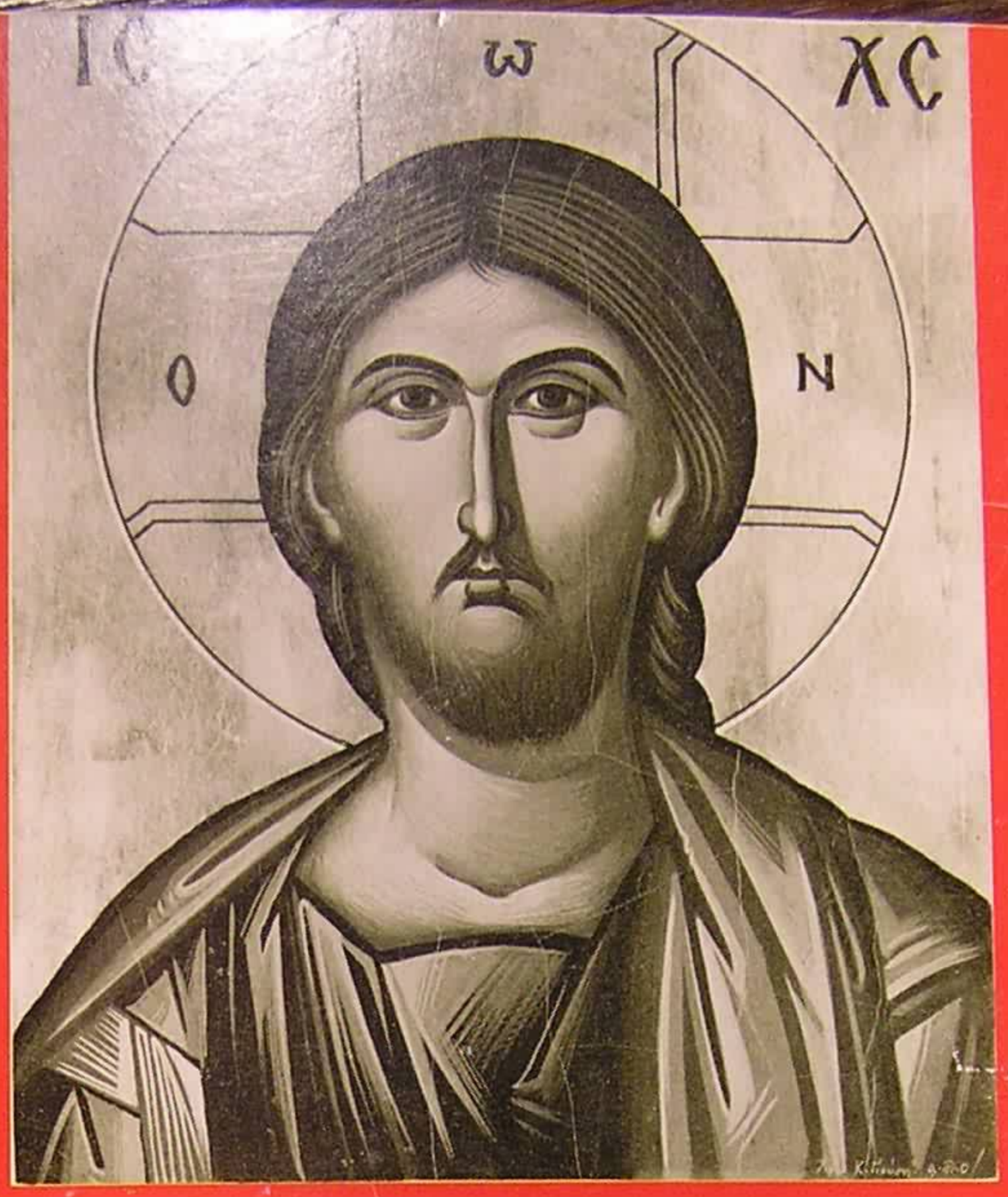
$6.95



HYMNS of DIVINE LOVE

by St. Symeon the New Theologian

Songs of praise by one of the great mystics of all church history.

Newly Translated By

George A. Maloney, S.J.

HYMNS OF DIVINE LOVE

by

ST. SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN

Introduction and Translation

by

George A. Maloney, S.J.

Dimension Books

Denville, New Jersey

CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Hymns of Divine Love 11

INTRODUCTION

The times in which St. Symeon the New Theologian lived (949-1022) were not unlike those in which we are living today. Christianity in general had become both for the masses and for the select group of "professional" Christians, such as monks, theologians and members of the hierarchy a ritual to be put on like a robe. But they found in their more honest moments that the robe put on could also be put off, that it hardly got inside of a person to change his vision of himself, God and his world so that he could be a true transfigurer by God's grace of God's beginning created order.

Symeon through his writings represents himself as a Christian mystic of outstanding quality. Yet in the West very little is known of his works. He wanted to be known as the "Enthusiastic Zealot," so eager was he, not only to share intimately the great, mystical graces that he had abundantly received during his lifetime, but also to teach all who wanted to hear what the Holy Spirit was saying through him in continuity with the teachings of the early Fathers.

Symeon could be called without any exaggeration a charismatic reformer. Through an intense life of asceticism that stressed observing the commandments of Jesus Christ as revealed to him in the radicalism of the Gospels and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in his daily life, Symeon grew in greater consciousness by grace that the Father and the Son truly dwelt within him. Jesus Christ was literally always asking the Father to send the Spirit upon him as he asked, searched and knocked.[1]

He moved progressively through a continued purification of his heart to open himself up to the presence of the Holy Trinity dwelling within him. This presence became so real to his consciousness that he saw God as a brilliant light, radiating within him and transforming him into a share in that same divine light.

Symeon describes one such vision:

> *As I was meditating, Master, on these things,*
> *suddenly You appeared from above, much greater than the sun*
> *and You shone brilliantly from the heavens down into my heart.*
> *. . . O what intoxication of light, O what movements of fire.*
> *O what swirlings of the flame in me, miserable one that I am,*
> *coming from You and Your glory.*
> *The glory I know it and I say it is Your Holy Spirit . . .*
> *but, while I was there surrounded by darkness,*
> *You appeared as light, illuminating me completely from your total light.*
> *And I became light in the night . . .* [2]

The presence of the risen Savior as light became so real and so intense in his spiritual life that Symeon eventually reached a state of mystical union whereby Jesus Christ no longer appeared under a form but spoke directly

and constantly to Symeon. "And then I knew that I consciously possessed You within me. From that moment I no longer loved You and the attributes that surround You, by recalling them in memory only, but it was really You, subsistent Love, that I was possessing within, such was from that time on my faith! Yes, the same love, for You really are Love, O God."[3]

Symeon felt convinced that the Holy Spirit wanted him to speak and write openly about his mystical experiences. The other side of his life is that of the opposition encountered from the "official" theological circles that feared his type of "enthusiasm" and direct line to the Holy Spirit. The sketch of Symeon's life can briefly be told. But his importance for us in succeeding generations consists in calling all Christians back from the heavy crustations of traditions and routines to face Jesus Christ Crucified in the radicalism of His call to become children of God, not only through a baptism of water but also of the Holy Spirit. What this meant for Symeon in his life and doctrine was a continual death to the darkness of egoism within man through an intense life of asceticism that stressed prayer, compunction for sins and charity towards others. He used his own experiences to exhort others that, if one observed diligently the Gospel commandments, he would become progressively more and more conscious of the indwelling operations of the Holy Trinity, divinizing the Christian.

HIS LIFE

Symeon was born in 949 in Paphlagonia in Asia Minor. At an early age he was brought to the imperial city of Constantinople by his uncle who held an important position at the imperial court. There, Symeon received his secondary education but refused to continue higher studies. At the age of 14, he met the holy Symeon, a monk of the Stoudion Monastery in Constantinople, reformed by St. Theodore. His spiritual father introduced him into the spirituality of what we would call "greater consciousness" or awareness of the indwelling Holy Spirit by giving him the spiritual writings of Mark the Hermit and Diadochus of Photike.

Symeon, while employed in the household of a patrician and later in the imperial service, strove to lead a deep spiritual life of asceticism and contemplation as taught by his spiritual guide, Symeon the Studite. He gave more and more time to praying at night, especially when God began to overwhelm him with graces of visions.

Still, he complains in his writings after having received many graces: "I did not understand the miracle that had happened to me; and being little by little led astray through laziness and negligence, I fell into my former evil habits and even worse."[4]

He accredited his return to God through God's mercy and the fervent prayers of his spiritual father, Symeon the Studite. At the age of 27, Symeon finally entered Stoudion to become a monk. But his total submission to his

charismatic spiritual director went against the common life as lived in that monastery and, on the advice of his director, he transferred to the neighboring Monastery of St. Mamas.

Here he made great progress in learning and in spiritual perfection and, within three years, he was tonsured monk, ordained priest and elected abbot. By his discourses (*Catecheses*) to his monks, he strove to lead them into a greater consciousness of God's presence within them, but not without stirring up great opposition. Some 30 monks rose up in revolt against him and strove to harm him physically while in church during one of his discourses. The Patriarch supported Symeon in this matter but it was not the last of opposition to Symeon's ideas.

His chief adversary was Stephen, Archbishop of Nicomedia, who resigned from his see to become the *syncellus* in Constantinople, chief adviser and theologian to the Patriarch. Stephen worried about Symeon's type of "enthusiasm" with its stress on the necessity of consciousness of grace and he feared that Symeon was denying the authority and jurisdiction of the official hierarchy. There were also at stake two opposing views of theology: Stephen's type of rational speculation about the mysteries of faith, using man's reason, philosophy and rhetoric against Symeon's more charismatic and apophatic theology that tended to denigrate man's reason to speak about mysteries while it exalted the interior, mystical experience as the only true type of theology.

Under such attack and desirous of more solitude for prayer and writing, Symeon resigned as abbot in 1005. The official circle of theologians headed by Stephen succeeded in having Symeon sentenced to exile in 1009, near Chrysopolis on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus to a small town called Paloukiton. Even though exonerated by the Patriarch and Emperor, Symeon insisted on remaining in the small monastery of St. Marina that he reconstructed. There in prayer and writing, he passed thirteen years, dying in 1022.

HYMNS

Symeon's main writings, as we would expect from such a strong personality are his *Hymns* and *Catecheses*. Here we see Symeon most personally sharing with the reader his own mystical life. His other works, *Theological and Ethical Treatises* and his *Theological, Gnostic and Practical Chapters,* follow more the traditional teaching of the Byzantine ascetical writers. Yet in all his works, Symeon is a reformer, hence is fighting with ardent fire any opposition to what he has so deeply experienced in his own prayer life as well as synthesized from his careful reading of Holy Scripture and the classical Fathers of the Church, above all, St. Gregory of Nazianzus.

Still the 58 *Hymns* will remain a unique classic both within the corpus of Symeon's writings and in the history of Christian mysticism in general.

We must not look for a work of even composition or for unified theme. These hymns, written in poetic style over several years, starting during his term as abbot of St. Mamas and ending in his exile, partake of no central theme. We find no new teaching or new material not found in Symeon's other writings. But we do find his best writing. Symeon's mystic gifts shine forth, especially in his lyrical outpouring in intimate dialogue with Jesus Christ. In a way, Symeon needed the discipline of metrics to harness his rampaging spirit, but in the process his rapturous love for God is intimately communicated and shared with the reader.

J. Koder gives a detailed treatment of Symeon's poetics, showing us his genius in writing poetry according to the metric conventions known in his day of eight, twelve and fifteen syllables to a line.[5] In the following translation from the Greek text into English, I have tried reasonably where possible to keep a similar long or short line arrangement to render better Symeon's style and thought, but I have concentrated more on a rather exact rendering of his thought. If the style and thought seem strained in translation, it can be due mainly to Symeon's elliptical style and the metric discipline he imposed upon himself. Even here, however, Symeon is ready to subordinate his chosen metric plan to suit his thought.

An outstanding feature of his *Hymns* is Symeon's passionate love for Jesus Christ. This bursts forth amidst a volley of spontaneous self-effacing remarks in the form of dialogues between him and the Lord.[6]

In this style he is not an innovator, as Koder points out[7] for Romanos the Melodius as well as Gregory of Nazianzus used this style in their hymns but as we read Symeon we have the conviction that the visions and words were events and prayerful conversations that actually took place.

It is hoped that this translation will help many readers who are hungry for a deeper prayer life. Symeon in his *Hymns* reaches a unique originality, not only in articulating the higher stages of the mystical union with Christ, but also in describing these levels in a dynamic, experiential language that the reader wishes ardently to share in what Symeon clearly lived habitually. This was his wish in urging his disciple, Nicetas, to edit his *Hymns* and other works, as Nicetas tells us in the *Life*,[8] and it is the purpose also why this English translation has been undertaken by me.[9]

George A. Maloney, S.J.
John XXIII Center for Eastern
Christian Studies
Fordham University

HYMNS OF DIVINE LOVE BY ST. SYMEON

MYSTICAL PRAYER OF OUR FATHER SAINT SYMEON

Invocation to the Holy Spirit, by the one who already sees Him.

Come, true light. Come, eternal life. Come, hidden mystery. Come, nameless treasure. Come, ineffable reality. Come, inconceivable person. Come, endless bliss. Come, non-setting sun. Come, infallible expectation of all those who must be saved. Come, awakening of those who are asleep. Come, resurrection of the dead. Come, O Powerful One, who always creates and recreates and transforms by Your will alone. Come, O invisible and totally intangible and impalpable. Come, You who always remain motionless and at each moment move completely and come to us, asleep in hell, O, You, above all the heavens. Come, O beloved Name and repeated everywhere, but of whom it is absolutely forbidden for us to express the existence or to know the nature. Come, eternal joy. Come, non-tarnishing crown. Come, purple of the great king our God. Come, crystalline cincture, studded with precious stones. Come, inaccessible sandal. Come, royal purple. Come, truly sovereign right hand. Come, You whom my miserable soul has desired and desires. Come, You the Lonely, to the lonely, since You see I am lonely. Come, You who have separated me from everything and made me solitary in this world. Come, You who have become Yourself desire in me, who have made me desire You, You, the absolutely inaccessible one. Come, my breath and my life. Come, consolation of my poor soul. Come, my joy, my glory, my endless delight.

I give You thanks that You have become one spirit with me, without confusion, without mutation, without transformation, You the God above everything, and that You have become all for me, inexpressible and perfectly gratuitous nourishment, which without end inexhaustibly flows to the lips of my soul and gushes out into the fountain of my heart, dazzling garment which destroys the devils, purification which bathes me with these imperishable and holy tears, that Your presence brings to those whom You visit. I give You thanks that for me You have become non-setting light, non-declining sun; for You who fill the universe with Your glory have nowhere to hide Yourself!

No, You have never hidden Yourself from anyone but we are the ones who always hide from You, by refusing to go to You; but then where would You hide, You who nowhere find the place of Your repose? Why would You hide, You who do not turn away from a single creature, who do not reject a single one? Today then, O Master, come pitch Your tent within me; until the end, make Your home and live continually, inseparably, within me, Your slave, O most kind One, that I also may find myself again in You, at my departure from this world and after my departure may I reign with You, God who is above everything.

O Master, stay and do not leave me alone, so that my enemies, arriving unexpectedly, they, who are always seeking to destroy my soul, may find You living within me and that they may take flight, in defeat, powerless against me, seeing You, You more powerful than everything, installed interiorly in the home of my poor soul. Yes, Master, just as You remembered me, when I was in the world and that in the midst of my ignorance, it is You who chose me and separated me from this world and set me before Your glorious face, so, now, keep me interiorly by Your dwelling within me, forever upright, resolute; that, by perpetually seeing You, I, the corpse, may live; that, by possessing You, I the beggar, may always be rich, richer than kings that by eating You and by drinking You, by putting You on at each moment, I go from delight to delight in inexpressible blessings; for it is You who are all good and all glory and all delight and it is to You, holy, consubstantial and vivifying Trinity that the glory belongs, You whom all the faithful venerate, confess, adore and serve in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen

HYMN 1

On divine illumination and the light of the Holy Spirit; that God is the only place, in which after death all the saints find repose; that he who falls away from God will not find repose in any other place in the life to come.

What is this tremendous mystery which is being fulfilled in me?
Neither the spoken word nor my poor written word
can praise and glorify the One
who transcends all praise, who transcends all speech.
If, in effect, that which is being fulfilled in me, the prodigal child,
is unutterable, inexpressible, how would the One,
who is the giver and author of it,
how, tell me, would He need to receive praise or glory from us?
No, he who possesses glory cannot receive glory,
no more than this sun which we contemplate in the heavens
can be illumined or could reflect light.

It gives light, it is not lit;
it shines, it does not receive light
for it possesses the light it received
from the Creator since the beginning of the world.
If, then, by making the sun, God, the Creator of everything,
made it without any need, to lavish His light
without expecting anything more from any other being,
how would He receive glory from me, the weakest of creatures,
for He, the Creator of the sun, has no need,
He who possesses all strength,
who fills all creatures with all kinds of blessings,
with a sign, with goodwill.
Here, I am speechless and my intellect knows
what is being fulfilled but cannot explain it;
it contemplates, it desires to express it
but does not find any words;
what it sees is invisible, completely destitute of form,
without any composition, simple, infinite in greatness.
In fact, it knows no beginning, never discovers any end
and knows not any kind of center;
how then will it express what it knows?
In my opinion, it is the whole recapitulated that one sees
not indeed by essence, but by participation.
In reality, you light a fire with fire;

it is the whole fire that you take
and yet the fire remains undivided without having lost anything
even though the transmitted fire be separated from the first
and distributed to many lamps, for it is a material fire.
But this one is spiritual, indivisible,
absolutely impossible to separate and to divide.
Not a fire that is distributed and which produces many others,
but it remains indivisible and is in me at the same time.
It rises in me, within my poor heart,
like the sun, or like the solar disk
it shows itself spherical, luminous, yes, like a flame.
I repeat, I do not know what I can say about it
and I would wish to be silent
– if only I had been able to –
but the tremendous marvel causes my heart to beat faster
and opens my mouth, my tainted mouth,
and makes me speak and write in spite of myself.
You, who rose in a moment in my darkened heart,
You who descended even to me as to the last of all,
You who made me a disciple and son of an apostle,
whom the dreadful, man-killing dragon formerly held
as his worker and instrument of evil,
– You, the sun who before all ages shone in the depths of hell
and who then enlightened my soul enveloped in darkness
and who have blessed me with the gift of endless light
– ah! how difficult this is for cowards and lazy people like
me to believe! –
You, who lavished all blessings on my former misery,
give me a voice, provide me with words to tell to all Your amazing works
and what You still are doing in us, Your servants, today,
so that those who slumber in the darkness of negligence
and who say: "Impossible for sinners to save themselves
and to find mercy, like Peter and the other holy, blessed and just apostles,"
may they know and learn that that was easy, is still easy and will
always be so because of kindness such as Yours.
And those who believe that they possess You, You, the light of the
whole world,
and who say that they do not see You, that they are not in the light,
that they are not enlightened, that they do not
contemplate You ceaselessly, oh, Savior,
may they learn that You have not enlightened their minds
nor dwelt in their tarnished heart
and that they are wrong to rejoice over vain hopes
imagining that they will see the light after death.

No, it is even here below ransom is already given, the seal stamping
us as Your own,
Savior, You give these to the sheep at Your right.
If in fact death closes the door for each one,
if likewise there is nothing more to do for all after death
and if no one should know how to do good or evil
– oh, my Savior, then, as each will be found, in this way will he remain.
Master, that is what frightens me, that is what makes me tremble,
that is what dries up all my senses;
as a blind man deprived of life and departed from here below
will never more sensibly see this sun, even if he recovers
his vision by rising from the dead,
even so the one whose mind is blind, if he dies,
will not see the spiritual sun either, that is, You, my God;
but he will come out of darkness to go into darkness
and he will remain separated from You for all eternity.
Master, of those who believe in You, no human being, no one of those who
have been baptized in Your name, will be able to endure this heavy and
dreadful burden of being separated from You, oh, merciful One:
what a terrible trial, what a terrible, unbearable, eternal suffering!
Indeed, what is worse than to be separated from You, Savior?
What is more painful than to be cut off from life,
to live down there like a corpse, deprived of life,
to be deprived at once of all blessings?
Yes, he who separates himself from You is deprived of all good
for it will not be then as it is now on earth.
Now, in fact, those who ignore You enjoy bodily pleasures.
They enjoy themselves on this earth, acting like animals;
they possess what You gave them to enjoy in this life;
they know only that, and they imagine that what
follows the departure of the soul,
the departure of this life, is the same.
But it is a false conjecture, a false opinion
when they pretend to be, not with You doubtless,
but at least at rest
and they pretend that they are preparing for themselves a sure place,
oh, what folly!
which will not receive any light but will be also deprived of darkness,
outside of the Kingdom, but outside of hell too,
far from the banquet hall and far from the
chastening fire all at once;
and it is there that the unhappy creatures long to attain,
saying that they do not need Your eternal glory
or the Kingdom of Heaven, and that they are at rest.

Alas, what is not their blindness, what is not their ignorance,
what is not their misfortune and their vain hopes!
This is not written down anywhere and neither will it be;
but those who will have lived according to Your will
will be in the light of all that is good
while the doers of evil will suffer in the chastening
darkness and in the center there will be, as You Yourself taught us,
You who have prepared all this,
a frightful abyss separating one from the other.
Yes, for the man who falls into the center, it will be worse
than the most horrid torments, than the worst punishments;
in an abyss of torments, in a pit of perdition
the unhappy man will roll, will be dragged
there where it is difficult to walk
for those who in torments would want to go to the land of the living
but who would prefer to be reduced to ashes in the dreadful fire
rather than throw themselves into this frightful pit.
So then, those who wish to find themselves there after death,
how much weeping and lamentations they deserve,
because, like senseless animals, they are completely stupid,
they wish their own curse, they themselves have lost their way.
You, oh Christ, are the Kingdom of Heaven; You, the land promised to the gentle; You the grazing lands of paradise; You, the hall of the celestial banquet; You, the ineffable marriage chamber; You, the table set for all,
You. the bread of life; You, the unheard of drink;
You, both the urn for the water and the life-giving water;
You, moreover, the inextinguishable lamp for each one of the saints;
You, the garment and the crown and the one who distributes the crowns;
You, the joy and rest; You, the delight and glory;
You, the gaiety; You the mirth;
and Your grace, grace of the Spirit of all sanctity, will shine like
the sun in all the saints; and You, inaccessible sun, will shine in
their midst and all will shine brightly, to the degree of their faith,
their asceticism, their hope and their love, their purification and
their illumination by Your Spirit.
Oh God, sole, long-enduring One and Judge of all men.
They will receive different dwellings and different places:
their degree of radiance, their extent of love and the vision
that they will have of You, the gauge of the greatness
of their glory, of their happiness, of their reputation
will distinguish their abodes, their marvellous dwellings.
Behold the different tents, behold the numerous abodes;
behold the brilliant apparel of the numerous dignities
and the various crowns, the stones and the pearls,

and the everlasting flowers presenting an astonishing sight,
behold the beds and the couches, the tables and the thrones,
and all that can procure the sweetest delights;
it was, is and will be to see You, and only to see You.
I repeat, those then, who do not see Your light,
and are not seen by You, but are cut off from Your sight,
in whom are all blessings, are deprived of these blessings.
Where then would they find comfort, where then, a place without suffering?
Where then will they dwell since they have not become upright
since "the upright will dwell in Your presence"?
For them, also, it is in the uprightness of the heart that You
form Your likeness and that it is with Your likeness
that they dwell in You, oh, my Christ,
oh, marvel, unbelievable gift of Your goodness!
that human beings can be in the "form of God,"
and that in them is formed the One that nothing can contain,
the God who is immovable, unchangeable by nature,
who desires to live in all those who are worthy of this,
in such a way that each one entirely possesses in oneself the great
King and also the Kingdom and all the blessings of the Kingdom
and he will shine more than the rays of the visible sun;
just as my Lord shone in His Resurrection
and behold the men, standing near the One who glorified them,
will remain dumbfounded, by excess of the glory
and the incessant increase of divine splendor,
the progress in fact will be endless, in the course of the centuries,
because the cessation of the growth towards this infinite end
would be nothing else but the seizure of the unseizable
and that the one who can satisfy no one
would become the object of satiety;
on the contrary, to be filled by Him and to be glorified in His light
will dig a bottomless progress and an unlimited beginning;
in the same way as, while possessing Christ who was formed within them,
they abide near the One who shines with an inaccessible light,
so even in them the end becomes the beginning of glory,
and – to explain my thought more clearly to you –
they will have the beginning in the end, and the end in the beginning.
I beg of you, consider that the one who is filled has need of nothing
more, while the end of the infinite, no runner will ever attain.
Indeed let this sky which we see with the earth and all it contains
pass away, then reflect on what I have said;
one will attain the place where one will find his fulfillment.
I am not speaking of a material world, but spiritually you will be
able to attain the fullness of the incorporeal world;
it is not the world, but the air as it was before,

not even the air, but this inexpressible
receptacle which we call the All
and who, on all sides, is an infinite abyss
equally all entire in every sense, on all sides,
it is this All who is filled with the divinity of God.
Those also who in Him have their share, who dwell in Him
how will they embrace Him completely, to be filled with Him?
How will they attain the end of what is endless, tell me?
This is altogether impossible, there is no way;
and that is why, neither in the saints who live here below,
nor in those who have gone to God in the other world,
such a thought can penetrate;
hidden as they are by the light of divine glory
they are enlightened, they shine, they enjoy these delights,
and they truly know, with total certainty,
that the completion of it will be without an end,
and that the increase in glory will eternally spring forth.
But those who fell away from God, I ask myself, where are they,
those who strayed far from the One who is everywhere?
And, brothers, this is really a marvel that should fill us with great
dread and which exacts the reflection of an illumined mind
to understand it well and not fall
into heresy, because of lack in believing the words of the Divine Spirit.
Very surely they too will be in the interior of the All
but outside of the divine light, and really outside of God.
In the same way as, in fact, blind people, when the sun shines,
even though they are entirely bathed in its light, spend their life
outside of the light from which they are separated by their senses,
especially of sight.
Similarly in the All shines the divine light of the Trinity,
and in the midst of this light sinners will be enclosed in darkness,
without seeing, without any sense of the divine,
but burnt in their conscience
and condemned, will know the unutterable trial
and the nameless sorrow, for all eternity.

