew 19:30.
- 2. See Matthew 20:16. Nicholas, however, actually quotes from Matthew 19:30.
- 3. Matthew 19:29.
- 4. Cf. Luke 7:47.
- 5. Matthew 20:1: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." Etc.
- 6. Here (at 5:10) the microfilm of ms. V<sub>2</sub> reads illegibly. I am surmising "ideo cum" in place of "conductus".
- 7. Genesis 15:1.
- 8. James 1:5-6.
- 9. See *De Docta Ignorantia* II, 6 (123). The Latin word "denarius" can signify either the number ten or the Roman coin that originally had a value of ten denarii. Nicholas here trades upon this double signification.
- 10. Wisdom 11:21.
- 11. I Corinthians 15:28. Cf. Colossians 3:11.
- 12. Matthew 20:15.

**Ubi Venit Plenitudo Temporis\***  
("When the Fullness of Time Was Come ...")<sup>1</sup>  
[December 29, 1454; preached at Innsbruck]

[1] "When the Fullness of time was come, God sent His Son."

Paul disclosed to the Galatians the true liberty that we have from the gospel and from faith in Christ. He declared that Christians are not under obligation with respect to the legalisms that are contained in the Law and with respect to ceremonies and circumcision and the other things. For faith justifies. But in this fourth chapter Paul inserts the likeness that was read in today's office: "As long as the heir is a child ...," etc.<sup>2</sup> [Thereby] he wanted to say that in our predecessors (viz., in the believing sons of Abraham) we were as children, although we were heirs. And in that condition there is no difference between heir and servant, even though [the former] is lord of all. For such an heir is under tutors and guardians until the time prescribed by the father. Similarly, when we were children we were serving under the elements of this world.<sup>3</sup> Hence, [Paul] calls ceremonial things "the elements of this world."

[2] Elsewhere [Paul] speaks as if at the time of the Law we were under a pedagogue.<sup>4</sup> For a pedagogue is assigned to a child in order to guide him in learning. And the lad does not know where he is being led or why; but, like a captive, he obeys out of fear of punishment. And [Paul] says that [the son] serves the elements, which are, as it were, starting points, or "the letter." For elsewhere [Paul] says that the letter kills but that the spirit enlivens.<sup>5</sup> And *that* is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament; for the New Testament understands [that which the Old Testament does not]. And so, to act in accordance with one's understanding is to be at liberty. Someone who does those things which his intellect tells him ought to be done cannot say that he serves as a servant. But he who is compelled to keep the Law out of fear of punishment fulfills the Law in a servile way out of fear and out of forced obedience. (He does not understand this Law, because in those things which he does there are certain secret aspects and aspects hidden from the intellectual eyes. These aspects are revealed at the appropriate time; but at first they are known only obscurely.) By comparison, a child who is subject to a pedagogue fears the rod [and] with effort combines the elements of letters and learns grammar. He does not then know of what use it is. But when he arrives

at adulthood, he experiences the fruit [of his efforts]; and he no longer serves grammar and the elements [of writing]. Rather, he applies his mind freely to the spirit of the words, i.e., to the significations of the words. And he is concerned not with the words but with their meanings. He pursues truth, by means of which he is at rest, once it has been apprehended.

Therefore, all engagement with the elements [of writing] tends only toward truth. Once truth has been apprehended, there is no need to insist on the shapes and forms and articulation of the letters. The case is similar as concerns the Law and Christ, who is Truth.<sup>6</sup> For a fullness renders otiose that which is but partial; thus, truth renders otiose [the Law's] befigurings. The spirit [of the Law renders otiose] the letter [of the Law]; and the end-goal [of the Law renders otiose] those things that are a means to the end. Hence, Paul adds that that time when we were servants under the elements of this world (i.e., under perceptible signs, which are of this world) was like unto our servitude. For we were children and were imperfect; thus, the time was not yet full and complete. But when the fullness of time arrived, there came Fullness and Perfection: i.e., the Son of God was born of a woman, etc.

[3] Note [the following]: As the entire time prior to Christ is seen to be a time of truth's being formulated, as it were, insofar as truth lies hidden beneath the writing [of the Old Testament] and is not seen even though it is whole and complete, so the promise of divine life was hidden beneath the promise of sensory life—hidden as beneath elements and signs and shapes. Similarly, the truth of the New Testament is not different from the truth of the Old Testament. Rather, the same truth is one that is hidden [in the Old Testament] as in the womb [and] is not yet understood or seen [and] is one that [in the New Testament] is born and made visible, since the veil of the writing has been removed. Furthermore, note that truth is perfected in us in four stages: something that appears in the distance is first seen to be a certain thing; then when it comes nearer, it is recognized to be an animal; then when it comes still closer, it is seen to be that which has the appearance of a human being; and when it comes into our presence, then we first recognize who it is, viz., our father or our son or someone else. In a similar way, prior to the Law truth appeared, by means of nature, at a distance and in terms of confused being. Subsequently, when an angel gave instruction and ministered the Law (as [attested] in [the Book of] Acts),<sup>7</sup> truth was revealed, as it were, not as some entity or other but as a living being. Thereafter, it was revealed more specifically (viz., as

a man) through the Son of God. The fourth stage still remains [to arrive], so that [at that future time] we may see truth without a revealer and may know it as it is.<sup>8</sup> And this [fourth stage] is the last and perfect [stage], where the intellectual soul finds rest as in its goal.

[4] Therefore, we turn our attention to the fact that the intellectual nature is the only nature that is capable of true life. For nothing can understand itself to be alive except the intellect, which alone has the characteristic that it is like sight. It is not like sensory sight, which sees other things but not itself; rather, it is like living sight that sees itself and that sees, within itself, all things. Therefore, only the intellect, as being a living image, is capable of relishing life in and of itself, i.e., [of relishing] true life, of which it itself is the image. For inasmuch as an image that is alive with an intellectual life knows itself to be an image, it knows that within it is the Truth and Exemplar and Form that gives being to it, with the result that it is an image. And this [Form] is the image's true life, which is present in the image as truth is present in its image.<sup>9</sup> Next, an intellect that understands itself to be a living image has from God the power to liken itself more greatly to its exemplar and, thus, has the power to approach closer and closer to greater union with its own object, viz., with truth, so that it may be more pleasantly at rest. For an image that knows itself to be an image cannot have rest apart from Truth, of which it is the image. Rather, it dwells in error and confusion and death if it is separated from that influence which gives to it vital, intellectual being; nevertheless, as concerns the pleasantness of its life, it remains as a dead image, as does a real eye when in darkness.

[5] Moreover, God, who, because He is good, willed to manifest the riches of His glory,<sup>10</sup> created all things for the sake of the intellectual nature, to which alone there can be a manifesting; for only the intellect has an eye that can behold truth. Now, God can manifest, by means of all His riches, nothing but truth. And so, lastly and subsequently to every [other] creation, He sowed a divine seed, viz., the intellectual nature (as it is beautifully revealed in Genesis that He placed man in charge of all [other] created things). In man He placed a living image—[doing so] by means of in-breathing, so that in that way we might understand the difference between the intellect and other creatures, since that in-breathing was the breath of life.<sup>11</sup> And from that breath the soul was made to be alive, in conformity to the divine life, which understands itself to be alive. And through this



breath man was made to be a living image of God.

[6] Now, we experience within ourselves that this living, wondrous power, [this] divine seed, is like a living image. For we are creators who make likenesses. Just as God the Creator creates and forms real things by understanding them, so we produce from our intellect the likenesses of things; and by means of the arts [and crafts] we show that we are makers of likenesses. And just as God actually enfolds within His own being all the things that exist or that can be made, so [our] intellect enfolds *within its power* all the likenesses of all things, and it unfolds by *making likenesses*, and this [making of likenesses] is the act of understanding.<sup>12</sup> Now, many stimuli are given to the intellectual nature in order that that seed may be stimulated and may sprout up, yielding cognitive fruit, in order that God may show the riches of His glory. Hence, God has given, and continues to give, many free gifts to men. They are gifts of the spirit, because God, who is Spirit, gives them to our spirit. And they are illuminations, and instances of grace, that tend only toward bringing it about that the grain not remain in potency in the earth but be stimulated to bear fruit.

[7] Therefore, to that soul in which this seed is present by nature, God speaks through the Holy Spirit or an angel. [He speaks] in these days, and lastly, through His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.<sup>13</sup> For the more actualized the intellect is, the more truly it possesses and comprehends. But an intellect that is altogether actualized, so that nothing more can be added [to it] since it actually understands everything that can be understood: this intellect<sup>14</sup> is attracted to [union with] Infinite Actuality, which is God; and as being an heir to all things, it possesses all things. [It possesses them] not as a child who is under a tutor but as an heir who after a definite period of time will actually possess all things. And this [heir] is Christ, because, as Paul states in Hebrews,<sup>15</sup> He was anointed above His fellow-men. Therefore, the true heir is that man [Jesus], whose human intellect is altogether actualized and enfolds within itself all things and possesses all things, because of its supreme union with the divine intellect. In Christ, then, there is fullness of perfection by means of the image's union—in the supreme degree [and] in such a way that it cannot be a greater union—with its Truth. And unless the union were a personal union, it could be greater. For the two natures in a man—viz., the soul and the body—are united in such a way that one man is constituted from the union, with the result that the sensory life exists only in the rational life.

(Otherwise, there would be not a man but a beast.) But the rational soul does not have a corporeal nature but is a seed of divine life and is a likeness of the Word, which is Absolute Reason; to this likeness the animal nature is united hypostatically.<sup>16</sup>

[8] Moreover, in all men there is found a grace that is a certain light and liveliness given by God to the soul. On account of this gift (because it is the gift of God) all men are made content by it with themselves. But Christ's intellect obtained the fullness of all grace because there remained nothing that was not given [to it]. Hence, Christ's intellect (in which the life of the animal nature from Adam was subsumed) was subsumed not in its own person but in the Word of God (i.e., in the Power through which God made even the ages) as what is attracted is subsumed in that which attracts it (as you know from elsewhere<sup>17</sup> about iron and a magnet). Likewise, you know that the Son of God, Heir of all things on account of the fullness of grace, is not an heir such as the sons by adoption are. These latter are called<sup>18</sup> to be partial heirs or joint-heirs or heirs together with the true Son.<sup>19</sup> But [Christ is Heir] both by grace and by nature. For [in Christ] grace, which is such that it cannot be greater (because it is full—indeed, because it is fullness), coincides with nature.

[9] And consider attentively that Paul instructs us as follows: because we have in us the Spirit of the Son—in that we cry out “Abba, Father”<sup>20</sup>—then just as we are partakers of the Spirit of the Son, so we are also co-heirs. But the Son Himself, as true Son, is the true Heir, whereas we, as participants, are adopted sons.<sup>21</sup> For adoption is the grace of sonship, or the partaking of sonship. And we are co-heirs. This partial inheritance is expressed for us by [Christ] our Teacher, who said that in His Father's house are many mansions and that He would go to prepare and arrange them for us and would go to prepare a meal for us and to feed us by ministering to us.<sup>22</sup> As Heir to all things, Christ shares [His inheritance] with us as with adopted sons, giving [us] mansions and food after the fashion of [one's bequeathing of] possessions belonging to this present world. By comparison, certain principates are as domains of the elect where the first-born son is heir to the principate, and he gives to his other brothers mansions and food or [other] necessities. Consider, then, carefully Paul's text about the Jews' serving under the elements—[serving], to wit, not as the heathen by worshipping visible things and the heavenly bodies (for then they would have been serving the elements). Rather, the Jews were serving under

the elements by observing new moons, sacrifices, etc. And they were heirs. Nevertheless, they did not know from these elements that they were sons of God and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. For just as they were serving under the elements of the world, so they were also expecting to inherit the earth.

[10] Furthermore, consider the fact that [Paul] says that God sent His Son, made of a woman and made under the Law.<sup>23</sup> Understand that of a woman, or mother, He was made a human being in order that through the sending of the Son of God into our nature—[a nature] that He received from His mother—we might receive adoption as God's sons. For just as the Father Himself sent the Son into the nature that is from the mother, so we understand that the nature that is from the woman is able to be united to the Son, who is from God. [Paul] says that [Jesus] was made under the Law—[meaning], to wit, that He was circumcised and was offered [to God] in the temple in accordance with the precepts of the Law. For it was supposed to be known that He was the Son of Abraham, whose sons are recognized in this way. And so, He was made under the Law not as one who needed to keep the Law in order to be purified but so that He might free those who were under the Law. For He came as Fullness of grace that frees from all servitude. And in Him the requirements of the Law reached their completion. As He said: "I have not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it."<sup>24</sup> Hence, as representing the person of all, on behalf of all those who possess Him by faith, He fulfilled the Law as Mediator between God and men.

[11] Note carefully regarding the Spirit: viz., that we who have received through Christ (whom we received through faith) adoption as sons of God have received in our spirit the Spirit of the Son. This Spirit gives us the boldness to cry out "Abba, Father."<sup>25</sup> For unless God had sent into our spirit (in which Christ dwells through our faith) the Spirit of the Son, we would not have the boldness to cry out unto God as unto our Father; neither would the Jews say "Abba" nor we Latins "Pater". Therefore, faith in Christ is proved to be in us if we have Christ's Spirit, which is the pledge that we shall obtain true sonship with God as His adopted sons. For as our pledge we have the Spirit, who leads our spirit unto what is perfect. That Spirit is as heat, or love, that strengthens and purifies and illumines. We see that nature is strengthened by faith in a new and most famous Physician who heals by His touch. Hence, if we have the Spirit of God's Son, that Spirit purifies us,

as the spirit of grape-juice causes the grape-juice to ferment and by means of the warmth distills by expelling everything that is not of the nature of wine. And it does this in order to turn the grape-juice into wine (as you know from elsewhere).<sup>26</sup>

[12] Note that miracles done by the saints were done in the Spirit of the Son of God. Peter said: “In the name of Jesus, arise and walk!”<sup>27</sup> And if amid incantations an evil spirit works because of faith the wonders that are signs of the power of the Prince of this world [viz., Satan],<sup>28</sup> then the Prince of the future age [viz., Christ] works in us, because of our faith, much more strongly by His own Spirit those things that are above nature. If, then, we say that we are believers having true faith that is [in-]formed [by love],<sup>29</sup> and if we have the Spirit of God’s Son, through whom God works all things, then none of the opponents of the Word of God (viz., evil spirits and sinners) will be able to withstand us. [13] Moreover, we will be able to experience in ourselves whether or not that Spirit indwells us—[to experience it] provided that we delight in following Christ by means of good works [and] provided that in our movements we walk as pilgrims who follow Christ. For the movement in our reason comes from our spirit. Therefore, if our soul is moved by a good spirit, viz., by the Spirit of truth and of Christ, then we follow Christ, and we joyfully suffer all things for God’s sake, humbling ourselves and being obedient [even] unto death. Christ said: “Do as I have done; for I have given you an example,” etc.<sup>30</sup> “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will receive rest for your souls,” etc.<sup>31</sup>

[14] Note, as you know from elsewhere,<sup>32</sup> that grace and the Spirit of the Son of God are the life of the soul, even as the soul is the life of the body. And although the soul does not always infuse a cheerful life into the whole body, nevertheless [the lack of gladness] occurs not because of the soul but because of the indisposition of the body. Likewise, the body is purified by the soul in order that it may better receive the inflow of the soul’s life. Similarly, the soul, too, must be purified in order that it may take into itself the inflow of divine life and divine grace. And thereupon we will be able to experience [both] the joyous life of our soul and the good spirit that indwells that life—even as someone cured of lethargy senses life and experiences, when the offending humor is withstood, that he has a vibrant soul. [15] From the Gospel take note of the fact that Simon said to Mary: “Behold this

[child, Jesus] is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be contradicted.”<sup>33</sup> The Apostle says that in Christ Himself God is going to judge the world.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, I understand that Christ was placed as a certain sign which is contradicted in that some say that He is good, whereas others say that not He but the Seducer is good. And in Him we apprehend the fall and the resurrection of many in Israel, viz., of believers. For when we believers take as a sign the life and the desires and the movement (that we have in the soul) toward Christ, then we immediately experience whether we are Christlike, arising with Him unto life, or whether we ought to fear ruin and damnation. For Christ alone is the Way to the Kingdom and is the man through whom judgment will be made (1) concerning resurrection unto life on the basis of conformity [to His life] and (2) concerning [damnation] on the basis of a lack of conformity. Therefore, let us act as do goldsmiths, who have in solid-form a sample of perfect gold and who determine, in relation to that sign, the degree of perfection of the gold presented [to them]; and they purify [the proffered gold] until it agrees [with the sample] and is perfect; thereupon it is true and lasting [gold].

[16] Consider that as regards him who ought to be free and not a servant: it is necessary that he first pay attention to the fact that every action of Christ is our instruction<sup>35</sup> in order that we may know that we will obtain the liberty of the sons of God if we follow the Son of God. And because the body of the Church has different kinds of members,<sup>36</sup> it is necessary that each member abide in his calling. And so, it is first necessary that you determine whether the spirit of Christ is in you and that until you find that spirit in your particular calling, you not believe it to be present in you. For the life of Christ is the universal pathway on which, however, different people walk. Hence, a Christian priest ought to put on Christ<sup>37</sup> in a priestly way; and someone in a religious order ought to put on Christ in a religious way; and a duke, in a ducal way; and a citizen, in a citizen’s way—each in his own order, office, and calling. Christ in one man is not different from Christ in another man. Similarly, there is not a different cloth for a secular leader and for a religious monk; but from the same cloth, made from the immaculate Lamb of God, different kinds of vestments are taken and are to be worn. For the Lord wills it to be thus. For He wills that the vestment be adorned roundabout with variety for the sake of the splendor of His curia, which is the Church militant, etc.

[17] Furthermore, the introit of the mass says: “While [all things

were in] the midst of silence ...” etc.<sup>38</sup> Christ the Mediator,<sup>39</sup> the Cornerstone,<sup>40</sup> the Stone cut without hands out of the mountain, etc.,<sup>41</sup> came in the midst of silence, etc.; by this means the respective faith of both the heathen and the Jews is united in the Cornerstone (as [you know] from elsewhere).<sup>42</sup> The case is similar as regards [the expression] “the midst of time”; by means of this [expression] it is understood that [Christ] is coming at the end [of time]. And here [in the present text] it is said that He is coming in the midst [of time—coming] as the End [of time], as the Saint of saints.<sup>43</sup> Thus, [He comes] at the height of [our] ascent and at that point. For He alone is the Most High, unto whom the ascent was made. And afterwards there occurs the descent, etc. And so, [He appears] in the middle [between the ascent and the descent]. But the descent is always steeper, and the ruin swifter, than the ascent. Thus, [it comes] after the middle-point of time when the world is declining.

## NOTES TO *Ubi Venit Plenitudo Temporis*

- \* Sermon CLXIX.
- 1. Galatians 4:4. The fuller title of this present sermon is “Ubi Venit Plenitudo Temporis, Misit Deus Filium Suum.”
- 2. Galatians 4:1: “As long as the heir is a child he differs not at all from a servant, though he be lord of all.”
- 3. Galatians 4:3.
- 4. Galatians 3:24-25.
- 5. II Corinthians 3:6.
- 6. John 14:6.
- 7. Acts 7:53.
- 8. I John 3:2.
- 9. Throughout this section Nicholas is distinguishing between an image and that of which it is the image. The latter he refers to as the truth of the image.
- 10. Romans 9:23.
- 11. Genesis 2:7.
- 12. These likenesses are concepts, which the mind abstracts from images by means of its assimilative power. See my *Nicholas of Cusa on Wisdom and Knowledge* (Minneapolis: Banning, 1996) and my “Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464): First Modern Philosopher?” pp. 13-29 in Peter A. French and Howard K. Wettstein, editors, *Renaissance and Early Modern Philosophy* (Vol. 26 in the series *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*). Boston: Blackwell, 2002. See also the different view about Cusa’s position on *a priori* knowledge: Klaus Kremer, “Erkennen bei Nikolaus von Kues. Apriorismus – Assimilation – Abstraktion,” pp. 3-49 in his *Praegustatio naturalis sapientiae. Gott suchen mit Nikolaus von Kues* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004).
- 13. Hebrews 1:2.
- 14. “... this intellect”: viz., Christ’s intellect, which was a human intellect.
- 15. Hebrews 1:9. Psalms 44:8 (45:7).
- 16. That is, in man, the corporeal animal nature is united to the rational soul in a oneness of person.
- 17. *De Pace Fidei* 8. Sermon CLVIII.
- 18. Here (at 8:14) I am reading, with the Paris edition, “vocantur” in place of “nominantur”.
- 19. Romans 8:15-17.
- 20. Galatians 4:6.
- 21. Galatians 4:5. Ephesians 1:5. Romans 8:15.
- 22. John 14:2.
- 23. Galatians 4:4.
- 24. Matthew 5:17.
- 25. Galatians 4:6.
- 26. Sermon LXIX (67).
- 27. Acts 3:6.
- 28. John 12:31 and 14:30 and 16:11.

29. Galatians 5:6.
30. John 13:15. Not an exact quotation.
31. Matthew 11:29.
32. E. g., Sermon CLXV (**11** and **12**).
33. Luke 2:34.
34. John 5:22.
35. Cf. II Timothy 3:15-16.
36. Cf. Romans 12:4-8.
37. Romans 13:14.
38. Wisdom 18:14-15: "For while all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, thy almighty word leapt down from heaven ...," (Douay version).
39. I Timothy 2:5.
40. Ephesians 2:20.
41. Daniel 2:45.
42. I Peter 2:5-10. Romans 10:12-13.
43. Daniel 9:24.



**In Caritate Radicati et Fundati\***  
("... Rooted and Grounded in Love ...")<sup>1</sup>  
[September 12, 1456; preached in Brixen]

[1] "... being rooted and grounded in love in order that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height, and depth ..." (Ephesians 3 and in the office of the mass).

Paul wrote to the Ephesians that he received [instruction] by revelation from on high, in order that he might preach even to the Gentiles the sacrament hidden from the world. Afterwards he added: "Therefore, I ask that you not faint at [my] tribulations [for you]," etc.<sup>2</sup> But in the office of the mass we read: "I beseech you, Brethren ..."

[2] Let us first of all note that God sent Christ—in whom are hidden all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom<sup>3</sup>—for the purpose of manifesting God's own wisdom. And He did so for the following reason: The Wisdom of God<sup>4</sup> is the Former of all created things; for God made all things in wisdom,<sup>5</sup> and all things were formed for manifesting God's glory<sup>6</sup> (as if a very gifted and very skilled artisan were to form all things in order to manifest his artisanship). Therefore, unless [God's] wisdom were known, [God] would be neither praised nor glorified. If, then, the subtle aspects of the art of painting be shown to an ignoramus, the master-painter is not glorified by the ignoramus. A pearl ought not to be cast before swine,<sup>7</sup> where the pearl's value is not at all recognized. And Paul spoke wisdom among the perfect,<sup>8</sup> where, indeed, it was understood. But the human race as a whole was without a knowledge of God, as the Apostle said<sup>9</sup> in Acts 17. And so, the Son of God, who is the Wisdom of the Father,<sup>10</sup> came into the world for the enlightening of men and for dispelling the darkness of ignorance—as here and there the Apostle states.

[3] You have often heard elsewhere that Christ is the one in whom divinity dwells in a bodily habitation<sup>11</sup> and dwells perfectly and permanently. Divinity is present in all creatures, but [in them] it is present by way of participation; in Christ alone it is present fully and wholly. And so, Christ alone—in whom God the Father's omnipotent art is present—was able by His power to manifest in and through His human nature works that can befit only the Creator. Therefore, the Father, wanting to make known from Heaven the riches of His wisdom,<sup>12</sup> created all things and, at length, sent His own Son, by means

of whom we have, through faith, access to apprehending wisdom, in order that we may be able to attain to glorifying God. For in our [human] nature [as it is present] in Christ Jesus we find wisdom in [such great] abundance and flowing-forth that [the human nature] can partake of wisdom for us; and it seeks to do so. Therefore, through the faith by which we believe that Christ is the Son of God we approach Him as Teacher of truth, and we are enlightened to such an extent that, being aroused as disciples, we will come to perfection.

[4] Now, the Apostle [Paul] wrote from Rome this truly marvelous and most pleasing letter [to the Ephesians], declaring all of God's benefits that they received by faith in Jesus. Through faith those who were far from God and from wisdom were brought near, so that [now] they give thanks to God and do not faint amid the tribulations of Paul, the apostle of those [tidings]. [It was not] as if when their teacher was imprisoned,<sup>13</sup> they would depart from the truth or be fearful or doubting. For when someone suffers because of a service rendered for someone else, then it accrues to the glory of him for whom the service is done not to faint but to show himself faithful. When, indeed, a preacher suffers for the sake of the word of God, although he could avoid suffering by consenting to his adversaries, then those who hear him ought rightly to be strengthened; for his sufferings or his acts of martyrdom bear testimony to the truth.

[5] There follows [in the text]: "To this end (viz., that you faint not) I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>14</sup> Note Paul's manner in praying. In particular, each individual ought to bend his knees. And [to do] this is only to bow in the presence of the Father and to humble oneself in every manner of humbling. For the outer man<sup>15</sup> ought to show signs of humility and to bend the physical knees suitably, as the inner man bends spiritual knees. Oftentimes the mind is called the inner man,<sup>16</sup> and the principal member of the inner man is called the heart,<sup>17</sup> because the heart is the seat of life; [and] we call the giver of life—viz., the rational soul—by the name of the physical heart.

[6] Paul says: "... to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>18</sup> The Latin manuscripts have these words, [whereas] the Greek manuscripts have only "... to the Father." And so, some men have thought that [the text] must be understood to mean that the name "Father" is applied not to the Lord Jesus Christ but to all rational creatures. But I deem that not without reason do the Latins construe [the text] as they do, so that we may know that this God is He who is the Father of Jesus

Christ. [7] From this [observation] note that our every prayer ought to be referred to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church observes this practice; and in the collects [of the mass] are placed [the words] "... through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son." Therefore, because, when we pray, we approach the Father through Christ, so that in praying we express our faith, without which faith nothing is obtained: we ought to signify that Jesus is the Son of God and that He whom we call Father is the Father of Jesus. For we know to be true the teaching of Him who said: "If you ask anything of the Father in my name, He will give it to you."<sup>19</sup>

[8] Now, Christ says that God is His Father, and He teaches us to say "Our Father." For there is only one Father and His only Son. Christ, as being the one Son, says with regard to the Father that He is *His* Father. But if all the members<sup>20</sup> of that Son were rational and could speak, they would rightly say with regard to the Father "Our Father." Christ, who is one, would say "My Father"; the members, because they are many, would rightly say "Our Father." But the members would have not from themselves but from Christ the fact that they could say "Our Father." For unless they were members of Christ, who is the unique Son, they could not say "Our Father." Hence, all the sonship of all the sons is from the unique Son, just as the life of all the members of the body is from one life. Therefore, Christ is the perfection [of the members]—i.e., is a totality—that is personal. He is the Son, who *is* also Sonship. But Christians are sons of God *through* Sonship,<sup>21</sup> which, indeed, Christ *is*.

[9] Paul says: "... from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named."<sup>22</sup> Note that the Fount and Origin of all begottenness and of all unfolding-of-power takes its name from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For only that Father is Absolute Fatherhood, which enfolds in itself all fatherhood that is present in heaven or on earth and that is present in the joining of heaven and earth (i.e., in human nature).<sup>23</sup> For just as Fatherhood, which *is* God the Father, is eternally very fecund and sends forth from itself a knowledge of its fecundity and embraces [that knowledge], so Fatherhood has given to every creature in heaven and on earth a likeness of itself. Thus, there is no creature that does not, in its own way, partake of fecundity, so that it endeavors to unfold fecundity and to rest lovingly in its embrace. [10] *That* fecundity is present in angels, in the heavens, [and] on earth. And if the entire perceptible world is considered as a single species, or essence: then the

heavens are as a father; the earth is as a mother; [and] from them exist the things that are produced in this world. The philosophers said that intelligences move the heavens and that an intelligence, together with the motion of the heavens, produces living natures.<sup>24</sup> For since a living nature is more noble than is a non-living nature, the physical heavens do not produce life, since the producer is more noble than is the produced. And so, [the philosophers] said that life is produced by an intelligence.

[11] Now, in angels there is fecundity-of-memory, which always bears fruit, so that it knows itself and is in a state of restfulness. The fruit is knowledge and is the restfulness-of-love—just as a living seed (which enfolds within itself a power that is never eternally unfoldable) always by means of unfolding begets fruit, in which one delights. [The situation is] as if one seed, e.g., a mustard-seed, continually expressed its power by producing its yield, and as if the expression would be only the seeing of fecundity in and through the yield. Similarly, the seeing of fecundity in the case of angels is the seeing of *understanding*. The memory, or the paternal fecundity, produces a yield—viz., [the angels'] vision and knowledge of their inexhaustible fecundity—in which yield [an angel] takes delight. And in an angel there is no other fecundity-of-memory than the Creating Father's creation, or likeness. Therefore, the more fruit an angel bears, the more he proceeds to a knowledge of God, from whom is all fatherhood. [12] Moreover, an angel will never be able to unfold his own fecundity so as always to produce new fruit—[viz., fruit] consisting of a knowledge of his fecundity. By contrast, the Father begets anew today<sup>25</sup> (i.e., continuously) the same Son, i.e., the Understanding of His fecundity.<sup>26</sup> (Hence, all things new are delightful, because they bear a likeness to divine begottenness.) So an angel cannot at just any and every moment unfold his fecundity-[of-memory] and his delight in such a way<sup>27</sup> that [these latter are] always new.

Likewise, consider what, in its own way, is the case with our intellectual nature.

[13] Hence, it is evident that the fatherhood that is present in all creatures manifests likewise the fact that a trinity is present in all creatures. Yet, [the trinity] is present to the intellectual nature in an intellectual way only where the intellectual nature has fecundity-of-memory after the fashion of the Father-Creator. In this fecundity-[of-memory] there are likenesses of the Divine Fatherhood; i.e., there are intellectual seeds of the beginnings from which an understanding is expressed. In this understanding the fecundity of the beginnings is

seen. [14] And if you consider carefully, [you will see that] there is only *one* Beginning, which is of manifold power. As Paul says in Acts 17, certain wise men have called it a divine seed or a divine offspring.<sup>28</sup> The intellectual nature's memory is like a source or a very fecund divine seed that yields from itself—when it becomes actualized—fruit of understanding (like the fruit of Paradise), in which one takes delight.

[15] Note that the Apostle says "... from whom all fatherhood is named,"<sup>29</sup> since the true name [for a thing] is given by the Giver of forms. For a name follows from the form, as you know from elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> Hence, on the basis of the foregoing statement of the Apostle's we ought to say that all names are named from the divine name rather than the converse.<sup>31</sup> For although those who say that we ascribe to God names that are imposed on things do so rightly, nevertheless they do not take account of from whence names are imposed on things. For we read that Adam imposed names on things.<sup>32</sup> Assuredly, there was with Adam divine light by which he was enlightened so that he would know what name would be fitting for each [animal]. [16] Hence, just as all fatherhood that is named in heaven and on earth has from the Fatherhood of God the Father that it is thusly named, so all sonship that is in heaven and on earth has from God's Sonship [that it is thusly named]; and all spiration, from God's Spirit; and all oneness, from God's Oneness; and all being, from God's Being; and all life, from God's Life; and all love, from God's love; and so on.

[17] But names do not befit God and creatures in the same<sup>33</sup> way. For they befit God as Creator and Originator [but] befit creatures as caused and originated. In the case of God they are [names] only of the infinite simplicity of the Originator, but in the case of creatures they are [names] only of likenesses of [that divine] simplicity. Therefore, every creature consists of *whereby it is* and *what is*.<sup>34</sup> It has *whereby it is* from a likeness to God, i.e., from actuality that is likened to God, who is purest Actuality. [It has] *what is* from potentiality, which in itself is nothing (for all *what is* exists [only] insofar as it exists actually; potential being does not exist [actually]). Thus, every creature is from being and from not-being. *Whereby it is*, i.e., its likeness to God, is being; and so, it is near to God because it is His likeness. However, not-being is near to nothing. As Augustine, too, said: God created two things, one near to Himself and the other near to nothing<sup>35</sup> (for privation is nearly nothing).

[18] In [today's] text there follow [the words]:

... in order that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened [with] might (*virtutem*) ...

{Elsewhere we read "*virtute*", and [that reading] better conduces to understanding [the meaning of the text].}

... by His Spirit in the inner man (*in interiorem hominem*), ...

{Elsewhere I have read "*in interiori homine*," and [that reading] is more felicitous. The Greeks ought to have that reading. Perhaps the reason that they have the reading that accords with our text [viz., "*in interiorem hominem*"] is that they lack an ablative case [in their language].}

... that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Let us take note of what the Apostle prayed to happen—i.e., of what he prayed to be given [to him] by the Father according to the riches of His glory. For one who is glorious and rich does not give meager things. Therefore, [the Apostle] asks of the most glorious and most rich Father-of-powers (who gave to His Son power in all fullness) that the power of being strengthened be given to the Ephesians, in order that they might be strengthened by His Spirit (viz., by the Spirit of the Father) in the inner man, [so that] Christ might dwell in their hearts by virtue of their faith. For since Christ is the power of God and the Wisdom of the Father,<sup>36</sup> then if He is to dwell in the inner man, or heart, this abode must be made to be *disposed* and must be strengthened by the power of God's Spirit. For unless God the Father strengthens the soul by means of His Spirit, the soul cannot be capable of receiving God's Son by faith. [19] And so, no one can speak of Jesus Christ except by the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> No soul is capable of having Christ dwell in it as God's Son unless the Holy Spirit has prepared [it as] a dwelling-place. For every human spirit in which Christ, the Son of God, dwells passes into sonship with God. Christ *is* Sonship that converts and forms sons of adoption.

[20] There follow [in our theme-text for today the words]: "... being rooted and grounded in love, so that you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, length, height, and

depth ...”<sup>38</sup> For when the inner man is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, then the man is rooted in love. For God’s Spirit is Love.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, where a man’s strengthening-root is a love that will never fail, then in that [loving] union [the man] is [united] with all the saints. For all the holiness that is in all the saints comes only from the love in which [the saints] are rooted. (For the root is hidden in that from which it draws life and the nourishment of life.) Love ministers life and gladness to the root. Therefore, the inner man lives from love by means of the union of his life’s root with love—just as the Tree of Paradise [draws life] from the Garden of Paradise, in which it is rooted.

[21] “... and grounded” is said [in today’s text], because what is grounded in love is steadfast in order that there may be comprehended what is its breadth, length, height, and depth. These [dimensions] are measures that are found in a complete material object. Now, Paul said elsewhere<sup>40</sup> that in Christ God dwells bodily—i.e., fully and perfectly and in full measure of every kind. [22] Therefore, he who has been made an attainer attains, together with all the saints, what is absolute length, absolute breadth, absolute height, and absolute depth; for the Great Lord, of whose magnitude there is no end,<sup>41</sup> is altogether infinite. Infinite length is length that is also infinite breadth; likewise, infinite height [is height that is] also infinite depth. But there is not more than one infinite thing; therefore, only infinity is the adequate measure of all things that are measurable by any kind of measuring. Maximum and minimum coincide in the infinite.<sup>42</sup> An infinite line, or infinite length, is the form and actuality of all that can be made from a finite line, or a finite length. And so on. Infinite being is *actually* all things that *can be*.<sup>43</sup> Infinite life is *actually* all things that *can live*. And so on.

[23] Hence, God is understood to be the Exactness and Measure of all the things that exist and that can exist. And herefrom it is known (1) that length is breadth, height, and depth and (2) that breadth is length, height, and depth and (3) that height is length, breadth, and depth, and (4) that depth is length, breadth, and height. All of these [statements] mean only that God is understood by the saints to be all in all.<sup>44</sup> [24] And if the aforementioned terms are applied to love, in order to know love’s breadth, length, height, and depth: then consider that the inner man is rooted in love after the fashion of an intellectual tree that grows by understanding. (Understanding is the breadth of the tree that is rooted in love.) For [love] is extended to all different places in all their breadth. For nothing is broader than is love, which for the sake of

the Creator embraces all created things with a sweet embrace. Love is not wearied throughout the entire length of days and times; rather, it is more lasting and longer than any length that is measurable by any measure whatsoever. For from end to end,<sup>45</sup> by means of a most pleasant contact, it reaches all things. It most highly ascends to union with God, who dwells in the highest places;<sup>46</sup> and through the mercy of compassion it reaches, by means of its humility, the lowest places and the depths. For there is nothing that can remain hidden from love's warmth.

[25] With regard to love there is not favoritism of persons.<sup>47</sup> There is no king, no matter how great, whom his lowliest servant could not love exceedingly—and vice versa. Love overcomes all [obstacles]. With respect to God's<sup>48</sup> love, [which] adheres to someone indissolubly, [the Psalmist] says: "If I ascend unto Heaven, You are there. If I descend unto Hell, You are there."<sup>49</sup> You never forsake me.<sup>50</sup> [26] Thirdly, the text [of today's mass] can be construed as referring to love on the part of Christ, who indwells [us] through our faith. For a soul that exists in love [and] that has Christ within it comprehends with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height, and depth of His love, through which all the saints have been gathered together so that they exist in sonship with Christ, the Son of God, and so that they are holy in the Holy of Holies. They comprehend that there can be no breadth that is greater than is the breadth of Christ's love, which is of such great [breadth] that it wills the salvation of all of this world's inhabitants—present ones, past ones, and future ones. [Christ's love] expends itself for them all—not only for friends but also for enemies, all of whom such immense love reconciled to God, as much as was possible, by a most generous shedding of Christ's own blood.

[27] How great the *length* of this love, which from sunrise until sunset embraces all men at all the times of [this] world! How great the *height* [of this love], which has united even angels very closely to God! How great the *depth* [of this love], which has drawn even those in Hell unto fellowship with God! Therefore, no measure attains the limit of Christ's love, which has merited eternal happiness for the foregoing and for all who through faith have Christ in their inner man. [28] Hence, if you take note: just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ all will be made alive.<sup>51</sup> Christ's love gathers into one all those who are obedient [and] who have been reborn through faith [and] whom Adam's presumptiveness made hateful<sup>52</sup> to God. Therefore, all



the saints, having been gathered by Christ's love [and] having been rooted in love, apprehend (*comprehendere*) the breadth, length, height, and depth of that love by which they are apprehended [*comprehendi*]. For to apprehend is to be apprehended: to have Christ within oneself is to be in Christ; to possess love within oneself is to be possessed by love. See how it is that the elect return to the Father in and through the one Son of God. Just as there is one earthly Adam, through whom all men have been scattered throughout this world, so there is one Heavenly Christ, who gathers from this world unto Himself the elect and who leads them back to the Kingdom of the Creator.

[29] There follow [in the text for today's mass the words]: "... to know also the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God."<sup>53</sup> Note in what way the Apostle speaks when he wishes for the Ephesians to have the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge. For super-eminent knowledge of Christ's love seems to be only obedience. For Christ knew that the obedience of love is to such an extent knowledge that he who loved God would know, according to the degree of his love, that God ought to be obeyed. And he who loved God in an eminent way would know that God ought to be obeyed even to the point of death and even to the point of a most vile death. And he would know that from this obeying there would result the fulfilling of all his desires even to the point of God's fullness. Thus, one who is thus obedient and who empties himself will be filled with divinity up to the point of the fullness by which God is full of all glory and happiness. For all who will attain that knowledge of love shall be as is Christ Himself. For they—those who in this way by faith have Christ in the inner man, i.e., in the mind—shall be like Christ when He appears.<sup>54</sup> This Christ the Lord has indeed obtained all the fullness of God.

[30] The Apostle adds: "Now, to Him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we ask or understand, according to the power that<sup>55</sup> works in us: to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, world without end."<sup>56</sup> After his [previous] prayer [the Apostle now] gives to the Father-from-Heaven glory—as to Him who is able to act more abundantly than we ask and understand, in accordance with His wondrous power, which<sup>57</sup> works in us indeed more than we ask or understand. For in Paul God's power worked abundantly and above all understanding. To God [be] glory in the Church and in Christ, its Head (i.e., in the Church, which is the body

of Christ Jesus), unto all generations, world without end (i.e., forever. For eternity is “world without end.” For a *saeculum*, which extends to the longest life of an elderly man, follows after a previous *saeculum*. But *saeculum saeculorum* is a duration that enfolds all *saecula*.)

NOTES TO *In Caritate Radicati et Fundati*

- \* Sermon CCXLIV.
1. Ephesians 3:17-19.
  2. Ephesians 3:13.
  3. Colossians 2:3.
  4. "Wisdom" is oftentimes used, in the Medieval tradition, as a name for God the Son. See I Corinthians 1:24.
  5. Psalms 103:24 (104:24).
  6. Psalms 18:1 (19:1). Isaiahs (Isaiah) 43:7. Colossians 1:16 (King James Version). Apocalypse (Revelation) 4:11.
  7. Matthew 7:6.
  8. I Corinthians 2:6.
  9. Acts 17:23-31.
  10. See n. 4 above.
  11. Colossians 2:9.
  12. Romans 11:33.
  13. Paul wrote to the Ephesians from prison in Rome.
  14. Ephesians 3:14.
  15. II Corinthians 4:16.
  16. Romans 7:22. II Corinthians 4:16. Ephesians 3:16.
  17. I Corinthians 2:9. Ephesians 4:18.
  18. Ephesians 3:14.
  19. John 16:23.
  20. Cf. Romans 12:4.
  21. Romans 12:5.
  22. Ephesians 3:15 (Vulgate and Douay-Rheims versions).
  23. Nicholas often calls man a microcosm. See, for example, *De Docta Ignorantia*, III, 3 (198). Sermon XX (32 - 33). Sermon XXX (8:1-2). Sermon XLV (5:1). Sermon CXXII (2:17-18). See also Hugo von Strassburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, II, 2 (beginning part). [This work was falsely ascribed to Bonaventure and is found in Vol. 8 of *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, edited by A. C. Peltier (Paris: Vivès, 1866).
  24. See Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, XII, 7 (1072<sup>a</sup>19 - 1072<sup>b</sup>13). See also Nicholas's *De Beryllo* 36.
  25. Hebrews 1:5. Psalms 2:7.
  26. Nicholas borrows from Augustine's *De Trinitate* the names "Memory," "Understanding," and "Love" as names of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Nicholas holds to the orthodox theological doctrine that the Son is *eternally begotten* from the Father. Thus, the Father always understands Himself through the Son.
  27. In this sentence I am reading (at 1 2:9) "quin" in place of "quoniam"—as does the Paris edition.
  28. Acts 17:28.
  29. Ephesians 3:15.
  30. E.g., *Compendium* 6 (end of 18).

31. "... rather than the converse": i.e., rather than the Divine Being's being named by the names of created things.
32. Genesis 2:19-20.
33. Here (at **1 7:1**) I am surmising "eodem" in place of "eo".
34. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, 54.
35. Augustine, in *Confessions* XII, 6 (*PL* 32:828) calls formless matter *prope nihil*.
36. I Corinthians 1:24.
37. I Corinthians 12:3.
38. Ephesians 3:17-18.
39. Cf. I John 4:16. See Sermon IV (**3 5**).
40. Colossians 2:9.
41. Psalms 144:3 (145:3).
42. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 4.
43. The Latin here ("Infinita essentia est actu omnia, quae esse possunt") makes clear that Nicholas's point is that God, who is Infinite Being, is *actually* all things that *can be*. That is, his point is not simply that God is all that *He* can be. See *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 4 (**11**) and *De Posses* 7.
44. I Corinthians 15:28.
45. Wisdom 8:1.
46. Psalms 112:5 (113:5) and 122:1 (123:1).
47. Romans 2:11.
48. Here (at **2 5:4**) I am surmising "Dei" in place of "Deus". The Latin sentence is malformed.
49. Psalms 138:8 (139:8).
50. Hebrews 13:5. Josue (Joshua) 1:5. At **2 5:7** of the printed Latin text, I am reading, with the mss., "derelinquis" in place of "derelinques".
51. I Corinthians 15:22.
52. Note Hebrews 1:9. Osee (Hosea) 9:15.
53. Ephesians 3:19.
54. I John 3:2.
55. Here (at **3 0:3**) I am reading (with the Vulgate) "quae" in place of Nicholas's "quam".
56. Ephesians 3:20-21.
57. Here (at **3 0:10**) I am reading "quae" in place of Nicholas's "quam".

**Quaecumque Scripta Sunt\***  
("Whatever Things Were Written ...")  
[December 5, 1456; preached in Brixen]

[1] "Whatever things were written were written for our learning ..."¹  
(Romans 15 and in the reading of the epistle of the Sunday mass).

The Apostle [Paul] taught that each one [of us] ought to please his neighbor unto good, for edification, and that Christ pleased not Himself but that, as it is written: "the reproaches of them that reproached You fell upon me."<sup>2</sup> (Thus spoke the Prophet—in the person of Christ—to God.) Afterwards, [the Apostle] added: "For whatever things were written ...," etc.—as if to say: that which was written about Christ, viz., that He pleased not Himself but bore the weakness of others, [instructs us that] we, too, who are stronger, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.<sup>3</sup> [2] Moreover, note that it is the opinion of the Apostle that although some things were written about Christ, nevertheless they were written for our learning. For Christ's every action serves as our instruction. And the things that were written about Christ describe a perfect man. And so, from those things we ought to learn in which way to be perfect.

[3] The rational soul, which is like a divine seed, was implanted in Adam, or earth, in order to grow and to be perfected. And so, to Abraham our father—in whom humanity began to have the use of reason and in whom humanity submitted itself to God through faith (as a student [submits himself] to a teacher)—God said: "Walk before me, and be perfect."<sup>4</sup> From that time on, humanity made progress and in Christ arrived at a perfection of the role of teacher. Christ taught us that our perfection consists in imitating God the Father. Therefore, Scripture perfects. [4] Indeed, [the Apostle Paul] speaks as follows: "Whatever things were written were written for our learning, in order that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures we might have hope." We see that Paul indicates that two things are contained in Sacred Scripture: viz., patience and consolation. And this [containment occurs] in order that we might have hope. For since this life (in which God spared not His own Son)<sup>5</sup> is not without turmoil, we are taught in order that we may conduct ourselves patiently and may make a virtue of necessity and, in so doing, may follow the perfect men Job and the others, about whom it is written [in Scripture]. And [we are taught] in

order that we may, especially, follow Him who is the Perfection of those who are perfect, viz., Christ, who when He was evilly treated opened not His mouth.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, [we are taught in order that] the Scriptural passage regarding the patience of the saints<sup>7</sup> might be, for us, instruction in patience and in the way in which the saints had this patience.

[5] Likewise, let us further consult the Scriptural passage, which after the mention of patience mentions consolation, as in the case of Job and the others, but especially as in the case of Christ; for “on account of this [patient, humble obedience] God exalted Christ and gave Him a name that is above every other name.”<sup>8</sup> From these Scriptural passages we are taught that those who have greater patience expect the greater consolation. Thus, because of the consolation, we will exhibit patience with equanimity; and so, from patience and consolation we shall have the hope of obtaining the reward of saints.

[6] Patience is a virtue which, according to Tully,<sup>9</sup> consists in the fact that over an extended period of time one endures with equanimity difficult and dreadful things because of usefulness and honorableness. Therefore, patience is present amid hardships; and although, properly speaking, patience is a forbearing of harm that is inflicted from an external source, nevertheless it can also have to do with hardship which the old man<sup>10</sup> inflicts, since it [also] concerns temptations that arise from the flesh. [7] For man is of a rational and an animal nature; and the one is from above and the other from below. Accordingly, man is, as it were, of fire and of water. Insofar as he is animal, he is like water; and insofar as he is immaterial, he is like fire. Accordingly, in the order of nature [fire and water] are opposed [to each other]; but with respect to man’s constitution they are united. Hence, man is a union of natures that have in themselves different laws and motions. Yet, this union, or love, is in continual conflict. And so, the virtue that pacifies the conflict is called patience. [8] It is a virtue for the following reason: the soul loves the body; and when the soul cannot please the body with regard to bodily desires but, rather, resists the body—which it loves—lest by satisfying the desire of the sensory life the soul lose the rational life: then the soul comports itself patiently. For the soul suffers because it cannot satisfy the one it loves. Thus, when the law of reason commands things that are vexations to the flesh, and when the observer of the law inflicts this vexation on his own body, [doing so, however,] with good intent: then he acts virtuously.

[9] Patience is a virtue by means of which a man governs himself. As our Teacher says: “In your patience you shall possess your souls.”<sup>11</sup> Patience can, not unfittingly, be spoken of as knowing how to suffer. Now, consolation coincides with sorrow, even as Christ said that the saints’ sorrow would be turned into joy.<sup>12</sup> For sorrow contains within itself joy. Unless in the one who is patient there were joyous consolation, [patience] would not be a virtue. Patience is a noble kind of overcoming, for he-who-bears-with-patience overcomes and plunges the enemies’ spears into the enemies’ hearts. The-one-who-bears-with-patience conquers the enemy, demons, and himself. [10] The patient soul is like a salamander, which is nourished by the fire of tribulation; and it is like an ostrich, swallowing down a piece of iron; and it is like a piece of gold placed in mortar, where it is purified. Gregory says: “we can be martyrs if we truly keep patience in mind.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the patience that is written about and the consolation which is subsequently mentioned teach us that we ought to have confidence in our attaining the reward.

[11] The text [under consideration] can also be read with a different punctuation, so that there is said “Whatever things were written for our learning ...,” so that then, after a punctuation-mark has been made, there is added “... were written in order that through patience and the consolation ...,” etc.<sup>14</sup> Thus, by means of the punctuation-mark the universal [clause] “whatever things ... for our learning” is modified. And, in this case, [the referent] can be only Sacred Scripture, which was written for Christians’ learning; and the height of learning is to arrive at true hope by way of patience and consolation. Now, when the Gospel and the sacred books of the Bible speak of *Scripture*, they speak only of the writing that is contained in the canon of the Bible. And if the intent [of a Biblical writer] is [to speak] of another writing, then that [other writing] is *specified*—as Paul in Acts 17 says “... as certain of your poets [stated] ...,” etc.<sup>15</sup> [12] Paul prays subsequently that God, the Giver of patience and of solace, grant to the Romans to be of one mind in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ—[grant it] in order that they with one mind and one mouth might glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup> {Unanimity is the rule of Christ’s disciples. (John 13: “In this respect all know that you are my disciples: viz., if you love one another.”<sup>17</sup> “For we, being many, are one body in Christ” (Romans 12).<sup>18</sup> And when we are gathered together, we more readily obtain what we seek. (Machabees 3: “The assembly was gathered as a large number ready for battle in

order to pray and to seek mercy.”<sup>19</sup> Matthew 18: “If two or three of you shall agree . . .” etc.<sup>20</sup> } [Paul] uses the words “with one mouth” because every creature obeys God, to whom it gives honor. (For [God] is worthy of receiving glory and honor, because He created all things (Apocalypse 4).)<sup>21</sup> *A fortiori* [God ought to be glorified by all] rational men, who are supposed to imitate angels, who do not cease giving glory to God (Apocalypse 7).<sup>22</sup>

[13] Moreover, do not neglect to note that God is the Giver of patience (of which the Apostle intends to speak) and likewise of solace. Accordingly, the Apostle is not speaking about that patience of which Tully [wrote] in his *On Rhetoric*;<sup>23</sup> rather, he is speaking about that divine patience which motivates a man to desire<sup>24</sup> hardships unto the end that the virtue of patience may increase in him in order that he may be proved. And together with this patience solace increases—as the Apostles went out from the council (when the sentence of death was brought against them), rejoicing because they were worthy to suffer reproaches for the name of Jesus.<sup>25</sup> [14] And because [Paul] prayed for like-mindedness (“... to be of one mind according to Jesus Christ”<sup>26</sup>)—i.e., prayed that they conduct themselves in the manner in which Christ conducts Himself toward them—he adds: “wherefore receive one another as Christ has received you”<sup>27</sup> (i.e., he added that one [person] have concern for another). And in this regard there ought to be no difference between those who have come to faith from Judaism and those who have come from paganism; rather, each Christian ought to care about the good of his brother. [Paul] declares<sup>28</sup> that for the sake of the truth of the promise that was made to the Jewish patriarchs Christ came as one sent to them. Christ preached to them, and He received them<sup>29</sup> in order to honor God; but out of mercy He admitted the Gentiles to the same [fellowship].