HYMN 2

What changes took place in this father; how, at the highest level of purity, he was united to God; what he was, and what he became; this is what these poems of love now addressed to God show. At the end, he speaks as a theologian of angels.

What is Your boundless mercy, Savior?
How have You deigned to make me a member of Your body,
me, the impure, the prodigal, the prostitute?
How have You clothed me with the brilliant garment,
vivid with the splendor of immortality,
which changes all my members into light?
For Your body, Your immaculate body, divine,
is all vivid with the fire of Your divinity
to which it is ineffably mingled and united;
and this is the favor that You have bestowed upon me also, my God.
In fact, these filthy and perishable remains
united to Your all immaculate body
and my blood mingled with Your blood,
I was united, I know it, equally to Your divinity
and have become Your very pure body,
brilliant member, really holy member,
resplendent member, transparent, luminous.
I see the beauty, I consider the brightness,
I reflect the light of Your grace;
and I contemplate with amazement this inexpressible splendor,
I am beyond myself thinking
what I was, what I have become – O marvel!
I am attentive, I experience within me a respect,
a reverence, a fear, as if in Your presence,
and I do not know what to do, having become all timid;
where to sit down, whom to approach
and where to place these members which are Yours,
in what works, in what actions, I could well employ
these members, formidable as they are and divine.
Allow me to speak and also to do what I say,
O my Architect, my Creator, my God!
for if I do not effectively realize that which I say,
I have become a piece of brass
which vainly resounds with great noise
without understanding the sound of the blows.
No, do not forsake me, do not abandon me,
do not let me go astray, my Savior,

miserable, poor and stranger that I am,
owing You ten thousand talents,
but, as You did of old, act again today, O Word!
Then in fact, heritage, entire territory of my ancestors,
father, brothers, mother, parents and strangers
and all the rest of my family and my friends,
You separated me from them, me a sinner,
more wicked than all of them, O Savior,
and You received me in Your immaculate arms,
I who showed myself ungrateful towards Your favors.
So, now again, have pity, be merciful.
As then, or rather, still more, O my God,
let Yourself be moved, surround me with Your protection,
appease the movements of my anger
and make me capable of bearing with patience
each trial and each pain of this life,
all that my own wickedness draws down upon me,
all that the jealousy of the demons invent to tempt me,
and all that which those of my brothers who are weaker than I
draw down upon me by their words and their actions, alas!
because my own members exhaust me
and that it is because of them again that I suffer these pains.
It is my feet which drag me along, I whose part is to be the head,
I walk barefoot and am torn by the thorns,
I suffer too much, I can no longer bear this pain:
one of my feet goes forward
but another one goes backward,
they draw me, they drag me hither and thither.
I am torn to pieces, I fall down,
in these conditions I cannot follow them at all.
To remain on the ground is painful and to walk in these conditions
is worse than to remain on the ground,
that surpasses all the other misfortunes.
Lord, give me a broken heart, afflicted
and deign, in the darkness of this life,
in this world, in this place of misery,
to permit me to serve You, to honor You well
and to observe Your holy commandments.
I give You thanks, my God, because You have given me the
grace to live,
to know You, and to adore You;
for to live is to know You, You the only
God, Creator and Author of everything,
not begotten, not created, without beginning, unique,
and Your Son, begotten of You,

and the most Holy Spirit, proceeding from You,
the Triune Unity, worthy of all praise,
whose adoration and religious veneration
surpass all other glory
which we could name in heaven or on earth.
What is there in the angels, what is there in the archangels,
the dominations, the cherubim and the seraphim
and all the other celestial armies
as glory or as light of immortality,
what joy, what splendor of immaterial life,
if not the unique light of the Holy Trinity,
indivisibly divided into three,
light which lives, unique in three persons
and makes itself known in an unknowable way, according to His will,
for it is not possible for the creature to know
the Creator totally, in the same way
as He knows Himself by nature.
It is by grace that all the angels and all created nature
see and perceive;
they do not embrace the reality, but they perceive
as light would like to make itself known or appear suddenly
to the blind or even to creatures who see;
without light, indeed, the eye does not see
but it is from light it receives vision,
because it is by it that it was created.
Name me an incorporeal or corporeal being,
you will find that it is God who made everything;
let one speak to you of any being whatsoever, those in heaven,
those on earth or those in the abysses,
for them also, for all, there is but one life, one glory,
one desire and one kingdom,
one unique source of riches, joy, crown, victory, peace
or whatsoever other brilliancy:
the knowledge of the Beginning and the Cause
from which everything has come, from which everything
has taken birth.
That is what sustains heavenly and earthly things,
that is what puts all spiritual beings in order,
that is what keeps all visible beings in submission.
That is what guaranteed the stability of the angels
when they grew in knowledge and redoubled their fear,
seeing Satan falling and his companions carried off by presumption.
That is the only thing that all those
who fell, slaves of their pride, forgot;
while all those who remembered it,

raised up by fear and love,
clung to their Lord.
Thus, the recognition of His lordship
produced also growth in their love
because they saw better and more clearly
the vivid brilliancy of the Trinity
and that in return the latter expelled far from them
all other thought and made unchangeable
those who originally had received a changeable nature
and who now live in the divine heights.

HYMN 3

What is the monk, what is his activity, to what sublime heights of contemplation the author rose.

The monk is the one who is innocent of the world
and converses continually with God alone;
he sees Him and is seen by Him,
loves Him and is loved by Him,
and becomes light, because enlightened in an ineffable manner;
glorified, he sees himself ever poorer:
intimate, he is like a stranger
– O totally strange and inexpressible marvel!
Because of my infinite richness I am a needy person
and imagine to have nothing, when I possess so much,
and I say: "I am thirsty," through superabundance of the waters
and "who will give me," that which I possess in abundance,
and "where will I find," the One whom I see each day.
"How will I lay hold of," the One who is within me,
and beyond the world, since He is completely invisible?
– Let the one who has ears to hear, hear
and understand in truth the words of the unlettered one!

HYMN 4

Instruction to monks who have just renounced the world and to men of the world; on the confidence that each one must have towards his spiritual father.

Leave the entire world and those who are in the world,
attach yourself only to the blessed affliction,
weep only over your bad actions
because it is they which have separated you
from the Creator of all, Christ, and from His saints.
Do not care for anything else but that:
may your body even be like a stranger to yourself,
lower your eyes like a condemned man
and, by following the way which leads to death,
lament without ceasing from the bottom of your heart;
no longer wash your face, except with your tears,
and your feet, which have pursued evil,
let it not be a question any more of bathing them,
much more, hold your hands together,
do not have the shameless audacity to raise them towards God
after having so often led them into sin.
With all your strength master your impetuous tongue
so inclined, also, to sin
for it is by it, it alone, that even among great people,
many have slipped away from the straight road
and have lost the Kingdom of Heaven.
Even before your mouth, close your ears
so as not to listen to any shameful vanities,
then perhaps, you will also be master of your tongue.
Listen only to the advice of your spiritual father,
answer him with humility
and, as to God, tell Him your thoughts,
even to a simple temptation, without hiding anything,
do nothing without his advice,
neither sleeping nor drinking nor eating.
And when you will have done this for many years,
do not think you have done something great.
You have sown well in sweat and in pain,
but you have not yet harvested the fruit of your labors.
Do not go astray then, do not believe to have found
before having acquired the eyes of the soul
and that the ears of your heart have been purified,
cleansed from their filth with your tears,

before beginning to see and to hear spiritually
and to be changed in all your senses.
Yes, you will contemplate many ineffable things
and will hear further more about them, in the most sudden way
that you will not be able to express with your tongue.
It is therefore a formidable marvel, to hear with the mind
and to see in this way, it is the marvel of marvels.
No sensual thoughts, never, for a man of this kind,
but he treads the earth as if he walked in the air,
he sees everything, even to the bottom of the abysses
and he understands all creatures,
he recognizes God, he remains stupified with fright
and he adores Him and glorifies Him as Creator.
Now it is a great thing to recognize His lordship
even as everyone else fancies to know Him,
but the majority are mistaken, do not doubt it!
Those who know Him are those who are enlightened,
but all the others, O terrible ignorance,
are more in the dark than the devils themselves.
But, O Lord, Creator of the universe,
who of the earth have made me living and mortal
and who have honored me with an immortal grace,
who have given me the grace to live, to speak and to move myself
and to glorify You, You, the Master of everything,
allow me, a wretch, Master,
to fall at Your feet and to ask what is good for me.
It is that I ignore how I was created in the world
and what are the things below to which one attributes existence,
what is sight, my sight, O my God,
what are visible things, I cannot say it,
how we men have all fallen into vanity,
incapable of a true judgment about creatures.
To be exact, I came yesterday and tomorrow I go away
and I imagine I will live eternally here below.
You are my God, I confess it before everyone
and, yet each day I deny You by my actions;
I am aware that You are the Creator of everything
and without You I strive to have everything;
You are the King of the things above and the things below
and I, I alone, without trembling, argue with You.
Grant me, grant to this needy, grant to the wretch
the grace to reject all perversity from my soul
which my puffed-up and fruitless pride
crush and pulverize at once, alas!
Give me humility, give me a helping hand,

purify the impurity of my soul
and grant me tears of repentance,
tears of regret, tears of salvation,
tears which will dispel the darkness from my intellect
and which will make me shine with heavenly brightness.
I desire to see You, light of the world,
light of my eyes, for me, a wretch
whose heart is full of the evils of this life,
exposed to numberless persecutions and to the jealousy
of the actors of the drama of my exile
or, better still, of my benefactors,
of my masters, of my true friends.
In return for these evils give them, O my Christ, blessings
the eternal blessings, the true riches, the divine blessings
which You have prepared forever and ever
for those who desire You and love You ardently.

HYMN 5

Alphabetical couplets of the same author: exhortation and guide towards perfection, for the one who has just left the world.

At first, put on Christ and an ardent faith,
(and then, leave the world.)
Progress by fleeing parents and friends,
(for that is profitable for beginners.)
Go forward, stripped of all material things,
towards the immaterial,
(you will find nothing better to help you in the struggle,)
Cast far away from you all cowardice,
(for powerful is the Master in whom you have taken refuge,)
And acquire on the contrary a firm hope,
(for He takes care of the little sparrows.)
Take upon yourself the Lord, whose yoke is light,
(for great is the future reward)
the Gift who saves us all, mortals,
(since we have been bought at the price of divine blood,)
and makes gods of us, by the power of the One who calls us,
(for this is the fruit of the Incarnation of the Master,)
so that you may know the result of your actions, through actions,
(a more astonishing miracle than all that one can see.)
It is beneficial for you to suppress the clamorings of your will,
(that makes of you a martyr in your conscience.)
Carry out the words and the orders of your spiritual father,
(for they will guide you on a road without obstacles)
until death, for that is a sublime height;
(God, it is clear, has done that for you.)
Consider yourself the most worthless of all
(that is what makes you first in the Kingdom)
and as poorer, a more humble stranger than anyone else,
(these are great virtues if you attain them,)
In everything you will become imitator of your Master
(and what is better than that?)
What does the daily trial not realize?
(Indeed, it is sweet, more than food and drink.)
It reaches the knowledge of what passes away and what remains,
(for first it detaches us from the entire world.)
Cultivate silence, which will preserve these blessings,
(for it cuts off the roots of all kinds of useless stirrings.)
Always keep the memory of death before you,
(for it is that which procures humility.)

All that will purify and enlighten your heart,
(O marvel, to which all aim!)
and you will deserve to see the divine light perfectly,
(for it is an immaterial trait come from the Immaterial.)
But it is Christ, love supreme,
(the one who possesses it is God by adoption)
who illumines souls who seek Him;
(alone, these will live, let no one be mistaken about it!)
O Love, who makes us gods, who is God!
(subject of amazement, reality beyond our struggles.)

In editing this hymn, Nicetas has added a phrase to each phrase of Symeon. I have put his phrase in parenthesis, so as to see more clearly the thought of Symeon.

HYMN 6

Quatrains of the same author in which we see the love he had for God, even here below.

How are You at once the source of fire,
how also the fountain of dew?
How at once burning and sweetness,
how a remedy for all corruption?

How do You make gods of us men,
how do You make darkness light?
How do You make one reascend from Hell,
how do You make us mortals imperishable?

How do You draw darkness to light,
how do You triumph over night?
How do You illumine the heart?
how do You transform me entirely?

How do You become one with men,
how do You make them sons of God?
How do You burn them with Your love,
how do You wound them without a sword?

How can You be patient, how can You endure?
How do You not remunerate at once?
How do You see the actions of all,
You who dwell beyond all creatures?

How do You look at the conduct of each one,
You, who are so far from us?
Give patience to Your servants,
so that trials may not overwhelm them!

. I have put

HYMN 7

Petition to God: how, united with God and seeing the glory of God acting in himself, the author was in stupor.

How do I adore You within myself and yet I perceive
    You at a distance?
How do I embrace You within me and I see You
    in the heavens?
You alone know it, You, the author of these things who
    shine like
the sun in my heart, my material heart, immaterially,
You who made the light of Your glory shine on
    me, O my God,
through Your apostle, Your disciple, Your servant,
the great saint, Symeon, You Yourself shine still today
in me and teach me to compose to him hymns at once both
new and old, divine and secret,
so that, through me, Your knowledge will be
    proclaimed marvellous, O my God,
and that Your wisdom, Your great wisdom, shall shine still
more, and then all will praise You, O my Christ, on hearing,
that I speak in new languages by Your grace.
Amen, so be it, Lord, according to Your will,
I fret, I suffer in my miserable soul
when within it appears the clear brightness of Your light.
In me love is known as suffering and so it is suffering at
    not being able to embrace You completely
and to satisfy myself as I desire – that is the situation,
    and I lament.
Yet, nevertheless, because I see You, that is sufficient
for me, that will be my glory, my joy, my royal crown
and, above all the charms and all the attractions of the
world, that will make of me the equal of angels,
will even elevate me, O my Master, above them.
For, if by Your essence You are invisible to them and
inaccessible by Your nature, yet You show Yourself to me.
It is even that, by the essence of Your nature,
    You become one with me;
no division, indeed, between Your essential faculties,
    no separation,
Your nature is Your essence and Your essence Your nature.
Thus, uniting with Your body, I participate in Your nature
and I really take as mine a part of Your essence,

uniting with Your divinity, much more becoming
heir in my body, I see myself superior
to incorporeals, I become son of God as You have said,
not for the angels, but for us, calling us gods in these terms:
"I have said: You are all gods and sons of the Most High."
Glory be to Your mercy and to Your Divine Plan,
because You became man, You who by nature are God,
without change or confusion, for ever God and man,
and that You have made me, a mortal by my nature, a god,
god by adoption, god by Your grace, by the power of Your Spirit,
uniting miraculously, God that You are, the two extremes.

HYMN 8

Who are those to whom God manifests Himself and those who receive His blessing by the practice of the commandments.

You who remain hidden, how do You behold, how do
You observe all creatures?
Without our seeing You, how can You see us all?
But it is not all those whom You see, that you know, my God,
it is only those who love You whom You know with love
and it is to them very specially that You manifest Yourself.
Sun which remains hidden to all mortal nature,
You rise in those who belong to You, You show Yourself in them,
and in You rise those who first were in darkness,
adulterers, fornicators and debaucherers, sinners, publicans.
Through repentance they become sons of Your divine light,
but what can light produce if not light?
They themselves then are also light,
children of God, as it is written, and gods by grace.
All those who will keep Your divine commandments as they should,
all those who will reject the empty and deceitful world,
all those who will hate their parents and their
brothers without hatred
by considering themselves as strangers, as passers-by in this life,
all those who will strip themselves of riches and fortunes
and will totally deny any passionate attachments towards them,
all those who, with all their heart, because of the celestial glory,
will reject with horror vain glory and the praises of men,
all those who have perfectly severed their own will
and have become like sheep without malice towards their shepherds,
all those who, henceforth, are dead to all evil action, in the
body, by dint of having toiled in the pains of virtue,
no longer living but by the will of the One who guides them,
by sacrificial obedience, but restored to life,
all those whom the fear of God and the thought of death
cause them to weep each night and each day
and cause them to fall in spirit at the feet of their Master
to ask His mercy and the pardon of their sins,
those will come into the possession of the good by the practice
of the good in full, lamenting each day
and, by knocking without respite, they draw down mercy.
Those, by frequent prayers, by inexpressible words
and by many tears purify their soul
and, on seeing it being purified, these men

become inflamed with the fire of love and the fire of desire
so as to contemplate it perfectly purified;
but as they are powerless to find the perfection of light,
the purification is incomplete for them.
Indeed, the more I shall be purified and illumined, unhappy one,
the more will appear the Spirit who purifies me,
and, it seems to me, I begin to be purified and to see more each day.
In a limitless abyss, in a measureless height,
who will be able to find a middle or an end?
I do not ignore its greatness, but I cannot measure it,
I desire ever more and more and at each instant I lament,
for what I have received is little – even if that seems much to me –
in comparison with what I suspect to exist far from me,
that I see and that I desire, believing to have nothing,
without realizing the treasure already received,
I see the sun in vain, I am not grateful for it.
How is that? Listen and be convinced of what I experience:
the sun is inexpressibly sweet to feel,
and it draws the soul to an inexpressible and divine desire;
on seeing it, the soul is kindled and burns with desire
and would like to hold on to all that appears to it,
but it cannot and it grieves over that
and does not consider as a blessing merely to see or to experience.
When then the One whom I see, that nothing can hold,
whom no one can truly approach, when this One would
want to have mercy on my grieved and humiliated soul,
at once, as He appears brilliant before me,
as I see Him completely in me, vivid,
and He fills me completely with joy, with total
eagerness, with a sweetness, I, a poor creature, all divine. . .
sudden change, strange transformation,
which takes place in me is inexpressible.
Indeed if someone saw this visible sun
going down into the interior of his heart,
dwelling there completely and shining in it fully,
would he not remain, motionless and speechless with astonishment,
and all those who would see it, would they not
be struck with amazement?
But the one who sees the Creator of the sun, like a torch,
shining, acting, speaking within himself,
how, thrilled at this sight, would he not be struck with amazement?
How would he not love the One who gives him life?
Men love men, their equals,
when they seem to possess more than others;
and the Creator of all creatures, the only immortal One,

the One who can do everything in everyone, who
will see Him without desiring Him?
Just for having heard about Him the majority believed and
loved Him, for His sake the saints died and they live,
but those who enjoy His sight, His light,
are known by Him and, knowing Him, how would they not desire Him?
Tell me, how will they not ceaselessly mortify themselves for
His sake,
how not despise the world and the things of the world,
how not renounce all honor and all glory,
elevated above earthly glory, above all honor,
in love with Him who is a stranger on earth, a
stranger to all the visible,
or, rather, who has created all the visible
– yes, and even the invisible –, in love with their Master,
finding and receiving immortal glory
and in that way possessing all blessings completely,
as well as all yearning, all desire
of eternal blessings, of divine realities?
They have filled themselves at the very source of eternal life.
Master, to us also as well as to all those who seek You and
love You ardently
grant us the grace to satisfy us lavishly
so that, we too, may enjoy with Your saints
eternal blessings forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 9

That, when one shares the life of the Holy Spirit, His light seizes us and we are transported above all passions, without experiencing any harm at their approach.

Oh, God, oh, God, Lord! All-Powerful!
Who will satiate himself with Your invisible beauty,
who will be filled with Your incomprehensibility?
Who will walk in a manner worthy of Your commandments
and will see the light of Your face,
great, admirable light that this sluggish and gloomy world
will never know how to contain,
light which plucks out of the world the one who sees it
with his body, oh, strange mystery!
Who has passed through the rampart of his flesh,
who has traversed the darkness of corruption,
who has left the entire world and has disappeared?
Alas, how ordinary are our knowledge and our words!
Indeed, then where has the one who has
crossed the boundaries of the world disappeared to?
Who has passed outside all that he sees?
Tell me, wisdom of the wise men fallen in scorn
– rather: struck by God with foolishness,
according to the expression of Paul and of any servant of God,
here is the "man of desires," desires of the Spirit,
he, who through the body draws near bodied creatures,
can be holy by the Spirit.
For, once beyond the world and these earthly bodies of ours,
there is no longer even any appetite for a fleshly passion
but a kind of impassibility, and whoever embraces this,
has found life in this embrace
Yes, even if you should see him misbehaving
as if he were only pleasing himself,
know that it is a dead body which acts thus;
I do not say a body without a soul to animate it,
but a stranger to evil desire;
for the delight of the all beautiful impassibility,
the ineffable kiss which its light gives me,
completely enraptures my spirit, draws it to itself
and seizes it, naked, with an immaterial hand,
without letting me fall away from His love
or conceive a passionate thought.
It embraces me without respite,

and the desire kindles my soul
and in me there is no longer any other sensation.
Indeed, as much as the most pure bread surpasses dung
in value and in fragrance,
so heavenly realities incomparably surpass
earthly realities, for those whose taste is wholesome.
Blush, wisdom of the wise,
deprived of true knowledge!
Indeed it is the simplicity of our words
which as a matter of fact possesses true wisdom,
by drawing near to God and adoring Him.
this God who gives all life-giving wisdom,
by which I am recreated, or even divinized,
contemplating God forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 10

That, through grief, death touches even the strongest.

I've learned something strange and full of terror:
an immaterial nature, harder than stone,
with a resistance equal to that of diamond,
which neither fire nor an iron tool softens
but which becomes wax, once mixed with lead.
Now I believe it: a tiny trickle of water
in the course of time hollows the hardness of a stone.
Yes, really, nothing is unchangeable in this world.
From now on let no one deceive me!
Woe to the one who considers the fleeting realities of life
as things which one clings to and who finds his delight in them:
he will suffer what I have suffered, the unhappy one.
Night has separated me from my very sweet brother
dividing in two the indivisible light of love.

HYMN 11

Our father relates here, with amazement, how God appeared to him as to the apostles, Paul and Stephen.

What is this new marvel which is happening now again?
Now again does God want to appear to sinners,
He who formerly ascended into the heavens and is now
seated on His throne
in the heaven of His Father, where He remains hidden?
For He hid Himself from the eyes of the holy apostles
and, consequently, we know, only Stephen
saw the heavens opened, and then he said:
"I see the Son standing at the right of the glory
of the Father," and at these words, as if guilty of blasphemy
he was stoned by the doctors of the law in person.
He died according to a law of nature and he lives for ever.
Nevertheless he was an apostle, he was a sanctified one,
completely filled with the most Holy Spirit;
preaching had just begun, there was a crowd of unbelievers
who, believing in Christ, thanks to the apostles,
received the grace of faith which is a gift.
But today, what does this strange thing
which is happening in me mean, and what can the terrifying
prodigy which is now taking place signify?
What is this manifestation of goodness to man,
which has just appeared,
strange outpouring of gentleness, new source of mercy
which by far surpasses those of old?
For many found mercy in the goodness of God,
but they offered a personal offering, their faith,
or many other virtues and agreeable actions, while I,
seeing myself deprived of all that,
am stupified, I cannot endure
what happens to me, a prodigal from my mother's womb,
from this God who brought forth all creation with one word.
The thought of it makes me shudder, how shall I write it out in words?
What hand would lend its services, what pen would write,
what word would express, what tongue would articulate,
what lips would utter what one can see taking place
in me, happening all day long?
Much more, even at night, in the midst even of darkness,
I see Christ – O terror – opening the heavens for me,
Christ Himself who humbles Himself and shows Himself to me

with the Father and the Spirit, thrice holy light,
unique in the three and the three in one single light.
Most certainly it is They Themselves who are the light
and the Three the unique light
which, more than the sun, enlightens my soul
and illumines my mind, in darkness until then;
for from the outset my mind did not see what it saw,
I was blind, believe me, I saw nothing,
likewise the marvel upsets me so much the more
when Christ opens in some way the eye of my mind,
when, so to say, He gives sight and He is the one whom I see,
For it is He Himself who appears to whomsoever
contemplates Him, "light of light,"
and those who contemplate Him it is still in
light that they see Him.
For it is in the light of the Spirit that those who
contemplate Him see Him
and those who see in this light, it is the Son
whom they contemplate,
but "the one who has been judged worthy to see
the Son, sees the Father"
and whoever contemplates the Father, assuredly
sees Him with the Son.
That is what, I repeat, is now also taking place in me:
what the mind cannot understand, I have
acquired some knowledge of
and now I contemplate the invisible beauties from afar
the light is inaccessible, the glory unbearable,
and I am all agitated by it; I am filled with fear.
Moreover it is a simple drop of the abyss that I contemplate;
but as a drop of water is sufficient to make
known the totality of water
with its quality and its appearance,
as the whole texture is known by the tip of the fringe
or, as the proverb says, "The lion is known by its paw,"
so in the same way in one particle I embrace and I consider the whole
and I adore Him in person, my Christ and my God.
But in my mind I enjoyed a little encouragement,
a guarantee not to be inflamed and consumed
little wax by the fire, according to the expression of the Prophet:
the fact of being far from the inaccessible fire,
of standing in the midst of obscurity, of hiding
myself there,
to look with dizziness, as through a small hole from there.
While I was absorbed in this situation,

imagining so to say to be looking into the heavens
and trembling to receive more and to be completely absorbed,
I found Him, the One whom I saw from afar,
the One whom Stephen had seen when the heavens opened
and whose sight had later blinded Paul,
completely, like a fire, truly, in the center of my heart;
likewise, stunned by the marvel and shivering violently,
I was beyond myself, very upset, very distracted,
and, incapable of bearing the sight of such glory,
I turned away
and I fled into the darkness of earthly pleasures.
I concealed myself and I took shelter in the ideas of this world
as if I were penetrating a tomb and, instead of stone,
I clothed myself with this unwieldy body for shelter,
to conceal myself – I thought – from the One who is
present everywhere,
who formerly restored me to life, when I had
been dead and buried in sin.
Yes, shivering, incapable of contemplating His glory,
I preferred to slip and to remain in the tomb,
and to live with the dead, living myself in the tomb,
rather than to be kindled with love and to die completely.
That is where I am and really I should lament without respite,
I, the prodigal child, must weep because I have lost
the One whom I loved and I am again lying in the tomb.
But I who lived like a corpse, under the earth,
covered over by a stone,
I have found life, God Himself, the One who gives life,
to whom honor and glory are due, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 12

Theological considerations on the unity in all respects of the divinity in three hypostases; and, by the humble expressions which he uses to speak of himself, the author confounds the presumption of those who think highly of themselves.

My God, what You formerly destroyed, how does it live
again in me,
and fill me with darkness and distress?
These passions of anger and rage which in me raise
a smoke, a cloud over my head
and which obstruct the eyes of my mind;
and, indeed, just as darkness covers the eyes
again and compels them,
alas, to close, in the same way they deprive me of You,
Light to which all aspire, but which very few really seek.
And, as for those who have managed to
participate in Your secrets,
– in an immaterial sensation – to share materially
in Your mysteries, formidable and for all unspeakable,
and to recognize, in visible things, the invisible glory
and the strange mystery which has taken place in the world,
they are still less numerous – well do I know it!
they are the ones who have received pure contemplation,
from the One who was in the beginning, before all creation,
begotten of the Father, and with the Spirit, Son, God and Word,
triple light in unity but unique light in the three.
Two aspects of a unique light: Father, Son and Spirit,
for it is indivisible in the three Persons, without confusion,
these three persons in whom, according to the
divine nature, there is but one power,
one glory, one authority and one will.
For all three appear to me, in one unique face,
like two beautiful eyes filled with light.
How will the eyes see without the face, tell me?
But, without eyes, it is useless to speak of the face,
deprived as it is of the essential, or, better still,
of everything!
Likewise the sun, were one to extract from it
the light which is its beauty,
would disappear first, and, after it, would disappear
the entire creation
which receives light and vision from it.

Thus in the order of the intelligible: if God were
deprived of one of the two,
either of the Son or of the Spirit, He would no longer
be Father,
He would no longer even be living, separated from the
Spirit who gives life and being to everyone.
Let every truly rational creature adore then
– all those who are under the sun, all those above it –
the Divine Nature in three hypostases transcendending
all explanation.
No man has ever known anything about God, indeed,
neither His name nor His nature nor His image
nor His form nor His substance;
to be able to say it or to write about it or to
share it with others;
but, as the radiant sun which penetrates into the clouds
and no longer lets itself be seen nor its light appear,
but sheds on the inhabitants of the earth a pale glimmer,
so, believe me, my God is hidden from us
and a vast and profound darkness envelops us all.
But, believe me, there is still something more astonishing
here:
for in God the light does not diminish like
that of the sun
but it shines everywhere and illumines everything,
and, in the midst of everything, I am enveloped in darkness
and I am deprived of the light which created me.
Who then would not weep over me, who would not lament,
who would not complain about me and who would not shed tears!
God is in everything and everywhere,
He Himself is all Light, He in whom not the least shadow
of change exists or sign of darkness,
no pretense of humbleness, absolutely none;
He is unfurled above everything, He shines
in an inaccessible way
and He shows Himself only to the worthy, approachable and
seizable,
– very little, I've said, in comparison with the total
radiance like that of the sun itself, when it will shine
in all its splendor,
but, nevertheless, it is much, in comparison with those
who are seated in darkness,
because the worthy have been judged worthy to see a small ray.
But I, a wretch, I prefer obscurity,
I care for the things of darkness, and I

add to my obscurity
and it thickens more on my poor soul.
And from there my passions grow and come back to life in me.
They become dragons, snakes, reptiles,
which ceaselessly torture the members of my soul.
Glory bites me, the kind that is empty and vain,
It has planted its fangs in my heart:
it has broken my strength, it has crushed me.
Then there came wild dogs, a herd of ferocious animals
and, finding me lying down on the ground,
they tore me to pieces.
Pleasures and compliments have sucked the marrow, have torn
the nerves of my soul, its vigor, its courage. . .
alas! how shall I describe all that was torn from me?
Like pillagers, they have thrown over me like a cover
sufficiency, nonchalance,
pleasure and preoccupation to please men,
and, drawing me hither and thither, they have
torn me to pieces.
The one exhibiting my temperance, my vigilance,
the other my good works, my holy actions,
they have made a corpse of me
and, what is more powerful, more extraordinary,
more unbelievable,
in this tainted body, they have left – sufficiency!
Yes, I ask you, how not to be astonished, how to
make the best use of His mercy
when such passions have suddenly swooped down on me
and have left me destitute of all virtue,
stripped and lifeless,
without my having noticed it; that I have
lost all consciousness
of what happened to me while thinking myself superior to all,
impassible, holy, wise theologian,
rightly honored by all men,
honored and even praised, since, deserving praise,
I invite them all and thus believe to reap honor.
For, in reaping such honors, I become more full of myself
at each moment I show myself; if ever I had forgotten someone
who would not have been there, who would not have seen me!
and lest there be found one who would have turned
his attention away,
in my spite, I criticize him, I ruin his reputation,
so that he may hear it and that in his turn, no
longer being able to bear my reproaches,

he comes, he greets me, he shows himself my follower,
as someone who also has need of my prayer and my charity
– and that I may say to all the others: "He, too, he comes,
he comes to seek my prayers, he listens to my words
and to my teaching!" – Alas, what foolishness
on my part!
How is it therefore possible, that I do not see
the nudity of my wretched state,
that I do not feel my sores, that I have neither
grief nor tears,
that I do not seek the healing, I who am lying
in a hospital
and I do not call the doctors to show them my wounds,
revealing to them even my secret passions,
so that in them they may put siccatives, plasters, poultices
and that I courageously put up with them in view of my cure?
How, on the contrary, can I multiply my wounds each day?
– But, O my God, have mercy on me as I stray away
and place Your fear in my heart,
so that I may flee away from the world
according to Your commandments
and that I have only hatred for it, that I
debase its wisdom;
O Christ, do not let me stray away in the midst of this world,
for it is You alone whom I love, I who have not loved You yet,
and I hope to observe the commandments with Your help only,
I who am given over completely to passion, I who do not know You.
Who, indeed, having known You, needs the glory of the world?
who loving You, therefore, will go seeking for something else,
either attracting all men to himself, or flattering some,
who will take the trouble to be the friend of everyone?
That is what none of Your true servants have done
and that is why I am distressed and desolate, my God:
for, in all these vices, I see myself reduced to slavery,
I cannot obey, I cannot be humiliated,
I do not want to seek Your glory and Your glory only,
by which I would appear as Your faithful one, Your servant,
by which I could be elevated above everyone,
especially in poverty, in destitution, in labors,
not only above the mighty, but above kings.
Incline towards me then and have pity on my poor soul,
God, Creator of everything, who have given me
all the good that I have,
give me true knowledge, that I may know how to
attach myself

to Your eternal gifts and to them only!
And I will love with all my soul, I will seek Your glory,
without any care for that of men, for that
which is but earthly,
so as to become one with You, now and after my death,
so as to obtain, O Christ, the grace to reign with You,
with You who for me bore the most infamous
of deaths and accomplished all the Divine Plan,
and then to be more glorious than all mortals.
Amen, so be it, Lord, now and forever.

HYMN 13

Exhortation to penance. How the will of the flesh, made one with the will of the Spirit, makes man like God.

I weep, I am pierced with sorrow, when the
light shines on me,
that I see my poverty and that I realize where I am,
what world I live in, what mortal world, mortal myself;
and I am filled with joy, with bliss, when I understand
what condition God has bestowed upon me, what glory,
and I consider myself like an angel of the Lord
completely adorned with the immaterial garment.
Thus joy kindles my love for the Giver
and the One who transforms me, God – and
love causes streams of tears
to gush forth and makes me still more brilliant.
Listen, you who like me have sinned against God,
hasten, run, energetically, by your works,
to receive and to seize upon the matter of the immaterial fire
– and I say: Matter, it is the Divine
Essence that I show you –,
to light the spiritual lamp of your soul,
so as to become suns which shine in the world
even if they are not seen by those who are in the world,
so as to become like gods, possessing within yourselves
the entire glory of God in two essences,
yes, in two natures, in two activities
and in two wills, as Paul cries it to us:
different indeed is the will of weak flesh,
different that of the spirit, different again that
of my soul.
However I am not triple, but double, in
as much as I am a man.
My soul is linked to my body in an inexpressible way,
nevertheless each does not seek its interest separately,
for example, drinking and eating, for example sleeping,
all that I call the earthly desires of the body.
But since, separated from the soul this will
no longer seeks for anything as such,
but dead, insensible, it is like mud.
I think that man has but one will which is entirely that of the soul.
The one, therefore, who has united his own spirit
to the Divine Spirit,

has become like to God for having received Christ
into his breast,
Christian according to Christ, since he possesses as well
within himself the formed Christ, yes, the
only One, the unseizable One,
the One who is truly inaccessible to all creatures.
– But, O immaculate Nature, hidden essence,
goodness unknowable to most men,
invisible mercy for those who live like senseless people,
unchangeable essence, indivisible, thrice holy,
simple and formless light, absolutely without composition,
incorporeal, inseparable, unseizable to all nature,
how have You shown Yourself human like me, known
to the inhabitants of darkness,
carried by the hands of Your most holy Mother
and bound as a murderer,
how have You suffered as a criminal in Your body, O King,
wishing all the while to save me and to lead me
back again into the Paradise of glory?
This was Your plan of salvation,
this Your appearance,
this Your mercy and Your love for mankind,
which was manifested for us, O Word, for all men,
for the faithful, the unfaithful, the pagans, sinners, saints,
for Your manifestation became a sharing for all,
salvation and redemption for the living and the dead.
But that which was produced secretly in me, the prodigal,
is also accomplished partially in a conscious unconsciousness,
certainly conscious in that which concerns me,
unconscious for the other –
what language can speak of it,
what mind can explain it,
what word can express it so that my hand may write it down?
Indeed, it is an awesome thing,
Master, awesome even beyond any word,
that I see the light that the world does not possess,
that He loves me who is not within this world,
and that I love Him who has no part with visible things.
I am seated on my couch completely lost to the world.
And, being in the middle of my cell, I see Him
who is outside of the world as here present,
I see Him and I converse with Him
and, dare I then to say it!
I love Him and He loves me.
I eat, I nourish myself with only this contemplation.

And being made one with Him, I am transported above to the heavens.
That this is true and certain I know,
but where then is my body, this I do not know.
I know that He who remains immovable descends.
I know that He who is invisible appears to me.
I know that He who is separated from all creation
takes me within Himself and hides me in His arms.
And I am completely outside of the whole world.
But I, so mortal, so insignificant in the world, contemplate in myself
completely the Creator of the world.
And I know that I will not die
because I am inside of life,
and that I have the entire life that completely flows out from within me.
He is in my heart
He dwells in Heaven;
both here and there He is seen by me equally dazzling.
But in what way does all of this happen?
How can I exactly comprehend it?
And how could I express all that I comprehend and see?
These are indeed indescribable things,
absolutely ineffable that eye has not seen,
that ear has not heard
and which have never entered into a heart of flesh.
Master, I give You thanks for having had pity on me;
You have granted me to see these things,
to write about them thus,
and to proclaim Your goodness for man to my companions,
so that now peoples, tribes, languages know this mystery:
that You have pity on all those who repent with fervor
like Your apostles and all Your saints,
that You fill them with blessings, with honor
and glory, my God,
because they seek You with great love and great fear
and see only You, Creator of the world,
to whom is due glory and honor, power, majesty,
as to the King, to the God of the universe
and to the Master,
now and always, in all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 14

Thanksgiving to God for the blessings He has conferred on the author; that the dignity of priest and the abbot is formidable even to the angels.

Master, I would like to speak for myself,
but I do not have the strength for it.
What could I really express, I who am unclean
in my thoughts, my actions, all my reflexions?
And nevertheless, I am wounded in my soul, all
within me is burning up with the desire to speak
to You, as little as that may be, my God.
– As You know everything about me, my God – I see
that all the members of my body and my soul,
I have stained them since my birth, for I am all
sinfulness;
I discover Your mercy and Your love for man
and these numberless blessings that You have done for me;
and I remain speechless, on the brink of despair.
I am as a prey to endless sorrow, unhappy one,
to find myself unworthy of all these favors.
When I reflect, when in my mind I want
to review, O Christ, the multitude of my vices
and how I have not done one thing well in my life
– and how, instead of punishments and
Your just anger
that I should have endured for having too
often grieved You,
You have now, on the contrary, judged me
worthy of such great blessings –,
then I fall into despair, I dread Your judgment
about me who each day add sin upon sin,
I tremble lest, for a worse punishment, You change
Your great mercy and Your love for man into wrath,
since, filled with Your benefits, I redouble
with ingratitude,
bad servant of the good Master that You are.
The remainder, Lord, was also an occasion for me
to practise patience
by obtaining the hope of eternal life for me;
and that is what filled me with great joy,
You alone know it,
for I relied on Your sweetness and Your mercy.
That is why You withdrew me from everything, separated me

from the world and from my parents and all my friends;
to take pity on me and to save me, O my Christ!
It is Your grace which gave me this certainty
and I had pure joy and firm hope.
But the last two things, I know not how to say them,
those which have happened to me by Your
goodwill, O my King:
leave my soul and my mind speechless,
my actions and all my thoughts cease,
whilst the greatness of Your glory overwhelms me
and that, for a little while, I would let
myself be convinced, my Savior,
no longer to say anything, nor do anything,
nor describe these things.
Interiorly I remain disconcerted, astonished, saddened;
how I, unhappy one, have been able to place myself,
in the service and practice of such ineffable realities?
The angels fear to fix their attention too freely therein,
the prophets have recoiled with fear at once on hearing
how incomprehensible are your glory and your
saving condescension.
The apostles and the martyrs and the throng of doctors
loudly proclaim themselves unworthy
as they openly preach to all the inhabitants of the world.
And I, the prodigal, I, the fornicator, how,
I, the lowliest of all, how have I been judged worthy
of becoming the superior of my brothers, the
priestly celebrant of the divine Mysteries
of the all holy Trinity?
There, indeed, where the bread is placed and
the wine is poured in the name of
Your body and Your blood, O Word,
You are there Yourself, my God, and Word
and they really become Your body and Your blood
by the coming of the Spirit and the power
of the Most High;
with boldness, we touch the inaccessible God,
or rather the One who lives in an inaccessible light
not only to this corruptible nature of our humanity
but to all the spiritual armies of angels also.
This then is inexpressible, this then is supernatural,
the work and the undertaking that I have
been ordered to accomplish;
it induces me always to keep before my eyes the
picture of death.

Thus putting away whatever is sensually pleasurable,
I have been seized with fright,
knowing that it is impossible for me
– as to all, I think –
to fulfill this service worthily and
thus to lead an angelic
life in a human body, or rather superior to the angels
so that – as the discourse has shown, and
as it is the truth –
to become nearer again in dignity to Him than they,
since with my hands I touch and with my mouth I eat
the One before whom they remain shivering with fright!
As to the account to be rendered for the brothers,
whom I have been ordered to pasture
what soul could endure it? What mind would be capable,
without deserving condemnation, to search the
inclinations of each,
to inexhaustibly provide all that each one needs
and to escape the judgment which comes to them?
For my part, I do not see, that that is possible for men;
moreover I am fully convinced of it: I'd
rather be a disciple
submissive to the will of one only, attentive
to the words of one only,
and having to render an account to him only,
rather than to be submissive to the characters
and the whims of many,
to test the disposition and to discover the
plans of these,
and to explore still more their actions and their thoughts;
for judgment awaits me and I will have accounts to render
for the sins of those for whom I have been chosen to shepherd,
I alone, most certainly, by an inexplicable plan of God.
For, doubtless each one will be judged and
will render accounts
for his own conduct, either good or bad,
but I alone will render an account for
each and every one;
how then do I plan to be saved or, how can I obtain mercy,
I who, in regard to my unique, wretched soul,
have not the least work to show towards salvation?
Yes, be sure of it, I have absolutely nothing to say,
since I have never done one deed, small or great,
thanks to which I can be saved from eternal fire.
Well, O Savior, Friend of man, merciful, compassionate

THE LIBRARY
ST. PAUL'S PRIORY
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

give me, the lowly one, divine strength:
that what I say
may with wisdom feed those whom You have given
me as brothers
may guide them towards the pasture
grounds of Your divine laws,
may lead them safely to the dwellings
of the Kingdom above,
safe and sound, unhurt, radiant with
the brilliancy of virtues,
worthy adorers, before Your formidable throne;
and, as for myself, unworthy as I am, draw
me beyond this world,
pierced as I am with the numberless wounds of sin,
Your devoted one nevertheless and Your useless servant. . .
And among the choirs of the elect, according
to the judgments known to You,
number me at the same time along with my disciples
so that all together we may contemplate
Your divine glory
and may enjoy, O Christ, Your ineffable blessings.
For You are the enjoyment, the delight and the glory
of those who love You with fervor
for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 15

How, in the sight of the glory of God, the author was directed by the activity of the most Holy Spirit; and that the divinity is interior and exterior to all, much more, at once seizable and unseizable for those who are worthy of it; and that we are the "House of David" that, becoming many members, Christ our God is and remains the only, the same and indivisible.

When You reveal Yourself, Master of the Universe,
and show the glory of Your face with more clearness,
I begin to tremble all over, to see You,
as far as is possible, to the lowliness of my nature,
I am filled with fear and, full of fright, I say:
"All that belongs to You, my God, is above my comprehension,
for I am impure, absolutely unworthy
to see You, You, the pure and holy Master
whom the angels venerate and serve trembling
and whose face disturbs the whole creation."
– But when I would speak thus and cover my eyes,
I mean, when I turn my mind towards earth, incapable
of looking at You or of contemplating You, unbearable vision,
then deprived of Your beauty, my God, I lament,
without being able to bear to be separated from You,
unique Friend of man – and while I weep and complain,
You surround me completely with Your light,
oh, amazement! and, upset, I weep more copiously,
admiring Your mercy towards me, the Prodigal.
Then I see all the shamefulness of my body,
and the unworthiness of my wretched soul,
and when I realize it, I exclaim beyond myself:
"To be sure who am I, O God, Creator of the universe
and to be sure what good have I done in all my life,
which one of Your commandments have I ever practised,
for You to glorify me, with such glory, in spite of my baseness?
and how is it, how does it happen that You have deigned
to surround me thus with Your light, night and day,
in spite of my wretchedness?
O my King, I have ever pined away with thirst in Your pursuit,
I have never grieved, suffered, for your commandments,
I have never endured trials and blows, like all
Your saints have endured them, forever,
so as to save me, O Christ, by counting me among them!
No, you will not save me, a slothful person, devoid of works,
as strong as Your love for man may be, this man whom You have made.

I hear Paul saying that faith without works is dead, and I
shiver over the punishments
which certainly await me down there, for my long negligence.
How then, as a faithful one, will I dare to be counted,
Master, in the ranks of those who have worked,
I who have never observed a single one of Your commandments?
But I know, You can do everything, You do all according to
Your will, and, Master, You give as much to the last as You
give to the first, indeed to the last, O marvel, before the first!"
While I speak thus, Creator of the world, You
who at first shone above me and then one day hid Yourself,
and who, afterwards, enveloped me completely with Your rays,
I suddenly contemplate You completely present in me,
You at first having appeared suddenly above, then hidden
behind a cloud, deprived of its rays like the sun.
Yes, as this star shows itself to whomever contemplates it,
and then, especially, all see it completely so to say,
similarly, You also show Yourself hidden within me,
yes seen, You, the inaccessible one, to the eyes of my intellect,
How? You know it –, gradually increasing,
redoubling with light, redoubling with brilliancy;
and another time, You show Yourself to me absolutely inaccessible.
That is why I magnify Your incomprehensibility
and, proclaiming your kindness, I cry to you:
"Glory to the one who has so glorified our essence,
glory, O my Savior, to Your incommensurable condescension,
glory to Your mercy, glory to Your power,
glory to You! because, remaining immutable and without change,
You are completely immovable and always completely in movement,
completely outside creation and completely in every creature,
You fill everything completely, You who are completely
outside everything, above everything, O Master, above all
beginning, above all essence, above the nature of nature,
above all ages, above all light, O Savior,
above intellectual Essences – for they too are Your work
or rather the work of Your mind.
Indeed, You are none of these creatures, but superior to
all creatures, for You are the cause of all creatures, in
so far as You are Creator of all
and that is why You are apart from them all,
very lofty, for our mind, above all creatures,
invisible, inaccessible, unseizable, intangible,
escaping all comprehension, You remain without change,
You are simplicity itself and yet You are all diversity –
and our mind is totally incapable of fathoming

the diversity of Your glory and the splendor of Your beauty.
You then, who are nothing of all that is, for You are above
everything, You who are outside everything, for You are
the God of everything, invisible, inaccessible, unseizable,
intangible, yes, You became a man, You came into the world
and showed Yourself to all, accessible, in the body that
You assumed.
But to believers, You made Yourself known in the glory of
Your divinity, You became seizable for them, You who are
totally unseizable, and completely visible, You the
invisible one to all; only the believers have seen Your
glory, O divine Divinity, and they alone contemplated it,
while all the unfaithful remained blind, they who saw You,
You, the light of the world.
So the faithful, now as then, see You ceaselessly and
possess You, You, the Creator of all things,
You live and You dwell with them in the darkness of this life,
like a non-setting sun, like a lamp which cannot be extinguished,
which darkness will never be able to seize
but which does not stop enlightening those who see You.
But, I repeat, since You are outside all things,
those whom You illumine also, You make them come out from
the visible and, just as You, while remaining above with
Your Father, You are equally, without separation, completely
present with us and at the same time being in the world
You are not separated from the world, for You are in
everything, but above everything –
in the same way we, your servants, in the midst of sensible
things are plunged in visible things, You make us come out
of them and draw us completely with You, resplendent with
Your light, and You make us mortals, immortals:
remaining what we are, by Your grace we become
sons, like You, and gods, seeing God.
In these conditions, who would not run towards You,
man's only Friend?
who would not follow You, who, urged by love, would not say:
"Behold, having left everything we are going to follow You,
You, the Master, filled with compassion, gentleness, mercy,
who always await our return to You,
who do not want the death of those who have offended You,
who now realize in us the dreadful marvels
that we hear formerly happened in the House of David,
to our astonishment!" Which ones? There they are;
We are the House of David, for we belong to Your race,
since You Yourself, Creator of the universe, became His

own Son, and we have become Your sons by grace.
By the flesh You belong to our race, by divinity we belong
to Yours, since, by assuming our flesh, You gave us your
Divine Spirit, and, all together, we have become the unique
House of David through what belongs to You only, by our
community of race with You.
Therefore, You are Lord of David in the Spirit,
but, all of us, we are children of David, we, Your divine seed!
And when we assemble, we become one single family,
that is to say, that we are all of the same race, we
are all Your brothers.
How not tremble in the presence of this marvel, or who
could without shivering no matter how little, conceive
this idea, welcome this revelation:
You are with us, now and forever,
You make Your home in each one and You live in everyone
and for all of us You become our home and we live in You,
each one of us entirely, O Savior, with You entirely,
with each one of us, You are along with him alone
and above us all, You are also, alone and all entire.
So You are, then, in us, about to do all these awesome marvels;
what marvels? – Among many, listen to these few:
for even if all we have already said surpasses all amazement,
nevertheless, listen, now, to still more formidable marvels!
We become members of Christ – and Christ becomes our members,
Christ becomes my hand, Christ, my miserable foot;
and I, unhappy one, am Christ's hand, Christ's foot!
I move my hand, and my hand is the whole Christ
since, do not forget it, God is indivisible in His divinity –;
I move my foot, and behold it shines like That – one!
Do not accuse me of blasphemy, but welcome these things
and adore Christ who makes you such,
since if you so wish you will become a member of Christ,
and similarly all our members individually
will become members of Christ and Christ our members,
and all which is dishonorable in us He will make honorable
by adorning it with His divine beauty and His divine glory,
since living with God at the same time, we shall become gods,
no longer seeing the shamefullness of our body at all,
but made completely like Christ in our whole body,
each member of our body will be the whole Christ;
because, becoming many members, He remains unique and
indivisible, and each part is He, the whole Christ.
Now, well you recognized Christ in my finger,
and in this organ. . . – did you not shudder, or blush?