[15] And note that Paul cites the Psalm: “Therefore, I will give You glory among the Gentiles.”<sup>30</sup> Christ gives glory to God the Father among the Gentiles, as also among believing Jews. Therefore, Christ, i.e., His mystical body, is what manifests God and praises Him. Therefore, no nation except the Christian nation rightly manifests God. (A Christian nation is said to *be* Christ because in Him they *are* Him.)<sup>31</sup> Christ manifests; Christ praises; Christ is rewarded—just as if a military general, under whose command the army serves, were to say that he does the things that the army does. [16] And so, note that the prophets took on the person of Christ in representing Him when they



prophesied. For in this way the prophet who said “I will give You glory among the Gentiles” said—in the person of Christ, whom he saw from afar—that he would praise God his Father among the Gentiles. Understand in a similar way the words of the other prophets: [e.g.,] “I have given my face to smiters”<sup>32</sup> and “O God, my God, look [upon me] . . .” etc.<sup>33</sup> And consider, with respect to all the prophets when they assume the person of Christ, that they speak as those who represent Christ—as if the Spirit of Christ then possessed them and as if through them the Spirit of Christ spoke.

[17] The Apostle [Paul] concludes his prayer: “May the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, so that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>34</sup> You know that God is a God of patience, a God of solace, and a God of hope. God is the one who alone can fill souls with all peace and joy in believing. For faith is a gift of God.<sup>35</sup> The fact that we believe the truth is not an individual gift of God, because *reason* cannot dissent from truth. But the fact that I believe the one who speaks the truth is a gift of God and is a grace. I say “the one speaking the truth,” which truth I do not recognize of myself. For I come to the truth through the word of the speaker; I would not come to this truth unless there were given to me by God that I believe the speaker.<sup>36</sup> [18] [Paul] says next: “. . . so that you may abound in hope.”<sup>37</sup> For [hope is] from the peaceful unity of faith.<sup>38</sup> That is, where faith is filled with peace and joy, it is perfect and vital and [in-]formed [by love]. Herefrom follows the abundance of hope. And the power of the Holy Spirit is present; for faith increases the power of the soul, because faith is the power of the Holy Spirit, whose gift it is. (Romans 8: The Spirit helps our infirmity and asks [on our behalf]—i.e., causes [us] to ask . . ., etc.)<sup>39</sup>

[19] “Whatever things were written were written for our learning.” Bonaventure in his *Illuminations* likens Scripture to water. According to him the vision of an intellect that has been made learned by means of Scripture is what is meant by “the work of the third day,” when God divided the water from dry land and called the gatherings of the waters *oceans* and saw that [the work] was good and said “Let the earth bring forth the green herb.”<sup>40</sup> For the fountain that waters the Paradise is Scripture, which waters the earth, wherein is the seed of the Tree-of-life, i.e., of the rational spirit.

[20] If we pay attention, then [we see that] Scripture is as water, which by means of the sun’s heat causes there to come more quickly

into actuality that which is present in the potency of the seed that is sown in the earth. And just as the heat of the sun by means of water causes the seed to be fruitful, so God's Spirit, which is called the Spirit of Wisdom, by means of Scripture causes the intellectual seed to be fruitful. For as water is a suitable intermediary between the sun's heat and the earth—and, thus, water is above and below the firmament,<sup>41</sup> so that it is a suitable intermediary that cooperates with the warmth of the sun for enlivening the seed—so, too, Scripture [is an intermediary]. [21] Hence, we ought to take note in Scripture of the fact that the invisible ray of the Sun of Justice<sup>42</sup> and of Wisdom was rendered diffuse on account of our infirmity—we who cannot stand to view it in its brightness.<sup>43</sup> Thus, we are able to apprehend [it only] by means of Scripture's mirror and Scripture's symbolisms and its signs and figures—even as the substantial form that perfects a thing is not visible to the sensory eye and, thus, shines forth in a visible befiguring, so that in this way it is attained in the best way it can be.

[22] Therefore, the Apostle rightly said in II Timothy 3 that a Scriptural-text, being divinely inspired, is useful for perfecting the man of God.<sup>44</sup> And the Jews rightly believed that they had from Scripture the life of the soul. Yet, they did not understand this life to consist in the Spirit-of-Wisdom that was hidden in them, viz., the Spirit of Jesus. And so, our Teacher sent them back to search the Scriptures, [and] He revealed that those Scriptures that contain the word of life are about Him (John 5).<sup>45</sup>

[23] Moreover, consider that Holy Scripture is as water that is impregnated by the celestial spirit for the fruitfulness of the earth. Nature has made water to be a means whereby the generation that is due to the influence of the heavens can occur on earth. By analogy, the intellectual nature [makes] the Scriptures [to be a means of fruitfulness for the intellectual spirit]. Hence, the Scriptures are from the intellectual nature's art in order that one intellect can impart to another the inspiration of the divine ray, [doing so] for the glory of God and the perfection of the rational nature. [24] For [the art of] writing is a means whereby a concept is manifest for the instruction of men (both present and absent) of the past, the present, and the future. For it is necessary that the intellect be informed by means of some experience, so that it becomes fit for inquiring. For example, if I have a seed, I cannot know what will come from it if it is planted, unless experience in the past shows me this or unless it shows someone else who teaches me this.

[25] Man cannot foresee future things except on the basis of a knowledge of things past. And so, a knowledge of things past is necessary for man—just as Ptolemy from the observations of Abrachis and Tymochardis regarding the movement of the planets discovered conjectural rules concerning their future movements;<sup>46</sup> and so on. Therefore, it is necessary that man know past things (and know those things which have been observed for a long time) in order more assuredly to make inferences about future things. And for the following reason the first men lived long lives (as Josephus reports in the *Book of Antiquities*):<sup>47</sup> [viz.,] so that from the long experience of 600 years they could investigate the movement-of-the-heavens and other [phenomena] and so that their experience could become known to their descendants. [26] The assistance of writing was given (by means of which assistance one era is linked to another) in order that by this implement man might in a “mirror,” so to speak, see past things and things which are behind him—things from which he profits. And by means of this assistance, viz., writing, one who is physically dead speaks to one who is living and one who is absent speaks to one who is present. For, assuredly, [writing] is a divine device whereby all eras and ages, and whereby the world’s learned men who have existed, and whereby divine illuminations and human inventions from earlier times, are still present to each intellect and still vital for the intellect’s perfection. For example, the spirit of Paul in his epistles lives on for our instruction. It teaches and perfects us by means of the writing. Something similar holds true as regards all other [writings].

[27] Therefore, whatever things were written for our learning were written in such a way (1) that we are therefrom certain that the spirit of the writer is of an immortal nature and (2) that the life of the spirit does not depend on the written characters but, on the contrary, this spirit gives [life] to the written characters, so that they are Paul’s epistle. The case is similar for all writings. Hence, we know that the intellectual spirit is not bound to the written character or to the paper or to a location. Accordingly, whatever things were written for our learning show that the one who is teaching us by means of the writing is an incorruptible spirit. [28] But from the different kinds of teaching we apprehend the different perfections of the [rational] spirits. For example, one teaching is crude and childish, another is more refined; but only in the teaching of Christ do we apprehend that the Spirit of Jesus is the most perfect Spirit of instruction-about-true-and-eternal-life. This Spirit does not teach by means of human *surmisings* but

teaches on the basis of a very certain *seeing*. For those things which Jesus's Spirit saw to be with God the Father, our Originator and Creator—these things are revealed by Him.

[29] Hence, all the teachings of whatsoever others, come from hearing and are surmisings. Only Christ's teaching comes from seeing and, thus, is true and certain; and so, it is unchangeable and eternal. For heaven and earth (as He says) shall pass away, but His words shall not.<sup>48</sup> The teachings of all others [besides Christ] are surmises about the teachings of Christ. Among these other teachings there is discrepancy and is unsteadfastness. For surmise partakes of truth to greater and lesser degrees; but it is not truth. About this fact the Apostle speaks elegantly in I Corinthians 1, [when he says], in particular, that the happiness-that-salvation-is is attained not by the prudence of the prudent but by the simplicity of faith, which is esteemed by the prudent of this world to be foolishness.<sup>49</sup> [30] Aristotle, not without reason, named [that] book of his which we call *The Book of Physics* "On What Has Been Heard about Physical Nature." [He did so] perhaps for the following reason: that he arrived at very strong certainty<sup>50</sup> only by means of surmising inferences, in the human manner. Hence, if you rightly discern, [you see that] Christ's instruction is a perfection that enfolds all instruction; for it is instruction about the reason for which God made the world.<sup>51</sup> No one ever doubted that every investigation centers on the Cause of things and that if that Cause were apprehended, then there would be had [the fulfillment of] every desire on the part of the intellect; there would be had the ultimate goal: rest and happiness.

[31] Therefore, that light of the Word of God illumines all instruction and is not confined. And all the things discovered by the philosophers have no light except from a partaking of that light [of the Word of God]. Hence, the saints' teachings, in which the light of Jesus's teachings is received, are not theirs but are Christ's; for the saints make known no other teachings than Christ's, which they have received. Therefore, just as in their teachings there live only the teachings of Christ, so in their spirit there lives only the Spirit of Jesus. Thus, Paul in this Chapter 15 [of Romans] admits that he can do nothing except that which Christ works in him.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, in the writings of Paul there lives the Spirit that is concealed in<sup>53</sup> him; and [concealed] in him is the Spirit-of-Jesus, the Author of life (even as in the teachings of a student of Plato's Plato the teacher [is present concealedly]).

[32] Regarding the fruitfulness of Scripture and its multiple senses, see Bonaventure, in the [afore-]mentioned place,<sup>54</sup> for he writes subtly. But in order today to minister to the common people something that will serve as needed food, let us by following Scripture's light, which illumines the darkness, investigate other sacred writers in terms of their writings on (1) uncreated foreknowledge, (2) innate conscience, (3) inspired knowledge, and (4) incarnate wisdom.

[33] *About the first [topic], the Book of life:* Luke 10: "Rejoice, for your names are written . . .," etc.<sup>55</sup> We ought to see to it that our names are written in the Book of life. For this Book is a Book of joy and of an immortal Kingdom. In this Book are written not [the names of] the lowly but [the names of] kings; for in it God has written [the names of] all those who will co-reign with His Son. Woe to those whose [names are] not written there, because their [names] are in the Book of death! And know that in the Book of life are written down [the names of] those whose life the life of Jesus characterizes. Therefore, there are [the names of] no sinners there, because Christ committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.<sup>56</sup> [34] It is evident that usurers, fornicators, adulterers, and other [such] ones are not named in the Book of life. Rather, their names are blotted out of God's memory. They themselves are cast out of God's memory (which is life) into outer darkness. (Apocalypse 20: Whosoever's [name] was not found in the Book of life, he was cast into the pool of fire.<sup>57</sup> Those whose [names] are not written in the Book of predestination are written in the Book of reprobation. (Isaias 65: "Behold, it is written before me. I will not be silent but will render and repay into their bosom their iniquities.")<sup>58</sup> Behold, the fact that [their names] have been written shows that they are not so dead that they do not exist but that they are damned.

[35] *About the second [topic]:* Romans 2: "When the Gentiles, who do not have the Law . . .," etc., "they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, with their conscience bearing witness to them."<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, no one can excuse himself on the grounds that he does not know the Scriptures, since he has them in his heart. For just as the Ten Commandments are on the tablets in the Ark [of the Covenant] in the Tabernacle, so the natural law is in the conscience. Conscience is in the soul; the soul is in the body. But conscience is destroyed by sin; it is repaired by grace. (Hebrews 8: "I will place my laws in their hearts and will inscribe them in their minds.")<sup>60</sup> [36] In

the book of conscience is written not only the natural law but also what is done in accordance with it.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, those things which are done in accordance with the law of nature are written [in conscience] with a golden pen; and those things which [are done] against [the law of nature are written in conscience] with an iron pen. (Jeremias 17: “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond”<sup>62</sup> (that is, [is written] on an obstinate heart)). And on the Day of Judgment all will read that writing, because the reason for the condemnation will be known to all.

[37] *About the third [topic]*: II Timothy 3: “All Scripture, inspired of God, ...,” etc.<sup>63</sup> Comply with these Scriptures in living rightly—if you wish for [eternal] life. {(Luke 10: “ ‘Master, what shall I do to have eternal life?’ Jesus said: ‘What is written in the Law? ...’ ” etc.<sup>64</sup>) Woe to the transgressors of the Law! (Galatians 3: “It is written: ‘cursed is everyone who does not abide in all the things which are written in the Book of the Law and who will not do them.’ ”<sup>65</sup>)} Note that [Paul] uses the word “inspired”; hereby it is evident that [Scripture] was sent from Heaven. And so, just as exiles and pilgrims are consoled by letters sent to them from their homeland by their loved-ones, so [Christ’s] beloved-ones [receive consolation] from Divine Scripture. However, the following is a sign that they do not belong to the Heavenly Homeland: [viz., that] they have no interest in the Scriptures and do not comply with them.

[38] *About the fourth [topic]*: Psalms [44]: “My tongue is a scribe’s pen ...,” etc.<sup>66</sup> The Holy Spirit is designated by [the symbolism of] the tongue and by the [symbolism of] the pen, by means of which pen the Word (who was conceived in the womb [of Mary]) is being written about. And the scroll that Ezechiel saw:<sup>67</sup> it was written-on inside and out ... , etc. Who could know how much wisdom there is on the inside and how many examples are written on the outside? Nonetheless, we ought always to read [this scroll]; and we shall find [described] in it the lamentation [that is] in the world, the song [that is] in Heaven, and the woe [that will occur] on the [Day of] Judgment.<sup>68</sup>

## NOTES TO *Quaecumque Scripta Sunt*

\* Sermon CCLIV.

1. Romans 15:4: “For what things soever were written were written for our learning in order that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

2. Romans 15:3. Psalms 68:10 (69:9).

3. Romans 15:1.

4. Genesis 17:1. In the printed edition of the Latin text, at 3:6, I am regarding “ideo”, which some manuscripts omit, as deleted.

5. Romans 8:32.

6. Isaias (Isaiah) 53:7.

7. Apocalypse (Revelation) 14:12.

8. Philippians 2:9. Not an exact quotation.

9. Cicero, *De Inventione Rhetorica*, II, 163.

10. Ephesians 4:22.

11. Luke 21:19.

12. John 16:20.

13. Not an exact quotation. Gregory the Great, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Homily XXXV, 7 (*PL* 76:1263 D).

14. “... in order that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4. Note the difference between (a) “*Quaecumque enim scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt: ut per patientiam, et consolationem Scripturarum spem habeamus*” and (b) “*Quaecumque enim scripta sunt ad nostram doctrinam, scripta sunt ut per patientiam ...*,” etc.

15. Acts 17:28.

16. Romans 15:5-6.

17. John 13:35. Not an exact quotation.

18. Romans 12:5.

19. I Machabees 3:44. Not an exact quotation.

20. Matthew 18:19-20. Not an exact quotation.

21. Apocalypse (Revelation) 4:11.

22. Apocalypse (Revelation) 7:11.

23. See n. 9 above.

24. Here (at 1 3:5) I am reading, with *Codex Vaticanus Latinus* 1245, “*desideret*” in place of the printed Latin text’s “*desiderent*”.

25. Acts 15:41.

26. Romans 15:5.

27. Romans 15:7.

28. Romans 15:8.

29. Here (at 1 4:12) I am reading “*eos*” in place of “*vos*”.

30. Psalms 17:50 (18:49). Romans 15:9.

31. Here (at 1 5:7) I am reading the manuscript’s word “*id*” as an abbreviation for “*idem*”. See *Codex Vaticanus Latinus* 1245.

32. Isaias (Isaiah) 50:6. Not an exact quotation.

33. Psalms 21:2 (22:1).

34. Romans 15:13.
35. Ephesians 2:8.
36. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Manichaei*, V, 6 (PL 42:176): “Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.”
37. Romans 15:13.
38. “... ex pace fidei...” Nicholas uses “De Pace Fidei” as the title of one of his treatises.
39. Romans 8:26.
40. Genesis 1:9-13. Saint Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron sive Illuminationes Ecclesiae*, XIII, 3 (Vol. V of *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi, 1891), p. 388<sup>a</sup>. An English translation of this passage may be found in *The Works of Bonaventure*, Vol. V: *Collations on the Six Days*, translated by José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1970), p. 184.
41. Genesis 1:7.
42. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
43. The ray is invisible because it is too resplendent for the human eye to gaze upon. See Cusa’s *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* 12.
44. II Timothy 3:16-17. The Apostle says that *all* Scripture ....
45. John 5:39.
46. Abrachis (i.e., Hipparchus, ca. 150 B.C.) and Tymochardis (or Timocharis, ca. 295 B.C.) were Greek astronomers whose observations were used by Ptolemy. See Paul Kunitzsch, *Der Almagest. Die Syntaxis Mathematica des Claudius Ptolemäus in arabisch-lateinischer Überlieferung* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974), p. 160.
47. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, I, 3, 9 (p. 18 of Vol. I in the series *Complete Works of Josephus* (New York: Bigelow, Brown, & Co., n.d.). Revised from Havercamp’s translation. (No reviser named.) See also Genesis 5. Note also *The Latin Josephus: Introduction and Text: The Antiquities: Books I – V*, edited by Franz Blatt (Kopenhagen: University of Aarhus Press, 1958 [in the series *Acta Julandica*, Vol. XXX], pp. 136-137 (= *Antiquitates*, I, 3, 9)
48. Matthew 24:35 and elsewhere.
49. I Corinthians 1:19-24.
50. Re Nicholas’s term “infallibilitas” and its meaning see pp. 10-12 of my *Hugh of Balma on Mystical Theology: A Translation and an Overview of His De Theologia Mystica*. (Minneapolis: Banning, 2002).
51. Hebrew 1:2.
52. Romans 15:17-18.
53. Here (at 3 I:13) I am reading, with the Paris edition, “in eo latens” in place of “eo latens”.
54. See n. 40 above. Saint Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, *op. cit.*, XIII, 2.
55. “... that your names are written in Heaven.” Luke 10:20.
56. I Peter 2:22. Isaias (Isaiah 53:9).
57. Apocalypse (Revelation) 20:15.
58. Isaias (Isaiah) 65:6-7.
59. Romans 2: 14-15: “When the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by



nature those things that are in the Law: these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves. They show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them.”

60. Hebrews 8:10.

61. Here (at **3 6:2**) I am reading “quod” (with *Codex Vaticanus Latinus* 1245) in place of the printed Latin text’s “quodam modo”. Moreover, I follow *Codex Magdeburg* 38 in adding “secundum”. Thus, I am reading “... quod secundum eam fit.”

62. Jeremiah (Jeremiah) 17:1.

63. II Timothy 3:16.

64. Luke 10:25-26. Not an exact quotation.

65. Galatians 3:10. Not an exact quotation.

66. Psalms 44:2 (45:1).

67. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 2:9.

63. *Loc. cit.*

**Non Diligamus Verbo neque Lingua\***  
(“Let Us Love Not in Word or with Lip-Service . . .”)  
[June 8, 1455; preached in Stegen (near Bruneck)]

[1] “Let us love not in word or with lip-service but in deed and in truth.”<sup>1</sup> ([Passage found] in [the reading] of the epistle for Sunday.)<sup>2</sup> John says in the canonical first epistle, Chapter 3: “Marvel not, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, for we love the brethren.”<sup>3</sup> He says later, in Chapter 5, that the entire world is situated in wickedness.<sup>4</sup> And because true Christians are not of this world<sup>5</sup> (although they are in the world), it is not surprising if the world hates them.<sup>6</sup> For as Jesus says, the world loves that which is its own.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, it is not strange—Jesus says to His apostles—if the world hates you, because it previously hated me.<sup>8</sup>

[2] Now, from the fact that the world hates us, we can know that we have passed from death unto life, for we love the brethren.<sup>9</sup> For this love is a clear sign that we are sons of God, because, as [John] says earlier,<sup>10</sup> in Chapter 1: “he who loves his brother abides in the light.”<sup>11</sup> Keep in mind [the following]: when the world hates us who are Christians (even though we love as brothers those who hate us), then we know that we have passed from death unto life. He who does not love abides in death. For example, everyone who hates his brother is a murderer,<sup>12</sup> and such a one does not have eternal life abiding in him.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, if hatred [works] death, then love works life. But it is necessary that love be perfect, i.e., necessary that we love our neighbor as God [loves] us—even as, also, consummate hatred enfolds murder. For in the will of him who hates is [the intent] that the one-whom-he-hates not live. So, then, this [hate-filled one] is a murderer, even as he who lusts after his neighbor’s wife has already committed adultery in his heart, as says the Savior.<sup>14</sup> But Jesus, who is both God and a man loved us with perfect love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to do likewise, viz., lay down our life for our brothers.<sup>15</sup> And when we act as we are obliged to act—[obliged] since Christ’s every action is our instruction and since we ought<sup>16</sup> to walk as Christ walked (as [John] says earlier<sup>17</sup>)—then we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we have perfect love for our neighbor.

[3] Assuredly, he who loves his brother, with whom he has a common Father, viz., God—[he who loves him] because of the fact

that he is his brother [and who loves him] even if the brother hate him—loves God exceedingly. For in that case he loves him on account of God, who is the Father of both; for the love of the brother *qua* brother is related to the Father. And when, like Christ, someone loves even his enemy to such an extent that he dies for him because he is his brother, then he especially loves the Father; for he loves the brother only on account of the Father; therefore, he loves the Father more greatly. Accordingly, he receives the reward of life if he dies for his brother's sake. Therefore, he who loves his brother perfectly has rightly passed from death unto life (for such love is as strong as is death);<sup>18</sup> and so, he [who loves perfectly] has the [same] reward as if he had undergone death for his brother.

However, consider the fact that John does not say “neighbor” but says “brother”. For although a neighbor can be called a brother, nevertheless John asserted that a *brother* (rather than a neighbor) is to be loved perfectly—[asserted it] so that we might see that in the love of a brother the love of God the Father is contained antecedently. He who lays down his life (i.e., his temporal life) for his brother overcomes the world. For he chooses to please God the Father, so that he saves his brother<sup>19</sup> even if he must lose his own life thereby. Such a man, by losing this [earthly] life—[a life] called animal from “*anima*”<sup>20</sup>—finds eternal [life]. Hence, note that we are under obligation to lay down our life for our brothers (i.e., for the salvation of our brothers). For in order that [their respective soul] not perish eternally, we ought to undergo temporal death—in the example of Christ, who died temporally in order that we not die eternally.

[4] Next, [John] adds another stage of love, when he says: he who has the goods of this world and who sees that his brother is in need and who closes his heart to him: how is it that the love of God abides in him?<sup>21</sup> For the goods of this world ought not to be preferred to the needs of a brother. Tight-fistedness with regard to the goods of the world, when one's brother is in need [of them], is an evident sign that the [tight-fisted one] is a miser and has not renounced the world. Instead, it is evident that his soul clings to the goods of the world. The law of love does not command that I should give my life in order that my *neighbor* not die *temporally*; rather, in order that [my neighbor] not die *eternally*, I ought rather to choose temporal death [for myself].<sup>22</sup> Next, the law [of love] commands that lest my brother die temporally, I ought rather to choose to lose [those] of this world's goods without which I will be able to continue to live temporally. When I do not do

this, then it is a sign that my life, which I am not required to forfeit [through my sacrifice], clings to the goods of the world, with the consequence that I cannot abandon them. Hence, it is evident that I am a miser and that my soul is glued to the goods of [this] world; and I worship those goods as constituting my soul's happiness. Therefore, I am an idolater; and in me is not love (*caritas*) of God but love (*amor*) of the world's goods.<sup>23</sup> Consider the fact that [John] infers that love for God is not present in one who shuts up his heart to a brother. So if one does *not* shut up [his heart], then love for God is present in his love for the brother—as was said. [5] Hence, [John] concludes [by] saying: “My little children, let us love not in word or with lip-service but in deed and in truth.”<sup>24</sup> For he who says that he loves but who does not evidence it in his deeds does not love in truth. Rather, he is a liar and serves as a soldier not under Truth but under the father of lying and wickedness;<sup>25</sup> and he will not see eternal life.

[6] The Gospel instructs us, concerning a dinner, how it is that we are invited to a dinner that has been prepared by a [fellow]-human being [*homo*].<sup>26</sup> For unless a [fellow]-human being prepared and invited, we would not be motivated [to come]. For a human being is motivated only with respect to community with [other] human beings;<sup>27</sup> for [man] is a political and civic animal that delights in community [with others]. But community comes under a single species; for without oneness there is no community. Therefore, the natural desire for community comes under a oneness of species. Accordingly, Jesus, who has made a dinner of eternal partaking, is a man who has prepared so much food that all men would be able to be fed. Hence, He has invited many;<sup>28</sup> an indeterminate multitude has been invited. Now, it can<sup>29</sup> be understood that they are *invited* only if they are invited by *someone*. The Word of God, by which our spirit lives,<sup>30</sup> put on human nature in order to be able to invite man to a meal. [The situation is] as if some new and precious branch-of-learning (*ars*) were to take on human form in order to be able to summon men to its content-of-learning.