But God was not ashamed to become like you
and you, you are ashamed to be like Him?
No, I am not ashamed to be like Him,
but, when you said, like a shameful member,
I feared that you were uttering a blasphemy.
Well, you were wrong to fear, for there is nothing shameful,
but they are the hidden members of Christ, because one
covers them, and for that reason they are more worthy of
honor than the others, as hidden members, invisible to all,
of the One who is hidden, of the One who sows the seed in
divine union, divine seed, made, amazingly, according to
the image of God, born of the divinity itself, completely –
for He is completely God –, the One who unites Himself
with us, O frightful mystery!
It is truly a marriage which takes place, ineffable and divine:
God unites Himself with each one – yes, I repeat it,
it is my delight – and each becomes one with the Master.
If therefore, in your body, you have put on the total Christ,
you will understand without blushing all that I am saying;
but if you have done nothing about it, or if of the
immaculate garment, I am speaking of Christ,
you have only put on a small piece to your soul,
plain piece on old material, it covers but one spot
and you are ashamed of all the remainder of your members,
or rather it is your whole body which is soiled.
Indeed how would you not blush, clad with soiled garments?
When I utter these formidable words about holy members,
and, with an enlightened mind that I consider all their glory,
filled with joy, without thinking of anything sensual,
you consider your own flesh, all soiled
and in spirit you run over your infamous actions
where your mind ever crawls like a worm;
that is why you project your shame on Christ and on me
saying: "Do you not blush at these shameful words,
and above all to disparage Christ to shameful members?"
But I say in my turn: "See Christ in the womb of His mother;
picture to yourself the interior of this womb and He
escaping from it, and whence my God had to pass to come out of it!
You will find there much more than what I have spoken about
and He accepted all that for our glory,
so that no one would blush to imitate Him
nor to say nor to suffer Himself what He suffered.
He became totally man, He, truly, totally God,
He the Unique One, without division, perfect man without
any doubt, and the same One is completely God, in the

totality of His members.
So there was, even now in these latter days,
Symeon the saint, the pious one, the Studite.
He did not blush before the members of anyone,
neither to see other men naked, nor to show himself naked,
for he possessed Christ completely, and he was completely
Christ, and all his own members and everybody else's members,
all and each one were always like Christ in his eyes;
he remained motionless, unhurt and impassive;
he was all Christ himself and as Christ he considered
all the baptized, clothed with the whole Christ.
While you, if you are naked and your flesh touches flesh,
there you are in heat like a donkey or a horse,
how do you dare then to speak against the saint himself,
and blaspheme Christ, the One who united Himself with us
and has given impassiveness to His holy servants?
For He becomes a spouse — do you hear? — each day,
and all the souls with whom the Creator unites Himself
become spouses and they, in turn, with Him, O wholly
spiritual marriage, divine embrace with which He embraces them!
Without dishonoring them in any way, away with the thought!
but even if He takes them already dishonored, by uniting Himself
with them, He at once restores their integrity, and what was
formerly soiled by corruption, in their eyes,
is no longer but sanctity, incorruption, perfectly healed.
They glorify the Merciful One, they are in love with the
most beautiful One. They are entirely united to His total love;
or rather, by receiving as we have already said, His holy
seed, within themselves, they completely possess God who
has taken the form of man.
Well, Fathers, isn't all that the truth?
Didn't we correctly speak of these divine realities?

Doesn't what I said truly correspond with the Scriptures?
But if you are clothed with the shamefulness of your flesh
if you have not bared your mind, nor stripped your soul,
if you have not succeeded in seeing the light,
buried as you are in darkness, what could I really do for you,
how should I show you the formidable mysteries?
Alas, how should I introduce you into the House of David?
For it is inaccessible for cowards like me,
it is entirely invisible to blind persons like me,
infinitely distinct for unbelievers and lazy persons
and very far from all the wicked, from all the friends
of the world, as for the conceited, without comparison,

it is distinct from them much more than the heights of the
heavens, than the depths of the abyss.
And who could, or how, ascend completely to heaven
or descend underground to explore the abysses?
While seeking a pearl, as minute
as a mustard seed, how could one find it?
Assemble, children, come, women,
hasten, fathers, before the end comes,
and, with me, all weep and lament,
since after having received God in Baptism as infants,
or rather, having become sons of God as little children,
soon, sinners, we have been expelled
from the House of David and that happened to us
without our realizing it! Let us hasten by penance
since it is by it that all the expelled return
and that there is no other way, do not be mistaken by it,
to enter into the interior
nor to see the mysteries which were accomplished there
and are still accomplished there now and till the end of
time in Christ, my God, to whom is due all glory,
all honor and all adoration, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 16

That the Divinity only is by nature object of desire and of love and that the one who participates in it has participated in all blessings.

Oh, what is this reality hidden to all created essence!
What is this intelligible light, which no one sees
and what is this abundant wealth, which no one in the world
has ever been able to discover or possess totally?
As a matter of fact, it is imperceptible to all,
the world cannot contain it.
It is most longed for, more than the entire world;
It is desirable also, as much as this God surpasses
visible things created by Him.
It is in that that I am wounded by His love,
insofar as I do not see it, I dry up in my spirit,
my intelligence and my heart are warmed and groan.
I wander and I am on fire, searching here and there,
and nowhere do I find the Lover of my soul.
I frequently cast glances all around to see my Beloved
and He, the invisible One, never shows Himself to me.
But when I begin to weep, as desperate, then
He shows Himself and He looks at me, He who contemplates
all creatures.
In amazement, I admire the splendor of His beauty,
and how, having opened the heavens, the Creator inclined
and showed me His glory, indescribable, marvellous.
And so who would draw nearer to Him?
Or how would he be carried away towards measureless heights?
While I reflect on this, He Himself is discovered within myself,
resplendent in the interior of my miserable heart,
illuminating me on all sides with His immortal splendor,
completely intertwined with me, He embraces me totally.
He gives Himself to me, the unworthy one,
And I am filled with His love and His beauty,
and I am sated with divine delight and sweetness.
I share in the light, I participate also in the glory,
and my face shines like my Beloved's,
and all my members become bearers of light.
Then I finally become more beautiful than those who are beautiful,
wealthier than those who are wealthy and more than all the mighty
I am mighty and greater than kings,
and much more precious than all that is visible,
not only more than the world or the men of the world,

but also more than Heaven
and all the angels of Heaven, for I possess the Creator
of the whole universe
to whom is due glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 17

That fear engenders love and that love eradicates fear from the soul a
remains alone in the soul, for it is the Divine and Holy Spirit.

How shall I sing, how glorify
how worthily extol
the God who did not dwell
on my numerous sins?
How shall I simply look above,
how raise my eyes,
how open my mouth, O Savior,
how move my lips?
How shall I extend my hands
towards the heights of Heaven,
what spoken words disclose,
what words pronounce?
How shall I dare to speak
how claim the pardon
of my numerous offences?
Really I have committed actions
beyond all forgiveness.
You know what I am speaking about, Savior,
I have violated all nature,
having performed acts against nature.
I've shown myself worse than creatures without reason,
than all the animals of the seas,
than all the herds of the earth,
the serpents and the wild beasts.
Yes, I have been worse than they,
for I have transgressed Your commandments
more than creatures without reason.
After having defiled my body,
after having sullied my soul,
how shall I show myself to You, how look at You,
how simply dare to remain
in Your presence, I, the unfortunate one?
How will I not shun Your glory
and the dazzling light
of Your Holy Spirit?
How shall I not withdraw by myself
towards darkness, I who have done
the deeds of darkness and not be cut off
from the throng of the Saints?

How shall I bear Your voice
pushing me back into darkness,
I who, here below, because of my deeds
bear the condemnation?
Shivering all over, scared to death,
filled with fear
and amazement, I call out to You.
I know O Savior, that no one else
has offended You like me
nor has done the actions
that I have done, unfortunate one,
and that for others also
I was responsible for their loss;
but what I likewise know,
that which I am convinced of, O my God,
it is not the magnitude of the offences,
it is not the number of the sins
nor the shame of the actions
which will never exceed Your mercy,
tender for man and great
– rather beyond all greatness,
beyond what one can say or think –
which You pour out in abundance
on those who offend You
and repent fervently;
You purify them; You enlighten them;
You share Your light with them;
You communicate Your divinity to them;
You speak with them and converse with them,
as to Your friends, Your true friends;
O unbounded goodness,
O inexpressible love!
That is why I prostrate myself
and I fervently cry out to You:
Just as You received the prodigal
and the sinful woman when they came up to You,
receive me also, O Merciful One,
I who repent from the bottom of my soul!
Consider my teardrops
as ever gushing fountains,
O my Christ,
and wash my soul in them,
wash also my body in them
from the stains of their passions.
Purify my heart also

from all wickedness,
for it is the root
and the source of sin.
Perversity is the seed
of the perverse sower;
there where it is found, it germinates,
it grows, it climbs up
and produces very numerous small branches
of perversity and wickedness.
The roots, the most deep-seated,
uproot them, O my Christ,
and purify the furrows
of my soul and of my heart
and plant fear in them,
Your fear, O Merciful One;
deign to implant it
and to make it germinate well
so that it may grow in height
and by the keeping of Your commandments,
continually develop!
Moreover causing tears to flow
it causes fountains to gush forth
and, irrigated by them,
increases still more,
and the more vigorous it becomes
the more it ascends to the heights.
Similarly it increases
humility with fear
and, thanks to humility, the passions
all disappear,
and with them,
the host of demons is expelled;
and all the virtues, as
for a queen, surround it
and show themselves its followers,
such as guardians and friends
and servant-girls for a mistress.
When they have gathered together
and have combined one with the other,
in the midst of them, like a tree
planted at the mouth
of the waters, Your fear
blooms and in a short time
shows me a strange flower.
O my Christ! the strange flower!

I said strange, because all nature
produces fruit according to its kind,
yes, the seed of all trees
is in each one according to its species;
but Your fear brings forth
a flower of a strange nature
and also a strange fruit
quite different from it.
For, by its nature, fear
is filled with shame
and causes those who have acquired it
continually to look gloomy
like slaves,
as if they deserved many blows,
as if constantly they awaited
the cutting edge of death;
they see the scythe
but without knowing its hour
and without having the hope,
still less the assurance,
of total forgiveness;
but they tremble before the end,
but they shudder before the appointed time,
as if they bore everywhere
the uncertain sentence
of this judgment, O my God.
In any case the flower that it bears
is of a mysterious beauty
and of a much more mysterious characteristic;
one sees it blooming
then it immediately disappears.
That is not natural,
that does not follow,
it is of a nature beyond nature,
that goes beyond all nature.
For a while the flower appears
beautiful beyond all spoken word
and it grips my whole mind
to contemplate it
without allowing it to remember anything
of what can give any fear;
yes, it is the oblivion of all this
that it then produces in me
and it disappears in a short time.
And the tree, the tree of fear

is again without flower;
and I grow sad and I groan,
and I ardently cry to You,
and again I see the flower
among the small branches of the tree,
and keeping my eyes, O my Christ,
solely on the flower,
then I do not see the tree.
But more often this flower
which blossoms and attracts me to itself
completely by desire
leads to a fruit of love.
But this fruit, it too,
does not accept to be borne
by the tree of fear;
or rather it is when it is
fully ripe that one sees it
alone, separated from the tree.
For, in love, fear
is absolutely not found;
but, again, without fear
this fruit does not ripen in the soul.
Marvel truly beyond all spoken word
beyond all thought;
with difficulty a tree
produces flowers and fruits
and its fruit, then,
uproots the tree entirely
and the fruit alone remains.
How a fruit can exist without a tree,
truly I cannot say.
In any case the fruit remains, in any case love
exists without the fear
which gave it birth.
Consequently love exists
really as full joy;
and with gladness and with delight
it fills up the one who possesses it
and in a sensible manner
it casts him beyond the world,
what fear cannot
absolutely do.
As fear is indeed in the interior of the visible,
in the interior of the sensible,
how therefore would it be able to cast

the one who possesses it far from these things
and attach him in a sensible manner
wholly to the invisible?
Truly it will in no way be able to do it!
But the flower and the fruit
that fear begets
are beyond the world,
they know how to delight the mind
and to carry the soul along with it
and cast them out of the world,
– How, tell me, does love
transport the soul and the mind out of the world,
I would like to know it clearly?
That, I said, is inexpressible;
Nevertheless, pay attention and I will tell you:
love is the Divine Spirit,
the light which operates everything and enlightens
without being of the world,
neither even something of the world,
nor a creature; for it is uncreated
and beyond all creatures,
uncreated in the midst of creatures.
Consider what I tell you, my child!
For it is apart
and the Uncreated never
can become a creature;
nevertheless, if He wills, even that,
it is possible for Him to do.
Thus the Word became with the help of the Holy Spirit
and by the good pleasure of the Father
without change, fully man.
He, Uncreated God by nature,
mysteriously became created
and, having divinized what He assumed,
He showed me a double marvel
by His two activities
and also His two wills,
A visible marvel and an invisible marvel,
seizable and unseizable;
He appeared, as creature,
in the midst of all creatures
and, because He was not a creature
according to what He seemed to them, He disappeared.
However, He did not really disappear
but as He was amid

all sensible creatures,
the Word allowed Himself to be seen, bound
to what He had assumed, as creature.
But, assuming creaturehood,
and hiding it or raising it
towards the heights, towards glory,
His own glory, which is indescribable,
He at once hid Himself.
And they said
that their Master disappeared
but it was only from their eyes,
for the Creator of everything
who cannot separate Himself from everything
and who, because He is God, fills everything,
how, therefore, could He hide Himself?
Will you move the Master
about, and will you cause Him
to go to another place,
and to hide Himself from the eyes
of the holy Apostles?
Away! from ignorance do not
fall into blasphemy!
Hence learn, if you wish,
the activities of love
and you will know how
love is greater than all.
All what? Do you not hear
the Apostle crying out:
"that to speak with the tongues of angels
and those of all men,
that to have full faith
to the degree of moving mountains,
that to know all knowledge
and the depth of mysteries,
that to give away all one's wealth
and to become a beggar,
that to deliver one's body
to the fire for Christ."
Love is greater than all that
and it exceeds these activities more especially
as without it,
– taken separately or even all together –
they have for the one who possesses them
absolutely no useful purpose.
The one who, therefore, is deprived both of love

and of all that we have said
tell me,
where will he show himself, what will he do,
how will he dare claim to be
faithful to those who ask him?
This is why one must pay attention
to whom one speaks of love.
I am seated in my cell
either by night or by day:
love is invisibly with me
and without my knowing it.
As it is exterior to all creatures,
it is also with them all;
it is fire, it is also ray,
it becomes a cloud of light,
it perfects itself as the sun.
Hence because it is fire, it warms the soul again
and burns my heart
and excites it towards desire
and love, love of the Creator.
And when I have been sufficiently inflamed
and set aflame in my soul,
like a ray carrier of light
it flies around and surrounds me entirely
casting its sparkling rays
into my soul,
illuminating my mind,
and it makes it capable
of the heights of contemplation
endowing it with a new outlook.
That is what I previously said
was the flower of fear.
And I, after having seen this ray,
filled with indescribable joy,
I did not rejoice to have seen it;
but it, which with a divine joy
had satisfied me, withdrew
and with it took away my mind
and my senses and all
desire of the world.
And my mind dashed forward running
and with a great desire it sought
to catch hold of this ray which had shown itself.
But the creature did not succeed in finding,
and could not come

completely out of creatures
to seize the ray,
uncreated and incomprehensible.
Nevertheless my mind went everywhere
and endeavored to see;
it scanned the atmosphere,
it scoured the heavens,
it scoured the abysses
and, it seemed to it, examined
the farthest parts of the world.
But in all that
it found nothing, for all that is created.
I moaned and was filled with sorrow,
and my bosom was on fire;
gone mad-like, in ecstasy,
that was what my life was like.
Love then came, as it desired,
and as under the appearance of a cloud
luminously it swooped down on me;
completely on my head
I saw it settle;
and it made me cry out,
for I was in terror.
Nevertheless, after having then flown away,
Love left me alone,
and while I arduously searched for it
then suddenly, completely
it was in me in a conscious manner
in the center of my heart;
like a truly heavenly body,
I saw it like the solar disc.
When it was thus revealed,
when it had shown itself in a conscious manner,
love put the battalion of devils to flight,
it expelled cowardice,
it aroused bravery.
From the perception of the world
it stripped my mind
and it put on me again the robe
of intellectual perception,
it separated me from the visible
and attached me to the invisible
and granted me the grace to see
the uncreated, and to rejoice
to have been separated from all

the created and the visible
and what soon perishes
and to have been united to the Uncreated,
to the incorruptible, to the eternal,
to what is invisible to all;
for that's what love is.
Let us, therefore, run, faithful ones, energetically,
let us hasten, lazy persons, with effort!
Let us wake up, slothful ones,
to possess love,
or rather to receive it by sharing
and thus
leave earthly things
and, with love, to keep ourselves in the presence
of our Creator and our Master,
having reached, with this love,
far beyond visible things.
Otherwise, we shall be banished
with the visible things
and creatures, as a creature,
in the fire and the abyss
and the terrible punishments;
because we will have been found without it,
I say, without love.
And if it is possible to be saved,
without it, O my Christ,
how would that be done?
Impossible! If we are separated from the light,
how will we escape darkness?
If we are deprived of joy,
how be freed from sadness?
Found outside of the wedding hall,
how therefore be full of joy?
Expelled from the kingdom,
I mean from Your contemplation, Savior,
what other salvation,
what solace
or in what other place
could we find them?
Really, absolutely nowhere,
even if some foolishly believe it –
for whoever says that is foolish.
– But perhaps someone will say:
How outside the Kingdom,
outside the wedding hall

and of the choir of the righteous,
would there not exist another place
of salvation or of repose?
Lunatic! Love said,
Do you not hear that in Paradise
Adam your first Father,
for a single commandment
which he had transgressed, was deprived
of divine glory, and that Eve with him
from Paradise
was at once expelled for
having received, in exchange of a pleasure,
O! the miserable death
and life filled with sweat and hardships, alas,
condemned justly by it in their life and in their death?
Consider that the same will hold true then for me,
when judgment will come:
whoever will be found like him
really deprived of divine glory:
he will be promptly expelled out of paradise,
yes, indeed, out of the kingdom
and the heavenly wedding hall.
Even if he is sinless
but is without virtues,
he is considered as stark naked.
And the first of all the virtues,
the queen and the mistress,
really is love.
It is the head of all the others
both their apparel and their glory.
Headless, a body
is dead indeed and deprived of respiration.
A body without a robe,
how will it not be naked?
Without charity the virtues are withered and useless.
He is devoid of divine glory
the one who has not charity;
even if he had all the virtues
he is completely naked,
and, not bearing his nakedness,
he prefers to hide.
For, bearing his shame thus,
he also bears his condemnation
and he hears the "I do not know you"
from the mouth of the Judge of the universe.

The Creator came on earth;
He took on a soul and a body.
He gave the Divine Spirit
who is precisely Love.
If you desire and if you want
to receive the Divine Spirit
believe perfectly in God,
deny yourself also,
unhesitatingly, on your shoulders,
lift the cross and accept it,
die intentionally, my child,
to become participator
in immortal life!
May the impostors not lead you astray
by their false talk
saying that it is after death
that those who die receive life;
do not let yourself be persuaded and become negligent
and not obtain life!
Listen to the discourses of God,
listen to the apostles,
listen to the masters,
those who watch over the Church,
listen to what Christ calls out at all times:
"Out of the belly of those who believe in Me
there will flow rivers
from the divine fountain, water of eternal life."
What is this water of which He speaks
if not the grace of the Spirit?
The pure of heart, He declares them
blessed, saying that they will
see God here below.
Both all the apostles
and the masters cry out
that here below in this life we receive
both the Spirit and the Christ Himself
if we would wish to be saved.
Listen to the words of the Master,
listen to the words of the Word,
how He shows that men
receive the Kingdom
of Heaven as early while here below.
The latter, He says, is similar
to a pearl of great price.
On hearing about a pearl

well, what do you understand?
Are you going to say that it is a question of a jewel
either that one possesses
or at least that one sees in some way?
Away with this blasphemy,
for it is a question of a spiritual pearl!
– The merchant who found it
tell me, how did he find it,
if it is unable to be grasped,
if it is invisible?
Where then did he find it?
How did he see it, tell me?
How would he have sold everything
and how would he have bought
a pearl which he did not find, which he did not see,
which he did not hold in his hands
and which he did not put into his pocket?
– But, you will say, it is by faith alone,
simply and in hope,
that he will exist as if he possessed it! –
– But the Master did not say,
as you yourself understand it,
that he sold what he had
in the hope of finding it
or in the hope of taking possession of it.
Why be in error? Why insist
upon vain hopes?
Why wish to become for others
responsible for their loss
and for yourselves deserving of a severe punishment
for fostering vain beliefs?
But first it is you that He advises
to discover the pearl for yourself
and, after having considered it
as estimable,
then it is up to you to sell
all and to buy it.
But you speak "in hope"
and in that way you show that
you do not wish to seek it,
you do not wish to find it,
you do not wish to sell
what you have and carry away
the Kingdom of Heaven
which is in you, if you wish it,

as the Master has said.
But perhaps you are poor
and do not possess any gold
or any estates, or any wealth;
hearing it said that it is by the sale
of all that one has
that is bought the priceless
pearl, you also say:
"How, therefore, without having
any fortune, will I myself, be able,
to acquire this divine
and magnificent pearl?"
On this topic, therefore, I invite you
to listen intelligently.
If you possessed the entire world
and all that there is in the world
and if, giving away your possessions, you distributed them
to orphans, to widows
and to beggars without means of support
and if you became a beggar yourself,
if you thought it ever so little
as a price of equal value
what you paid for yourself, saying:
Give me the pearl,
because I gave all that I have!
You would at once hear the Master say to you:
"What is this 'all that I have' that you are talking about?
You came out naked
from your mother's womb
and it is naked also
that you will go into the sepulcher.
What are the possessions that you claim as yours?
Don't you understand that you are completely foolish?
You will not receive the pearl,
you will not have the Kingdom.
But if you have given everything away,
all that belonged to you,
or if you are entirely poor
and if you come forward saying:
'Consider now, Savior, a heart
and a soul broken, severely mortified,
violently consumed;
Master, look at my nakedness,
look at me without means of support,
stranger to all virtue

excessively poor,
having nothing to give
to purchase You, Word,
have mercy on me; You only,
O my God, who sustain the wicked!
Indeed, what would I find worthy
in the world, O my God,
that I could give in exchange for You
who have made all things?
What did the sinful woman give?
What did the thief provide?
O my Christ, and the prodigal,
what fortune did he bring You?'
Say that and you will hear:
'Yes, they offered Me gifts
yes, they offered Me a fortune;
having given Me what they had,
they have received the pearl
better than the whole world.
You also, if you so desire,
offer Me these gifts and you will surely receive it.
With that come to Me
and at once I will show you
this pearl which they received, and you will rejoice;
yes, even if you give your soul,
you will think that is a mere nothing,
you will calculate that this is a mere nothing,
what you completely gave.
For if you draw near
like the sinful woman who drew near to Me,
I, Myself, have all power,
I, Myself, possess the pearls,
– and if the world received them
and with this world
other myriads of other worlds
not one single pearl would be missing
from My treasures; –
and I would also give this gift to you
as I gave it to her.' "
That is what God will tell you,
and He will teach you how the thief approached
and how the sinful woman,
those that we praise in this world,
and how the prodigal son,
no sooner returned, was welcomed:

"It is through faith that the thief was saved,
he who had committed many misdeeds,
and this is right, because only,
when all had denied Me,
when all had been scandalized
that I was hanging on the wood,
he confessed that I was
God and King;
and from the bottom of his heart he cried out
that I was immortal.
That is why and before all others
he received the Kingdom.
And the love of the sinful woman,
what speech will express it?
The love that she bore
in her heart when she drew near
Me, as the God and Master
of visible and invisible things;
she abundantly offered it to Me
as no one else till then.
Seeing it, I received it.
And I did not take away her love
but, having given her the pearl,
I also left her love
and even enkindled it more,
I made it rise like a large blazing mass
and I dismissed her who had grown
more venerable than virgins.
Suddenly, indeed, having passed through
the whole law, like climbing a wall,
or like a ladder, she attained all the virtues;
she rapidly attained the summit of the law which is love
and went away keeping it unsullied
until her death.
And the prodigal son, he too,
having repented from the bottom of his heart,
sincerely became converted
and he, who before was My son,
did not approach as My son
but he begged Me to become
as one of My hirelings.
It is not only in words
but with his soul that he spoke
and by his actions he showed
what he said in his words.