[7] Hence, [the parable] describes how it is that those who are invited—those who are entangled in the temporal affairs of this world—make excuses. No one who serves God as a soldier is entangled in worldly affairs;<sup>31</sup> and, conversely, he who entangles himself in the affairs of this world does not pay attention to the things that are of God. If a student's mind is bound to carnal desire, then the student does not hear, with the ear of his mind, the words of the teacher; for he is

mentally distracted and is somewhere else [with his thoughts]. The concern that is in a man for the things that he desires draws his mind toward that which is desired, and it binds [him], with a strong bond, to that desired object. By way of illustration: one who focuses on visible features cannot easily understand a speaker, because his attention is not free but is fixed on visible features.

By way of [further] example: In the case of intense deliberation the mind takes on the form of that upon which it is deliberating; and it cannot be drawn away to other [objects of deliberation] unless it is first freed from the antecedent form—just as matter is not suited for receiving another form except by means of a discarding of its antecedent form. Therefore, in the case of intense and serious deliberation, the bond of love that arises between the soul and the loved-object that is being considered binds together the mind and that object. As Paul says: “he who is joined to a harlot is made one body with her; and he who is joined to God is made one spirit with God.”<sup>32</sup> For with regard to God nothing can be considered other than spirit; and so, the loving mind is joined to Spirit, which is God. But with regard to a harlot nothing is considered other than body; thus, mind is made carnal. Hence, it is evident that those who are in this world and who walk amid its delights and who are interested in these delights are such that, although they are called away from the world’s meal-of-delights unto the feast of eternal life, they do not hear the one inviting [them]. Rather, they make excuses, on the ground that they have things to do—[things] which are better than the things to which they are called. For they are saying that they are to be excused, at a time when they are not foregoing that which is preferable [to them].

[8] Now, the Gospel mentions worldly transactions that are undertaken with very great concern<sup>33</sup>—for example, as regards pride of dominion (e.g., in acquiring a farm) or as regards greediness (e.g., in the case of five yoke of oxen) or as regards the desire of the flesh (e.g., in the case of [taking] a wife). The Gospel states that all [these transactors] asked to be excused, because of preoccupation, [from coming to the dinner]. For one bought a farm; another, five yoke of oxen; a third married. (That is, according to common parlance, [the latter] procured a wife. For in that contract by which a husband gives himself to a wife and the wife [gives herself] to a husband; the husband procures a wife with his own body, because he gives himself in exchange for her; and, conversely, the wife is said to procure a husband, because she gives herself in exchange for him. And so, neither

of them retains proprietary-right over his own body but transfers it to the other—as, in a purchase, property or dominion is transferred.) Hence, in these business-transactions (which cannot be engaged in without mind, for business-transactions require a mind free [of clutter and preoccupation]) the mind is occupied by the business-dealings and eagerly longs to find out whether it has made a favorable transaction. [The situation is] as if one were to say: since I have made a purchase, then inasmuch as someone strongly desires to see what he has purchased, I am excused if I am interested in seeing it, probing it, and making use of it. Because, then, there results from a business-transaction [the outcome] that [the transaction] renders the transactor so very much concerned and intent: these business-dealings, which are especially prepossessing, do not permit [the transactor] to hear the voice of the inviter [to the feast].

[9] Now, the one who has prepared the dinner wills that it be eaten.<sup>34</sup> At the appropriate time he sends his heralds to summon the invitees. We are invited [to Christ's feast] when we are regenerated through the washing of baptism and through faith. Through servants we are invited prior to our death, prior to our demise; and so, all care is taken. But, at the same time, we all hide behind excuses—we who attend to the engrossing tasks of this world. But those who live in hamlets and villages and who are poor and weak: since they are not transacting business but since, rather, the world has become of no interest to them, they are suited to be led into [the dinner]. And there is no need of an invitation and a summoning, because temporal delights, which they lack, do not have a grip on them. And these individuals can be said to be teachable by God, [and] theirs is the Kingdom of God. (Nevertheless, the dinner is prepared not only for them but also for those who have not yet entered into the City of [this] world<sup>35</sup> but who are still in the cradle [or playpen], as are those baptized ones who have not yet come to use reason or who, if they *have*, have not [yet] sinned actually.) Such ones also come to the dinner but are not induced through rational persuasion but are impelled by the simplicity of faith. For faith does not guide by means of persuasion and reason; rather, it impels<sup>36</sup> [one]—in spite of his not understanding—to undertake the journey. And so, there are those who, in this last way, are impelled; and there are those who are not yet entangled in the delights of the world-community; and there are those who have abandoned the world's delights and are brought in. But entangled in the world's delights are those who, when invited and called, make excuses. And because they adduce excuses,

none of these who are called come to the dinner (as the Gospel states).<sup>37</sup>

[10] Please note that eternal life, which is consummate happiness, is always expressed in the Gospel in terms of the sending of God's word into the soul—[expressed], for example, through the sowing of seed in good earth<sup>38</sup> or through the nourishment of a prepared dinner<sup>39</sup> or through a treasure in a field<sup>40</sup> or through a finding of a pearl,<sup>41</sup> etc. Hence, our soul makes itself capable of the grace of receiving into itself the word of God; and the word, once planted in the soul as in good earth, bears fruit. A seed that is in the earth draws unto itself, from the earth, that by which it is nourished and by means of which it grows; suitable nourishment is converted into the vegetative life of the seed's nature. Similarly, the word of God draws from the soul what is suitable to itself, viz., the intellectual power, which is converted to the divine life of the word. And [the word] bears fruit in accordance with the soul's degree of goodness. Furthermore, note that our soul, in comparison with [God's] word, is called *earth*. Accordingly, the word of God is to the soul as the soul is to the body. For the soul is as the seed of life for the body, and it bears the good fruit of life in accordance with the condition of the body. Similarly, the word of God is the soul's seed-of-life, and it bears the good fruit-of-life in accordance with the condition of the soul. Now, the body has within it principles such that it can be enlivened. For otherwise it could not be brought to be actually alive—[brought] by the soul, which is alive actually and which brings into actuality the body's potentiality for being alive. Thus, [the soul] is the prime activator of the organic body, which has, potentially, an animal<sup>42</sup> life. In an analogous way, it must be the case that the word of God is the prime activator of a disposed soul, which potentially has divine life.

[11] Now, the disposition that is in the soul is called intellect. For the fact that the soul has the potency to receive the word-of-God (which is life) is due to the fact that the soul can understand. For if it could not understand, it would not be capable of receiving the word. Therefore, there is included in the soul a certain power, or potency, for a receiving of the word, or of wisdom. Hence, in the soul there are certain principles, even as in earth there are certain universal and inter-fused powers because of which earth is capable of receiving seed; and from these powers the seed draws nourishment and transfers the nourishment unto itself. Hence, from its own universal power the earth produces fruit. But there are thorns, thistles, and hay. (Hay is straw that

grows wild. For the earth produces from itself certain sheaves that grow wild; they are called hay, and they have a certain likeness to grain, but they are not food for the life of a rational animal but are food for beasts.) By analogy, the intellectual soul has a power that enfolds universal principles by means of which it unfolds the natural fruit of the branches-of-learning [*scientiarum*]. Now, if good seed is sown in the earth and if the earth is good, then in accordance with the nature of the seed [the earth] brings forth much good fruit. Hence, [analogously], in accordance with the seed of the word, [the intellectual soul] produces the fruit of the arts and the sciences. For example, from Plato's word—if it is received and preserved—[there comes] the fruit of Plato's knowledge, so that we may partake of Plato's intellect. And from Aristotle's word [there comes the fruit] of Aristotle's knowledge, so that we may conform ourselves to Aristotle's intellect. And so on. But from the word of God [there comes] a very perfect fruit: viz., an understanding of the most perfect Intelligible Being, viz., God.

[12] Moreover, consider [the following]: From the fact that our Teacher, Jesus, speaks the word of God as a seed, insofar as [the seed] falls into our soul: in the word that is received in the soul there is, in potentiality, that of which the seed is [a seed]. (By analogy, in the seed of a tree there is the tree, in potentiality.) Accordingly, in a receiving of God's word in the soul, there is received, in potentiality, the divine understanding [of that] of which the seed is [a seed]. Moreover, in order that a seed in the earth produce fruit, the seed must be activated, in order that the fruit of the seed be brought from potentiality into actuality. For example, the seed of a tree is activated to become like the tree from which it had its being a seed. And this [activation] is wrought by means of celestial heat, from which comes the activation, because [the activation] arises from the movement of the heavens. In a similar way: by means of divine warmth—i.e., by means of Love, or the Holy Spirit—the seed of God's word is activated to become like Him whose seed it is. Therefore, the word of the Son of God, when it becomes active, grows into a likeness of the Son of God.

[13] And consider that that very lofty theologian says [the following]: When the Son of God—He who is in us by His word, or seed—shall appear to us, then we shall be like Him.<sup>43</sup> It is as if the *form* of a tree's seed were an *intellectual seed* having an arboreal form (since the form of the tree of which it is a seed would be present in it). In that case, [the intellectual seed] would conform itself to this [arbo-



real form] by passing from potentiality to actuality; and this [transformation] would occur noticeably. Our intellect is like a universal seed for forms [*species*]; and when a certain form appears to it by means of perceptual images, then the intellect is “in-formed” and is made like that [form];<sup>44</sup> for [in regard to this form the universal seed] is brought, by the light of the active intellect, from potentiality unto actuality. But if the intellect, i.e., the power of the soul, is indued with a higher and supernatural power, viz., faith, and if the intellect takes into itself the word of God, then the universal seed for natural forms becomes a divine seed that is formed from the seed of God’s word. And so, the [universal] seed for created forms becomes a [divine] seed of the Creator of forms.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the word of God is a seed, and it turns into itself the intellectual power (which is a seed for forms) so that [that power] becomes a seed of the Form of forms.<sup>46</sup>

In the earth there is a universal power of seeds; and when a seed is sown in it, the seed turns that universal power into itself, so that the power which was earthly accords now with the nature of the seed that was sown in it. Let it be the case, then, that that seed which is strewn into earth is a seed for the fruit of all fruit and, hence, is the seed of all seeds. In that case, it would convert into itself all the seminal power of earth; for the power of that seed would occupy the whole of the earth and would diffuse itself throughout the entire power of earth. In an analogous way, the word of God, received by the soul of a believer, is diffused throughout his entire intellectual power; and it draws [that power] unto itself. And in this way intellect comes to be attracted into the word of God, or seed of God, so that it becomes like God, whose seed it has been made by the word.

[14] And note that our Teacher compared the rational soul—which is capable of receiving God’s word—to earth, from which seeds draw nutriment. But the nutriment is transformed into the nature of that which is nourished. Hence, the vegetative life, which makes what is potentially vegetable to be actually vegetable, furnishes the earth with plant life rather than the earth’s furnishing life. [The vegetative life] attracts in order to enliven; and by nature [earth] seeks to be enlivened. And so, it does not resist, but obeys, the attracting. Similarly, the divine life in the word, or seed, seems to be nourished from the rational soul’s power, which passes into the seed. But, nevertheless, this [phenomenon] is nothing but the fact that the vegetative life of the divine seed becomes present in the rational soul’s power, which is called intellect.

## NOTES TO *Non Diligamus Verbo neque Lingua*

- \* Sermon CXC.
- 1. I John 3:18
- 2. *Loc. cit.*
- 3. I John 3:13-14.
- 4. I John 5:19.
- 5. John 15:19.
- 6. I John 3:13.
- 7. John 15:19.
- 8. John 15:18.
- 9. I John 3:14.
- 10. Here (at 2:5) I am correcting the printed edition of the Latin text so as to read “supra” instead of “Sapientia”.
- 11. I John 2:10 (not Chapter 1, as Nicholas misremembers).
- 12. I John 3:15. Cf. Matthew 5:22.
- 14. Matthew 5:28.
- 15. I John 3:16.
- 16. Here (at 2:27) I am surmising “debeamus” in place of “debemus”.
- 17. I John 2:6.
- 18. Canticle of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 8:6.
- 19. Nicholas is here speaking of saving the brother’s soul, not of saving his temporal life. See the passage marked by n. 22 below.
- 20. The Latin word “*anima*” is translatable both as *soul* and as *life*. Insofar as the human body is alive, it has *animal* life, i.e., life that is due to the animating (enlivening) soul.
- 21. I John 3:17.
- 22. See n. 19 above.
- 23. Although oftentimes Nicholas uses “*caritas*” and “*amor*” interchangeably—as when he speaks of *caritas Dei* or *amor Dei*, he never speaks of *caritas mundi* but rather of *amor mundi*.
- 24. I John 3:18.
- 25. John 8:44.
- 26. Luke 14:16-24.
- 27. Aristotle, *De Politica*, I, 2 (1253<sup>a</sup>2-3).
- 28. Luke 14:16.
- 29. Here (at 6:14) I am surmising “potest” in place of “possunt”.
- 30. Matthew 4:4. Deuteronomy 8:3.
- 31. II Timothy 2:3-4.
- 32. I Corinthians 6:16.
- 33. Luke 14:18-20.
- 34. Luke 14:17.
- 35. Nicholas is here alluding to Augustine’s distinction, in *De Civitate Dei*, between two cities: the earthly city and the heavenly city.
- 36. Luke 14:23 uses the Greek aorist imperative ἀνάγκασον, which the Vulgate translates as “*compelle*”. In the passage above, which reflects Luke 14:23,

Nicholas too uses forms of the infinitive "*compellere*". I have translated these forms by "impel," since, obviously, no one is *compelled* by faith. Etc.

37. Luke 14:16-20.

38. Matthew 13:3-9.

39. Luke 14:16-24.

40. Matthew 13:44.

41. Matthew 13:45-46.

42. See n. 20 above.

43. I John 3:2.

44. Nicholas here articulates the Aristotelian theme that a passive intellect receives the universal form that the active intellect abstracts from perceptual images. This theme is developed a bit (though never extensively) in *De Mente* (e.g., *De Mente* 4 and 7).

45. See *De Mente* 2 (62-65), where Nicholas uses the example of a spoon, which is a utensil that represents a new species, one not found in nature. Such artefacts and such new forms are created by the human mind. In this way, the creating mind, notes Nicholas, imitates God's creating of natural forms.

46. The human mind does not become the Form of forms (viz., God) but becomes like the Form of forms—i.e., becomes Godlike in becoming a son of God (John 1:12), in becoming "deified." See Nicholas's *De Filiatione Dei*.

**Suadeo Tibi Emere a Me  
Aurum Ignitum et Probatum\***  
("I Counsel You To Buy from Me Fire-tried Gold.")<sup>1</sup>  
[August 28, 1456; preached in Navacelles, France]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "I counsel you to buy from me fire-tried gold in order that you may be made rich ...."

Because the Sunday Gospel-reading, which speaks of love for God and neighbor, presents itself, and because love for God is the first and greatest commandment and love for one's neighbor is similar to it (as says the Teacher in Matthew 22),<sup>3</sup> I will say some things about love.<sup>4</sup> In every sermon one speaks of love; but enough can never be said about it, because it is the completion of the Law.<sup>5</sup>

[2] Christ said that all the laws and the prophets depend on this love of God and of neighbor. Now, the former love (*dilectio*) is a true love and is very great; it is called *caritas*. The latter love is the image and likeness of the former love; and it is called love (*dilectio*) of neighbor. But consider the fact that unless love of neighbor were the image of love for God, it would not have perfection. For nothing is *absolutely* perfect except God, who is Love (*caritas*).<sup>6</sup> Nothing is perfect *by way of participation* except insofar as it is an image of the Absolutely Perfect. Nothing is a befiguring, or an image, except insofar as the truth [of the original] shines forth in it. For an image in which there is no likeness of its exemplar has [in it] nothing of the truth [of the original]. Therefore, a likeness is a true image. Hence, in the image there is nothing except the exemplar in a contracted likeness. [3] Therefore, insofar as love of neighbor is like love for God, it fulfills the commandment. For that which appears in love-of-neighbor is a likeness. But the spirit that lies hidden in love-of-neighbor is Love, which that resembling-love [viz., love-of-neighbor] befigures. And so, in the canonical text [viz., Apocalypse 3:18] John instructs us [as follows]: Although without love for God no one can attain sonship, and although no one can even know whether he is abiding in love, nevertheless if he has love for his neighbor, he ought to be certain that he does abide in love.<sup>7</sup> Loving one's neighbor is loving God in and through His image.<sup>8</sup> When I love a human being—who, like me, has God as his Father—I love in him the Father, whose image he bears. Analogously, he who on account of a king loves the son of the king loves, in the son, the father;

and he is pleasing to the father. For he knows that the procreator takes pleasure in his offspring and son, or image, whom the procreator has called to his inheritance and to partnership with himself.

[4] Therefore, he who loves his neighbor not on account of God but on account of something useful or beneficial does not fulfill the commandment; and he abides not in love for God but in self-love, because he loves himself in his neighbor. Thus it is that true works of mercy are holy, for they proceed from a love-for-one's-neighbor in which only God is seen. [5] Moreover, let us note that by means of love we come to a knowledge of God. Although nothing is loved unless it is known,<sup>9</sup> nevertheless God—who because of His infinite knowability is unknowable (as a light, which of its own nature is visible, is on account of its exceeding brightness invisible to our eyes)—is knowable by means of a likeness. For anything that was unknown enters into our knowledge by means of a likeness. (For example, an unknown face becomes familiar through its likeness, which comes unto our eye. Now, we know that God is Love. But love for one's neighbor is a likeness of Love. Therefore, by means of love, as by means of an image and a likeness, we come to a knowledge of God. [6] The Savior made this point when He said: "If anyone loves me . . .," etc., "we [viz., the Triune God] shall make our abode with him."<sup>10</sup> And this [abiding] is [God's] remaining in the understanding of the one who loves [Him]. Natural love<sup>11</sup> shows that nothing is more desirable than is love; for if love and harmony are removed, all things fall into disarray. If love and delight are removed, all sensory life occurs in sorrow and in death, and [that life] perishes. Therefore, that which furnishes life with gladness and delight is love, than which nothing more agreeable, nothing better, can be thought. Hence, the Fount of so great a good—from which Fount there flow life and the motion of gladness and delight—is beyond all reach of the senses and is the resting place of all motion and is better than can be thought.

[7] Lo, by means of the likeness of natural love one arrives at a taste of, or a knowledge of, the Love that God is. Moreover, fire, because of its heat and light bears a likeness to love, which in natural things is as heat and in immaterial things is as light. Therefore, by means of the likeness of fire's forcefulness, one ascends (according as Dionysius teaches)<sup>12</sup> unto a knowledge of God. Therefore, the Spirit of Christ, who spoke to John, symbolized love as gold—and not only as gold but as gold heated up, and not only heated up but proven [there-

by to be gold], because [fire-ried gold] makes wealthy. If we look at the sky, we see in the sun all [celestial] power; if we look at the earth, we see in gold all mineral power; if we look in-between, we see in fire a marvelous [in-between] power. We assert that Love has placed its likenesses in these three perceptible materials and that in them its power shines forth. For the light of the sun makes all the stars bright and turns them unto itself, inasmuch as all brightness is enfolded in the sun's power as in a fount; and so, the sun is light firstly and foremostly. Similarly, love diffuses itself throughout intellectual natures and turns them unto itself so that they partake of its nature. This nature is a true light that illumines every spirit—[illumines it] with divine and incorruptible life.

[8] However, it is necessary that things receive, into their inner being, the radiating light ; and, in that case, there remains in them no darkness. For example, the moon, being of earthy nature, does not deeply receive the sun's ray; and so, it remains darkened but is illumined on the side that is turned toward the sun. Similarly, our soul, which is where time and eternity are united (viz., on the horizon of eternity) receives the spirit of Love only in [the soul's] highest power, which is turned toward the Sun of Justice;<sup>13</sup> for like a polished mirror this splendid, incorporeal surface, [or power], is capable of receiving that radiating [divine light]. Yet, [this highest human power, viz., the intellectual power,] does not deeply receive [the divine ray when the soul is in the state] where it animates flesh and blood. For the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God.<sup>14</sup> For the perceptible world (to which the old man<sup>15</sup> belongs) neither sees nor knows nor can know that Spirit; rather, that which is reported about Love is foolishness to him.<sup>16</sup>

[9] Apart from the influence of the sun nothing lives. Therefore, all things partake of the motion of life—[partake of it] from the movement of the sun in the zodiac, or circle of life. Some stars do not by means of their own movement infuse the motion of life; rather, in accordance with their power they *dispose* to being alive. Therefore, in the heaven of the intellectual nature there are as many powers as there are stars in the firmament; [these powers] all have light from the Sun of Justice. Without this spirit, [or light], they would be altogether without any adornment and beauty and, likewise, without virtue. For virtue is not present apart from lovely adornment. But only the Spirit of the Sun of Justice effects divine life, which is called "being a son of God."<sup>17</sup>

[10] Likewise, the value of gold enfolds within itself the value of all metals; and the more a metal partakes of gold, the more valuable it is. And [a metal] is incorruptible only to the extent that incorruptible gold is present in it. Nor does a metal have any real value except insofar as it has within itself some gold. Therefore, gold measures the value of metal. Similarly, love measures the value of the virtues, for they have value in proportion to the love that is present in them. Likewise, the action of heat—without heat nothing has life—takes its beginning from fire. Fire is hot firstly and foremostly; and it is of highest activity, penetrating all things and transforming all things into itself. In itself fire is not visible, but it is visible in that which partakes of its nature. For pure fire is not anything that we see; rather, [we see] what is on fire. Analogously, divine warmth, i.e., divine love—unknowable in itself—shines forth in the virtues, which divine love transforms into itself and purifies and renews, as does fire. And so, the prophets spoke of God's spirit (1) as a fire that purifies metal and that separates incorruptible gold from corruptible and combustible sulphur and (2) as the power of the herb used by fullers—[a power] that washes away all uncleanness.

[11] And because the Kingdom of Heaven is only joy and peace in the Holy Spirit,<sup>18</sup> who is Love, Christ is seen to liken [it] (1) to love for<sup>19</sup> a good pearl<sup>20</sup> and, likewise, (2) to a hidden treasure.<sup>21</sup> And here in our theme-text love is likened to fire-tried gold that makes [one] rich. These [examples] are only of (1) possessing all things in one thing and of (2) possessing nothing except that one thing in which are all things. By comparison, in a precious pearl a merchant has all things, because he has sold all his goods and has bought the pearl. Thus, in and through the pearl he has all the things that he wishes to have. (The situation is similar with regard to the treasure hidden in the field and similar here [in today's text] with regard to the fire-tried gold.)

[12] I say that love is like a gem-stone that renders a man invisible.<sup>22</sup> For love, which covers a multitude of sins,<sup>23</sup> covers shame and nakedness; and no blemish appears. Analogously, in a flame of fire a black piece of coal or a black piece of iron appears not black but bright, in conformity with the brightness of the flame. For the brightness covers the blackness. And the fact that [the blackness] is covered is evident; for if [the coal or the iron] is withdrawn from the fire, it again looks black, as it was previously. Something similar is evident in the case of this world's love; for love covers defects. For example, a lover,

while he is in love with his beloved, does not see her defects, because he loves exceedingly; but after the love ceases, he sees the defects. As the lyricist said: “If someone loves a frog, he thinks the frog to be Diana.”<sup>24</sup> Hence, love covers shame, so that it is invisible to all, as was said about iron in fire. But the world’s love does not cover the defect; rather, it blinds the lover, from whom it removes a true viewing, because the lover does not see in accordance with a true judgment of the intellect but sees in conformity with his affection.

[13] Moreover, I say that love can be called a divine elixir. For some men tell of a certain potion that transforms all things into gold. In Arabic this potion is called an elixir. Analogously, love not only covers over but also transforms a son of man into a son of God by making of what is terrestrial that which is celestial. For he who has perfect love has fire-ried gold that enriches. For he is rich to the point that he can purchase the Kingdom of Heaven, since the worth of that gold enfolds the value of the Tree of Life in the midst of Paradise<sup>25</sup> and the value of all the fountains of the waters-of-life in the city of the New Jerusalem<sup>26</sup> and in the entire Kingdom.

[14] Do we not see in the case of the world’s love that all things are added to the state-of-love, a state in which all things are the common-property of the loving-parties and in which the one who is poor possesses all the things that the one who is wealthy possesses?—if between the two parties there is perfect love. Now, love makes to be its own son the one who loves it [viz., love]. Even as one who has justice is made to be a son of justice and from justice is called just, and even as one who has humanity is called, from the humanity, a man and is truly that which he is called, so if love is present in our spirit, it makes us sons of love. But God *is* Love. Therefore, through love we are adopted sons, because God Himself loved us before we loved Him.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, He chose us. This choosing is love. So love is the adoption of the sons of God. But a son has the father’s inheritance. Hence, each one abiding in love possesses the Kingdom of the Father. Although the Kingdom is one Kingdom, all the sons possess it at the same time, and each possesses it completely. Analogously, all see the [one] Face of the Father who is in Heaven, and each by himself sees it in its entirety.

[15] Therefore, the gold of which [we are speaking] here in our topic—gold which has passed through the fire and been proven—can be understood to be gold that has been fire-ried by the Spirit of Omnipotence. For when the power of the elixir (which furnishes the



power-for-transforming) is added to the gold, it makes the gold fiery; and by means of this procedure we see that this gold, through the fiery spirit that dwells steadfastly in it, becomes possessed of the power of transforming other metals into gold. Similarly, perfect love not only covers shame and weakness, as does bogus love, but transforms into gold-producing powers the powers and operations of lead and of stannum and of copper. Similarly, when a draught of water is given, it is a small work in terms of effort; but love makes it to be a work worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, when vital warmth is joined to human nature, it makes the nature capable of turning food (e.g., bread and meat) into itself. And if [the food] is joined to a fleshly nature, there is a turning of the meat and of the bread into the nature of flesh. Therefore, just as vital warmth is a likeness of the divine warmth that is called love, so [love] gives to the nature to which it is united the power of choosing, of attracting, of loving, and of transforming. Thus, divine warmth, or love, is rightly said to be like gold that is heated by the fire of the spirit of an elixir, in the aforesaid way.