It is his deep humility
which drew My mercy
and I immediately enriched him
and in a short time I glorified him,
for I saw that he was drawn
to Me with his whole soul,
because he never turned
– as many do –
his heart away from Me.
In the same way, therefore, if every man will draw near
and will sincerely fall at My feet,
– may all creatures hear! –
I will at once welcome him.
But whoever with guile
wishes to receive My grace
and advances with hypocrisy,
whether he retains any malice in himself
or puts his trust in his works,
being possessed by pride
or envy, he has no share in Me, the Christ."
– To you and to everyone, that is what God
cries out at each moment through us.
If you wish, by still other passages,
I will clearly show you that it is here below
that you must receive the Kingdom of Heaven fully,
if you want to enter it also after your death.
Listen again to God who speaks to you in parables.
"To what shall I compare
the Kingdom of Heaven?
It is, listen attentively, like
to the grain of mustard
which a man took
and which he threw into his garden;
and it grew and really
it became a large tree."
You who are listening, tell me
what is this grain?
What do you think it is?
Speak frankly.
If you cannot, then I will tell you
and will express the truth to you.
In any case, He told you
that this seed, it is the Kingdom of Heaven.
And this seed, it is the grace of the Divine Spirit,
and the garden, it is the heart,

that of each man,
there where the one who received the Spirit
casts Him within and hides Him in his secret heart,
in the innermost recesses of his bosom,
so that no one can see Him;
and he keeps watch over it with all
his attention, so that it may grow,
so that it may become a tree
and rise towards Heaven.
If you say, therefore, it is not here below
but it is after death
that they all will receive the Kingdom,
all those who have ardently desired it,
you twist the words
of the Savior our God,
because, if you do not accept the seed,
this mustard seed that He said,
if you do not cast it into your garden,
you will remain totally barren.
But, likewise, if you accept the seed
and if you suffocate it under the thorns
or abandon it to the birds
(and they will steal the seed),
or else if, without watering it, you forsake
your garden through negligence,
(your seed also does not grow,
it will not germinate and will produce nothing)
tell me, your seed,
of what use will it be?
At what other time if not now,
will you receive the seed?
After death, you tell me.
But you stray away from what is evident
for then in what garden
will you hide it, I ask you,
and by what works
will you cultivate it so that it may grow?
Truly completely, my brother,
you labor under an illusion full of error!
This is the time for works,
the future is the one for crowns.
"Here below, receive the money in pledge,"
the Master has said,
"here below, receive the seal.
Already here below light your lamp,

that of your soul,
before night falls and before the doors
of activity are closed!
If you are sensible,
it is here below that I become for you
the pearl and that I am purchased;
it is here below that I am your wheat,
and like a grain of mustard;
it is here below that I become a leaven for you
and I cause your dough to rise;
it is here below that I am like water for you
and that I become a soothing fire;
it is here below that I become
your garment and your food
and all your drink, if you desire it."
That is what the Master says.
"If in this manner, therefore, already here below,
you thus recognize Me,
yonder you will also possess Me ineffably
and I will become everything for you.
But if you depart from this earth ignorant of
the operations of my grace,
it is only as a rigid judge
that you will find Me yonder."
O my Christ and my God, do not condemn me then,
do not hand over to Your justice
me who have offended You greatly
but receive me as one of
the last of Your hirelings.
Grant that here below
I may serve You, O my Savior,
and that I may receive Your Divine Spirit,
the pledge money of Your Kingdom
and up there, grant me to rejoice
in Your banquet, in Your glory,
that I may see You, O my God,
forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 18

Instruction mingled with theology on the operations of love, which is none other than the light of the Holy-Spirit.

Who will be able, O Master, to speak of You?
Those who ignore You fail, for they know nothing at all
and those who in their faith acknowledge Your divinity
are seized with great fear and remain stunned with fright
and they know not what to say because You are beyond our mind.
Entirely incomprehensible, entirely imperceptible
are Your works, both Your glory and the knowledge that we have of You.
That You are, we can know it and Your light, we see it,
but what You are and of what kind, we are all ignorant of it.
Nevertheless we have the hope, we possess the faith
and we know the love that You gave us,
boundless, indescribable, which nothing can contain,
which is light, inaccessible light, light which operates everything.
This light we name Your hand, we call it Your eye,
Your most holy mouth, Your power, Your glory,
We recognize Your face in it, more beautiful than everything.
It is a sun inaccessible even to the most advanced in divine things.
It is a star which always shines, for those who cannot receive more of it.
It is opposed to grief, it drives hatred away
and causes the jealousy of Satan to disappear completely.
At the outset it consumes, it weakens by purifying,
it repels arguments, it curbs the emotions,
it teaches one to hide and to humble oneself,
it does not allow one to have too many irons in the fire,
nor to get excited either.
Furthermore this is the star, which, by shining, draws people aside
and creates the oblivion of all the anxieties of life,
It usually nourishes and heals thirst
and bestows its power on those who toil for righteousness.
It calms anger and the turmoil of the heart,
and does not allow one to get angry or be at all perturbed.
When it escapes, those that it has wounded pursue it
and with great love, in their heart, seek it.
But when it returns and appears and shines in its love for mankind,
it causes those who pursue it to turn away and withdraw
and what they sought so much, they reject now through fear,
considering themselves unworthy of the righteousness that is
beyond all creation.
O inexpressible favor!

Indeed, what does it not do, and what is it not?
It is charm and joy, sweetness and peace,
countless mercy, abyss of compassion,
the invisible that we see, incomprehensibly comprehensible,
untouchable, impalpable and which can be seized in my mind.
Possessing it, I do not see it, but I contemplate it when it goes away;
I quickly dash to seize it and it completely flies away.
I do not know what to do, I am inflamed and I learn to ask
and in tears to seek with great humility
and not to regard what goes beyond our nature as possible
or as an effect of my strength or of human zeal,
but as the fruit of God's compassion and of His infinite mercy.
This light appears a short moment and withdraws,
it banishes one passion from the heart, but only one.
For man cannot overcome his passions
if the latter does not come to our assistance
and, moreover, it does not banish them all at once.
Psychically man indeed cannot suddenly
receive the Spirit fully, and become passionless,
but when he will have achieved all that is in his power:
the stripping, the indifference, the separation from one's family,
the pruning of his will, the renunciation of the world,
the endurance of trials, prayer, compunction,
poverty, humility, with all the fortitude he can,
then, dimly, like a delicate ray, minute,
having enveloped his mind suddenly, it enraptures him in ecstasy,
rapidly forsaking him so that he may not die.
Therefore, in consequence of this great rapidity, the one who has seen acknowledges that he has not understood and does not remember its beauty.
That is so that, he, the child, may not eat the food of perfect men and that he may not burst or have pain and vomit.
From that time onwards therefore it leads us by the hand,
strengthens us, teaches us,
appearing and fleeing, when we need it,
not when we desire it – this is the attribute of the perfect –,
but when we are in trouble or totally worn out,
it comes to our aid, it appears from afar
and it causes me to be aware of it in my heart.
I call out, I choke in my desire to seize it
and all is night, and my poor hands are empty.
I forget everything, I sit down and I weep,
despairing of seeing it in this manner once again.
But when I'll have wept a lot and consented to stop,
then, mystically arrived, it takes possession of my head,

– and I burst into tears being unaware of who is there –
and it enlightens my mind with a very sweet light.
But when I discerned what it was, it rapidly took flight
after having left me the fire of its divine desire
which prevents me from laughing or from looking at man
or from welcoming the desire of anything visible.
Gradually this light is kindled, stirred up by waiting,
and it becomes a big flame which reaches the heavens;
relaxation extinguishes it, both the trouble of one's own concerns
and the solicitude for life (for that happens in the beginning).
It invites silence and hatred of all glory,
to be beaten and trampled under foot like dirt;
it is in these things that it rejoices and desires to be,
for it teaches the all-powerful humility.
When therefore I will have acquired it and will have become humble,
then it also remains inseparably with me,
it converses with me, enlightens me, looks at me and I also
look at it.
It is in my heart, it exists in Heaven,
it reveals the Scriptures to me and increases my knowledge,
it teaches me mysteries that I cannot express;
it shows me how it tore me away from the world
and commands me to have mercy on all those who are in this world.
Hence walls surround me and I am held back by my body,
but I am really beyond them, have no doubts about it!
I do not perceive noises, I do not hear voices,
I do not fear death, for I am beyond it also;
I do not know what anguish is, even if all grieve me;
pleasures are bitterness for me, all the passions flee,
I continually see the light, by night and by day.
Day appears like night to me, and night is day
and I do not want to sleep, that is punishment for me.
When all the evils surround me
and on the surface throw me down and get the better of me,
then I suddenly find myself beyond everything with it,
beyond the joys, the sorrows and the pleasures of the world;
I enjoy this delight which is ineffable and divine,
I strut in its beauty, I frequently embrace it,
I kiss it, I prostrate myself and I have great gratitude
for those who led me to see it, the one that I loved,
and to participate in this inexpressible light and to become light
and to communicate in its gifts here below
and to acquire the fountain of all blessings
and to see myself filled with the charisms of the soul.
Who has guided me and drawn me to these blessings,

who has raised me up from the depth of the deceit of the world?
Who has separated me from my father, my brothers, my friends,
my parents, the pleasures and the joy of the world?
Who has shown me the path of repentance and of compunction
from which I discovered the day which has no end?
It was an angel, not a man; nevertheless he is a man,
the world is ridiculed by him and the dragon is trampled under foot
and the demons tremble in his presence.
How shall I tell you, brother, what I've seen in Egypt,
the marvels and the wonders that he accomplished?
I will only tell you what is here, for I cannot say everything.
The fact is that he came down and found me a slave and a stranger
and he said: "Come, my child, I will lead you to God!"
And I told him from the depth of my unbelief:
"And what sign will you show me, to ensure me
that you, you can tear me away from Egypt
and snatch me from the hands of the crafty Pharaoh,
so that, after having followed you, I do not risk greater dangers?"
"– Light a large fire," he said "so that I may penetrate to the center,
and if I do not remain untouched, do not accompany me!"
This remark struck me with amazement and I did what he had commande
And the flame burned and he stood in the middle,
intact, uninjured, and he called me to him.
"Master," said I, "I am afraid, I am a sinner!"
He stepped out, he came towards me and he embraced me:
"Why were you afraid, tell me, why fear and tremble?
The marvel is great and redoubtable, but you will see greater ones yet."
Struck with amazement, I said to him: "Lord, I dare not approach you
and do not wish to appear bolder than the fire,
for I see that you are a man who is more than a man.
I dare not even look at you, you whom the fire spared."
He made me come close, he clasped me in his arms
and he kissed me again with a holy kiss
and himself entirely gave out a scent of immortality.
I believed, I chose to accompany him
and I had the desire to become his slave, his alone.
Pharaoh was my master; the frightful foremen
compelled me to care for brick and straw;
alone, I could not escape because I had no arms.
Moses told God to do what was expedient:
God struck Egypt with plagues, on ten successive occasions,
and Pharaoh did not relent and did not release me,
and behold my father pleaded on my behalf and God heard his prayer,
and He told His servant to snatch me from the hand of Pharaoh
and He promised him that He would walk together with us,

setting us free from Pharaoh and the evils of Egypt,
and he caused self-confidence to enter my heart
and he gave me the audacity not to fear Pharaoh.
It is in this way that God's laborer acts.
He grabbed me by the hand and he walked in front of me;
and it is in this way that we began to cover the road.
Lord, at the request of my father, give me the intelligence
and the speech to relate the marvels of Your generosity
that You have accomplished on account of me, the prodigal and
the adulterer, causing me to leave Egypt by the help of
Your servant!
The king of Egypt heard of my departure:
he scorned it like the departure of a single man
and did not set out himself,
but he sent some slaves whom he had in his hire.
They rushed on, they overtook us at the border of Egypt,
they all returned empty handed, aching all over;
they broke their swords, they used up their arrows,
their hands grew tired working against us
and we remained without suffering any harm.
The column of fire burned and the thick cloud was near us
and all alone we were crossing a strange country,
amid robbers, amid numerous peoples and kings.
The King heard of the defeat of his soldiers;
he went mad and he thought that it was a great disgrace
to be trifled with and conquered by only one man;
he harnessed his chariots and aroused his people,
and he himself set off in our pursuit, with cocky boasts.
He came and found me alone, lying down through weariness.
(But Moses was on guard and conversed with God).
He ordered my hands and also my feet to be tied
and apparently they took hold of me and began to put me in chains.
But, lying down, I was laughing and I armed myself with prayer
and I repulsed them all with the sign of the cross,
and not daring to touch me or to come up to me,
standing from afar they seemed to be afraid of me,
and holding fire in their hands they threatened to burn me,
they uttered loud cries, they made noises;
and so that they might not boast about it as a great success,
they saw me turn into light thanks to the prayers of my father,
and immediately they all withdrew together filled with confusion.
Moses withdrew near God, he found me confident,
filled with joy and very moved at the prodigy.
He asked me what happened, I told him everything:
"There was Pharaoh, the king of Egypt,

and few minutes ago he arrived with countless soldiers;
he was unable to chain me down; then, he wanted to burn me
and all those who had come with him had turned into flame
and from their mouth they vomited fire against me."
And I also said: "They saw me turn into light by your prayers
and all turned into darkness and here I am now all alone."
"Think it over," Moses answered, "and do not grow bold,
do not consider appearances, but rather fear what is hidden!
Come, let's take to our heels! God commands it thus
and Christ will battle with the Egyptians in our place."
"Come, my lord," I said, "I will never part from you,
I will not transgress your command, but I will observe them. Amen."

HYMN 19

Theological instruction and consideration discussing also the priesthood as well as impassive contemplation.

Master, how shall I express Your strange marvels,
how relate with words the depths of Your judgments
which You accomplish each day in us, Your servants?
How do You not cast Your eyes on the infinite number of my sins
and not take into account the actions of my malice, Master?
But You have mercy, You protect me, You enlighten and nourish me
as if I carried out all Your commands, O my Savior.
Not only do You take pity on me, but, still more,
You grant me leave to remain in the presence
of Your glory, of Your power, of Your majesty.
You talk with me and You address words of immortality
to the one who is weak, lowly, unworthy to live.
How do You cover my sullied soul with light
and render it immaculate and divine light?
How do You, with light, invest my miserable hands
which, by sinning, I have sullied with the stains of sin?
How do You transform my lips by the ray of Your Divinity,
from unclean, making them holy?
And my filthy tongue, O Christ, how do You purify it
and give it a share in the mastication of Your flesh?
How do You condescend to see me and to let me see You,
to let me hold You in my hands, You who hold all things,
You whom all the celestial armies cannot contemplate,
inaccessible even to Moses, the first of the prophets?
For he was not judged worthy to see Your face
nor any other man, to avoid that he die.
You therefore the only incomprehensible, the only inexpressible,
that no one can contain, inaccessible to all,
to hold You, to embrace You, to see You, to eat You,
to possess You in my heart, O Christ, how am I judged worthy of it?
How am I not consumed, but divided between joy and fear
and singing, O Christ, Your boundless love for man?
How therefore do the blind, the sensual, who do not know You,
who are insensitive, or rather who show their own
weakness, their blindness, their deprivation of all blessings,
O my Savior, how do they dare to speak thus:
"And of what use is it to man to possess the priesthood
if he does not gain one of these three advantages:
the nourishment of the body or the acquisition of gold

or the throne of rich bishopric, among those which are important?»
O darkness, O hardness of heart, O extreme destitution,
O dire poverty, O profound ignorance,
O useless, empty and vain words,
O boldness, O thought worthy of the traitor Judas!
For just as the latter took little account of
the mysteries of the Last Supper of the Master and of
His immaculate body,
but estimated a few pieces of silver better,
so also these, preferring corruptible gifts to the incorruptible
and the divine, choose to hang their soul.
Tell me, maniacs! if you know this:
Who now, if he possesses Christ, still needs some other
possessions of the present life?
If he has the grace of the Spirit in his heart, who
does not possess, dwelling in himself, the venerable Trinity
who enlightens him and makes him god?
Who now, having become god by the grace of the Trinity
and favored with the glory from above, from the prime glory,
would think that there is still something more glorious
than to celebrate the Liturgy and to contemplate the Most-High Nature,
active everywhere, inexpressible, inaccessible to all?
Or else what would he want more brilliant in life,
reflect, in this life which is of a short duration
or think of it, in the other which is endless?
If you knew the hidden profoundity of the mysteries,
you would not compel me to say or to write that.
In my reverence, I tremble, while expressing the divine
mysteries in writing
and while outlining with letters what is indescribable for all.
If you had seen Christ and if you had received the Spirit
and if, thanks to Them both, you had been led to the Father,
you would know what I am saying and what I am putting
into words for you,
that the divine service is great and awesome and that it transcends
all glory, enlightenment, command and authority,
wealth and power and every kingdom
when one, celebrates the Divine Liturgy with the consciousness of a
pure heart,
in honor of the pure, holy and immaculate Trinity.
Don't speak to me of bodily innocence
and present testimonies whose profundity you ignore,
but listen to what God has said by the mouth of the Apostles
and of Basil the wise man, with the burning tongue,
and the simple testimonies of our Father Chrysostom

and of Gregory who has spoken well about these things of God;
listen with faith to what kind must be
the one who celebrates in honor of God, Creator of the Universe.
And according to your merit and your virtue
you can admire the grandeur of the grace that He has
bestowed upon you.
Do not go astray, brothers, do not have the audacity
to touch or approach the One who is inaccessible by nature!
For he who will not renounce the world and the things of the world,
and who will not deny his own soul and his body
and will not completely die in all his senses,
without considering anything with passion any longer amid the pleasures
of life,
without desiring absolutely anything of the things of the world,
without even being charmed by human words,
he who will not become deaf and blind to the things
and to the customs, to the actions and to the sayings of the world
– doubtless, seeing all that the eye can naturally see,
but without allowing anything to penetrate to the interior of his heart
nor his heart to make a list of the traits and forms of these,
listening also to all that a human ear can receive
but remaining like a stone, without emotion or feeling,
without remembering either the sound or the power of the words,
– that man cannot offer the mystical and unbloody offering,
in a pure manner to the God who is pure by nature.
For when he will be conscious that he is doing it "in truth"
that is, that he has been separated from the entire world and from
the things of the world
and he will know and believe what I am now going to write.
This dark air which David calls the Wall,
that our Fathers called the Sea of our life,
he crossed them, he moved beyond them, he came into port
and all those who arrive there find in it all their blessings.
That is where paradise is, there, the tree of life,
there, the bread of sweetness, there, the divine drink,
there, the inexhaustible richness of the gifts.
That is where the bush burns without burning away
and that at once the sandals were unloosed from my feet,
this is where the sea divides and I cross over alone
and I see my enemies submerged in the waters.
There, I see the piece of wood pushed into my heart
and all that is bitter is changed into sweetness.
There, I sucked the honey which flowed from the rock
and from that moment my soul no longer experienced any anxiety.
There, I found Christ, who obtained these blessings for me

and I followed Him with my whole soul.
There, I ate manna and the bread of angels
and I no longer desired anything human.
There, I saw Aaron's staff, which had been withered and then blossomed
and I admired God's prodigies.
It is there that I saw my barren soul bear fruits
and how the dry piece of wood produces a beautiful fruit.
There, my muddy and debauched heart,
I saw it: pure, holy and virginal
and it heard the: "Hail, full of grace
for the Lord is with you and in you forever!"
There, I heard the: "Plunge yourself into the pool of tears!"
I did so and I immediately believed, I recovered my sight.
There, I was put into the tomb of perfect humility
and Christ approached me with unbounded mercy
and He lifted the heavy stone of my malicious deeds
and said: Come, go out of the tomb of the world!
There, I saw how impassively my God suffered the passion
and how He died, He the immortal One,
and left the tomb without breaking the seals.
There, I saw the life to come and the immortality
that Christ bestows on those who seek Him
and I discovered that in me was the Kingdom of Heaven
which is the Father, the Son and the Spirit,
the Divinity inseparable in three Persons.
Those who have not preferred it to the entire world
and who have not deemed as a glory, an honor, a treasure,
the fact only of adoring, of officiating and of standing in His presence,
are unworthy also of the immaculate vision
and of the happiness, of the joy and of all the blessings
in which, without having repentance, they will never have a share,
unless, as we have said, they learn, they welcome,
they zealously accomplish all that my God has said;
and it is barely then that with great fear and reverence,
if God commanded it, one would touch the sacred realities!
For it is not all those people who have the right to officiate;
but, even if someone had completely received the grace of the Spirit
and if he was free from sin from his mother's womb,
unless by His command and by His choice God
give him, by divinely enlightening his soul, the assurance
and enkindle him with the desire of divine love,
it does not seem to me reasonable that he offer the Divine Sacrifice
and that he touch the untouchable and awesome mysteries
to which is due glory, honor and all adoration,
now and always forever and ever.

HYMN 20

Thanksgiving, Confession and Theological Reflections, on the Gift and Participation of the Holy Spirit.