[16] Likewise, when a strong wine's simple and pure spirit—for the more purified and simplified a wine is, the stronger it is—is joined to water, then in accordance with the wine's strength, it transforms into wine the water into which it is poured. Moreover, consider the fact that a fiery spirit is characteristic of good aqua vitae. And so, if into aqua vitae there is put a chemical potion or a spicy [herb], the aqua vitae immediately attracts that [herb's] spirit and enters into [the herb]. For example, place galingale [into aqua vitae] at certain times; the entire power of the galingale leaves the solid substance and ascends into the spirit of the aqua vitae, and the spirit of aqua vitae descends, with its power, into the spirit of the galingale. If later you put a little of this aqua vitae into a jar of wine, the whole of the wine is changed into the taste and power of the galingale. (And if the specimen were a laxative, the wine would become a laxative; and if it were constipating, the wine would become constipating; and if it were an antacid for the stomach, the wine would become such as to be transformed in such a way.) For the spirit, or strength, of the wine is transformed by the spirit of the spicy thing in which is present the fiery spirit, viz., the spirit of the "quintessence." And this [transforming occurs] through adoption in order that there might be possessed the inheritance of sonship with the "father," i.e., the inheritance of the "paternal" power, which extracts [the spicy taste]. [17] A certain devout man called this aqua vitae a heaven, or a quintessence. And, not unfittingly, it is likened to a heav-

en. For there is in that heaven the spirit-of-aqua-vitae, which by its nature, which is called love, attracts every spirit-that-is-capable-of-love; this spirit comes to the spirit-of-aqua vitae, and [this latter] casts out no spirit. And it separates off the corruptible body, which cannot retain the [spicy] spirit. It is as if in the very perfect aqua vitae there were placed various kinds of spices, from which their [respective] spirit it would be attracted (with the dead bodies being left behind [as dregs]). It is as if the immaterial power of each [spice] were conserved in the heaven of aqua [vitae], in which each [spice] remains intact with regard to its power and species, even though each kind is united unmixedly with each [portion of aqua vitae].

[18] Moreover, in each power of each species one and the same spirit of aqua vitae is present, binding that power to itself by means of an unseverable union, lest that power ever be separated from the aqua vitae. And the spirit of wine is in that aqua [vitae]; and no power of any kind [of spice] can be attracted except in the aqua [vitae], where there is the kingdom of the spirit of life. And that spirit is altogether unknown. (For although it is called the spirit of wine, because it is extracted from wine, nevertheless that fiery spirit is also extracted from beer and from apples and pears and all things, as giving to every thing power. And so, it would have to be named by all names and by none of them all.) So, too, to some extent (although the comparison is exceedingly lame), conceive of God's Spirit, which we call Love, as the unknown and truly ineffable Creator of every [finite] spirit. And God's Spirit is not attained except by rational spirits, who alone are capable of attaining it and in whom an incorruptible love of virtue brings delight. And this [occurs] in the heaven in which there is the throne of God, even as the spirit of aqua vitae has its throne in its own heaven, viz., in water. But the heaven in which the invisible and unknown Spirit is hidden is the medium through which one comes to union with it and to enjoyment of it. (This [union, or enjoyment,] is also called a seeing.) Similarly, warmth is a heaven, or a throne, of the spirit of sensory life.

[19] But that [incorruptible] heaven is called a heaven of glory. For it is the Divine Light (in which there is the throne of God's Spirit) insofar as a created spirit has access to that Light. Therefore, [that Light] attracts every rational spirit that is in [that] heaven. Now, the spirit of reason is an intellectual power that is free of desire and that indwells each [rational spirit] unconfusedly. This indwelling is, for

each rational spirit, a possessing of God and of eternal life. And so, by means of a likeness you see that God is present in each and every [rational] spirit. And each spirit is most lovingly united with each other spirit through an indwelling love. (The [individual] power of each spirit remains preserved and unintermixed [with that of other spirits].)

[20] Climacus said that love is a fountain of fire: the more it flares up, the more it will inflame one who thirsts. Love of peace [is] the mother of wisdom, the fount of immortality, and the root of glory. The domain of love is hope. Through hope we expect and receive love's reward and retribution. Love and impossibility-of-suffering and the adoption-of-sons differ only in name, as do fire's light and a flame. Consult Climacus in regard to the final stage of the *Scales*,<sup>29</sup> because he spoke as one who understands.

**NOTES TO *Suadeo Tibi Emere***

- \* Sermon CCXLI.
1. Apocalypse (Revelation) 3:18.
  2. This was the feast-day of St. Augustine.
  3. Matthew 22:36-39.
  4. Here Nicholas uses a declined form of the noun “*caritas*”. In the opening sentence of this paragraph he uses the noun “*dilectio*”. In general, he makes no distinction between the use of these two nouns and the use of “*amor*”. Toward the end of **6** and at the beginning of **7** he employs “*amor naturalis*” (“natural love”) when speaking of the human love between a man and a woman. But at **11**:2-3 he speaks of love (*caritas*) for a good pearl. And in Sermon I (**6**:15-18) he speaks of God as *amans* and as *amabilis*. (See also Sermon II (**4**:7) and III (**3**:1-6).) Neither Augustine nor Nicholas uses “*amor*” exclusively to signify profane love, worldly love, etc. However, in the present sermon Nicholas does use “*caritas*” (principally) and “*dilectio*” (alternatively) when speaking of God’s love for man and of man’s love for God. In here preferring the word “*caritas*,” he is displaying the influence of the Vulgate-text of I John 4. See n. 6 below. See also Sermon XXXVII (**11**:1-2).
  5. I Timothy 1:5. Romans 13:8.
  6. I John 4:16.
  7. *Loc. cit.*
  8. Augustine makes this same point. See his *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus* lxv.2 (*PL* 35:1809).
  9. See n. 14 of my Notes to Sermon CLXXII.
  10. John 14:23.
  11. Natural love is the harmony, orderliness, affinity, cohesion that pervades the natural world.
  12. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, Chap. 2, section 1 (*PG* 3:393 & 394. *Dionysiaca*, Vol. II, pp. 1113-1114).
  13. Malachias (Malachi) 4:2.
  14. I Corinthians 2:14.
  15. See n. 25 of my Notes to Sermon CLXXIV.
  16. I Corinthians 2:14.
  17. I John 3:2.
  18. Romans 14:17.
  19. Here (at **11**:3) I am surmising the preposition “*ad*” in front of “*margaritam bonam*”.
  20. Matthew 13:45-46.
  21. Matthew 13:44.
  22. The allusion is to the story of the Ring of Gyges, as told in Plato’s *Republic*, Book II (359C – 360B).
  23. I Peter 4:8.
  24. Hans Walther. *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi. Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters in alphabetischer Anordnung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966 (Vol. 4), p. 952, entry

28967.

25. Genesis 2:9.

26. Apocalypse (Revelation) 22:1 and 7:17.

27. I John 4:10 and 4:19.

28. Mark 9:40.

29. St. John Climacus. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 30, n. 9.

Translated by Archimandrite L. Moore (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 262.

**Respice de Caelo  
et Vide et Vista Vineam Istam\***

("Look Down from Heaven, and See, and Visit This Vineyard.")<sup>1</sup>  
[July 20, 1455; preached in Brixen]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "Look down," O Lord, "from Heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard" (Psalms 79).

God once planted a choice vineyard. After He had tended to it with much care and it did not bear good fruit but, on the contrary, produced with bitterness wild grapes, the Prophet David<sup>3</sup> asked that a visitor come from Heaven and inspect the vineyard so that it not be reduced to total ruin. And it happened that that Divine Power, through which all pleasantness of life exists, descended from Heaven unto the vine[s] and became the true Vine<sup>4</sup> bearing the fruit of eternal gladness. And from the true Vine there sprung forth, and there spring forth, fruit-bearing sprouts. Now, in order for a vineyard to yield fruit, it must be maintained by means of good and continual cultivating. And hence it pertains to the head of the household to visit often and to see whether the workers cultivate the vineyard rightly. Similarly, to the bishop—who was set over the workers in God's House by Jesus, to whom, as Heir, the vineyard belongs—it pertains to visit the vineyard at times in order to see what those who care for it are doing and to see how they are laboring in the Lord's vineyard, each in the area assigned to him.

[2] By the supreme and universal head of God's House, viz., the Roman Pontiff, I have been set over an area of the God-of-hosts' vineyard—[an area] marked off by certain boundaries and called the Church of Brixen. But I am unworthy to be in charge of workers and to exercise care of the assigned portion in order to see that it is rightly cultivated. Would that I were able diligently to accomplish the assigned tasks! But because I have determined to now begin the visitation with this parish, I consider the words set forth by the Psalmist [as saying] that I must take a pattern from Heaven in accordance with which I may judge whether the vineyard is being cultivated optimally or whether something is lacking to it. For as far as possible we must attend to the church militant in order that it may be conformed to the church triumphant. For just as on the Mount of Contemplation Moses saw an exemplar after whose likeness he fashioned the material tabernacle,<sup>5</sup> so too must it be done by us.

[3] First of all I ask, dearly beloved, that you take note of the fact that we who are called Christians have entered into a certain religious practice that is—assuredly, beyond all conceivable holiness—quite in line with [that of] the Heavenly citizens. For our Teacher, who by word and example taught us this [religious practice], alone knows the disposition of that Kingdom and of its inhabitants. And He descended for our sakes, in order to preach to us about the riches-of-glory of the Heavenly Kingdom and in order to instill in us earthly beings the fire of desire for Him so that it would blaze and would convey us upwards. The special property of heat is to tend upwards; and the special property of divine love is to join hearts to God, who dwells in Heaven. Now, in every founder of a religion there must be found such holiness of life that he is believed. Each person who reflects finds [this point to be true]. For how is it that some people would follow St. Benedict, others [St.] Basil, others [St.] Anthony if they did not believe that by the route by which they were proceeding they would arrive at happiness, which alone all wish for? Hence, faith is that without which no religious practice is accepted; and so, the gateway of Christian religious practice is faith: viz., the faith (which Peter first confessed)<sup>6</sup> that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. Jesus, according to His humanity, is truthful; and, according to His divinity, He is Truth. And according to His humanity He is the Way to life, but according to His divinity He is Life itself,<sup>7</sup> which enlivens all intellectual spirits and makes happy all men who are made happy.

[4] Only Heavenly citizens obtain true happiness. Therefore, the pathway by which Jesus Christ preceded us—Jesus, whose teachings and religious practice we have professed—leads us to the Kingdom of Heaven and to the community of Heavenly citizens. And unless we had this faith as regards Christ, we would not at all be Christians. Accordingly, we ought first of all to believe that Jesus the Son of God is the unique Savior, who in accordance with His humanity aids all those, and intercedes for all those, who call upon Him—[aids them and intercedes for them] with God the Father, in order that they may obtain salvation—and who in accordance with His divinity gives [them] salvation and saves [them]. Therefore, if God alone is the Creator of souls and the Savior of souls, then salvation is not to be sought from anyone other than from God and from Jesus our Savior. Now, aids and intercessions with God the Father are to be sought (1) from Jesus, the Head of religion and of holiness, and (2) from the glorious Virgin and (3) from the saints. Hence, a visiting [inspector] ought to ask, in the first

place, whether every Christian keeps his faith undefiled. For example, if there are those who resort to any kind of words or deeds<sup>8</sup> by which to instill faith-in-a-rescue, then they do injury to the true Savior—as when they promise: “If someone does such and such, he will be freed from his fever or will find love or will obtain wealth.”

[5] With full devotion and humility a Christian ought to ask from God—through Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of the saints—whatever he needs. And he ought to believe that omnipotent and most gracious God will grant whatever things are for salvation. And if those things that oftentimes are ignorantly asked for are not granted, he ought to express thanks to God, who in accordance with His providence knows that those things are not suitable for the one who is asking. Accordingly, the Apostle James said: “If anyone needs wisdom, let him ask, and it shall be given.”<sup>9</sup> Now, the judge who judges as to need is God, who grants only to one who needs [something] with respect to salvation. For example, because forgiveness of sins is necessary for salvation, God never denies it to one who truly and rightly seeks it. Thus, one who seeks it ought to believe that he will obtain it. But one who asks for other things ought to believe that he will obtain them if he needs them for his soul’s salvation. Otherwise, he ought not to ask for those things from God, the Giver of every good; nor ought he to hope for them or believe [that he will receive them].

[6] Moreover, in cases where the Church has placed certain forms of prayers in the missal or in the pontifical ([e.g., has placed prayers] against storms, dissensions, ailments, inclement weather, and so on), we ought to stick to these forms. But where [the Church] has placed no special [forms], we ought to take the general [forms] and apply [them] to the particular envisioned-need. Where no general forms are applicable to what is purposed, let us bring forth prayers of our own together with [using] the Lord’s Prayer. Now, each person can, with devout intention, extend the Lord’s Prayer (which enfolds within itself whatever things can be sought from God) to the particular things that are desired. For example, [suppose that] you want to obtain a condition-of-air that is good for [growing] fruit and you say “Our Father”; and subsequently you add devoutly: “O Lord, You command me to ask of You daily bread, which is always necessary for life. And so, in order that I may acquire it by Your gift, remove inclement weather, hail, excessive rain, aridness, extreme degrees of cold and heat, and other such things.” Likewise, [suppose] you wish to ask from God a



good bishop. You premise “Our Father” and add: “Because, O God, You command that all food [that is necessary] for life be sought from You, and because wisdom and Your word feed the soul and are the daily bread of the rational soul: in order, then, that my soul can be nourished by the word of life, give us, O Lord, a good, knowledgeable overseer who loves You—one who will feed us daily and without ceasing.” Do you wish to ask God for other things that are necessary for you—such as health, peacefulness, love, and whatever such things? You will be able under the name “bread” to ask God for all that you need. For all that we need comes under the name “bread”.

[7] Consequently, superstitions, fortune-tellings, incantations (and all trickeries), divinations, geomancy, nigromancy, pyromancy (and all foretelling) are far from the Christian religion. Likewise, those individuals are far from faith (1) who ascribe to God neglect or meager providence or ignorance or that He distributes goods unjustly, ([distributing] much to one who is evil, little to another who is good, many children to one who is poor, few children to another who is rich) and (2) who blame God (a) because of storms and bad weather and (b) because He allows the young and strong to die, the frail to live, (c) because He creates some as beautiful, others as deformed, and (d) because He is slow to be merciful, and (e) because He permits the Devil to tempt even those who are going to fall. Those who thus rail against God do not have faith, as do those who believe that God neither does nor permits anything without a reason, (though His judgments are a great depth,<sup>10</sup> as in the example of the hermit. See, in Discipulus, Sermons CVIII and CX.)<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, one who comes to this Christian religion must, as the apostle says, believe that God *is* and that He is a Rewarder of all.<sup>12</sup> But he who does not believe that the rational soul is immortal, and that it is of very great dignity insofar as it exists, cannot be called a Christian. For to whom could a reward be made by God if there were no subject capable [of receiving it]—i.e., if the soul were not immortal? But the fact that the rational soul is a noble creature you will infer from the following [consideration]: it is a living image of the Creator; and from its presence the body has all things, viz., life, movement, beauty. In order to benefit the [rational soul], Christ worked thirty-three years and gave His life, which was of more value than are an infinite number of worlds.<sup>13</sup> And He gave His Body for [the soul’s] food.<sup>14</sup> God gave an angel as guardian for the [rational soul], and He chose the [rational soul] for His temple.<sup>15</sup> He created [it] to take the place of [fallen] angels<sup>16</sup> and to

come to inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, the [human] soul is of more worth than is anything perceptible and corruptible. (See Discipulus, Sermon CXXXII, and take note of his illustration.)

[8] Therefore, each person ought to enter the Christian religion by way of the door of faith, viz., the sacrament of baptism. Hence, in order that this sacrament be accomplished in the right manner, all care should be exercised—[care] especially (1) that midwives, who baptize in emergencies, know the [proper] form and (2) that in regard to this sacrament the Church's prescribed manner be devoutly maintained in all respects. Now, after one comes into the Lord's House (which is called the Church) by means of baptism, one ought to consider that the Christian religion leads us from this world unto the Kingdom of Life. And since there are three things in the world—viz., the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and covetousness (i.e., lust of the eyes)<sup>17</sup>—then in perfect religion a man ought to be free of these things. And hence in religion there is, against pride, *ordinate obedience*; against lust of the flesh, *chastity*; against covetousness, *poverty*. [These are] in conformity with the Kingdom of Heaven, in which there are supreme obedience, supreme chastity, and supreme satisfiedness (which can be called poverty, or renunciation of the desire of having anything more). Where these three [traits] are most excellently maintained, *there* perfect religion is present. Indeed, these three are of the essence of perfect religion; for those who preserve these [traits] live after the fashion of Heavenly citizens. [9] In heart, in mouth, and in deed—i.e., in will, in speech, and in action—they preserve accord. And such accord acquires all things. For it is impossible that the prayers of many persons not be heard. And for this reason we come together in church, praying all together—because our Teacher says (in particular, in Matthew 18): “If two [of you] shall agree concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father.”<sup>18</sup> How much more [is this true] where a multitude come together!

Just as God dwells amid the Heavenly citizens, so Christ dwells amid His own: Matthew 18: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in their midst.”<sup>19</sup> Where *many* [are gathered together this statement holds] all the more true. God readily hearkens to a multitude. In Genesis 18 God said to Abraham: “If in Sodom I find ten just men, I will spare the entire place for their sakes.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, even as in Heaven the saints are nourished [spiritually] by their vision of God, so in the Church they are nourished by a hearing of the word [of God]. For [man does not live] by bread alone ...,” etc.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, in Heaven all things are [held in] common, and one individual shares with another. For the merit of one increases joy for all. Such was the case in the state of nature prior to the law and in the early Church (Acts 4)<sup>22</sup> and [is the case] now in religions other [than ours].

In Heaven the citizens do not marry; rather, all are totally chaste. The case is similar [for the priests] within religion. Fifthly,<sup>23</sup> in Heaven all offer themselves as a sacrifice to God; similarly, in religion [they offer themselves] through obedience, when they yield up to God their own will. In Heaven the inhabitants obey the divine commands *willingly, gladly, and persistently*; within religion the case is similar with a prelate. Obedience is either with respect to precepts or with respect to counsels or with respect to conformity-of-mind. As Paul says: "You will that I do a thing without murmuring."<sup>24</sup> For with murmuring-complaint the devils, crying out, departed at the command of Jesus, etc.<sup>25</sup> Obedience ought to be Heavenlike and joyful. Obedience gladdens a prelate, renders work less burdensome, furnishes assurance to conscience.<sup>26</sup> Obedience ought to be persistent. Bernard [says]: "So as not to lose obedience, Christ lost His life."<sup>27</sup>

[10] Now, in the Christian religion [obedience] is a threefold state: of laymen only or of clerics or of monks. However, in every religion, life must be lived under obedience. For Christ our Teacher became obedient to the Father (1) when He said "not as I will but as You [will]"<sup>28</sup> and (2) when [he was obedient] to the point of death, even death on the Cross.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary that all [Christians] be obedient. Yet, obedience ought to be stricter in the clerical state [and] still stricter in the monastic state. In the first state, [viz., the state of laymen], all three substantial [requirements] are present: [viz., obedience, chastity, poverty]. But [the requirement of] chastity is less strict, for fleshly desire is permitted unless it becomes lust. Hence, a virgin does not sin if she marries in the Lord;<sup>30</sup> and a man does not sin [in marrying] if he keeps his vessel [i.e., his body] in a state of holiness. Thus, the sacrament of matrimony is allowable for them since it takes place without lust and fornication. So too, in this [laical] state poverty (which is the renunciation of personal possessions) is thought to be present when<sup>31</sup> one possesses what is his own and does not take what is another's. In the clerical state chastity is required to be stricter, since in that state even marital union is forbidden. Likewise, [a cleric] cannot call anything his own, although he has the use of those things that belong to the Church and has special administrative jurisdiction [over them]. But in the monastic state neither matrimony nor use in

terms of managing is permitted to every [monk]; rather, [use is permitted] to one [monk] who is in charge, and he manages for the others.

Now, to no one is there granted that he be allowed to misuse what has been granted [him]. For in the laical state both the misuse of marriage and the misuse of things are forbidden. Likewise, in the clerical [state] the misuse of things is forbidden, and in the monastic [state] the misuse of the managing of things is forbidden. Laymen, as long as they do not abuse marriage, are called chaste; and as long as they do not misuse their goods they are called poor and are said to keep the basic requirements of the [divine] ordinance. A similar thing holds true for clerics and monks. But misuse is found to characterize transgressors.

[11] Let us now turn our attention [more fully] to the laical state. And first of all we must maintain, as regards obedience, that each [Christian] is obligated to be obedient to Christ (the Head of the [Christian] religion) and to one acting as Christ's representative. For Christ left behind for us the law of the Gospel and He made to be its overseer him who acts as His representative, who makes this law known. And this man, sent by Christ, speaks not his own words but the Son of God's word, which is contained in the Gospel. Therefore, he must be listened to exactly as Christ would be. For Christ said: "He who hears you hears me."<sup>32</sup> And [Christ] speaks of Himself, saying: "The words that I speak are not mine but are His who sent me, [viz.,] the Father. For on my own authority I speak nothing."<sup>33</sup> Therefore, if the words of a priest, or of a bishop, are God the Father's words, made known to us by the Son and recalled by the priest, then they must be obeyed completely. Hence, consummate disobedience—which is [one's] choosing not to obey—excludes [one] from the Christian religion, because [disobedience] is heathen and satanic and is the sin of idolatry. Therefore, the overseers of the Church are to be obeyed as [being representatives of] God. And if any men are obstinately disobedient, they are to be separated off and relegated away from fellowship with others—being considered members cut off from the mystical Body of Christ because of their rottenness.

Therefore, dearly beloved, know the following: that unless you are obedient to those who are set over you, you are not in the Church, in which there is the power of binding and loosening.<sup>34</sup> And unless you believe that your overseer acts as the representative of Christ and that he has the power of binding and loosening on Christ's behalf, you will never obtain sacramental absolution of your sins. Nor [will you obtain] indulgences and remissions, which flow from the [episcopal] chair.<sup>35</sup>

For he who does not believe does not hope. And he who neither believes nor hopes will not obtain. But he who believes that the one [who is ecclesiastically and spiritually] set over him acts as the representative of Christ (because of the fact that Christ said regarding those overseers “He who hears you hears me”) will assuredly obtain from Christ all things on account of his faith and trust, which cannot disappoint those who place their hope in Christ. Therefore, let each person be united to his prelate and priest, and let him reverence Christ in and through his priest, and let him receive his priest’s words as the words of Christ. Thereupon, through this obedience, he offers himself as a sacrifice to God. [He offers himself] even to the point of the demise of his freedom of choice,<sup>36</sup> when *he* does not live but Christ lives in him;<sup>37</sup> [and] he obeys Christ’s will (which the priest communicates to him) without murmuring.

[12] Therefore, when you do the foregoing and are obedient in all respects to him whom God has set over you, then by the hands of [that] prelate you will be led unto the Eternal Kingdom. And, as regards strict judgment, you will not have to answer for anything other than for obedience. For example, if you say “O Lord, I have obeyed you in and through your overseer,” then this [obeying] will suffice for your salvation—even if the overseer is going to answer to God for the burdens placed on your shoulders and for the obligations and payments. For, indeed, through the obedience that you give to the overseer, whom the Church backs, you cannot be defrauded [of salvation], even if he imposes obligations other than he ought to. Therefore, for the sake of your salvation the judgment of your pastor is binding on you because of the good of obedience—even if the judgment be unjust. For it does not pertain to you to decide that the judgment is unjust; and you do not have the prerogative of not obeying, if the judgment seems to you to be unjust. For it would not be a case of obedience if it were up to you to decide, regarding the judgment of the pastor, whether [or not] it ought to be obeyed. For the Church takes that judgment for granted; if you obey it, your reward will be great. Accordingly, blind obedience is consummate obedience and very perfect obedience. [Blind obedience occurs] when one obeys without asking for a rationale, just as a mule obeys its master. Therefore, if you see that your bishop does not associate with someone, then do not yourself associate with him. See how greatly those sin who detract from the bishop and speak evil against one who is serving as Christ’s representative—especially [if they speak evilly] with regard to the things which he does as bishop.

Let these statements suffice for now.

[13] In addition, because holy matrimony is a sacrament that makes licit what otherwise would be forbidden, we must see to it that the ceremony is rightly performed in accordance with the regulations of the holy fathers. The holy fathers decided that in certain cases marriage cannot be contracted. And although in those times there was a prohibition [against matrimony], as regards blood-relationships and relationships by marriage, down to the seventh degree: nonetheless, nowadays the prohibition is extended only to the fifth degree. Moreover, there are spiritual affinities and matters of public decorum and certain great sins, as well as times when the contracting parties are not free; these [circumstances] hinder the contracting [of marriage]. Therefore, it was ordained that proclamations should be made openly in churches prior to the [marriage] contract, in order that if anyone would know of a hindrance, he could disclose it in due time. Now, because it has not been the practice in this diocese that proclamations be made, many marriages have been found [to have taken place] contrary to the ordinance of the Church. Therefore, I decreed that proclamations be made; and, now at last, by the gift of God, that salutary decree has been accepted.