It is on my behalf that You have been seen on this earth,
born of a virgin,
You the invisible One who exists before all ages,
and You became flesh and You appeared as man,
You who are bathed, in an inaccessible light.
All thought that You were limited,
You whom nothing whatever can contain,
whom no word is capable of expressing,
that the mind violently pursues with its love
and cannot seize being inhibited by its fear.
It seeks You again, interiorly consumed,
but, after having received a brief vision of Your light,
it is rejected through fear and it rejoices in gladness.
For the nature of men cannot bear
to contemplate You clearly, fully, my Christ,
even if we believe that we receive You completely
owing to the Holy Spirit that You give us, my God,
both Your immaculate blood and body,
because, when we communicate, we acknowledge
that we possess You and we eat You, my God, without division
and without confusion, for You do not have a share
in our corruption and in our defilement, but it is You who
gives me a share
in Your own incorruptible purity, O Word,
You wash the stain of my evil deeds
and You expel the darkness of my sins.
You purify the shame of my heart,
You lessen the depth of my malice.
You render me light, I who was previously plunged in the dark,
and You make me beautiful when we are together.
You bathe me with a brightness of immortality
and I am in stupor and I burn interiorly
with the desire to adore You Yourself.
And when I reflect on that, I the unhappy person,
O Marvel, I discover You in myself:
You live, You move, You speak,
and then You render me speechless,
with stupor in the presence of Your inaccessible glory.
Fright then possesses me and embarrassment

for the One who holds everything in His hand,
I see Him contained in my heart.
But what is then the strangeness of Your mercy, O my Christ,
what is then Your unbounded condescension, O Word?
Why did You come to my poverty,
how did You enter into my sordid house,
You who dwell in inaccessible light, my God?
How do You let it be sheltered from the flames,
You the fire unbearable to a mortal nature?
What can I do worthy of Your glory
and what can I find in keeping with so much love?
What will I offer You, to You who has glorified me with such glory,
with such honor, I the unworthy one?
I whom men do not deign to look at
and with whom, in the presence of my misery, they by no means desire
either to converse, or share a meal,
behold that You, who nourish all life and every nature,
You the inaccessible One to the Seraphims,
You the Creator, the Author, the Universal Master,
not only do You see me, do You speak to me, do You nourish me
but this flesh which is identically Your flesh,
You have granted that I take It and I eat It
and that I drink Your most holy Blood
which was shed on account of me when You were immolated.
You set me up as a servant and minister and
a person initiated in these mysteries, I whom You nevertheless know,
You who knew everything before creating the ages
and before having brought forth any of the invisible realities,
– for it is afterwards, that You created the visible world –,
I, the sinner, the prodigal, the publican,
the robber, having been guilty of suicide,
the hypocrite of righteousness, the worker of iniquity,
the transgressor of all Your commandments.
You know that this is true;
how shall I remain in the presence of Your gaze, O my Christ,
how shall I approach Your table?
How shall I hold Your immaculate Body,
I whose hands are all sullied?
How praise You, how intercede for others,
I who have not, by reason of my faith or my good works
the love and the confidence to draw near You
but who am a debtor, You know it,
of many talents, of many faults?
My mind hesitates, my tongue is powerless,
I find no word, my Savior,

to express the works of Your goodness,
those that You have done for me, Your servant.
Interiorly, I am consumed as by fire
and in silence I cannot bear
the great weight of Your numerous gifts.
You who gave sparrows their song,
give me also the word, to me the unhappy one,
so that I may tell everyone, by writing or by word of mouth,
what You have done for me
by a boundless mercy, my God,
and solely in consequence of Your own love for man! –
For they are great and awesome, they exceed all thinking
the blessings that You have granted me, to me the stranger,
the ignorant, the beggar who dares not speak,
rejected by all humanity.
My parents did not lavish me with the love that nature calls for,
my brothers and my friends all made fun of me,
they pretended they loved me, it was a lie.
My relations, strangers, the princes of this world
did not turn towards me and did not even care to look at me,
except to drag me into their ruin by their impious deeds.
I have often desired glory, but an innocent glory,
and I have not yet found it in the present life
for glory, that of the world, as I am totally convinced,
without even further action, is sin.
How many times have I desired men to love me
and to have with them this familiarity that intimacy gives
and among upright people no one accepted me;
others consented further to see me and to be acquainted with me
but I avoided them like doers of vice.
All that, Master, and still more numerous things
that I am not in a position to say nor even to recall,
it is You who have done it in Your foresight for me the prodigal,
to draw me out of the abyss and the darkness of the world
and from the dreadful deception of the pleasures of life.
The good avoided me on account of my exterior appearance
and it is I who avoided the wicked by a personal choice.
As I said, I liked the glory and the wealth of the world,
the finery of clothing, the customs of comfort.
I know not what to utter, I know not what to say to you
for I am afraid to say and to write such things,
dreading to fall and to sin by my words,
and what will be written contrary to the truth will be ineffaceable.
When someone invited me to acts of folly
and of sin, it is true, in this world of error,

my heart completely collected its thoughts interiorly
just as if it hid itself through modesty,
sustained in an invisible manner by Your divine hand.
And I liked all the rest, the beautiful things of life,
all that which delights the sight, tickles the gullet
and beautifies the body, this corruptible being.
But the impure actions and the unchaste desires,
it is You who wiped them out of my heart, my God,
and who introduced their hatred into my soul;
even if I approached them in my inclinations.
Instead You made me have – marvel really very great –
a desire without actions and actions without desire
and by Your divine plan You separated me from everyone,
from kings, from princes and from the riches of this world.
Often, when many desired such and that I myself
had consented to them,
You Yourself did not permit that the will of anyone persist;
some promised me glory and wealth during life
but I hated them, Master, with a hatred from the heart,
so that never did I consent to an encounter with them,
and they, with rage, with sticks beat me black and blue in revenge;
others slandered me by their slanders with everyone,
saying that I indulged in all vices;
they wanted to lead me astray from the road of uprightness.
for I avoided actions so as not to be slandered
and they slandered me so that I would end up in such actions,
in the event that it was the praise of men that I desire,
and unceasingly they continued to slander me by their words
until I would yield to their views
But to those who pretended to give the glory of the world,
You have given me to retort thus, my Savior:
"If you possessed all the glory of the world," said I,
and if the crown of royalty was on your head,
and if your feet were shod in purple
and if at once you made me master of all that
and gave yourself up as an ordinary member of the public, desiring
to become my slave,
I would not have shared your vices and your designs,
and I would not have agreed to them in my lifetime."
What volume could contain Your favors
and all the many kindnesses that You have shown on my behalf?
If indeed countless tongues and hands were given me,
I could not tell or write them all down
because they are an abyss by their unlimited number,
they are incomprehensible by the greatness of their glory.

My reason is exhausted, my heart suffers
for I cannot speak of You, my God.
When I reflect, indeed, unhappy soul, on what I have done,
on all the helps that You have bestowed on me, from what dangers
You have rescued me
and from what vices You have snatched me away in Your kindness,
my Savior,
and that You have not remembered the evils that I have committed
but, as if I had accomplished many great and fine actions,
as if I had remained innocent from the womb of the
sacred baptismal font,
You welcomed me, You covered me with honor,
You adorned me with the robe of the Kingdom,
I am completely seized with trembling and convulsed with joy,
I remain speechless and I am completely powerless
because You, my God, You have given Yourself to me, You the
Creator of the world,
to a man terribly defiled, object of repugnance to all,
men and demons, for having already become,
for having even surpassed the demons by the practices of
outrageous actions.
Disaster! It is to myself, shamefaced and defiled that – how tell? –
You united Yourself, friend of men, by an unbounded compassion,
You, great purity, still greater holiness,
of incomparable power, of unparalleled glory,
and You descended from above, from your infinite height,
down as far as the last of the gates of hell, that of my sins,
and the darkness of my poverty and my ruined house
in consequence of my numerous faults and of a very great carelessness,
my house totally neglected and defiled.
In the first place You lifted me prostrated on the earth
and You placed me on the rock of Your divine commandments,
You bathed me, You purified me from the mire of my vices
and You clothed me again with a tunic whiter than snow;
You swept my dirty house
and, after having entered, You occupied it, O Trinity, O my God.
Then You made of me the throne of Your divine divinity,
and the house of Your inaccessible glory and Kingdom,
the urn containing the manna, that of immortality,
the lamp which retains in itself the inextinguishable and divine light,
the jewel case, the genuine one, of the beautiful pearl,
the field, where the treasure of the world was hidden,
the fountain from which those who drink never thirst again,
the one which also lets its water flow with a tenfold abundance
and which makes those immortal who in faith drink from it,

the new Paradise which in its center possesses the tree of life,
the land which hides the One which no one can contain;
You whom I formerly sought with all my heart;
yes, I desired to hear of You unceasingly
and I wanted to keep Your remembrance in my soul
and frequently speak and hear of You.
If indeed my mind could not formerly imagine things
about You, in a pure way,
nor my eyes contemplate You, nor my ear hear You,
nor my heart welcome Your divine upliftings
and if it was completely struck with amazement at only
hearing Your word,
and if my soul withdrew in fear and dread,
well now, on seeing You in the interior of itself, it is agitated.
On contemplating You, in so far as You grant it to the mind,
– You who are completely in the whole universe, and completely
outside of it –
present also in the interior of itself,
on contemplating You – You who are completely incomprehensible in
Your divine divinity,
invisible and hidden to all,
You the inaccessible One –, accessible nevertheless to those only
for whom You have willed it,
when You consented, in Your love for men,
– You who are inaccessible to the Seraphim, the Cherubim, to
all the angels,
and awesome in the splendor of Your divine nature –,
to show Yourself, accessible among men,
my soul is completely thrown into confusion. But it is still
more amazed at
Your kindness and Your love for men,
in that You purify defiled souls, You enlighten the mind,
You take possession of an earthly and material essence
and You kindle a large flame of divine love
and You throw into me, like a fire, the passion of divine desire,
and You prepare me to reach up to the third heaven,
and You care that I be carried off, Savior, up to Paradise
where I hear mysterious and strange words
which men are not allowed to repeat or to relate.
It is to You that is due the honor, the glory and the majesty,
the eternal power, O Christ, to You the master of the Universe
with the Father and the Spirit most Holy by nature,
now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 21

Letter to a monk who had asked him: How do you separate the Son from the Father? With a distinction of reason or actual? You will find in it also a wealth of theological contents which refutes this same blasphemy.

You have shone, You have manifested as light of glory
the inaccessible light of Your essence, Savior,
and You have enlightened a soul plunged in darkness,
or rather, which was darkness, in consequence of its sin
for it had lost its natural beauty,
for You raised it from hell where it was lying
and You have granted it to see the light of divine day
and to be enlightened by the rays of the sun
and to become light, O great marvel!
They do not believe, those who have not
despised the glory of men as You commanded,
for they have not tasted the divine glory
that You have given and give now, my God,
to those who, from the bottom of the soul, with all their will,
have sought You, eternal glory,
You, the God truly crowned with glory,
the contemplation of You is the summit of glory.
He who has been deemed worthy to see You constantly
has truly received the dignity of angels,
even if he is bound to the flesh by nature.
If You have agreed to live in him
and moreover if You willed that he live in You,
You have totally realized Your plan
and You have rendered the corruptible being similar to Yourself
and made him god, God, You, who by nature subsist,
preceding all eternity, with the God who shares Your eternity,
Your Son, the Word, who was begotten of You
and who is not separated from You by a distinction of reason
but who is really inseparable from You.
Even if He is separated, at least it is not by nature,
rather by His Hypostasis, or also by His Person,
for to say "by a real distinction," that is what the
impious and atheists say,
and "by reason," a distinction made by those who are totally
plunged in darkness.
For the mind possesses the speech that it begets
unceasingly, really and separated in a way.
And if it is begotten, it really comes out

and it is separated in a subsisting speech,
but it also remains in the interior of the one who has begotten it,
that which we can also call "the paternal bosom"
and it extends through the entire world
and it fills everything, separately from the Father, entirely,
and it remains entirely with the Father.
It is by His operations that He communicates Himself
and it is by His enlightenment that we say that He comes.
You have heard these expressions: He walks, He stays,
He turns His face and He looks,
He comes down and He goes back up,
He arrives and then He takes off;
all the Divine Scriptures use these terms
and many others about the divine operation,
terms which the most Holy Spirit used who proceeded,
in an inexpressible manner, from the Father.
The Spirit who has been sent by the Son to men,
not to the unbelieving, nor to the friends of glory,
nor to orators, nor to philosophers,
nor to those who have studied the works of the Greeks,
nor to those who are ignorant of our Scriptures, the interior meaning,
nor to those who have held a role on the world's stage,
nor to those who speak with affectation and with a great flow of words,
nor to those who have achieved great names,
nor to those who have succeeded in being loved by renowned personages,
nor to the accomplices of those who act illegally,
nor to those who give titles nor to those who receive them,
nor to those who amuse themselves,
nor to those with whom we amuse ourselves,
but to those who are poor in spirit and in their way of living,
to those who are pure of heart and of body,
to those who speak simply, live more simply
and whose thinking is simpler still,
to those who shun glory like the fire of hell
and who hate flatterers from the bottom of their heart,
(for the Spirit does not accept flatteries
and it does not agree to listen to what is not)
to those who consider only the sole glory of the soul
and the salvation of all their brothers
and who, not even with a slight movement of the heart,
have a feeling for anything of the world,
for example for the praises or human glory
or all other pleasure or passion.
Those are dead and yet they are really alive
for they are true and yet considered like seducers.

They are humble of mind and of heart,
they are gentle and zealous for the Lord.
They are ungodly to the ungodly
and sweet smell of life for the elect of the Lord.
They are unclean to the unclean of heart
and like the angels to those whose soul is pure.
The latter humble themselves even amid glory
and in poverty they are covered with glory.
They consider humiliation as a kingdom,
and a kingdom as poverty.
When they eat, they remain in temperance
and when they fast, they are satisfied with every good.
The former do not resort to injustice,
and cannot neglect the one who is crushed
and oppressed by the rich.
The former are not afraid of the face of men
for they see the Face of the Lord.
The former do not let their hearts be moved by gifts
and they do not neglect the law of justice,
for they possess the riches that cannot be stolen
and they consider all the riches of the world as dung.
The former, because they have the Spirit for their teacher,
have no need of the knowledge which comes from men
but, enlightened by the light of this Spirit,
they look at the Son, they see the Father
and adore the Trinity of Persons,
the unique God, who by nature is one in an inexpressible manner.
The former further receive from the Father the revelation
that the Son is begotten without division
in the manner that He alone knows, for I cannot say it;
if I could, the spoken word would absolutely have the power
to say what transcends the speech and thought
and to turn everything topsy – turvy.
If, indeed, the creature understood the Creator
and imagined Him as He is
and could express Him by the spoken word or writing,
the achievement would be greater than His Creator.
Stop, man, tremble, mortal nature,
and consider that you have been drawn from nothingness
and that on leaving your mother's womb
you saw the world which had been made before you.
And if you could know the height of Heaven
or indicate what is the nature
of the sun, of the moon and of the stars,
where they remain fixed and how they move about,

they which move without possessing life or sensation,
or even the nature of the earth, whence you were drawn,
its limits and its measures, its width and its height
and what supports it, if you have seen it,
and then what is this support and on what it rests,
if you knew that and if you had discovered the end of each thing
and if you had counted the sands of the seashore
and if you could also know your own nature
and interpret the work of wisdom,
then you could think of Your Creator Himself,
how in the Trinity the Unity remains without confusion
and in the Unity, the Trinity without division.
Seek the Spirit! leave the world!
Absolutely do not surrender your eyes to sleep.
Do not be concerned about the present life.
Weep, moan, for the time that you have lost!
Perhaps God will comfort you and will grant you,
as He has already granted you to see the world
both the sun and the light of day,
yes, He will likewise deign to enlighten you now,
to show you the intelligible universe,
to enlighten you with the light of the triple Sun,
and if you see It, you will know what I am saying:
You will then come to know the grace of the Spirit,
that, even absent, He is present by His power
and that we do not see Him present in consequence of His divine nature,
and that He is everywhere and nowhere.
If you seek to find Him in a sensible manner,
where will you find Him? Nowhere, you will simply say.
But if you have the strength to look at Him spiritually,
it is rather He who will enlighten your mind
and will open the pupils of your heart;
then you will no longer deny that He is everywhere
and by Him you will be taught everything,
even if you consider yourself to be ignorant and unrefined.
But if you have not discerned that the eye
of your mind has been opened and that it has seen the light
if you have not perceived the sweetness of the Divinity,
if you have not been enlightened by the Divine Spirit,
if you have not shed tears without feeling any pain,
if you have not contemplated that your soul has been cleansed,
if you have not known that your heart has been purified,
that it has shone with its luminous reflections,
if you have not found the Christ within yourself, contrary
to all expectation,

if you have not been struck with stupor on seeing the Divine beauty
and have not forgotten human nature
on seeing yourself completely transformed
how do you not tremble, tell me, to speak of God?
How dare you, you who are completely flesh
and have not yet become spirit, like Paul,
how dare you to philosophize or speak about what has to do
with the Spirit,
you who hear it said that He does not live in such persons
because they themselves are flesh, as they say?
But I have written that so that you may know the way that I believe
and if you consent to it, that you may believe me and be repentant,
For if you really do not possess the treasure
that the world cannot contain,
if you have not yet received the glory of the Fishermen
that have really received those who have received God,
you will leave the world and the things of the world,
with agility you run before the doors
of life and of the stage of earth are closed for you,
before the market be closed, alas,
and the sun darkens and the stars,
and the earth pass away and hell be opened,
and all become darkness and chaos:
and then you will know, dear soul, and you will learn
that those who do not possess the Divine Spirit,
shining in their mind like a torch
and dwelling in their heart in an indescribable manner,
are sent into eternal darkness.
For the Lord is the Spirit,
Spirit also God, the Father of the Lord,
one single Spirit to be sure, for He is not divided.
He who possesses Him, really possesses the three
but without confusion, even if it is without division.
For the Father exists and how will He be the Son?
For He is not begotten by essence.
There is the Son and how will He become Spirit?
The Spirit is Spirit – and how will He appear Father?
The Father is Father, because He begets unceasingly.
And how does this eternal generation take place?
Because He does not separate Himself at all from the Father
and that He completely comes from Him in an inexpressible manner,
He remains continually in the bosom of the Father
and He continually comes from Him in an ineffable way.
Constantly we see the Son in the Father,
He is begotten, but remains one with Him;

and in the Son we also contemplate the Father,
without distance, division or separation.
The Son is Son because He is constantly begotten
and He was begotten; begotten before all ages.
He comes without being cut off from His root.
But at the same time He is apart without being separated
and completely one with the Father who is Living,
and Himself is Life and gives life to all.
All that the Father has, so the Son also has.
All that the Son has, the Father likewise has.
I see the Son, I see the Father also.
We see the Father similar to the Son in everything,
except that one begets and that the other is constantly begotten.
– What is there, outside of the Father, which exists?
What is there? say it, express it to all men! –
He is the eternal God and the Creator
of all that has been made and of all that will be.
God equal to the Father both by the essence
and by the nature and by the power
and by the form really as by the notion
and by the duration never separated from the Father.
How does He issue from Him? As the speech comes from the mind.
How is He separated from Him? As the voice is from the speech.
How does He take shape? As the word that we write.
From the heights I have descended to miserable words
and I have turned within myself full of sorrow
and I have wept over the race of men
for they are searching for strange examples, thoughts
and actions, and they put forward
expressions drawn from human things,
believing to represent properly the divine nature,
nature that no one among angels or men
has been able to contemplate or name.
For how can one give a name to the Creator of everything?
Names and actions and expressions,
all came into the world by God's command
for He gave their names to His deeds
and His own appelation to each reality.
He did not give it to everything personally, but He gave to His works
the power to give in their turn a name to some works.
And thus it is that these works give and receive different names,
but His own name, we have never known it
except that "the God who is inexpressible," as Scripture says;
hence if He is inexpressible, if He has no name
if He is invisible, if He is mysterious,

if He is inaccessible, unique beyond every spoken word,
beyond not only human thought
but also that of immaterial minds,
– "He set darkness as a refuge"
and all the rest from here on earth belongs to darkness
but He alone, as the Light, is beyond darkness –,
how then do you introduce a distinction of reason in Him
or would you have contemplated Him "separate in reality"?
– Whence and how have you crossed the darkness
and alone have been set aside of all creatures?
But if this gift has not been granted to you but to another,
I wonder to whom and I request you to inform me of it:
to an angel or to one of the immaterial spirits.
And would you not know that they keep their faces
and their feet covered
with their divine wings and with respect and modesty
– if at least you somewhat understand these wings –
because do they not bear the inaccessible character of His glory?
For it is not His nature that they see but the glory of glory.
Or else to what man will you dare say that that was granted?
to John the Baptist or to the great Paul?
But the first shouts and announces to all
that he is not worthy to undo
even the strap or the buckle of His sandals.
And the other one, when He ascended to the third heaven
and was then carried off to Paradise,
would he have said something in particular to you alone
that you have kept hidden and that you now wish to proclaim?
Because for us indeed, concerning this,
we have learned that he left nothing in writing;
what's more he loudly declares:
"I have heard words, which I cannot say
and God lives in an inaccessible light."
So John does not undo His buckle,
and he is not even capable of undoing His strap.
Paul has not been able to express the words
which he heard, declaring them inexpressible.
Who is the one therefore who has penetrated God so well,
who remained unconsumed in the inaccessible light
and, arrived at the center of His abode,
has contemplated the nature of the Master,
to dare, the unfortunate person,
to say more about it than John and Paul?
Who will not be in terror, who will not be in sorrow
in the presence of the blindness, the darkening of those who now

speak and innovate a really strange dilemma
which immerses them in a similar abyss,
those who ask the question and those to whom it is asked?
For, that they separate the Word by a mental distinction
or by a real one, from both sides, lamentably
they come to nothing and fall into heresy.
To separate Him in reality, it is to settle the Word once and for all.
To separate Him in thought, it is to confuse Him to the point
of no longer distinguishing Him.
Tremble, man, learn at least to know yourself,
speak of yourself, and say all that you wish.
Perhaps you will also cry out like David:
"Marvellous is Your wisdom
and Your knowledge is too great for me, my God!"
Yes, abandon your curiosity,
lay aside the blasphemy of your words.
In the first place say: How can we be saved?
Afterwards say also how you have been saved
so as not to be content with teaching us by your words
but to make us more fervent by your actions.
If you do not want to bear a judgment against yourself
and condemn yourself for not having lived what you speak about,
– and it is because of that that you exaggerate your words
without having ever given them any foundation –
put the rock as the first of foundations.
One does not hang up a building in the air!
Practise the commandments of Christ, who is the Rock,
the builder of the Church of God,
the new people of the sheep of the Word.
Act and speak by building on the Rock.
Still more, you also, let yourself be built by the Rock.
It is He who is the shepherd, and also the architect.
May He also be the foundation of your existence.
What is the good of the roof before the foundations?
The construction first and then the roof,
the practice in wisdom and then contemplation?
Why do you want to drink the wine before the vine-harvest?
The latter is not poured into an old wine-skin.
Before sowing why do you think of gathering the sheaves
and of distributing them to others in vain?
If you wish, come here, do not stray from the way
but teach us what concerns the depth of the judgments
pronounced concerning us: how some succeed
who are wicked perhaps and do not know God,
how others are unfortunate although they know God

and are known by God alone.
Some suffer perhaps while giving thanks,
others bear to be poor with gratitude,
others on the contrary are rich and they are culpably ungrateful
and others, by stealing and by being unjust,
believe to serve God that way
and so many other deeds that you see each day
for men act and suffer in turn
and God permits it, He who has created everything.
Will He be looked upon as unjust in the eyes of the ungodly
or of small minds like me?
Tell me, teach us about the judgment of God,
about the hour and about the day,
when all, naked, we shall be summoned to stand
near the tribunal of my God and Savior
and where, for our actions and of our words here on earth,
of our discussions and of our reflections,
we shall receive the reward, the just reward.
Tell me, who will be filled with confidence yonder
and who on the other hand will be covered with shame?
You have infinitely to say on the matter.
After that examine also what concerns creation,
for you will find there another abyss.
See the sky, the sun and the stars,
look at the earth, on His command, become
the mother and tomb of us all.
Once arrived there, speak of death,
give air to numerous and necessary reflections,
useful to your friends just as to your parents,
to those who are rich just as to those who are renowned.
And while you explain with everyone,
you will have something to talk about until your death
on such topics. . .
And that will be useful to you after your death.
Then look at the people of our earth,
the species of animals of all kinds which are found there,
the shapes so varied of the birds
and also the chirpings of the simple sparrows,
the expanse, the dimensions, the limits of the sea,
admire them, be struck with awe, speak of it intensely.
"O, the depth of the richness and of the divine knowledge,
O, Your wisdom, my all merciful God."
Come and retire within yourself far from exterior objects,
concentrate your mind, contemplate yourself,
or rather reflect on what you have and what you are

and, in all that you look at, in every object that you see,
may you find a teacher of virtue for yourself
or an image of the evil passion
so that, from the greatness and from the beauty of creatures,
you may learn the incomprehensible wisdom of God
and the spiritual combat
which the universal Artist has represented in advance.
In the likeness of the serpent, possess prudence to be sure
but vomit the poison, that of wickedness.
In the likeness of the horse, run on the path of justice,
but most certainly do not neigh after the female.
Be a cat which keeps an eye on the rat, in the spiritual sense,
without in the slightest carrying off the belongings of the neighbor,
without stealing the share of your brothers,
but also by the rat, expel all rats
adverse far from your house!
Do not become a wolf and shun wolves,
become rather the dog of the master
and show all your anger against the wolves
and follow in the trail of the paths of your Master;
until you discover, until you reach
the divine gate, do not turn backwards
to become the prey of spiritual wild beasts.
Imitate the hare, if you cannot imitate the dog,
as your refuge seek the Rock that is Christ
and hide yourself there where fear is impossible,
or else as the hart, ascend the mountains,
escape from the hands of the hunters
or take flight like the beautiful sparrow
and pass above all nets.
The wings, understand, are the divine love
without which you will pass nowhere.
Imitate the ass's foal which carries its Creator.
Become also the ox which pulls a divine plough
and ploughs the sweet furrow of the Word.
Imitate all these examples but not the contrary.
Wicked beast, the fox which lives hypocritically,
that is one thing and that appears another
for it pretends to be dead, to catch its prey;
terrible example, the bear: for if he has received
a sword-thrust somewhere,
he does not cease from scratching the sore from this wound
until he dies from it.
Wicked beast, the pig which eats greedily.
Wicked beast, the asp, for it even stops its ears.