There still remains that there be enacted the sacred rite regarding the blessings of those who are marrying—a rite that is observed in many churches. Accordingly, I desire that the mode prescribed in my written communications be accepted and observed. For the holy fathers have judged that thus the [ceremony] ought in every respect to be conducted. Therefore, you who propose to contract [marriage], undertake [it] henceforth with faith—[undertake it] after the proclamations and three days before the conjugal union (in conformity with the example of Tobias).<sup>38</sup> Or contract [the marriage] in the presence of the Church at least one day [before the conjugal union]. And, having confessed, receive the (assuredly very fecund) blessing according to the form handed down for laymen. For if you act accordingly, you can hope for enjoyable peace and long life together with all the things that are favorable for sustaining a holy marriage. Therefore, as concerns the observance of this sacrament, it is fitting to be exceedingly watchful that it be adhered to in a holy, pure, and very strict manner and that adulterers (who according to the Law of Moses are to be stoned) not be allowed to defile the communities of Christians who are living rightly. And each [Christian] is obliged to be zealous in this regard and to aid me and my assistants, so that [adulterers] be corrected or so that

incorrigible ones be separated [from the fellowship of believers].

Now, one preaches often about the honorableness and mutual love with which married persons ought to live together and raise their sons and daughters in the fear of God. And so, [this topic] may now be passed over.

[14] As concerns the point about property, the following is to be observed: [viz.,] that you neither covet what is someone else's nor be enriched through another's loss—but that you live from that which (by the gift of God) is yours and by means of your labors, so that you may be happy. But you should give alms, as Jesus said, from that which is more than you need.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, have<sup>40</sup> in your possession only the necessities of food and clothing, as accord with your status. The remainder belongs to God, who wills that you distribute to the poor. Therefore, whatever things you possess are God's; and inasmuch as they are not anyone else's, He wills that you use them for your necessities and that you distribute among the poor that which remains over and above your needs. Thus, managing is entrusted to you. And you remain poor because all things belong to God, in accordance with whose will you distribute [them]. Hence, so that the concession by which you are allowed to be able to have some things which are yours not turn back against religion (in accordance with which you have relegated from yourself all coveting of your neighbor's goods), guard yourself carefully from becoming greedy and from reassuming *that [earlier] inordinate desiring*. Therefore, lest you become overly eager, do not set your heart, as it were, on desiring to become rich. Otherwise, you will entangle yourself in many useless cares and will pass from one mode of acquiring to another and will forget that you have renounced inordinate desires and will fall into many wearying and useless snares.

Now, because, as regards *acquiring*, a certain mode that is called usury is trouble-free, assured, and easy: many persons latch onto it as a means of acquiring. [But] you, O Christian, flee from it completely. Once [this practice is] accepted, it is abandoned [only] with difficulty. And where it is found, one must attempt with very great determination to root it out, for it defiles not only relatives but also religion; and it harms the state and does very grave injury to love-of-neighbor. Likewise, let each one who has goods that are due to be returned, take care to return them as soon as possible. And he who owes to God and the Church payment of tithes and owes rent to his masters: he must make a certain effort and discharge his debts as soon as possible; for

sin is not remitted unless what has been taken is restored. This restitution is, indeed, scarcely made without [great] effort.

[15] Now, the statutes of our religion must be adhered to in every respect. They are contained, chiefly, in the Ten Commandments and, secondarily, in the things added by the holy fathers (especially for you laymen) regarding feast-days and fasts. As concerns feast-days, be careful to observe them, not by acting wantonly or by singing and dancing or by becoming drunk and gluttonous, but by ceasing from manual labor, in order to have time for God and in order to recover your strength, which you depleted through physical laborings. And for this reason beasts of burden ought also to be rested, as Moses commanded.<sup>41</sup> And in this regard you will note four different kinds of feast-days that will be published for you [by me].

[16] Now, as concerns silence (which in every perfect religion is judged to be necessary), some things in regard to the Christian religion are to be noted. For our Teacher, Christ, admonishes us not to spew forth words idly, for all of which we are going to give an account [in the Day of Judgment].<sup>42</sup> Therefore, since an idle word is one that is uttered pointlessly, then (as is evident) silence must be preserved within religion at every place and time when words are not useful and do not edify and do not serve a purpose. And if we are forbidden to waste time spewing forth idle words, then [this prohibition applies] all the more in a holy and religious location and among things divine. Those who belong to religious orders are obliged to keep silent in the house of prayer—and likewise during meals and in their sleeping quarters. So, too, you, who have professed the Christian religion, ought to do nothing other in the house of prayer than pray; and in the house of refectio[n] [you ought] to be fed while praising God; and after the meal [you ought] to sing a hymn to God. But if you must speak at mealtime, these [utterances] will be able to be made very briefly [and] without fault-finding. For it is dangerous to say many things while eating. Many talkative people have choked between bites. Likewise, when you go to bed, you ought, after having prayed, to lie down and be quiet and well-up with praise for God.

Religiousness discloses itself in speech. For of what kind each person is, of such things he speaks: either [he is] Heavenly and [speaks of] Heavenly things or [he is] earthly and [speaks of] earthly things or [he is] infernal and [speaks of] infernal things. Speech reveals each person. For of what kind a man's heart is, of such kind are his speech



and his deeds. Christ teaches us that sins proceed from the heart, and He gives the example of blasphemy.<sup>43</sup> Just as praises of God proceed from a celestial heart, so blasphemies proceed from an infernal heart and mundane prattle from a mundane heart. A wife who has an impudent tongue has an unclean heart. The same holds true for husbands and for virgins.

Moreover, we ought not to believe those who make the excuse for themselves that they do not harbor in their heart the things which they bring forth with their mouth. For Christ says that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”<sup>44</sup> If someone readily and with joy praises God, he is learning here in this world the language with which he will always speak in the future. As the Prophet Isaias says: “Joy and gladness will be found in her” (viz., in the City of God), “thanksgiving and the voice of praise.”<sup>45</sup> He who is of the earth speaks of the earth.<sup>46</sup> And, as John says in the canonical epistle: “They are of the world; and so, they speak of the world.”<sup>47</sup> For regarding those who speak often of worldly things: it is a sign that they are sons of this age. However, those who are infernal blaspheme God, as says John in the Apocalypse: “They have blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, blasphemers and users of profanity<sup>49</sup> are here learning the language that they will speak in Hell. Hence, Isidore in his *On the Supreme Good* says that evil words ought not to be present in the mouth of a Christian.<sup>50</sup>

[17] A Christian ought to imitate Christ. For as Augustine [says] in *On Christian Doctrine*, no one is rightly called a Christian except him who imitates Christ’s ways. In His words Christ kept to the truth; and a Christian is obliged to do likewise. For no one who is a liar is loved either by God or by men. “For, lo,”<sup>51</sup> said the Prophet, “you have loved truth.”<sup>52</sup> A genuine florin is of more worth than is a counterfeit one; similarly, a man of truth is of more worth than is a man of lies. The liar has the tongue of the Devil, who from the beginning deceived our first parents by lying.<sup>53</sup> Usefulness is supposed to be connected to truth, so that truth either consoles or admonishes, or either teaches or informs. According to Bernard, Christ (whom we imitate) never uttered a useless word. Nor is it fitting that *we* utter jesting words through which we provoke the elderly or others to anger or to blasphemy; for [in that case] we are guilty of those sins. For those individuals who are damned give occasion ..., etc.<sup>54</sup> And jesting [words] that incite to evil or that entice or that produce excessive delight are to be avoided—especially the mode of joking that produces a lie togeth-

er with an oath [that it is not a lie]. For as St. Thomas holds in [the *Summa Theologica*], IIa – IIae, 98: [the fact of its being a practical] joke does not excuse such a liar from perjury and from mortal sin.

Christ had moderation in speaking, and so [should] you [have]. As a rich man does not spend money unless it is first counted, so let us not speak except with aforethought. Therefore, to our Christian religion it especially pertains to bridle the tongue. For the Apostle James says: “He who esteems himself religious but does not bridle his tongue—his religion is empty.”<sup>55</sup> Cato spoke similarly: “I regard the primary virtue to be restraining the tongue.”<sup>56</sup> And not without reason do we have one mouth for speaking and two ears for hearing. To have kept silent does no harm; to have spoken causes harm.<sup>57</sup> Talkativeness is a sign of foolishness according to Solomon.<sup>58</sup> Silence is the material of peace. And so, [silence] befits religion. For “by means of very few words a quarrel sometimes grows to be immense.”<sup>59</sup>

## NOTES TO *Respice de Caelo*

- \* Sermon CXCVI.
- 1. Psalms 79:15 (80:14).
- 2. This date was the Sunday before the Feast-day of Mary Magdalene.
- 3. Psalms 79:15 (8j0:14).
- 4. John 15:1.
- 5. Hebrews 8:5. Exodus 25:40.
- 6. Matthew 16:16.
- 7. John 14:6.
- 8. "... any kind of words or deeds": i.e., incantations, promises, false hopes, and the like.
- 9. James 1:5.
- 10. Psalms 35:7 (36:6).
- 11. Johannes Herolt (Discipulus), *Sermones discipuli de tempore* (Lyon, France, 1529). See principally Sermon CVIII.
- 12. Hebrews 11:6.
- 13. See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* II, 14.
- 14. The allusion here is to the eucharist.
- 15. I Corinthians 3:16.
- 16. See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* I, 16-18.
- 17. I John 2:16.
- 18. Matthew 18:19 (not Matthew 8, as the copyist and/or Nicholas misstates and as I have corrected in the translation).
- 19. Matthew 18:20.
- 20. Genesis 18:26.
- 21. Deuteronomy 8:3. Matthew 4:4.
- 22. Acts 4:32.
- 23. Nicholas is following Johannes Herolt, whose fifth point he here repeats. See n. 11 above.
- 24. Philippians 2:14. Nicholas *alludes to* this text rather than *quoting* it.
- 25. Mark 1:26. Luke 4:41.
- 26. At 9:37-38 I am reading (with the Paris edition) "obedientia" in place of "obedientiae".
- 27. Bernard of Clairvaux, Epistle 42 (33). See p. 126 of Bernard of Clairvaux, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. III, Tome 2 (*Lettres*), in the series Sources Chrétiennes, #458 (Paris: Cerf, 2001). The Latin text is from Jean Leclercq and Henri Rochais.
- 28. Matthew 26:39.
- 29. Philippians 2:8.
- 30. "... marries in the Lord": i.e., marries a (Christian) believer in God.
- 31. Here (at 1 0:19) I am reading (with the Paris edition) "quando" in place of "quamdiu".
- 32. Luke 10:16.
- 33. Nicholas alludes to John 14:10.
- 34. Matthew 16:19.

35. We must remember that in this present sermon Nicholas is addressing the Church at Brixen during his episcopal visitation of it.

36. Nicholas does not teach that man can lose or can abandon his freedom of will. Rather, he is here alluding to a believer's "surrendering" his will to the will of God, i.e., to a believer's conforming his will to the will of God, to his making God's will for him to be his own will for himself.

37. Galatians 2:20.

38. Tobias 6:18-22.

39. Luke 11:41.

40. Here is an example of an indicative mood ("habes") used imperatively.

41. Exodus 20:10.

42. Matthew 12:36.

43. Matthew 15:18-19.

44. Matthew 12:34.

45. Isaias (Isaiah) 51:3.

46. John 3:31.

47. I John 4:5.

48. Apocalypse (Revelation) 16:11.

49. Here (at **1 6:52**) I am correcting the printed edition of the Latin text to read "maledici" in place of "maledicti".

50. Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae*, II, 29, 5 ("De Summo Bono") [*PL* 83:629].

51. In the printed edition of the Latin text: add quotation marks around "Ecce enim" at **1 7:7**.

52. Psalms 50:8 (51:6).

53. John 8:44.

54. Bernard of Clairvaux, passage not found.

55. James 1:26.

56. *Dicta Catonis*, Book I, Couplet 3. Edited by Geyza Némethy (Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Letters, 1895), p. 18.

57. *Dicta Catonis, op. cit.*, Book I, Couplet 12 [p. 19].

58. Proverbs 29:20. Ecclesiastes 5:2 (5:3) and 10:14.

59. *Dicta Catonis, op. cit.*, Book II, Couplet 11 [p. 25].

**Assumptus Est in Caelum\***  
("He Was Taken Up into Heaven.")  
[May 26, 1457; preached in Brixen]<sup>1</sup>

[1] "He was taken up into Heaven, and He is seated at the right hand of God" (end of Mark).<sup>2</sup>

(See, in the *Scholarly History*,<sup>3</sup> the story of Christ's Assumption into Heaven. And for an interpretation, see the illustration mentioned elsewhere, [viz.,] in my sermon [preached] in Erfurt;<sup>4</sup> for [that illustration] is sufficiently suitable.)

[2] Mark states that the Apostles did not believe those who saw Christ after the Resurrection. Accordingly, he adds: "*Lastly, He appeared to the eleven [disciples] as they were eating.*"<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Jesus, while eating with them, etc., (as Luke says),<sup>6</sup> reproached [them for] their unbelief and their hardness of heart.<sup>7</sup> For they did not believe those who had seen that He had arisen from the dead. Note that unbelief comes from hardness of heart. Now, that heart is hard which is not pliable and soft and tempered for receiving an impression. [3] "Heart" stands for the inner man. Hence, the inner man<sup>8</sup> must be docile; otherwise, it does not receive the form of wisdom. But why are the Apostles called unbelieving and hard [of heart]? Surely, [Christ] permitted them to be such for the sake of a more excellent salvation. For it did not befit our salvation to believe quickly on the basis of those evidences by which Christ showed that He had arisen. For the evidences ought to have been multiple and varied, since, given the form in which He then was, no one [of them] proved that He was Christ. For a variety of God's works, no one of which [by itself] suffices to show His omnipotence, occurs in order that [the omnipotence] may be better displayed.

The text [of Mark] says: "... *who saw that He had arisen from the dead.*"<sup>9</sup> I take [this] to mean that from the condition of the dead (who remain immovably where they are laid) [the Apostles] recognized that Christ had arisen—[recognized it] when He appeared to them alive. That is, [they recognized it] by those works that befit the living; for they saw [Him] walking, talking, eating, and so on.

[4] However, He made of them believers. That is, [they believed] that just as from within the womb of the Virgin the divine nature assumed into union with itself a true, living human nature (consisting of a body and a soul), so too the mortal body, which was sepa-

rated from the soul by death, maintained this same union [with the divine nature]. [And] the soul, [also] united to the divinity, reassumed the body from the sepulcher—[doing so] by the power of the divinity once [the body's] mortality was shaken off. Thereafter, [Christ] said: "Going into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature."<sup>10</sup> That is, go once this faith has been confirmed by the Holy Spirit, who will, very shortly, descend upon you (as Luke reports<sup>11</sup>). For no one is suited for preaching the gospel unless he has that Spirit which causes the soul—once all unbelief has been expelled—to be fervent with that divine fervor, so that the soul's words are an expression made ardent by God—indeed, made exceedingly ardent. For by means of the word [the Holy Spirit] breathes fiery ardor into the hearts of those who hear [it]. About this fact the Savior speaks: "I have come to send fire on earth; what will I but that it be kindled?"<sup>12</sup> And [this] is the fire of love, when the whole man is fervent with yearning for the Kingdom of eternal life.

[5] "... *into all the world*" indicates that [Christ] willed that all men be saved. And so, in the midst of the world He wrought salvation, so that [the Apostles] would preach as they went circularly from the center to the circumference. In the Church we sing thusly: "Go into the world-orbit ...," etc. Lo, how our King established the fullness of His Kingdom! For He sent His law to the whole world. Therefore, God's Church—whose King, Head, and Teacher is Christ—is not confined to a particular location but is extended unto the ends of the earth, and there is no end of the King's dominion. And if up to now Christ is still not accepted in some region of the world, assuredly He *will be* accepted; for the whole world is His possession. Christ would not have commanded the Apostles (and, in and through them, their successors) to go into all the world unless He had foreseen in every part of the world believers and those who are predestined to the Kingdom of God. And so, that Kingdom of Christ's is called the Catholic Church, because what is catholic is universal.

[6] [Jesus] says: "*Preach the gospel ...*" "To preach" can also mean *to prophesy*. For a preacher proclaims the status of the future Kingdom, i.e., of the coming Kingdom. Elsewhere he is called a prophet, because he discloses secret and unknown matters. To preach the gospel is to evangelize. For preaching, evangelizing, and prophesying are the same thing. For to proclaim immortal life is an evangelization, or a good proclamation; for the fact that mortal men can—

rightly and by means of the teaching of the Savior, the Son of God—pass from death unto life is the best news.

[Jesus] says: "... *to every creature.*" This good news is to be preached to every creature capable of understanding the word. For no creature that is capable of understanding the word—whether he be barbarian, Scythian, Greek, or Latin—is excluded, wherever he is in the entire world.

[7] There follows [in the text]: "*He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.*"<sup>13</sup> This is the gospel: viz., believing in Christ as the Son of God. And he who puts on Christ in baptism will obtain that which he believes, viz., immortal life and salvation with Christ. He who believes in Jesus is made to be Jesus, i.e., to be saved. For Jesus is the Savior.<sup>14</sup> Matthew adds other things, viz., that [the Apostles] ought also to teach the doctrine of Christ.<sup>15</sup> But those who are now baptized or who amid obstacles<sup>16</sup> are presently coming to faith are saved. And so, properly speaking, the good news of salvation is *this*: viz., that faith furnishes immortality in the Kingdom of Christ.

[8] There follows [in the text]: "... *but he who does not believe shall be condemned.*"<sup>17</sup> [Jesus] does not say to be condemned both "he who does not believe *and* he who believes but is not baptized." For [only] faith is of necessity; baptism is a sacred sign of faith. Therefore, faith [by itself] suffices [for him] who has faith but who cannot obtain the sacrament [of baptism]—for example, the thief on the cross.<sup>18</sup> From this [passage] it is evident that one who does not believe in Christ, who promises to believers eternal life, is condemned, i.e., is damned with eternal death. For our spirit does not obtain that which it neither loves nor hopes-for. For love unites the spirit to the beloved. But he who-does-not-believe neither loves nor hopes-for. And so, he who does not believe that he can obtain eternal life remains in eternal death.

[9] [Jesus] says [in the text]: "...*shall be condemned.*" For after the gospel is preached and spurned, [the one who spurns it] will be justly condemned, because he has spurned the Son of God and has not believed in Him. By the word that speaks in the conscience of the unbeliever, [the unbeliever] will be condemned. Within himself he would be saying: "I was able to live but I assign to myself the death that I am undergoing." And so, he shall be condemned by his own judgment, and he shall be tormented eternally. For by assigning to himself death, he torments himself. And so, those to whom the gospel is

not preached are not thus eternally condemning and tormenting themselves. In comparison with unbelievers they are said to have no sin, if they otherwise have not acted against their tormenting conscience. As Christ said to the Jews: “If I had not come . . .” etc., “they would not have sin.”<sup>19</sup> [10] If you consider the worm-of-conscience, which does not die<sup>20</sup> but always gnaws, you will find that it is the judgment of God’s word. For this word, which judges by means of reason, whose judgment is called the dictate of conscience, is nothing but that light—viz., the word of God—which illumines every man. And by means of that light [every man] reads within himself the judgment [of conscience].<sup>21</sup>

[11] There follows [in the text]: “*But these signs shall follow those who believe: [viz.,] they shall cast out devils in my name . . .*,” etc.<sup>22</sup> Christ wanted these perceptible signs to be sacred signs of that Heavenly Spirit who is given to believers. For one and the same Spirit manifests itself by means of different powers in different believers—even as one human nature manifests itself to the senses in different ways in different men. Hence, that power of the nature-that-is-intellectual and that is of the essence of human nature, manifests itself in one man in one way—e.g., in the art of writing—[and in another man manifests itself] in another way in the art of speaking, in another way in the art of building, in another way in the art of governing. And so, in different ways the power of the intellectual nature shines forth. Likewise, in the different supernatural gifts of grace and of what is supernatural, the Divine Spirit, who is given to believers, manifests His power. [12] For when the soul receives this power from on high, then by means of signs that can be made only by that Spirit it manifests that it has received power. And for this reason Paul said that Christ—when He ascended on high, leading with Him captivity captive<sup>23</sup>—gave to men gifts, which [Paul] lists.<sup>24</sup> And these are divine gifts that signify the presence of the Spirit [and] that assure us that we are admitted into fellowship with Christ because we have His Spirit.

[13] And consider that by its presence the intellect brings it about that [our] animal nature is assumed into an association with [our] intellect’s own nature—i.e., that the ignorance and darkness of the animal nature puts on the light of human wisdom. Similarly, the rational soul passes into an association with the Divinity through its union with the Spirit of God. But note [the following] difference: [viz.,] that the *intellectual* spirit is *created* in the animal nature by being breathed in



[by God]; for that which is animal precedes that which is spiritual, as says the Apostle.<sup>25</sup> However, when the *divine*<sup>26</sup> spirit is breathed-in, it is not created but is *communicated*. And so, there are different created [spirits] in different men; but [in men] the Uncreated Spirit is one and the same. [14] And so, in Christians, in whom there is one faith, there is also one Spirit, since faith is only a gift of the Spirit. For when the intellectual nature is elevated beyond itself, so that it sees truth that it does not understand—i.e., when in a very assured way [and] over and above its natural powers it apprehends truth, which it knows to be its life—then, of necessity, this [apprehending] occurs because of a higher Power. And this Power that is higher than the created intellectual power must be divine. For between the intellectual nature and the divine nature there can be no other intermediary nature.

[15] Now, of the signs that accompany believers, this [sign] is certain: [viz.,] that that spirit-of-faith removes devils (i.e., adversarial powers) and brings with it a new pronouncement, viz., the Heavenly and powerful pronouncement that is contained in our credal confession of faith. [This spirit-of-faith] removes serpents (i.e., futile promptings whereby the old man,<sup>27</sup> having been made futile, was infected). [This spirit-of-faith] also removes poisonous things (such as erroneous doctrines) that are at odds with its life. [Doctrines] imbibed and heard will not harm it, because once this Heavenly spirit is savored, it does not permit the soul to waver, with the result that the soul would be inclined toward another doctrine. For [this spirit-of-faith] contains the best [doctrine]. And by the hand of its power it cures the sicknesses-of-soul that have been contracted from the flesh. [It cures these] by bridling the lewd desires of the senses and by restraining the body so that the body obeys it. The spirit-[of-faith] works this [restraint] in all believers; and some believers, thus strengthened in the name of Jesus by faith, manifest by external signs these [workings of the spirit]—[manifest them] when they cast out demons, and so on. [16] Hence, take note of the fact that we find these deeds to have been done by believers who had this spirit. Therefore, we too who have this same spirit-of-faith do not doubt that in all of us the spirit works, in a spiritual way, those things that (in order to show its power through believers) it showed perceptibly in [believers] other than us. In this present world we can be led to things spiritual only by means of things perceptible.

[17] “*And the Lord Jesus, after having spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven, and He is seated at the right hand of God.*”<sup>28</sup>

I understand that in Christ the human nature was taken up into Heaven, i.e., into incorruptibility and immortality. For Jesus said that no one would ascend into Heaven except Him who came down from Heaven—adding that He is the Son of man, who is in Heaven (John 3).<sup>29</sup> Thus, when the Son of man uttered these statements, He had not yet ascended, with respect to His human nature, into the Heaven of incorruptibility. For mortal nature had not yet laid aside the possibility-of-dying, which [Christ] proposed to lay aside by dying—as was fitting. But the *person* that spoke was in the Heaven [of incorruptibility], i.e., was in the divine nature, which is immortal. (Likewise, the Heavenly Father dwells in immortality, as Paul said.)<sup>30</sup> [18] But after the resurrection from the dead, Christ ascended unto the Heaven of the Father's habitation, i.e., unto immortality. To arise from the dead and from corruption is to indue a pre-existing material with an incorruptible and indestructible nature. Likewise, in the general resurrection the good and the evil [shall] arise. Thereupon certain of these [resurrected ones shall] ascend farther—unto happiness. And they [shall] ascend unto immortality, wherein dwells the Heavenly Father; and they shall enter into eternal life. The others will remain in the lower parts of the earth, i.e., in Hell. But in Christ the human nature arose from the dead [and] is no longer going to die. Thereafter, it ascended above all the heavens until it sat, or rested, at the right hand of the Father—i.e., [rested] in the might of His Immortal Power.<sup>31</sup>

[19] And consider why John the Evangelist and Matthew do not speak of the Ascension: [it is] because they saw that in the case of Christ the Resurrection is also the Ascension. For some men arise in whom [their] resurrection is not [their] ascension; and Christ the Judge determines whether they are to ascend or to descend. But in Christ-the-Judge resurrection and ascension occur together. And because this fact is [also] true only of those who are Christ-like: Christ, for our learning,<sup>32</sup> postponed for forty days<sup>33</sup> His showing evidence of the Ascension. [He did so] in order that in the meantime evidence of the Resurrection would be multiplied (though intermittently) so that [the evidence of the Resurrection] would be better apprehended. However, it is not the case that after forty days He decided *not* to show that He had arisen. For a little while after this [forty-day period] He showed to the Apostle Paul that He had arisen.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is evident that the Ascension occurred with perceptible signs in order that by means of these signs we might be persuaded of the truth of the Resurrection, which in Christ is also the Ascension.

[20] Perhaps someone might say: “Because resurrection is common to all, explain how and why this is the case.” I answer that the manner [of resurrection] is not known. But according to some [writers] it can be said that there is in man a corporeal nature that is to a great degree celestial—just as in man there is a spirit that is to a great degree divine. And [it can be said] that this celestial nature, which is called a fifth essence [or fifth element]<sup>35</sup> and which unites in itself an elemental [nature], remains after the elements [of the body] have been corrupted—even as, if gold had lead unitedly mixed with it, it would remain if the lead were dissolved. And [we can say] that man’s spirit is inclined toward this [corporeal-celestial] nature and will be joined to it at the end of the world’s motion. As a result, a judgment [will then] be made [by God] about the spirit that is united to such a celestial and incorruptible body. (A man consists of these both, [viz., spirit and body].) Furthermore, [we say that at the Judgment] a man receives either ascent because of his merits or descent because of his demerits.