Wicked, the wicked beings, and if you want to know them
and if you make efforts to shun them, dear soul,
you will really find true wisdom.
Walking on the path, you will go towards what is best
and with all the rest, you will understand yourself
and when I will question you then, you will simply say:
the speech that you utter, I also grasp it.
It is in you and makes itself known also to me
or else will it leave you empty in your speech?
You will say: "I know it, it came also to me
and it is completely with you, as before.
How then did it separate itself from you and how did it come to me
and how does it remain completely in you without separating
itself from you?"
Tell me, and now leave God alone
for fear that all creation tremble and collapse,
and squash your thick flesh,
and crush your carnal soul,
and by fire consume your mind
that advances towards emptiness by thinking of nothing useful.
For it is neither in reality nor in thought
that the indivisible speech is divided.
For he who is confined in the interior of his house
but whose mind wanders abroad
is not abandoned in the house without his mind
but his mind is really with him and yet is also outside.
So this kind of separation, how will you name it?
Will you say that it is a reality or will you claim it only
as a distinction in thought?
If it is in thought, how is it completely outside?
If it is in reality, how is it inside the house?
To be sure, what can this example be worth
with regard to the Word who surpasses mind and thought?
For, sent forth from the Father, the Word descended
and He lived completely in the womb of the Virgin
and yet He was completely in the Father and He was completely
in her womb,
completely in the all, He that nothing can contain,
without being compressed nor made smaller, He truly filled it completely
and remaining unchanged, He took the form of a slave
and after having been given birth, He became man in everything,
and completely come out of the womb He arrived in the world,
and He was completely borne away whence He had not left.
Did, therefore, all that take place in thought or in reality?
Would you indeed dare to affirm what is impossible to say

for all the angels, for the archangels and for all created nature?
Indeed we imagine Him in a real way, we cannot express Him at all
and the mind cannot really understand Him perfectly.
How then is God also man and man also God,
And He is also the Son of the Father, completely, in a manner
which does not separate Him from Him?
And was He not borne of the Virgin and did He not go out
into the world
and did He not remain uncontainable for all, as we have said?
Was it in thought or in reality, do say it? You will now remain silent
for even if you wanted to speak, your mind would not provide any word
and your loquacious tongue remains reduced to silence.
But if you wanted to say that the divine nature is reality,
say it then and of what kind, for I do not know the answer.
Glory be to You, Father and Son and Holy Spirit,
Divinity that we cannot enclose, indivisible in Its nature,
We all adore You in the Holy Spirit,
we who possess Your Spirit, for we have received Him from You
and, seeing Your glory, we do not seek You indiscreetly
but it is in the Spirit that we see You, unbegotten Father,
and Your begotten Word who comes from You,
and we adore the indivisible Trinity without commixture
for Its unique Divinity and authority and power. Amen

HYMN 22

Thanksgiving and theological considerations: on the names which we give to the divine grace of the Spirit, drawn from its operations.

What is this new mystery, Master of the Universe,
that You have manifested in my regard, the debauched and the impure?
What is this great marvel that I consider in my own interior
and which I do not understand, and which remains hidden to me?
As a star indeed, I see it which rises in the distance,
then it becomes like a large sun
which has not, in its greatness, either measure or weight or limit;
its ray rises small and then makes itself be seen as a flame
in the center of my heart and of my bowels,
turning without stopping and illuminating all
the interior of my entrails and rendering them light.
And behold what it said and taught with kindness
to me who knew nothing and desired to learn.
– "I am the star of sweetness, the one, you hear it said,
which one day will rise from Jacob; it is I, do not have
any doubts about it,
I show myself to you as a sun which rises in the distance
to be for all the just inaccessible light
in the existence to come and life eternal.
I am also the one who show Myself as a ray and you see Me as a light;
I burn the passions of your heart without consuming you,
and by the dew of My sweetness and of My divine grace
I purify your filth, and I wholly extinguish
the coals of your body, these sins of sensual pleasures,
and in My love for mankind, I realize in you all
that I did also of old in all the saints."
Have mercy on an afflicted, show pity to a man in anguish;
do not grow angry against me who still desire to speak to you!
How are You the Star which comes from Jacob,
You who are totally imperceptible
and how to You manifest Yourself in this way for all till now?
How do You show Yourself like the rising sun,
You who are nowhere and who are everywhere, above all creation,
You who are a radiance proclaimed invisible to all?
How do You become and make Yourself seen by me as a flame?
How do You burn matter, You who are immaterial by essence?
How can You cover with dew and wash the filth of my body,
You who are completely an inaccessible fire,
that the angels cannot endure?

How do You envelop Yourself with the corruptible essence of my body
and join Yourself to a human soul without mingling with it?
By means of this soul, present in the whole body
without confusion, how do You, the Intangible, divinize me completely?
Tell me, indeed. Do not expel me for I am sad and afflicted!
– Boldness! Folly! Senseless words! –
How do you not tremble at asking these questions so brutally?
How do you not also realize that you ask what you know?
Do you dare speak with God as if you were putting Him to the test?
And what you know, you pretend to ask it of Me as if you
did not know it
and you wish to write to make your knowledge known to all?
But, nevertheless, I tolerate you, for I am the friend of men
and once more I teach it to you, by speaking thus to you:
I am inexpressible by nature, infinite,
perfect, inaccessible, invisible to all,
intangible, impalpable, immutable by essence
alone in the unique All and alone in the center of all those
who recognize Me in the obscurity of this life,
outside of the world, complete, outside of the visible,
outside of the sensible light, of the sun and of the darkness
and of the place of chastisement and of the terrible condemnation
where the proud servants fell
who have wickedly held up their head against Me, their Master.
I am the Immovable – indeed where then am I not present
to be able, by a change, to take possession of a place?
I am also the ever-Moving that none can circumscribe;
where then would you go look for Me so as to find Me?
By My word Heaven was brought forth as nothing,
the sun, the stars, the earth, as a small accessory
I made them and all what else you see, in the same way.
The angels, that had been created before that,
contemplate from afar the glory of My glory, but not My very nature.
I had only to think of creating the powers
and already they were there, singing hymns to My domination.
But you who reside down below, in exile,
there where the profound darkness is, where there is found
the great precipice,
where there are the serpents that always bite your heels,
where there is found the groaning, the wailing,
the mourning without end,
there every kind of oppression holds you, cares, sorrow, and also
death and corruption.
How do you remain idle, without preoccupation, without care, tell me?
How do you not care for the evils that you have done in the world

and not bestow all your esteem on repentance alone?
How do you not hasten to manifest it with sincerity
and how do you not interrogate very earnestly about it
and do you not seek with care how to succeed in it
to be able, thanks to it, with My own mercy,
to obtain a great pardon of your faults?
But you relinquish repentance and you seek for what is beyond nature,
you scrutinize what there is in Heaven; much better, it is not even that,
but it is of Myself — who has made as nothing, I said,
Heaven and earth —, whose nature you scrutinize!
And you wish to learn what no other has known about Me,
O the marvel! O designs of man!
Even if I have blamed you! well, I am going to praise you
for you also are My work and My creation.
How! You have been fashioned from earth, from mud, from dust,
it holds you, you live with it.
And yet you consider all as nothing, and you value it as a shadow
and you take no further interest in all the rest
and it is I alone that you seek?
It is of Me that you wish to speak, on account of Me to discourse,
and see Me, if it is possible, during your whole life.
You wish neither to enjoy sleep, nor to be engrossed in anything
of food or of drink or of clothing for your body.
And all the boasts of the world, you consider them
like trees or trunks which stand up at the edge of the path,
and you pass near, on the road of your life, as if it were nothing,
without turning from the eye of your conscience
without letting the eyes of your soul look at them.
But it is I that you imagine, it is Myself alone that you remember
and you love Me as none of those who live with you do.
Who indeed, in My name, has the heart radiant
and at once awakens to love and to desire?
Who, on often hearing about Me
has wept from the bottom of his soul, by paying attention to Me only?
Who now has sought with zeal to learn and to keep
My divine words and who, My commandments?
Who, like you, has thought of Me as the God superior to all?
and at once has desired to serve Me, Me alone,
and for that has despised parents, brothers, house
and land, just as his family, his neighbors and his friends,
and has come to Me
as if he had never contemplated anyone from among them
and, as if he traveled through a land and a strange city
whose inhabitants would speak another language and would be
complete foreigners,

he passes among his companions, his intimates, his friends,
the simple personal acquaintances or the great and the rich of this world
on finding himself settled in their midst?
In the eyes of the senseless they are perhaps only words
and without importance,
but they are great realities and of a great merit for Me
who contemplate them.
Who is the one from the great of this world, of the powers
and of the thrones
or of those who pretend to command to reign, thanks to Me,
or of those who hold the place of My divine Apostles,
who has thought of that, or has had the strength to observe it
so that, when it is a question of keeping My commandment or My law,
he looks at all men without making any distinction,
his parents and his guests,
the rich and the poor alike, famous people and the unknown,
and the mighty just as the simple?
Who is the one who has judged without passion, looking at those
judged with sweetness?
If I chance to find in the world one soul who has observed that,
especially in the present generation and in these days,
I will glorify him no less than My apostles and My prophets
and he will sit with Me at the time of My coming,
for he will judge, then also, as he judged on earth, with justice,
and will obtain the glory of the Judge of the living and the dead.
That's what is good to seek, and also to keep with them
the rest, as much as one can, and to observe it with care.
It is not a question of searching into My nature, son of man,
nor the operations of My Holy Spirit,
how He shows Himself as sun, how we see Him as star,
appearing in the distance and rising above the mountains,
and, when He hides from your eyes,
procuring for you an inconsolable anguish and affliction,
and, when you think that you will no longer see Him,
He becomes visible inside somewhere in your heart
giving you an unexpected surprise and joy.
And do not go, because He shows Himself as a flame,
He causes Himself to be seen as a ray and as fire.
You are amazed and seek to explain it; that is not what is good for you!
Believe then that I am a light absolutely without form,
entirely simple, without composition, with no part, by nature;
that one cannot scrutinize either, inaccessibly accessible.
I allow Myself to be really seen, I mercifully show Myself,
according to the capacity of each person,
I change form: it is not I who undergo this change

but it is those who see Me, who are worthy of seeing Me
under this form.
For they are those who cannot see me any more:
they cannot receive more,
and that is why the same ones sometimes contemplate Me
as sun, when they have the mind very pure,
sometimes as a star, when they are found plunged
into the darkness and the night of this body.
It is the effervescence of love which makes me fire and ray.
Indeed, when the coal of tenderness has enkindled in you,
then I also, seeing the desire of your heart,
find Myself united to this desire and I bring light
and I show myself as fire, I who created fire by My word.
The virtues of the soul are underneath like wood
and the divine light of the Spirit which envelopes them
gets its name also from this wood on which it rests,
because the Spirit has no particular name among men.
When man is filled with remorse and weeps,
He, the Spirit, is then called water, for He purifies.
He unites with the tears and washes from all stain.
When affliction cools down the anger of the heart
with His help, He takes the name of gentleness.
When on the contrary, man flares up against impiety,
it is again, thanks to Him, and He takes the name of zeal.
Again He is called peace and joy and goodness,
because, to him who grieves, He grants one and the other
and that He makes joy burst forth in his heart as a spring.
It is from this spring that all compassion and mercy
pours, flowing out from the soul to all men,
but, above all, to those who desire to reform and be saved.
For He has mercy on all, but with the latter He cooperates.
He helps them; He encourages them and shares all their sufferings
and unites in the soul with their will
and, recognizing the beauty of the conversion in His mind,
He redoubles with love towards them.
He is also called humility, because man esteems as nothing
when he has tasted His gentleness
and has contemplated the inconceivable beauty of His light,
all the things of the world, including even his soul,
his own body and all his activity.
Since you know that, never more beg Me to speak of such subjects
nor to explain them to you in detail!
By nature these things are inexpressible, totally unutterable,
forbidden to men, unknowable even to the angels
and incomprehensible to every other creature.

Seek to know only what concerns you, or better still, yourself,
and then you will know that I am totally imperceptible,
that I live with those only that I love, those only who love Me
and who always remember My commandments with fervor,
and who prefer nothing of the things that come to them.
Behold, these are the ones to whom I will communicate and with whom
I will be united intimately now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 23

Theological details on the Divinity that we can neither understand nor limit; that the Divine nature, being impossible to limit, is neither interior nor exterior to everything, but interior and exterior at the same time, in so far as it is the cause of all creatures; that it is only by the intellect that the Divinity is, in imperceptible manner, perceptible to man, like the rays of the sun to the eyes.

O Trinity, Creator of all things,
O my God, Unique for the Unique,
whose nature cannot be limited,
whose glory is incomprehensible,
whose works inexplicable,
essence immutable!
O God, Life of all things,
O the One who transcends all splendors,
O principle of the Eternal Word,
O my God, transcending eternity.
You who were never made
but who are without beginning!
How will I discover You entirely
You who bear me in You?
Who will grant me to perceive You,
You whom I bear in me?
How are You outside of creatures
and how in them also,
without being either in them or outside of them?
– "Since I am imperceptible, I am not in them;
since I am perceptible, I am not outside,
and because one cannot limit Me,
I am neither inside nor outside.
The Creator can be inside of what,
and outside of what, tell Me?
I bear all in Me
since I maintain every creature,
and I am outside of everything
since I am separated from everything.
For the Creator, how would He not be
outside of all His creatures?
And I who am before all things
and who fill everything as its fulfillment,
how would I not be, even having created them,
in all My creatures?

I was indeed everywhere
in everything, as the one transcending the fullness,
and I fill all because I created it.
Understand what I tell you!
I did not change place when I created,
I have not been united to what I created.
Since I am unlimited,
where then will you say that I am?
(I do not speak to you in the corporeal sense
but, understand Me, in a spiritual manner.)
If you seek Me spiritually,
You will discover Me as being unlimited
and hence nowhere, actually even
either inside or outside,
even if it is true that I am everywhere and in all things
without alteration nor confusion.
I am outside of everything, in so far
as I was before everything.
But let us leave this creation
total, that you see,
for it has no share in speech
and with justice does not have any
relationship with speech,
being deprived of all intellect.
Let us take the living person who has relationship
with the speech of wisdom
so that he, who has, as spirit, with respect to wisdom
and as speech with respect to the Word
closer bonds of relationship and intimacy,
may have also, for his good, participation,
he, the created person, with his Creator,
since he is made according to the image
and likeness of the Creator!
What is then the living person of whom I speak?
It is man, simply, that I have named,
endowed with reason amidst creatures without reason,
for he is double, composed of one and the other,
sensible and intellectual.
He is the center of all creatures.
He alone knows God
and, for him only, God
is perceptible in an imperceptible manner to his mind,
lets Himself be seen in an invisible manner
and be possessed without being possessed.
– In what is God perceptible to him, in what is He imperceptible?

How does He mingle without mingling?
How, tell me, explain it!
– How explain the inexplicable to you?
How tell you the unutterable?
Nevertheless, pay attention, and I will tell you;
the sun causes rays to shine
(I speak to you of the sensible sun,
for the other one, you have not yet seen it)
in every case you see the rays of this sun,
they are perceptible to your eyes.
But the light of your eyes
was found united to your eyes.
Now answer my question:
how then is your light
united to the rays?
Is it in a union which does not mingle them
or are they blended together?
I know, you will say they are not mingled
and you will recognize also that they are mixed
and you will tell me that the light is perceptible,
when the eyes are really open
and very clean.
– But this same light, if *you* close your eyes,
there it is at once imperceptible.
For the blind it does not exist,
but it is found with those who see.
And when it sets, even those who see,
it leaves them as blind.
– When it is night, the eyes
of men do not see –.
Hence it is the soul which, through the eyes,
stoops and sees the light;
but when the light is not there,
it is completely in darkness.
And when the light rises,
then at first you see the light
and in the light also everything else.
But by having the light, you do not have it;
for you have it, since you see,
but you cannot keep it
or grasp it in your hands.
It seems to you that you hold nothing.
You open your palms
and the sun shines on them
and you imagine you possess it.

This is what I mean when I say that you have it.
Suddenly, you close your hands,
the light stays outside of your grip.
Hence, in one way, you have nothing.
Simple things are held simply,
they are not held by tightly squeezing them.
For even if we think that this light
is corporeal by nature
when we see the sun,
it is nevertheless indivisible.
Therefore how will you bring it
into your house, tell me?
How will you be able to keep it,
how will you hold the unseizable?
how will you possess it completely?
in parts or in its entirety?
How will you seize a fragment of it
and hide it in your bosom?
This is wholly impossible,
you will tell me, that this could happen.
Hence if this sun, that the Creator,
by one word and by one command,
has placed as luminary
to shine for all the creatures of the world,
how is it that you can neither express
nor totally examine its nature,
and it is also a body
for it surely is not incorporeal?
How is it seizable in an unseizable manner?
How does it mix without mingling?
How is it seen by its rays
and how does it light you up in them,
the sun, which, if you look at it straight in the face,
will rather blind you entirely?
But the light from your eyes, also,
you are at a loss to explain it to me.
How, without another light,
it can see nothing.
And how it unites with every light
and, as light, sees everything.
It remains absolutely intact,
distinct from exterior lights,
but also it is
light completely united to the light.
This union takes place in indescribable manner,

without confusion with these lights,
and the distinction between them likewise
we do not understand.
How then can one fathom the nature
of the Creator of everything?
And His operations also,
how do you pretend to explain them to me?
How can you tell them to me, how express them,
how explain them by word?
– Receive everything through faith!
For faith does not vacillate.
Faith, is not undecided.
Besides, everything is as I tell it to you
and I tell you everything clearly.
The fashioner of the universe is
the divine nature and wisdom,
is not a creature among all creatures;
it is not in all things – how indeed is it possible
that that which is not at all like all other creatures
but which is the cause of all?
It is everywhere and in everything
and it completely fills everything
by its essence, by its nature,
by its hypostasis also.
Everywhere God is there;
as Life, He gives life.
Is there one single creature that has been created
to which He Himself has not given it birth?
Yes, even to the gnat, believe me,
and to the spider's web.
Whence has it so gratuitously received
such a thread, tell me?
It does not have to spin
but, without fatigue, it weaves each day.
It is more skillful than fishermen
and than all bird-catchers;
it unfolds its threads
and brings them together from far outside
and finally right in the center,
as a net, it weaves
its trap in the air,
settles there
and waits for her prey
to see if ever, fallen from somewhere,
some gnat will be caught in it.

He whose providence
extends to all these details,
how is He not in everything?
How is He not with everyone?
Yes, He is in the middle of everything,
yes, He is also outside of everything,
yes, He Himself is light
intelligible, illuminating souls,
yes, and He is also non-setting
(where would He set, He who fills everything?)
If you do not see Him,
know that you are blind
and, though you are in the midst of the light,
you are completely filled with darkness.
He shows Himself to those who are worthy of it.
They do not see the One who fills everything
but they see Him in an invisible manner,
as a unique ray of light,
and for them He is perceptible,
He the imperceptible by essence.
It is the ray that we see
–He, the sun, blinds instead –
and its ray is perceptible for you,
as we have said, in an imperceptible manner.
It is on that account then that I say:
What I have, who will give it to me?
What I see, who will show it to me
– completely, I mean –?
For it is the ray that I see,
but the sun I do not see.
But is it not the ray, hardly the sun, that appears to you,
and is contemplated by you?
Seeing this ray, I desire
completely to see the One that has given it birth.
Seeing in this way, I say again:
Who will show me the One that I see?
Further, if I have His rays
completely in my dwelling,
I repeat: where will I find
the source of these rays?
And the ray, in its turn, in me
manifests itself as another source.
Strange marvel!
It is up there that the sun shines
and in its turn the ray of the sun

appears to me as another sun
on earth and it shines with brightness.
The second is really
like to the first.
Possessing the latter, I say that I possess the sun,
but seeing the other far from me,
I cry out as well:
Who will give me the one that I possess?
For they are not divided one from the other.
They are not at all separated,
but the difference cannot be expressed.
Compared with the whole, how much do I possess?
One particle only, one spark.
And I seek to have the whole,
even if as a matter of fact I already possess it.
– How "the whole," what do you mean?
you are playing as with foolish men.
Stop making sport of me, do not say:
No! but I possess the whole
if I have absolutely nothing!
How, what do you mean? I am amazed.
– Listen and I will tell you again.
Imagine a large ocean
and seas of seas
and in your mind fancy
an abyss of abysses.
If then you stand at the edge
on the shore of these seas,
you could very rightly tell me
that you surely see the water
even if you do not see it completely.
For the totality, how could you see it,
since, for your eyes, it is without limit
and it cannot fit into your hands?
Of course, you see all that you see.
Now, if someone were to ask you:
"Do you see all these seas?"
Not at all, you would answer him.
"Do you hold them all in your palm?"
No, you would say, how could I?
And if he asked you again:
"Do you not see them at all?"
Yes, you say, I see and I possess
a bit of water from the sea.
Hence whatever be the water that you hold,

when you keep your hand in the water,
you hold all the abysses
contained in your hand
(for they form but one whole)
even if you do possess not all the abysses but a little.
Compared to the whole, what do you possess?
One single drop, you would say.
But the whole, you do not have it
even though you hold some contained in your hands.
Well, it is in the same way that I too also tell you
that by possessing I possess nothing
and that I am poor and that I see
a richness deposited in me.
When I have eaten my fill, I hunger;
when I am poor, I am rich;
when I drink, I thirst again.
Indeed, sweet is the drink.
One single draught puts a stop to
all the thirst of millions of men
and I thirst to drink unceasingly,
drinking beyond all sufficiency.
I desire to hold the whole
and to drink, if it is possible,
all the abysses at once.
But, as that is impossible,
I tell you that I always thirst,
although in my mouth
there always is some water
which flows, which brims over and runs down.
But when I see the abysses,
I believe not to drink at all
because I desire to possess the whole,
although I possess with abundance
the entire water entirely in my hand;
I am always a beggar
when I really possess the whole
united with the tiny bit.
It is then the sea, but also
the abysses of abysses
which are united to the drop.
Hence if I possess one drop,
I possess them all with it.
And besides this drop
which I tell you I possess,
it is completely indivisible,

unseizable, completely incomprehensible;
we cannot limit it either
altogether difficult to see
it is completely God.
If then such is for me
the divine drop,
what will I really think I possess?
Really, by having it, I have nothing.
Let me describe it again in another way.
The sun shines from the heights,
coming down to us by its rays,
or rather I possess a ray;
running, I ascend
to draw near to the sun.
But when I have really drawn near
and I seem to touch it,
the ray slips at once from my hands
and soon I become blind
and I lose both
the sun and the rays.
Hence I fall from the heights;
I sit down and begin to weep
and I seek to find the previous ray again.
While I am in this state,
this ray, after having split for me
all the darkness of the night,
as a rope comes down
from the celestial heights.
Quickly, I seize it,
I grip it as if one could hold on to it,
and it cannot be held.
And even though it is ungraspable,
I hold it and I rise up.
And while I thus go up,
the rays go up with me
and I pass beyond the heavens
and the heavens of the heavens.
I see the sun again
still above them.
Does it vanish away? I am unaware of it.
Is it motionless? I know nothing about it;
whether I walk, whether I run,
I am not able to overtake it.
I pass beyond the height of the heights
and when I have arrived beyond

all height, it seems to me
the rays from my hands
disappear with the sun
and I am at once carried away
into an infernal fall, unhappy one!
This is the activity, this is the work
of "spiritual persons."
Upward, downward; downward, upward,
for them the race is without a break.
When he fell, it is then that he runs,
when he runs, he stands.
Completely lying on the ground,
then he is completely erect,
and when he wanders through the heavens,
again he is bound below.
The beginning of his race is his end
and the end is the beginning.
Perfection has no end,
there again the beginning is the end.
How the end? As Gregory
the Theologian has said:
illumination is the end
of all those who love;
and repose of all
contemplation is the Divine Light.
He who has managed to see it
keeps away from and separates himself
from all creatures
for he sees their Creator.
And he who sees Him, outside of everything,
is alone with the Alone
and he sees nothing of all
the visible or intellectual things.
It is the Trinity alone that he sees.
The splendors that he sees in it, one must say nothing about them
for one sees them in an obscure manner,
one understands them moderately.
You have been upset on hearing
what are the limits of the visible things.
But if that has upset you,
how would I not seem a liar,
by revealing to you what is outside of the visible?
Totally unutterable indeed,
inexpressible, are the divine things
and what there is in them, absolutely,

even if speech, urged by desire,
strives in some way to speak
about divine and human things.
But then, leaving divine things aside,
to speak of what is proper to us,
by my words I will show you
the way, then I will stop.
Know then that you are double
and that you possess two eyes,
the sensible and the spiritual.
Since there are also two suns
there is also a double light,
sensible and spiritual,
and if you see them, you will be the man
as you were created in the beginning to be.
If you see the sensible sun
and not the spiritual sun,
you are really half dead.
He who is half dead is also a corpse,
for he is without activity in all domains.
If indeed he who does not see sensibly
is someone without activity,
how much more he, who does not see
the intelligible light of the world,
is dead and worse than a dead person?
The dead person feels nothing to be sure
but he keeps an awareness after his death,
and what a great pain he will have!
Rather he will be like someone who dies
in pain for eternity.
But those who see the Creator,
how would they not live outside of everything?
Yes, they live outside of everything
and they are in the midst of everything
and they are seen by everyone
and all see that they do not have
sensation of present things.
They are certainly amidst everything
but beyond the sensation of everything;
they get outside of everything
in contact with immaterial realities,
they do not experience any sensation of sensible things.
It is that their eyes see
in an insensible awareness.
– How? Tell me. I am going to tell you at once.