[21] You might ask further: “Why does the text say that Christ was taken up [into Heaven], etc.?” I reply: Christ frequently refers to Himself as one sent by the Father, and He now is returning as a Victor; therefore, He is taken up in order to sit beside the Father. It is as if our Lord Pope Calixtus were to summon the returning Legate of the Holy Angel<sup>36</sup> to sit beside him (as we read that Peter summoned Linus),<sup>37</sup> so that [the Legate] would be in a position of equality, reigning with the Pope and with him judging all matters. [Let it be] posited that the Legate had manifested his faith and God’s glory and that he had conquered the adversary (namely, the Turks) and had freed the Christians who were held captive under them and that he were returning with that victory [and] were leading captivity captive and were leading the redeemed behind the triumphal chariot.

[22] Therefore, understand [Christ’s] ascension to be in the foregoing likeness of the Legate. Yet, [the likeness is] remote, because the Pope, who is the representative of God, received a relatively unimportant man to whom he entrusted his deputies so that [that man] would not be merely a private individual but would be a legate with the fullest power of the prince of the religion. And then [the Pope] made him—in accordance with the loftiness of the dignity and the merits of the faithfulness—ascend above all the heavens (i.e., the hierarchical gradations) of the Church (i.e., above all orders and dignities, all principalities [and] powers, etc.) unto an association with himself. [And the

Pope did so] by establishing him as a judge and by giving him all his own things—according as we read of Joseph,<sup>38</sup> who similarly ascended in Egypt, and as we read of Melchisedech,<sup>39</sup> who came to prominence, so that he was [both] king and priest. These men were types of Christ. Hence, because Christ took a human nature into a union with His divinity—[took it] all the way to immortality and to being situated at the right hand of God the Father's power—it is evident that the [human nature] was elevated above all the intellectual heavens, i.e., [above all] powers, thrones, and might.<sup>40</sup> [It was elevated] all the way to being seated with God the Father, of whose Ascension today is the feast-day—[a day] rightly joyous to all men.

## NOTES TO *Assumptus Est in Caelum*

- \* Sermon CCLXXXIV.
1. Thursday, May 26, 1457 was the feast-day of Christ's assumption into Heaven.
  2. Mark 16:19.
  3. Peter Comestator, *Scholastica Historia*, Chap. 198 of the section *Historia Evangelica* (PL 198:1644 B-C).
  4. Sermon LXXXV (preached in Erfurt on Thursday, June 3, 1451).
  5. Mark 16:14.
  6. Luke 24:41-43.
  7. Mark 16:14.
  8. Here (at 3:2) I am reading "illum" with ms. *L* in place of "quem" with ms. *V*<sub>2</sub>. The demonstrative "illum" refers to *interior homo*.
  9. Mark 16:14.
  10. Mark 16:15.
  11. Acts 1:4-8. (Luke is regarded as the author of the Book of Acts.)
  12. Luke 12:49.
  13. Mark 16:16.
  14. The name "Jesus" means *savior*. Matthew 1:21.
  15. Matthew 28:19-20.
  16. Note, below, the example of the thief on the cross.
  17. Mark 16:16.
  18. Luke 23:39-43.
  19. John 5:22.
  20. Mark 9:43.
  21. Romans 1:18-32.
  22. Mark 16:17.
  23. Ephesians 4:8.
  24. Galatians 5:22-23.
  25. I Corinthians 15:46.
  26. Here (at 1 3:10) I am reading "spiritus divinus" with ms. *L*. Ms. *V*<sub>2</sub> omit "divinus".
  27. Romans 6:6. Ephesians 4:22-24.
  28. Mark 16:19.
  29. John 3:13.
  30. I Timothy 6:16.
  31. "... in virtute immortalis potentiae." Cf. Ephesians 1:19.
  32. Romans 15:4.
  33. Acts 1:3.
  34. Acts 9:3-5. I Corinthians 15:8.
  35. The traditional four elements are earth, air, fire, water. Later a fifth element was added to the list. See Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*: Quodlibetum VI, Quaestio XI, Articulus XIX, ad 1.
  36. The editors of the printed Latin text here refer to the entry, in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, on Juan de Carvajal (1399-1469).

37. See *Le Liber Pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire* by L'Abbé L. Duchesne (Paris: Boccard, 1955). Vol. I, p. 118, lines 8-10. This is section 1, 3 on "Petrus". See also p. 6 of *The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis): to the Pontificate of Gregory I*. Translated by Louise R. Loomis. New York: Octagon Books, 1979.

38. Genesis 41:37-45.

39. Hebrews 7:1-17. Genesis 14:17-20.

40. Ephesians 1:20-23.

**Sufficit Tibi Gratia Mea\***  
("My Grace Is Sufficient for You.")<sup>1</sup>  
[February 20, 1457; preached in Brixen]

[1] "My grace is sufficient for you" [is read] in [today's] epistle.

The Apostle, who asked to be freed from a "thorn," received the foregoing answer from the Lord. And he adds the reason for the answer: viz., that "power is made perfect in infirmity." The Apostle concludes: "Therefore, I shall gladly glory in my infirmities so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." By means of these [words] he instructs [us] that the power of Christ dwells in him who, in order to give to Christ the honor of power, glories that he is infirm.

Let us note, then, this epistle, in which the Apostle declares of the power of Christ that it dwells in him. He spoke of pseudo-apostles—ministers of Satan—who transfigure themselves into true apostles, even as Satan [transfigures himself] into an angel of light.<sup>2</sup> And he renders the Corinthians attentive to not being deceived by those whose end is in accordance with their works.<sup>3</sup> And since many of them were glorying "according to the flesh" (as if [glory] ought to be duly accorded them because they were descendants of the prophets and the patriarchs): lest they be deceived because of this fact [of descendancy, the Apostle], like one who is foolish, lists about himself those things that are greater than are the things whereof *they* can glory.<sup>4</sup>

[2] Consider, then, that the apostles are ministers of justice. Therefore, Christ, whose apostles they are, is Justice. Some who feign being just—who under the guise of justice (i.e., by means of observing formalities and legalities) feign being apostles—aim at worldly gain and profit [and] seek their own advantage.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, Christ is presented [by them] in the shape and outward appearance of sheep, but their disposition is that of wolf-like greediness. [3] Hence, in order to take away from the pseudo-apostles their pretext [for glorying], the Apostle abstained from a permissible receiving of things needful for living. Moreover, lest they would highly esteem themselves because of the fact that they prided themselves on being Jews and Israelites, he did some things (viz., he cited his condition and glory) that were commonly accustomed to be done not in accordance with God or with wisdom but rather in accordance with foolishness. For in Proverbs 24 praising oneself is forbidden.<sup>6</sup> For commonly it is not permitted; but [it

is] rightly [permitted] in the case of the Church's edification.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, [Paul] set aside that which is [commonly] permitted and did what is [commonly] forbidden—[did it] so as to take away from false apostles their rationale for believing [themselves to be superior] and so as to edify the Church. It is as if the Apostle were saying: "Set before your eyes the fact that I have walked in the plain view of the Church, and consider what kind of person I am in comparison to them and to all the things regarding which they vaunt themselves. Consider the story of my life, and you will find that I am to be believed rather [than they]."

[4] But we ought to take cognizance of the Apostle's wondrous practical wisdom: no matter whether [what he said] would be reckoned to him for wisdom or for foolishness, no matter whether it would be construed as vanity or as glory, he did not for this reason remain silent, but he promoted the truth. Likewise, let us carefully consider what kind of man Paul was and consider that he suffered hardships very patiently and underwent perils of body in order to preach Christ, with whom he was acquainted in the rapture unto the Third Heaven, or Paradise, at the time (as is believed) when he was blind for three days.<sup>8</sup> Christ introduced Paul to a vision of immortal riches, which He promised to give him as remuneration if he would serve as a servant faithful in preaching the gospel. And Paul believed the promise; and he bore witness to that which he saw; and he caused believers to hasten with him unto an apprehension of that treasure.<sup>9</sup>

[5] In this regard, note that the place of delights is the palace of God's glory, i.e., is that loftiness of ascent that is called the Third Heaven.<sup>10</sup> Kings have quite private places where they appear to their friends and show themselves to them in glory and majesty. Hence, in the less private places (e.g., the place of assembly where the domestics remain) they make an appearance augustly; and, secondly, they make an appearance more augustly in the Council, where the wisemen and the courtiers come together decorated with royal gifts. Nevertheless, [a king appears] still more [augustly] in his own private quarters, where he manifests himself to his friends in majesty and glory [and] with open treasures. To this third place of all royal delights there are admitted only the very trustworthy and very beloved, to whom it is granted to see the face of the king and to see him in majesty there where he manifests unbecloaked his most private and most hidden things—[manifests them] as to his only son. There [in the Third Heaven] Paul heard secret words that it is not granted to man to utter.<sup>11</sup>



[6] Earlier the Apostle said: “I will come [to telling of] visions and revelations.”<sup>12</sup> Here he says that he heard secret words. It is necessary that seeing and hearing coincide. For example, he who reads a book hears the author of the book speaking. But he does not hear with his bodily ear; rather, he hears within, where he hears however much he sees. For he hears as much as he sees with an inner vision, i.e., with the intellect. Therefore, when he is caught up unto the word and conception of the writer—[caught up] by means of perceptible letters and human knowledge (i.e., by means of human reasoning and human logic and by means of a knowledge of [the meaning of] words)—he ascends unto the conception, or intent, of the author. And [the author’s] conception, or word, is incorporated within the word, or conception, of the reader; and with this conception [the reader] descends to seeing, i.e., to understanding, the book; and by means of the book the reader ascends again unto the word and sees the author’s wisdom. In an analogous way, the Word is the Father-Creator’s Wisdom, who causes the intellectual nature that apprehends the Word to be conformed to itself.

[7] Let us say, then, that Paul was raptured and that in the rapture he saw, in the Paradise of delights for the spirit, the Word of God. And [let us say] that, by seeing, he heard secret words—viz., heard in what way Wisdom speaks secret words through which it infuses itself into the intellect, where it remains as the light of the intellect’s life. For he who when thus rapt has received within himself the Word<sup>13</sup> through which the Creator described this book (viz., the book of the creation): he understands (by means of that Word, who is the Form of things) all the things contained in the book [of creation]; and within himself, where he has received<sup>14</sup> the Word, he comprehends all things. And whether he ascends or descends, whether he enters in or goes out: because he has the Word, or the Door,<sup>15</sup> or the Way,<sup>16</sup> he will find Paradise’s pastures,<sup>17</sup> which are the food of immortal life.

[8] Augustine, in the sermon in which he expounds this epistle, says that Paul was raptured from corporeal things unto immaterial things that are likenesses of corporeal things (even as the imagination is related to the senses in the absence of what is perceivable).<sup>18</sup> And from something thus immaterial [Paul was raptured] unto an intellectual utterance, unto the Paradise-of-delights of all paradises-of-delights—i.e., unto a vision of the Trinity. [Augustine] says: “If a good soul has joy in the good things amid the whole creation, what is more excellent than the joy that is [obtainable] in God’s Word, through

whom all things were made?"<sup>19</sup>

And although Paul says that he does not know whether at that time [of rapture] he was in the body or out of the body,<sup>20</sup> nevertheless he thereby makes manifest to us great secrets. For our intellectual nature, which is called the inner man, is capable of light and of the intellectual word of God. For the Word of God is a Spirit and is heard only in the intellectual spirit and speaks within and from within. For it does not come from without as does a perceptible voice, which is formed from forced air. And so, when the inner man is caught up unto the Word of God, it withdraws from the outer, perceptible world. And this separation is seen to be a [partial] withdrawing from the body and from every corporeal nature. But, nevertheless, since the soul does not on this account [altogether] depart from the body, which it animates, the withdrawing from the body is not observed. Accordingly, the rapture unto the vision of the Word of God does not appear to be a separation; for [the rapture] is [the place] where outside and inside coincide, because *there* 'to withdraw from' is 'to enter into'. [9] For the Word of God is the Logos, or the Absolute Form, which grants to every intellect intellectual-being. Thus, [the Word of God] is the Center of intellectual being. Hence, one's being raptured unto the Word is an *entering in* by *withdrawing from*, as in a case where one proceeds from the circumference to the center, [or] proceeds from the composite to the simple, [or] from the body to the spirit. Yet, this [proceeding] occurs in a coinciding, so that (1) withdrawing is entering-into or approaching and (2) outside is inside. But how it is that outside coincides with inside is known by God alone, who is outside of all things in such a way that He is within all things. And, hence, the Apostle [Paul] states that he does not know [how] this [coinciding occurs], but he declares that God knows it.

[10] Subsequently, we are taught here [in today's text] that the inner-man, which is immaterial, has a name as regards the outer-man. Paul was raptured unto the Third Heaven, although the same Paul was in Damascus. For in accordance with the carnal outer-man, with respect to which he was in time and place, he was a living and true man present in Damascus. But in accordance with the immaterial inner-man, with respect to which he was not in time and place, he was raptured unto the Word-of-God, who is not bound to space or time, both of which exist [ontologically] subsequent to Him and because of Him.

[11] Paul says that he heard secret words that it is not granted to

a man to utter.<sup>21</sup> He says “to a man” (viz., to one who is in time) because those corruptible ears could not grasp God’s incorruptible secrets. Therefore, it is not granted to a carnal man to speak, and to unveil, the secrets of the Spirit of God. That Spirit who is the Word of God utters these secrets within the spirit of a man. In this [human] spirit the Word is received, and this speaking occurs in silence and in secret, because the words are secret [words].<sup>22</sup> What is secret is hidden. Speaking in hiddenness is a revealing in spirit. As we commonly say: “My conscience tells me this.” That’s when secret matters are revealed to conscience. For conscience says that God is to be loved because God is Goodness itself, which is loved in whatever things are loved. [12] The Word, or Logos, that is present in the desiring spirit reveals this basis for loving God. And this is the word that speaks in conscience. About this [word] the prophet said: “I will hear what the Lord will speak in me.”<sup>23</sup> For it is reason that persuades [us] concerning [what things are] best—e.g., concerning justice, truth, graciousness, and the virtues. And so, to this Word, thus speaking in us, let us give a name that accords with the name we hear. For example, if [the Word] persuades us that justice is to be cherished, we call the Word *Justice*; if graciousness, *Graciousness*; if truth, *Truth*; and so on, with respect to all the excellences. Hence, we say that that Word is the Excellence of excellences, the Wisdom of holy wisemen, the Immortal Life of all who are living immortally—and whatever such things.

[13] [Let us note] next: this speaking-of-the-word that occurs in the hiddenness of our spirit—where conscience is the locus of hearing—is heard by seeing. When we wish to correct, in a brotherly manner, someone who errs: we commonly ask that he look to his conscience, which reproves him if he sins. This looking is his hearing the reproving [conscience]. Therefore, when the inner-man is caught up unto the Word of God (i.e., unto the locus of hearing, where the Word is heard to set forth hidden words in the secret-place, namely, of conscience: then the [inner-man], by seeing, hears those things of which it is not granted to speak. [14] The prophet said: “my secret to myself.”<sup>24</sup> For to every rational faculty Absolute Reason speaks—secretly and in hiddenness—its own word, as it were, sent from the secrets of God to each rational spirit. And in this school of Christ, who is the Word of God, each one can apprehend and study the evangelical teaching that is vital and that is suitable to himself and that offers immortality.

As regards this topic, let the foregoing things be said in the fore-

going way for the time-being.

[15] Next, let us reflect upon our theme that grace is a sufficiency. For to a faithful servant who has as his Master Him who is Graciousness itself, it is enough to have his Master's favor, [or grace]. For in that case, [the servant's] weakness does not diminish the favor but rather increases the Master's mercy toward the servant. For the Lord is quite gracious to him because the quite weak man is a quite faithful [servant]. Such a faithful [servant] glories in his weakness because, [as a result of it], the power of the Lord's grace abounds in him. "Power is made perfect in weakness."<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, there follows [in the text]: "Gladly will I glory in my infirmities in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me." Elsewhere<sup>26</sup> [Paul] says: "When I am weak, then I am quite strong." Power is strength and stamina. Therefore, strength coincides with weakness. [16] When Paul thrice asked of Christ to be freed from that weakness-of-flesh, (viz., from the thorn [of the flesh]), he obtained not liberation but rather Christ's strength and power. This is the power that does not permit Satan to prevail with his temptings; but it does permit him to tempt. And when temptation reaches the point that because of the weakness of the flesh one despairs of his power to resist, then Christ, who has been invoked, is present and is the Victor over the Tempter. At His command Satan withdraws. Therefore, he who battles under Christ's [command] and who is in Christ's grace cannot be overcome; for, at the right moment, Christ's power is present. By "at the right moment" I mean the moment when human resources cease and no hope of further resisting remains. And so, Paul elsewhere states that he is not permitted to be tempted beyond that which he is able to bear but that [God] gives, together with temptation, a way of escape.<sup>27</sup>

[17] The Tempter is not overcome except by the power of Christ. Temptation is permitted for a time in order to show Christ's power—for the sake of progress on the part of the one who is tempted. But, at the right moment, our Helper is present. When He is asked, He delivers the one who is experiencing trials. And not only does He deliver him, but he also glorifies him, as if the one in and through whom the power of Christ wrought the victory had himself wrought the victory. [Christ] gives the reward of victory to him in and through whom He conquers. For the one in and through whom He conquers is His faithful [servant]. And so, [Christ] dwells in him through grace. The faithfulness of the servant is the abode of the Lord's grace. The Lord

ascribes to the faithfulness of the servant the triumph that He brings about by means of His own power and might. And so, faithfulness obtains the reward, because faithfulness is what attracts the strength-giving grace.

[18] Let us also reflect upon the phrase “is sufficient,” where Christ said “My grace is sufficient for you.” For nature does not suffice; only grace is sufficiency; it contains that which is lacking. To the servant of a king there is lacking nobility of birth, mighty strength, practical wisdom in deeds; and there are lacking to him many other things that are required in a royal minister. However, because of his faithfulness, he is in the king’s favor, [or grace]. The king’s favor suffices; it supplies all [that is lacking]. For it makes the servant noble, strong, and practically wise in the king’s eyes. And his being—by grace—without defect in the eyes of the king is sufficient for him.

[19] Grace makes a man worthy to be the adopted son of God, so that he is supremely happy as being an heir to the Kingdom of God. The grace of God is the form that perfects an infirm nature. Christ is the fullness of perfecting-grace, meant to be imparted to all. All [who receive grace] receive [it] from Christ’s fullness, and from Christ’s fullness they are perfected. Therefore, this grace is sufficient for all, even as [it was sufficient] for Paul. Christ is Absolute Grace, without which no one can be pleasing to God and through which all who are pleasing to God are made pleasing [to Him]—as in the case of the true Son of God, whose Sonship enfolds all grace.

[20] Let us, therefore, together with Paul, be faithful. And let us show faithfulness amid all hardship—[faithfulness] even unto death—just as did Paul. And [then] we will have a sufficient amount of Christ’s grace, through which we will be like Him<sup>28</sup> in the glory of God the Father, who is forever blessed.

## NOTES TO *Sufficit Tibi Gratia Mea*

- \* Sermon CCLXIX.
- 1. II Corinthians 12:9.
- 2. II Corinthians 11:13-14.
- 3. II Corinthians 11:15.
- 4. II Corinthians 11:18 - 12:18.
- 5. Re “seek their own advantage” (“*quae sua sunt quaerunt*”), note I Corinthians 13:5.
- 6. Proverbs 27:2 (not Proverbs 24, as Nicholas misremembers).
- 7. Thus, Paul is permitted to boast of his sufferings for Christ, inasmuch as these boastings edify the Church.
- 8. Acts 9:8-9.
- 9. Here (at 4:16) I am reading, with ms. *L*, “*secum*” in place of “*sensum*”.
- 10. II Corinthians 12:2.
- 11. II Corinthians 12:4.
- 12. II Corinthians 12:1.
- 13. John 1:12.
- 14. Here (at 7:11) I am understanding “*concepit*” to have the same meaning as “*recepit*” at 7:6.
- 15. John 10:9.
- 16. John 14:6.
- 17. John 10:9.
- 18. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII, 34 (*PL* 34:483).
- 19. Colossians 1:16.
- 20. II Corinthians 12:3.
- 21. II Corinthians 12:4.
- 22. Throughout this sermon Nicholas uses “*verbum*” sometimes to refer to God the Son, who is the Word of God, and sometimes to refer to what Paul “heard” from the Son of God in the rapture. Moreover, the Word of God is eternally spoken, or begotten, by God the Father. Furthermore, the risen Christ is He who speaks, through the Holy Spirit, to believers. And so on. In developing his homiletical theme, Nicholas trades upon this manifold use of “*verbum*”. It is sometimes difficult to know whether or not to capitalize the English term that translates “*verbum*”.
- 23. Psalms 84:9 (85:8).
- 24. Isaias (Isaiah) 24:16.
- 25. II Corinthians 12:9.
- 26. II Corinthians 12:10. Nicholas is here alluding—not quoting exactly. (He seems not to remember that this passage is one that immediately succeeds his theme-verse.
- 27. I Corinthians 10:13.
- 28. I John 3:2.

**Paraclitus autem\***  
("But the Paraclete ...")<sup>1</sup>  
[May 31, 1444; preached in Koblenz]<sup>2</sup>

[1] "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will bring to your mind whatever things I will have said unto you."<sup>3</sup> John 14.

Let the grace of the Holy Spirit be present with us; by means of a yearly feast-day we celebrate the descent of this grace unto the Church. God the Father created man; God the Son regenerated him; God the Paraclete instructs him. We have a certain natural being, in order in this world to be that which we are; and we have it from the Father. We have, over and above this mortal being, the capability of arriving at an eternal, spiritual being; and we have it through regeneration in and through the Son. In our spirit we attain this spiritual being through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I am going to speak about this Holy Spirit, by whose guiding we proceed here below unto the promise and through whom we obtain happiness at the end of our journey. But because no one will be able to speak rightly about God the Spirit unless the Spirit speaks in and through him, and since the fleshly man does not perceive those things which are of the Spirit:<sup>4</sup> hence—in order that the Spirit may speak in and through me, and in order that your spirit may be aroused by the Spirit of the word-of-God that I am going to utter, and in order that in us the Spirit may increase the fire of divine love into a flame that ascends upwards—let us pray: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of believers-in-You, and ignite in them a fire of love for You ...," etc.

*PART ONE*

*Why the Sending of the Spirit of Christ Was Necessary*

[2] When He preached in Capharnaum ..., Christ said (to those listeners who received His words in a sensory and fleshly way) that His words were spirit and life.<sup>5</sup> And since the bodily presence of Christ, together with His human and perceptible conduct, impressed on the sensing part of the Apostles' souls certain new and wondrous things, and since Christ, as He passed by and preached the Gospel, was the Sower of the word, and since the hearts of the Apostles were dry: those words, insofar as they were uttered and sown in the human soil of the

Apostles, remained in their literal becloaking and could not bear fruit unless they died with respect to their perceptibility.<sup>6</sup> And, thus, just as a man cannot—by means of his inner, imaginative power—envision [another] man as long as that other man is present perceptibly, so the Apostles could not apprehend Christ by means of their spirit unless Christ withdrew from their senses. For Christ said: “Unless I go away, the Paraclete will not come.”<sup>7</sup> Hence, the Gospel says the following: “While still remaining with you, I have spoken. But the Paraclete . . . , etc., will teach you . . . ,” etc.<sup>8</sup> The Apostles were able to have this doctrine of the Spirit only from the Spirit, so that they understood that the words of Christ are spirit and life.

[3] Now, Christ promised to send the Spirit of truth after He Himself was assumed [into Heaven]. This [promising] is to be construed as follows: Since Christ said that He Himself is Life and Truth,<sup>9</sup> He promised to the Apostles His own Spirit, viz., the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father.<sup>10</sup> For no one can say in truth that Jesus Christ is God and man [i.e., is Divine and human] except by means of that Spirit.<sup>11</sup> And no one can exclaim to the Father “Abba, Father” except by means of the Spirit of truth.<sup>12</sup> For only the Son knows the Father. And so, the Son calls Him whom He knows “Father”; and no one else [knows the Father] except him to whom the Son reveals [the Father].<sup>13</sup> But he to whom the Son reveals [the Father] is he who receives within his own spirit the Spirit of truth and of revelation. Now, Christ declared all things to the Apostles as to friends.<sup>14</sup> But in their spirits they could not receive—and thus did not apprehend—the things declared with spiritual vitality.

But in order that in their spirits they might taste of those things that He impressed on their ears, He commanded that they await expectantly the promise of the Father, etc.<sup>15</sup> [4] For the following is the way by means of which one comes from sensory apprehension unto spiritual [apprehension]: viz., [by] hearing of, and seeing, with wonderment the works-of-God that God worked in and through Christ and [by] waiting (and not wandering away but meditating on those works and expecting in highest faith a revealing of things hidden in the Spirit) and [by] praying without ceasing, as did the Apostles for ten days. Etc.<sup>16</sup> For after the Apostles, with greatest desire, persevered in prayer for ten days and awaited the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit descended on the eleventh day. Let us look at the [Biblical] story. Etc. But from [that] story we know in what way the Holy Spirit came in accordance with that expectation, and we know under what signs [He came]. But the



Gospel says that only he who observes the word of Christ can have the Father and the Son dwelling in [him] and that to him will be sent the Holy Spirit, who will teach all truth, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Let us consider the Gospel in its summary: “If anyone love me ...,” etc.<sup>18</sup>

*PART TWO*

*What the Spirit Is*

[5] “But the Paraclete ...,” etc.

Because here the Spirit who is the Paraclete is spoken of, we ought to take note of different spirits. For there is the Spirit-of-the-Lord, who is the Creator; [and] there is the spirit that is a creature. The Holy Spirit, who is the Creator, is the Union of the Father and the Son—i.e., [is the Union] of Oneness and of Equality [of Oneness]. From Oneness comes Equality; from Oneness and Equality [of Oneness] comes Union.<sup>19</sup> Etc. Here below, then, the Spirit is the Uniting Power of all creatures. And by the Platonists He is called the world-soul; by others He is called Fate; by still others He is called the divine disposition that inheres unchangeably in things.<sup>20</sup> For just as from oneness there derives otherness, or possibility, and just as from equality there derives the actuality of possibility, i.e., the form by means of which nothing is greater or lesser [than it is]: so from union there derives motion; for nothing can be brought from possibility into actuality except through motion. Similarly, in the case of artifacts we see that form is introduced through motion. Therefore, the motion of the universe descends from Infinite Union. Thus, God is omnipotent and is Absolute Necessity, through which there is the possibility of things. He is Infinite Wisdom, through which there is distinctness and formal disposition. He is Infinite Goodness, through which there is attraction. Accordingly, He creates, disposes, and attracts.

[6] And so, the motion of the universe derives from the Spirit of all things, and this motion is partaken of in various ways—in one way by the intellectual nature, in another way by the rational nature, in still another way by the sensory nature. For certain things partake of this uniting motion for the purpose of *existing*, certain for the purpose of *living*, certain for the purpose of *understanding*. “The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world ...,” etc.<sup>21</sup> “Send forth Your Spirit, and they will be created ...,” etc.<sup>22</sup> But we men partake of this universal motion not only in order to exist, not only in order to live, but also in order to exist

and to live and to taste—intellectually, in their Fount— (*a*) of the Being of omnipotence and (*b*) of the Life of eternal wisdom and (*c*) of Goodness itself.

[7] Therefore, the restfulness of the lowest creatures that partake of the Spirit of all things in a shadowy way consists in their being that which they are in this world. But the restfulness of animals consists in their living in a sensing way. The restfulness of things intellectual consists in their apprehension of life and of intellectual being, i.e., in their apprehension of the true; for the true is the object of the intellect.<sup>23</sup> Now, our spirit has an animal motion by which it moves the body so that the body lives in an animal way; and this motion is manifest only in children and simpletons. Insofar as [our spirit] is an image of God it has a motion by means of which it makes itself to be all things, for it is a likeness of things;<sup>24</sup> and this motion is manifest in men who have the use of reason. And our spirit has both of these motions because of its natural partaking—within its own order—of the Spirit of all things; for [our spirit] is a rational [spirit]. Yet, by means of these movements [our spirit] cannot attain unto rest. For (since its movement is toward the true) it does not attain the true by means of animal motion; rather, [by means of animal motion] it attains life that is corruptible. Moreover, by means of the rational movement by which it makes itself to be the likenesses of things, [it also does not attain the true], since a likeness is not the truth itself but falls infinitely short of it. Hence, in regard to the following, all human motion is rest: viz., in regard to the sensory life of this substance or in regard to an immortal, but sensory, life. But in this [motion] there was ignorance of all things, inasmuch as no one could go beyond the sensing of things or the likeness of the true. And, hence, all men posited this world as their goal.

[8] However, Christ, who is Truth, taught us about another, spiritual world and kingdom; and He made us capable of attaining it in and through Himself. Now, Christ has opened [this kingdom] for us. For that spirit which posits its goal outside of God [and] in [this] world is an evil spirit; it does not have rest, since its motion is not toward truth (where alone there is rest for the intellect) but is away from truth and toward the likenesses of the imagination. Hence, all these [thus-directed] spirits have a false and erroneous motion; their leader is the Prince of this world.<sup>25</sup> But this Prince of this world does not have any power over the truth or over the Spirit of Christ. Similarly, a shadow does not have power over the light; but when light approaches, it withdraws,

and its power is reduced to nothing, as says the Gospel.<sup>26</sup> There are, then, certain intellectual natures that have cloaked themselves with the shadows of ignorance, and they are moved away from the good, the true, and the just. But there are other spirits that move themselves toward the good, the true, and the just. And we apprehend this [fact] in the movement of our spirit. For although our spirit was created by God as good, nevertheless its motion—in order to be rational and to partake of Divine motion in a higher degree—is of free choice. Therefore, if [our spirit] turns away from the good by means of a movement toward what is false and evil, then it consents to this movement. Therefore, that motion to which it thus consents is prompted by some apparent good. Hence, we are said to be prompted to this movement by the seduction of an evil mover. Accordingly, we believe that an evil tempting spirit suggests these things to us. Hence, the doctors [of the Church] assert that each man has an evil spirit and also a good spirit. But this evil spirit induces in a general way to evil things and is subject to the orders of princes who concur in the seducing. Thus, when someone is inclined to the sin of licentiousness, the motion results from a spirit of fornication. And so on. For every motion of turning away from God by means of some particular transgression is done under the influence of some prince of the world. Yet, all princes of the world are subordinate to one prince, about whom [we read] here in the Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

[9] Likewise, all intellectual spirits are powers. And there are powers that move and incline toward the virtues. And there are various spirits that partake of the good nature of the one Supreme Prince, i.e., of the Supreme Spirit; they have been turned to Him and they turn [others] to Him. For all spirits separated [from a body] work, insofar as they exist, either by turning [others] away from the power of the Most High (a power which is the Holy Spirit) because they are turned away or by turning [others to the Most High] because they are turned [thereto]. Now, Christ says that the angels of all those men always see the Face of the Father.<sup>28</sup> These angels have charge of us. (The Psalmist [says]: “He commanded His angels concerning you . . .,” etc.)<sup>29</sup> And they watch over us with marvelous diligence; and they take extreme care to present us to the Most High. For as Origen says, because of this [caretaking] they know that they serve God pleasingly.

[10] Therefore, with regard to every motion toward an end, ascend unto a certain contracted beginning of it, and understand there

the governing divine power, or angel. You see one motion in the leonine species, another in the wolverine species, still another in the ovine species—and so on as concerns all specific natures. Therefore, as regards this power which you see to exist variously in all things that are united in a species: affirm that it is the power of God, partaken of in this contracted way. Now, the power of God is sometimes called an angel—for example, by Christians. Philo, who was a Platonist, said that even demons are spoken of as learned animals. Hence, there are some spirits who are in charge of the movements of the elements, others who are in charge of the movements of the stars, others who are in charge of the movements of reason, others who are in charge of the movements of the senses, etc. Nonetheless, there is one Divine Spirit that in this way is variously and multiply partaken of. By comparison, in a music-organ one wind (*spiritus*) is received in the various ducts or pipes: in and of itself the wind is *one* but in its operation it is multiple, in accordance with the variety of the receiving pipes. Similarly, all kingdoms, with regard to their governing motion, are subject to certain spirits—as we read in [the Book of] Daniel regarding the kingdom of the Persians.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the universal Church is subject to a rector, as is every church (as [we read] in the Apocalypse).<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the church in Trier [is subject to a rector]; so too is each gathering, whether of the religious or of citizens, etc.

[11] And we must note that just as the Divine Spirit is Love (*amor sive caritas*), or Union, so all such powers-of-union, or spirits-of-union are preservers also of peace. But there are evil spirits who turn away from peace and love and who are prompters of divisiveness. Therefore, consider what wars are waged among spirits and what evil occurs from the triumph of an evil spirit. Hence, since there are some spirits whose movement is from God [and] since there are other spirits whose movement is from the Prince of the world,<sup>32</sup> a man is often deceived because he does not know how to distinguish between spirits; for Satan fashions himself into an angel of light.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, we are commanded to take heed and to test the spirits as to whether they are from God.<sup>34</sup> But unless the Holy Spirit teaches us and brings to our minds words of truth, we shall not attain the distinguishing. And, as Paul says, the discerning between spirits is granted to us in and through the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is the Spirit-of-the-Lord through whom occurs the motion of all the things that are moved and in whom are all the things that are moved. For He is the Beginning, the Middle, and the End of all motion; He contains all things and fills all things.<sup>36</sup>

## PART THREE

*What the Holy Spirit Works in Those to Whom  
He is Sent, and How He is To Be Received; Five Questions*

[12] As to the third [topic]—viz., to whom [the Holy Spirit] is sent—it must be said here that the Holy Spirit is sent to those who are intellectually and affectionally capable [of receiving Him], those whose spirit is moved toward the one, the true, and the good.

[13] **How ought we to prepare ourselves so that the Holy Spirit be sent unto us?** I answer: Since the Holy Spirit is the Power (*virtus*) of God, He will be sent only unto a virtuous [*virtuosus*] spirit. For there cannot be [divine] power in a spirit that is insincere and unvirtuous. Rather, a spirit ought to be virtuous, in conformity with its motion toward the one, the true, and the good. Indeed, the principal thing is that [a spirit] move itself (*a*) only toward the One, who is Being itself, i.e., toward the Father; (*b*) only toward the True, i.e., toward the Son; (*c*) only toward the Good, i.e., toward the Holy Spirit. For motion that is toward the one, the true, [and] the good is motion in which Father and Son and Holy Spirit can be present. He who prefers God to everything in the world moves away from the world (which is situated in much divisiveness and in evil) and toward the Father. He who prefers truth to all else moves away from the treacherous deceptiveness of this world unto the Son of God. He who chooses the good in its purity leaves behind all of this world's apparent good. He who habituates his spirit to these motions makes it virtuous. For the whole man will be virtuous if his spirit does not allow his sensual impulses to deviate from this pathway but rather controls his animal body with a bridle and with spurs. For [in this way] he adorns his house with practical wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation,<sup>37</sup> so that in him there can be the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. It is necessary that our spirit take note of the fact that the words of Christ are spirit and life.<sup>38</sup> [Our spirit] must grasp these [words] and sit and meditate upon them<sup>39</sup> and be aware that unless sensual influence abates, [the Holy Spirit] will not be able to be present in our spirit. We must prayerfully ask Him, implore Him, etc.

[14] Let the house be carefully prepared! Let it be purified by a purging of the uncleanness of sins, for the Spirit is not like a swine, etc. And [this purging] is the getting rid of sensuality, because the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit ...<sup>40</sup> (Bernard [says]: just as water and fire are not compatible, so carnal delights and

spiritual delights [are not compatible]). And this [getting rid of sensuality] is the expelling of unclean spirits. “Create in me a clean heart, O God ...,” etc.<sup>41</sup> After the purifying, one must adorn [the house] with various pictures of holy meditations. Likewise, through importunate prayer [the Holy Spirit] must be invited; for He is not like a buffoon who goes to a wedding uninvited, etc. The Apostles prayed for themselves and for others (Acts 8). When invited, [the Holy Spirit] comes quickly: “I wished, and understanding was given to me; I called, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me ...”<sup>42</sup> And we ought to call upon Him every three days, not at the last moment. ([See] the end of Luke: “But remain, until you are indued with power from on high.”)<sup>43</sup> And note what company the Apostles had when they called upon the Holy Spirit: viz., the company of Mary, the Mother ..., etc. Be serious in this [invoking]. Likewise, it is necessary that you serve Him rather than the world, that you serve the Spirit rather than your belly, etc. Isaias 42: “Lo, my servant; I will uphold him. [Lo] my elect; my soul has taken delight in him. I have given my spirit upon him.”<sup>44</sup> As regards John the Baptist: “The child grew and was strengthened by the Holy Spirit ...,” etc.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, one must prepare a bed for Him, because He is not like a miller who sleeps amid the commotion [of the water-mill], etc. Isaias 11: [the Spirit of the Lord] will rest upon him who is humble and quiet.<sup>46</sup> In addition, it is necessary that you receive His household also, for He is not a rustic lord ..., etc.

[15] **How is the Holy Spirit in us?** God is present in His creation in a twofold way: either (*a*) by means of His essence, presence, and power (and in this way He is present everywhere) or (*b*) spiritually and by grace when He gives gifts of grace—as occurs here [in the giving of the Paraclete]. Hence, [God the Holy Spirit] comes bearing a gift. (Romans 5: “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us.”)<sup>47</sup> One is saved not through grace given freely but rather through grace that makes one pleasing [to God], i.e., through love; for without the Holy Spirit one is not saved ..., etc.: if I do not have love, I am nothing ...<sup>48</sup> This love pleasantly joins the soul, through love, to God; and it is called *a pleasant love*. And it enjoins all the powers of the soul and of the body to serve the Beloved in every place and at all times ..., etc. Also, it is called *an ardently desiring love*, because it ardently desires to serve; and it is called *an operative love* or *an active love*. There is another stage [of love], through which [the soul] urges that the Beloved be loved, praised, blessed, etc., by all. And then love-of-

neighbor flows forth; and it is ascribed to the Holy Spirit (although the works of the Trinity are undivided) because it proceeds in the manner of a gift . . . , etc. The Holy Spirit, because He is holy, comes by way of sanctifying.

**[16] In what way is the sending of the Holy Spirit [to be] understood?** I answer that the sending of the Holy Spirit is described as follows: it is the proceeding of love from the Father and the Son unto creatures for the sake of creatures' sanctification. Only a rational nature or an intellectual nature is sanctifiable, because only [such a nature] is capable of attaining God by way of understanding and by way of affection. And sanctity is nothing other than the grace that makes one pleasing [to God]; or rather, the love that the Holy Spirit infuses at His coming [is the grace that makes one pleasing to God]. Moreover, fear first arises from one's meditating on his sins, from severity of judgment and of punishment; and [this] is a servile fear, and it is the beginning of wisdom.<sup>49</sup> Next, [the fearing spirit] reflects on the goods of the Creator—[goods] which the Creator has bestowed; and [the spirit] is ashamed of its offense, etc. And this fear of the Lord is the initial fear through which the Holy Spirit first enters into the mind. But where the [fearful spirit] reflects not on his own [affairs] nor on punishment but on the things that have to do with honoring and reverencing God, then the fear will be filial fear; and [this *fear*] is the first gift [of the Spirit].<sup>50</sup> Next, the mind is made *devout*, i.e., is made generously benevolent. Hence, it strives (*a*) to recompense God for all that He has bestowed and (*b*) to recompense its neighbor for God's sake, giving the neighbor whatever compassion it can, etc. And [this] is the second gift [of the Holy Spirit]. But because discernment is necessary for this [devoutness of mind], there comes the gift of [that] *knowledge* which is a supernatural discerning among things doable. And because such hardships of temptation occur, there comes next the gift of *courage*; then comes the gift of *counsel* for the purpose of ardently accomplishing those things that the spirit is counselled. And the foregoing are the gifts that have to do with the active life. Next, comes the gift of *understanding* that is present in the contemplative life. Through this gift [our spirit] understands<sup>51</sup> the wondrous power of God and His marvelous works and [the requirements] of His law, etc.<sup>52</sup> Next, there is the gift of *wisdom*, [given] so that one may taste how sweet the Lord is, etc.<sup>53</sup> (Note: a visible sending is evident through signs; an invisible sending occurs without a sign.)

[17] **In what way are we to regard the differences of the gifts?** I answer that (1) there are certain gifts of the Spirit together with which there is *not conferred* the grace that makes one pleasing [to God]: for example, servile fear [of God] and faith that is not in-formed [by love]. (2) There are certain gifts of the Spirit together with which [the aforementioned grace] is *not always [conferred]*: for example, the gifts of tongues, of miracles, of prophecy. (3) There are other gifts by means of which holiness *is always conferred*; indeed, they are the sanctifying of a creature: for example, love, which makes a man acceptable and pleasing to God ([and] this [making acceptable] is [what is meant by] sanctifying). Accordingly, with the infusion of love the Holy Spirit is given. For [love] is the virtue of virtues and is their form, giving meritorious being—something which the other virtues cannot have apart from love, because without love a man is nothing . . . , etc.<sup>54</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity* XV: love by itself distinguishes the children of God from the children of perdition. Now, love cannot be a fixed disposition (*habitus*) that is acquired from frequent acts; for human exercisings cannot (however much they aim to do so) attain the ultimate end—attain it in the supernatural way in which love moves the mind both here below and in Heaven. Rather, love is a fixed disposition that is specially infused by God through the Holy Spirit. And among created gifts, [love] is the most excellent [gift]. Or rather, it is a certain partaking of the Uncreated Gift, viz., the Holy Spirit, from whom it flows directly into the rational spirit, flowing subjectively into the will, enlivening all the powers of the soul and directing [the soul] unto God.

[18] For just as the Holy Spirit is the Union and indissoluble Bond by whom the Father and the Son love themselves and us, so the power of love is a certain union by means of which we are united lovingly and formally to God and, in and through God, are bonded with our neighbor. And this [connectedness] is [what it means for] God to dwell in us and for us to dwell in God. [This connectedness] does not occur after the fashion of moral friendships, which—with a view to what is good, honorable, delightful, or useful—bind [the friends] together for the sake of political association; rather, this love is most lofty with respect to divine and beatific association. It has orderliness; for, first of all, [it directs us] above ourselves unto God on account of God. For he who acknowledges God [only] when it benefits him loves himself more than he loves God, and he is outside of love. Secondly, [through love] one is brought unto himself, so that he loves himself as



a participant in God's glory. Thirdly, [he is brought] unto that which is on a horizontal plane with him; i.e., [he is brought unto] his neighbor as unto a fellow-seeker of happiness. But he who loves his neighbor not for God's sake but for his own sake is not [abiding] in love. Fourthly, [the one who has love is brought] unto that which is below himself, viz., unto his body, so that he nourishes it, rules over it, chastises it, so that it may be made a partaker of happiness. But love (*caritas*) is not a desire-filled loving of one's flesh (*diligere carnem in desideriis*) ..., etc.

[19] Therefore, since love is the life of the soul, every sin that is contrary to love is a mortal sin. For example, contempt makes a sin to be mortal, because contempt is opposed to love ..., etc. And so, in an extended sense, every sin is against the Holy Spirit; yet, there are some enumerated sins that are said to be *primarily* against the Holy Spirit. For some sins are against the Father: they are done out of weakness contrary to power, which is ascribed particularly to the Father. Some sins are against the Son: [they are done] out of ignorance contrary to truth or wisdom, which is ascribed particularly to the Son. Some sins are contrary to goodness, which is ascribed particularly to the Holy Spirit. Indeed, those things that are done from malice—e.g., malice such as despises and rejects those things through which sin could be avoided—are said to be against the Holy Spirit. And because the mercy and the justice of God prod us toward hope [in God] and toward fear [of God], then by means of despair and presumptive audacity one sins against the Holy Spirit.

Two things are considered to belong to the gifts of God: the knowledge of the truth and the aid of inner grace. Opposing these are a disputing of known truth (in order that one may sin more unrestrainedly) and jealousy with respect to a brother's grace (when one envies the fact that [one's brother's] grace increases in the world). Moreover, with regard to sin there are two things that ought to hold us back: viz., (a) the baseness, or disorderedness, of the act and (b) the smallness, or meagerness, of the good which is obtained by means of the sin. In the beginning, [the good] is rejected by means of unrepentance—i.e., by having the intent of not repenting. Thereafter, it is rejected through stubbornness, for [stubbornness] reinforces the mind's resolve to cling to the sin. These sins have no excuse and, hence, are not forgiven. But because God's mercy can assist some men to return to their heart and to receive contrition for certain sins, the remission of these sins does also occur, etc.

[20] **Why is the Holy Spirit commonly called Teacher, Liberator, Strengthener, Comforter ..., etc.?** I answer: [He is called] Teacher because He teaches about true life, in opposition to hypocrisy and fraud. Likewise, [He teaches] about true justice, as opposed to greed; about true well-reputedness, as opposed to licentiousness; about true justice, as opposed to pride, which does not allow a man to know himself. Moreover, [the Holy Spirit] frees man from servitude. The law of the Spirit of life-in-Christ set Paul free from the law of sin and of death (Romans 8).<sup>55</sup> (II Corinthians 3: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.)<sup>56</sup> [The Holy Spirit] strengthens in the good, as in the desert John [the Baptist] was strengthened by the Spirit ..., etc.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, [the Holy Spirit] aids and defends His host against His every adversary. (Job 26: The Spirit of the Lord has adorned the heavens.)<sup>58</sup> Similarly, He inflames His host's love for Him. (Romans 5: God's love is shed abroad ..., etc.)<sup>59</sup> Moreover, He receives His host into His own palace.<sup>60</sup> (Your good Spirit leads unto His land ..., etc. Henceforth, says the Spirit, ..., etc.)<sup>61</sup> Moreover, through the Holy Spirit we have forgiveness of sins, victory over our enemies, glorious gifts, grace-given rewards. As regards the first [of these, see] Ezechiel 36: "I will pour forth upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed ..., etc."<sup>62</sup> "Create [in me] a clean heart ..., etc."<sup>63</sup> II Corinthians 7: "Let us cleanse ourselves ..., etc."<sup>64</sup> As regards the second-mentioned [role of the Holy Spirit]: "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Sampson, and Sampson tore the lion apart."<sup>65</sup> The lion is the Devil: I Peter 5: "Your adversary, the Devil, ..., etc."<sup>66</sup> As regards the third [role of the Holy Spirit]: Isaias 11: "A virgin will go forth from the root [of Jesse] ..." (and the other words down to the words "upon Him the Spirit of the Lord"), etc.<sup>67</sup> Regarding the fourth [role]: "The Kingdom of God is not food and drink but is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14).<sup>68</sup>

[21] Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is Comforter because He illumines the intellect: He infuses the bright ray of knowledge, while inflaming the affections. He bestows the ardor-of-love, while purifying the affections. He reduces the pain-of-temptation, while delighting one's spiritual taste. He affords the sweetness-of-devotion. Take note of how it is that the Holy Spirit is water, fire, ointment, etc., and is all those things that cause growing, purifying, or cleansing. Note that a fervent fire increases with the wind of adversity; thus, one who has the Spirit ..., etc. ("By means of tribulation you have enlarged me ..., etc.")<sup>69</sup> The Apostles, rejoicing, departed from the presence of the council, for they were considered worthy ..., etc.<sup>70</sup>

## NOTES TO *Paraclitus autem*

\* Sermon XXXVII.

1. John 14:26. The Holy Spirit is called *the Paraclete*, a word deriving from the Greek παράκλητος, meaning *Comforter* or *Intercessor* or *Advocate*.

2. This was the day of Pentecost.

3. John 14:26.

4. I Corinthians 2:14.

5. John 6:64.

6. John 12:24-25.

7. Nicholas alludes to John 16:7. He does not aim to quote it exactly.

8. John 14:25-26.

9. John 14:6.

10. John 14:16-17.

11. I Corinthians 12:3.

12. Galatians 4:6. Romans 8:15.

13. Matthew 11:27.

14. Luke 12:4.

15. Acts 1:4.

16. Acts 2:1.

17. John 14:23 and 16:13.

18. "If anyone love me, he will keep my word." John 14:23.

19. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 9 (26).

20. Cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* II, 9 (142).

21. Wisdom 1:7.

22. Psalms 103:30 (104:30).

23. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia - IIae, 9, 8.

24. The allusion here is to the Aristotelian-Thomistic view that, in perceiving, the mind makes itself to be a likeness of the object perceived, so that perceptual images resemble the objects of which they are images.

25. The reference is to the Devil. John 12:31. John 14:30.

26. Cf. Matthew 4:16.

27. "... here in the Gospel": i.e., in the Scriptural text for Pentecost, viz., John 14:23-31.

28. Matthew 18:10.

29. Psalms 90:11 (91:11).

30. Daniel 10:4-21.

31. In Apocalypse (Revelation) 2 each church is indicated to have an angel governing it, watching over it.

32. See n. 25 above.

33. II Corinthians 11:14.

34. I John 4:1.

35. I Corinthians 12:10.

36. Ephesians 1:23 and 4:10. Wisdom 1:7.

37. These are the so-called *cardinal virtues*, esteemed by the ancient Greek philosophers and incorporated into Medieval Christian philosophy.

38. John 6:64.
39. Cf. Deuteronomy 6:7.
40. I Corinthians 2:14.
41. Psalms 50:12 (51:10).
42. Wisdom 7:7.
43. Luke 24:49.
44. Isaiah 42:1.
45. Luke 1:80.
46. It is not clear to which passage of Scripture Nicholas is here referring. Cf. Cantic of Canticles (Song of Solomon) 3:1 and Isaias (Isaiah) 11:2 (not Isaias 65, as Nicholas writes and as the editors of the Latin text emend in their notes).
47. Romans 5:5.
48. I Corinthians 13:2.
49. Psalms 110:10 (111:10).
50. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are *timor Dei, pietas, scientia, fortitudo, consilium, intellectus, sapientia*. See Isaias (Isaiah) 11:2-3.
51. Here at 16:37 I am reading, with the Paris edition, “intelligat” in place of “intelligent”.
52. In line 16:39 I disregard the editors’ addition of the word “hic”.
53. Psalms 33:9 (34:8).
54. I Corinthians 13:3. Throughout his discussion of love Nicholas uses the word “*caritas*”.
55. Romans 8:2.
56. II Corinthians 3:17.
57. Matthew 3:1. Luke 1:80.
58. Job 26:13.
59. Romans 5:5.
60. Here (at 20:20) I am reading “palatium” (with ms. *U<sub>2</sub>*) in place of “palatium”.
61. See, respectively, Psalms 142:10 (143:10) and Apocalypse (Revelation) 14:13: “Blessed henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit ....”
62. Ezechiel (Ezekiel) 36:25.
63. Psalms 50:12 (51:10).
64. II Corinthians 7:1.
65. Judges 14:6.
66. I Peter 5:8: “Your adversary, the Devil, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”
67. Isaias (Isaiah) 11:1-2.
68. Romans 14:17.
69. Psalms 4:2 (4:1).
70. Acts 5:41: “... were considered worthy to suffer shame for [Christ’s] name.”