For instance, on seeing fire, you do not burn,
in the same way, I see without having any sensation.
You see the sun, its nature
and really you see the flame
and you do not feel any pain,
but you are exterior to it
and on seeing it you are not consumed
for you feel insensibly;
— or else how will you express it otherwise? —
It is not that you burn without feeling it,
and yet it is in a sensation that you see it.
Believe me. He experiences the same thing,
he who sees spiritually.
For the mind, on contemplating all things
sees Him without experiencing anything,
as if he saw a great beauty,
but which is beyond all desire.
The fire then is the beauty.
The contact is the desire.
If you do not touch the fire,
how would you feel the pain?
Impossible! The mind, it also,
before experiencing an evil desire,
when it sees gold, will look at it
as if it were mud,
and glory, he will look at it, not as glory
but as a form of the phantasms
which would appear in the air;
and wealth, he will judge it
as wood in a desert,
as foliage thrown on the ground.
Why try to explain to you
and to make you understand every thing?
If you do not understand it by experience,
you cannot know it.
In your powerlessness to know it you will say:
Alas, how do I not know that!
Alas, how far am I
from these splendors! In my ignorance!
And you will hasten to know it,
to have at least a reputation for learning.
For, if you do not know yourself,
your nature and your qualities
how could you know the Creator,
how could you receive the name of faithful?

How could you be called a man
when you are an ox or a wild beast?
You will be like an animal deprived of reason
or still worse than them,
you who ignore the One who has created you.
Who, if he doesn't know Him,
will dare claim to be reasonable?
For he is not.
How could he be when he is deprived of reason?
And he who is deprived of reason
is put in the rank of the animal.
If he lets himself be led to the field of action by men,
really he will be saved,
but if he is not willing, and if he draws near
mountains and cliffs,
he will be the prey of wild beasts
like a lost lamb.
Behave like this and reflect.
Do not spend your life without paying attention, my child!

HYMN 24

By the confession contained in this work, the author shows the depth of his humility; further, the author teaches humility to the one who has attained a certain degree of perfection and has been worthy of such revelations, imitating in that also the divine Paul who declares himself a sinner and unworthy to be called apostle.

Grant me, Christ, to kiss Your feet.
Grant me to embrace Your hands,
these hands which created me by Your word,
these hands which brought forth everything without effort.
Grant me to fill myself with these graces without being satisfied.
Grant me to see Your face, O Word,
and to enjoy Your inexpressible beauty,
to contemplate and to savor Your vision,
ineffable vision, invisible vision,
awesome vision; however, grant me to tell
not its essence but its operations.
For You are beyond nature, beyond all essence
completely, You, my God, my Creator.
But the reflection of Your divine glory
lets itself be seen to us as a simple light, a gentle light;
light it reveals itself, light it unites itself
completely, I think, with us completely, Your servants,
light that we contemplate in spirit and from afar,
light that suddenly becomes visible within ourselves,
light that springs like water, and burns like fire
in the heart which it really possesses.
By this light I have known, my Savior,
that my humble and miserable soul had been seized,
that it was burnt and consumed.
The fire indeed, when it took possession of an essence similar to
dry wood,
how would it not burn, how would it not consume it,
how would it not bring about inevitable sufferings in it?
However, after having burned me – grant me to say it, Savior –,
this fire shows an inexpressible splendor, of charming beauty,
it delights me and produces a flame of desire
intolerable; yes, how shall I bear it,
how shall I fully suffer, how endure
or how express this great marvel
which has happened to me, the prodigal?
I cannot bear to be silent, my God,

and to hide in the abysses of oblivion these works
that You have accomplished and that You accomplish each day
for those who always eagerly seek You
and who, by penance, take refuge near You.
I am not willing, in my turn, like the wicked servant
who hid his talent, to be condemned justly.
But I reveal these marvels and tell them to all,
and I pass on in writing what I know of You
and of Your mercy and I tell it
to the next generations, O my God,
so that, on hearing of the great mercy
that You have manifested and that You manifest toward me,
me, once a prodigal, the only impure one
who has sinned more than all the others,
each one, instead of hesitating will rather desire,
instead of being afraid, will advance in joy,
instead of being frightened, rather will have confidence
on seeing the ocean of Your love for men.
May he run towards You, may he fall at Your feet, may he weep
to receive the pardon of his faults,
saying sincerely to himself, my God:
"If the Creator has had mercy on this totally evil person,
on this perverse person, on this man so debauched
who has sinned more than all other men,
how would He not with greater reason have mercy on me,
I who have sinned moderately in some way
and who have not transgressed all Your commandments?"
Hence, in order that he may know the number of my vices,
I would like to tell them here, O Word, not all to be sure
– for they are countless, more numerous than the stars,
more than the drops of the sudden rain storm and than the sand
of the sea, than the multitude of the waves raised by the surge –,
but those that the book of my conscience bears
and that the cupboards of my memory contain.
The others, You are alone in knowing how to count them.
I have been murderer – listen everyone, so you
may weep from compassion – but the manner,
I leave it aside, so as not to lengthen my speech;
I have also been adulterer in my heart
and sodomite in deed and in desire.
I have been a fornicator, magician, a slayer of children,
swearer and perjurer, greedy,
thief, liar, shameless, grasping – woe is me!
insulting, hating my brothers, full of envy,
stingy, imprudent, and I have committed moreover

all the other forms of wickedness.
Yes, believe me, what I say is true.
It is not invention or comedy.
Who, then, after having heard that, would not be terrified
and would not admire Your forbearance,
O Lover of men, would not become terror-stricken and would not say:
"How did the earth not open up, refusing to bear,
not agreeing to keep on its back this poor wretch,
and how did it not hurl him alive into Hell?
How did lightning not fall from above,
how did it not destroy this transgressor?
How did the heavens not cave in, at the same time
that the stars and the sun went out,
on the one who had thus scorned You?
Oh! what patience is Yours," he will say, "Savior,
and what goodness and what mercy!
Truly they exceed all pardon,
the actions of this scoundrel!"
And on hearing about them each one will cry out:
"Did justice really allow this man to live?
and how, since it is just, did it accept even for an instant
that this man be walking on the land of the living?"
And if he thinks that I am writing lies perhaps,
grant him Your pardon in Your mercy.
It is because he is ignorant of Your magnanimity, Savior,
and the abyss of Your love for men
and because he has come to know the infamy of my works
that he has rightly borne this judgment.
– "If Your justice," says he, "has given up pursuing this man,
judgment is no longer possible in the future."
But in reality, it is precisely because You will judge later on
that You have patience now, O my God.
For You really want the salvation of all and You await their repentance,
the one which comes from works, in Your patience which is just.
It is the attribute of the just, in fact, not to strike those who fall
but much rather to offer them a helping hand
and it is what You have not ceased to do, O my good Master,
and that You will never cease to do.
Life is a combat for all men
and all men are Your servants, O Creator.
And little and great, we likewise have
implacable enemies, the rulers of darkness.
Hence, if You do not offer us a helping hand instead
but on the contrary You allow them to rule over us,
where will be Your justice, where will be Your love for men?

For we have become slaves of the latter
by our own decision, by our own will
and it is You who came to redeem us
by Your immaculate and precious Blood
and You offered us to Your Father, O my God,
as gift; on seeing us, the enemy cannot bear it,
he cannot master the hatred that he has,
but he roars against us like a lion,
he prowls around us, gnashing his teeth,
he cruelly seeks whom to devour.
Therefore those who by this cruel beast
are attacked and receive blows,
when they lie wounded, O my Christ,
would You not have mercy on them, would You not instead have
compassion on them?
Would You not expect that they recover their health?
But on the contrary, would You strike them, would You
crush them completely
and would You complete the death of such men?
That would be just, yes, I myself say it also,
for it is not against their wills that they are dominated,
but it is they who voluntarily surrender themselves.
Nevertheless, what ruse, what crafty wickedness
in this wild beast so full of trickery:
it assumes friendly dispositions, as if it were my friend,
whereas it seeks to seize me, to capture me completely.
By showing me the visible life,
it tears away from me the life of the spirit.
Through the sensation of actual goods, it robs me
and it plunders the riches of future blessings.
Quite another is its external appearance
and quite another what it conceals, my Savior!
If some men, by means of studies, fashion tricks by their sham,
what will not the inventor of evil do?
How will he not lead astray, especially the young?
How will he not fool those who are innocent,
without any experience, without any guile,
he who by choice is Satan, the artful one,
the one who invents all ruse with skill?
Besides, it is everyone that he deceives and wounds;
no one escapes from his hand
or has passed through his deeds without having
tasted the poison which is found there and without having been
wounded by it.
O Christ, we have all sinned and we are deprived

of Your inexpressible and divine glory
and we urgently ask You to save us gratuitously
and to justify us by Your grace and Your mercy.
It is that mercy which You have now poured out on me with abundance
and I will not hesitate to say it or to write it.
How then would I be able to receive in silence
what happens to me at each moment, O my God,
and what takes place in me, the poor wretch?
For really it is inexpressible,
incomprehensible, it is beyond thought and word.
How shall I say it, how shall I express it?
Well, then, not bearing to be silent, I am going to speak.
You are the eternal God, uncreated, unique,
Holy Trinity in the Son and the Spirit.
You are incomprehensible, inaccessible
Creator of the visible and intelligible creation,
You are Lord and Master.
Beyond the heavens and of all
that is in the heavens, of the heavens You are
the sole Architect, alone holding the power,
alone You support everything by Your command
and by Your Will alone You maintain everything.
You have around You myriads of angels
and thousands of thousands of archangels,
thrones and numberless rulers;
You have the Powers, the Cherubims and the Seraphims
with the multiple eyes, the Principalities and the Dominations
and others still more numerous, as servants and friends.
You possess a glory beyond all glory
so much so that some among them do not dare
to fix their eyes without fear on it, O my God,
and cannot bear, when it shows itself,
the dazzling splendor of Your Face.
How could the work contemplate
completely, understand completely the one who has created it?
I think that is absolutely impossible.
But the Creator, in so far as He wills it,
appears and lets Himself be seen by those He wishes,
He lets Himself be felt and His creation knows Him.
He lets Himself be seen and it sees Him, in so far
as its Creator grants it leave to see.
For if it is by You that they have been brought forth, my God,
it is from You that they derive their existence and their vision
and the power to serve You without deserving any blame.
But You, You are up there above all the Principalities

and they for their part surround You, You, my God,
and we, we are below, in the bottom of the pit
– and by "pit" I do not mean this visible world
but really the darkness of sin –
pit of perversity, pit of obscurity,
pit and sepulcher situated in redoubtable manner in the lowest place,
that the sun would not be able to illumine.
For it is outside the visible world
and the world to come, this power of sin,
and those who in their folly fall into it,
it keeps them now, and will also retain them after their death,
chained down forever and ever.
Of those I am the first one, O my Christ,
I who was maintained there and lost,
and when I found myself in the bottom
of the abyss, I cried out: Have mercy on me!
Having realized all my evils
– for I have understood indeed where they made me fall
and because of that I wept, I shed
from my eyes torrents of tears, sorrowfully, –
I repented with all my heart
and I cried out with inexpressible cries.
And from Your indescribable height You heard
the one who lay in the very deep abyss
of the obscurity without limit, whose end is to be without end.
And, having left the Powers who surrounded You,
You passed through all the visible world without stopping
and You descended there, in the place where I was lying down.
At once You brought Your light, You dispelled the obscurity,
You awakened me with Your divine breath,
You restored me to health to observe Your commandments,
You captivated me by Your beauty and by Your love.
You wounded me, You transformed me entirely.
I saw Your face and I was afraid,
however gentle and accessible it appeared to me;
but before Your beauty I went into ecstasies
and I was struck with stupor, O Trinity, my God.
Identical are the traits in each of the Three
and the Three are one unique trait, my God,
that is named the Spirit, the God of the Universe.
You, then, You appeared to me, to me the poor wretch;
how should I not be afraid and bury myself
and place myself lower still than where I was
and cover myself again with darkness
to hide myself from You, You whom no one can sustain?

But for my part, it was through fear that I did it,
and You, O my God, You clasped me more in Your arms
You embraced me more, You pressed me more in Your arms
in the bosom of Your glory, O my God,
in the folds of Your garment,
You attracted me completely and You covered me with Your light
and You removed from me the memory of visible things
and of the terrible pleasures which previously gripped me.
O depth of Your mysteries, O sublimity of Your glory,
O ascension, O divinization, O richness,
O unutterable brilliance of Your words!
Who, using words, could understand
or perceive the greatness of Your glory?
He who has not seen what the eye has not seen
and has not heard what the ear has not heard
and that which has not risen in the heart of man,
how would he believe a man who writes on this topic?
And even if he believed, how, thanks to a discourse,
could he see what the eye has not seen?
How would he receive, by hearing, in a fitting manner
these mysteries that never the ear of man has heard
to conceive beautiful thoughts from them
and to be able to enter into their comprehension,
these mysteries which those who see them cannot seize the beauty,
whose form is to be without form
and incomprehensible, to repeat it again,
to all those to whom it shows itself?
Who, if he tried to imagine them by reasoning,
would not end up very far from the truth
and would not go astray in his inventions and his reveries,
scrutinizing and contemplating false images,
the result of personal suppositions of his own mind?
Just as for Hell and its chastisements,
each one fancies them as he wishes
but no one in the world knows what they are like,
in the same way, one thinks that those blessings,
that are in the heavens, are incomprehensible to all
and invisible. They are knowable and visible
only to those to whom God will reveal them
according to the measure of the worthiness of each one,
the measure of his faith, of his hope and of his charity,
the measure of his fidelity to the commandments.
But the measure of spiritual poverty is different:
the perfect measure is neither small nor great.
For God hates extremes and it is not injustice

but justice, for they are not at all in conformity with justice;
what is small, as a matter of fact, deviates from justice,
through negligence or even through contempt,
it remains useless: that is reason and that is justice.
What is not small but great
leads the possessor to pride
and is hurtful to all those who have to deal with him.
The just measure of humility, here it is:
it is not to despair totally of oneself
and not to think either that there is someone in the world
worse than oneself as regards shameful actions
and, because of that, to weep and to moan unceasingly
and despise all that is seen.
This indeed is the sign of repentance
that is according to God and that comes from the bottom of the soul.
But he who becomes attached to something visible,
has not known himself in his conscience,
has not conceived in his heart the fear
of the divine judgment and of the eternal fire,
has not acquired perfect humility
and for this reason does not obtain the vision
and the favor of these blessings
that no eye of man has seen.
Let us all hasten to discover humility,
this grace of our souls that has no name;
it has no name but, when one has experienced it,
it gives an outstanding name to those who possess it.
Christ is meek and humble of heart.
The one who has received Him in his house has known
that it is, thanks to Him, that he possesses humility,
what's more, that it is He who is humility.
The soul who seeks the glory that comes from men
has never known this humility.
The one, who even indifferently possesses a high opinion of himself,
how will he possess humility within himself?
Impossible really, Woe unto me! a poor wretch
full of vain glory and of revolt,
I who do not even possess one single virtue
and who foolishly fritter away
all the days of my present life.
Who would not weep over me, who would not grieve deeply!
For I have shunned the world and the things of the world
yet I have not given up the opinions of the world.
I have draped myself in the habit of monks
and like a worldling I like the things of the world:

glory, wealth, pleasures, delights.
On my shoulders I carry the cross of Christ,
but to endure the humiliations of the cross,
I totally refuse it, I absolutely do not want any of it
and I insinuate myself among renowned personages
and with them I desire to be glorified.
Oh! what folly! what a pity!
I deserve a double punishment
for, after having committed many faults in my past life,
I had promised to repent indeed
and now I have proved an ungrateful sinner
for all the blessings that God has given me,
I have shown that I denied my promises
and that I was unworthy of all His benevolence.
Now then! O my God, O the unique merciful One,
hasten, hurry, turn again
to repentance, to tears, to sorrow
so that I may be washed, purified and that I may see
Your glory shine clearly in me!
Yes, give it to me now and for all ages,
I who proclaim Your glory by unceasing words,
You the Creator and the Master of all ages.

HYMN 25

Concerning the contemplation of the divine light received by the author and how the divine light is not understood while in darkness. How struck by awe by the excessiveness of the revelations, he recalls his human weakness and accuses himself.

How shall I describe, Master, the vision of Your countenance?
How should I speak of the unspeakable contemplation of Your beauty?
How can the sound of any word contain Him whom
the world cannot hold?
How can anyone express Your love for mankind?
For I was seated in the light of a lamp that was shining on me.
And it was illuminating the darkness and the shadows of night.
It seemed indeed to me that in the light I was occupied in reading,
but as if I were scrutinizing the words and examining the propositions.
Then as I was meditating, Master, on these things,
suddenly You appeared from above, much greater than the sun
and You shone brilliantly from the heavens down into my heart.
But all the rest, I was seeing as a deep shadow.
However in the middle there was a column of light,
cutting through the air completely
and it passed from the heavens down to me, miserable one.
At once I forgot the light of the lamp.
I did not remember any longer that I was inside the house.
I was seated in what seemed to me to be a shadowy atmosphere.
Moreover, I forgot completely my body even.
I said to You and now I say it from the bottom of my heart:
"Have mercy on me, Master, have mercy on me, Unique One!
on me who have never really served You at all, O Savior,
but who from my youth served only to anger You.
I had my share in every kind of vice of the flesh and soul,
and I committed innumerable sins, unheard of sins,
more than all other men, more than brute beasts,
having surpassed all the reptiles and wild animals.
It is therefore toward me You must demonstrate Your mercy,
towards me who have sinned so irrationally, exceeding more
than all others.
It was You Yourself who said that it was not the healthy
who had need of
a physician, Christ, but the sick.
As I have a great sickness and have been so negligent,
so pour out Your great pity upon me, O Word!
But, O what intoxication of light, O what movements of fire!

Oh, what swirlings of the flame in me, miserable one that I am,
coming from You and Your glory!
The glory I know it and I say it is Your Holy Spirit,
who has the same nature with You and the same honor, O Word,
He is of the same race, of the same glory,
of the same essence, He alone with Your Father
and with You, O Christ, O God of the universe!
I fall down in adoration before You.
I thank You that You have made me worthy to know as much as it is
the power of Your divinity.
I thank You that You, even when I was sitting in darkness,
revealed Yourself to me, You enlightened me,
You granted me to see the light of Your countenance
that is unbearable to all.
I remained seated in the middle of the darkness, I know,
but while I was there surrounded by darkness
You appeared as light, illuminating me completely from Your total light.
And I became light in the night, I who was found
in the midst of darkness.
Neither the darkness extinguished Your light completely,
nor did the light dissipate the visible darkness,
but they were together, yet completely separated,
without confusion, far from each other, surely, but not at all mixed,
except in the same spot where they filled everything, so it seems to me.
Likewise I am in the light, yet I am found in the middle of the darkness.
So I am in the darkness, yet still I am in the middle of the light.
And I say, who will help me in the middle of my darkness
to find a light which the darkness cannot receive?
For how can darkness receive within itself a light
and without being dissipated by the light, it still remains
in the middle of the light?
O awesome wonder which I see doubly,
with my two sets of eyes, of the body and of the soul!
Listen, now. I am telling you the awesome mysteries of a double God
who came to me as to a double man.
He took upon Himself my flesh and He gave me His Spirit
and I became also god by divine grace, a son of God but by adoption.
O what dignity, what glory!
As a man saddened by sorrow, I see my own misery
and I consider my weakness and I lament.
I am indeed completely unworthy to live, I well know it.
But taking courage in His grace and considering the beauty
which He has given me, this sight fills me with joy.
Then as far as I am human, I know that I see nothing
of the divine realities,

and I am totally cut off from the invisible.
But by the divine adoption I see that I have become god
and I become a participator of intangible things.
Insofar as I am human, I have nothing of the transcendent
and divine realities,
but insofar as I have received mercy through the kindness of God,
I possess Christ, Lord, the Benefactor of all things.
For this reason again, Master, I fall down before You
and ask that I not fail in the hopes I have placed in You,
as being my life, honor and glory and kingdom,
but also as even now You have allowed me to look upon You, Savior,
so also after death grant me to see You!
I do not say how much, O Merciful One,
but generously and mercifully, with the look of Your pity,
such as You even now look upon me
and fill me with Your joy and Your divine sweetness.
Yes, my Creator and Fashioner, guard over me with Your hand.
And do not abandon me, no, do not bear any malice toward me!
My great indifference, O Master, do not measure,
but make me worthy by Your light right to the end
to continue without hesitation along the way of Your commandments
and in the very light of Your hands, O all-Merciful One,
let me place my spirit as You rescue me from my enemies,
from darkness,
fire, eternal punishments, O Word.
Yes, You whose compassion is great, whose mercy is unspeakable,
deign to consign my soul into Your hands,
just as even now I am in Your hand, Savior.
Do not then allow sin to be an obstacle along my path
to cut me off, to snatch me from out of Your hand.
But may the terrible prince of darkness and corruptor of souls
be put to shame in seeing me, O Master, esconced in Your palm,
just as even now he does not dare to draw near me,
for he sees that I am protected by Your grace!
Do not condemn me, Christ, do not push me into Hell!
Do not cast my soul into the abyss of death,
because I dare to pronounce Your name,
I who am completely sordid, stained and impure.
May the earth not open up and devour me,
O Word, me, the great transgressor, who am completely unworthy,
both to live and to speak!
May fire not descend upon me and at once devour me
for saying without having the right, "Lord, have mercy!
May You, rich in mercy, the Lover of mankind by nature, not wish
to enter into judgment against me!"

For what should I really be able to cry out, I who am sin itself?
What then should I express who am the condemned one,
who from my mother's womb have offended You immeasurably
and up to the present am so insensitive to Your magnanimity.
I who have descended a thousand times into the depth of Hell
and who have been pulled out from there by Your divine goodness?
I who have sullied the members and the flesh of my soul and body
as no other living human?
I, crazed by pleasures, a lover, shameless, and perverse and deceitful
in the soul's evil?
I who have not kept, O Christ, even one of Your commandments?
What will I offer in my defense, what response will I make to You?
In what spiritual frame of mind should I bear Your accusations,
O my God?
If You will lay bare all my disorders and actions,
O King immortal, do not show them to all,
because I shudder at thinking of the deeds of my youth
and to speak of them fills me with fright and covers me with shame.
For if You would wish to reveal these to all,
my confusion would be worse than every sort of punishment.
For who, after seeing my audacities, after seeing my debaucheries,
after seeing my impure embraces, after seeing my shameful actions
which even now sully me when I call them to mind,
would not be stupefied, would not tremble,
would not cry out and at once turn away their looks and say:
"Take away, Master, such a totally sordid person!
Order that the hands be quickly bound along with the feet of
this wretch
and that he be cast quickly into the dark fire,
so that he may no longer be looked at by us,
Your faithful servants!"
Yes, it is proper, Master, this is truly just, that all those men
so express it and You Yourself carry it out,
and that I be cast into fire, prodigal and perverse sinner that I am.
But You descended to save the prodigals and the perverse.
Do not totally shame me, Christ, in the day of judgment,
when You place Your sheep on Your right hand
and place me and the goats on Your left.
But may Your immaculate light, the light of Your countenance,
hide my works and the nudity of my soul,
and clothe me with joyfulness
so that with confidence without shame,
I may be placed at the right hand
with the sheep and with them
I may glorify You forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 26

That as long as one lives in ignorance of God, he is dead, even though he is among the living who know God and that for those who unearthily communicate in the Mysteries, namely, the divine body and blood of the Lord it is an incomprehensible thing.

Now I am as a corpse among the living, O Master
and among the dead I am as one living,
the most wretched of all men on the earth
whom You created, my God.
For to be dead among those living according to You
shows indeed that I am worse than those
who have not even been created.
To live among the dead this irrational life
is to be like those creatures who do not know You are God.
For how would not this be similar, how not the very same thing?
Even if I seem to know You, if I think I believe,
even if I am convinced that I praise You and call upon You,
– for indeed my mouth speaks the words which I have learned
and I chant the hymns and the prayers which were written down
by the ancestors who have received Your Holy Spirit,
and when I say such and I think I have performed something great,
I am only stupid and ignorant,
for, like children, when they learn, do not understand
the force of what they say,
so also when through my prayers and psalms and hymns
I steadfastly continue to praise You, the unique Merciful One,
yet I do not have an awareness of Your glory and of Your light.
And like the heretics who, having studied a great deal,
think they know You, think they comprehend You,
think also, the most wretched persons, that they see You,
my God, so I also, when I say my many prayers and many psalms
with my tongue alone, perhaps also with my heart,
because of these I think that I have reached the peak of faith,
because of these I think that I have received every knowledge of truth
and I have need of nothing more
and because of these I also pretend I see You, the light of the world,
O Savior, and because of these I think I possess You
and am united with You.
And I think I participate in Your divine nature!
And I search out according to my topic examples
and in studying Scripture I apply Your words
and I say: The Lord has said that those

who eat of His flesh and drink of His blood,
abide in Him, but even more that He the Master
abides in them.
But in saying this I am preaching
what is incomprehensible as being comprehensible,
that the unseizable is found in a graspable body,
that whom no one can at all hold on to
is possessed and seen.
And I ignore, O unfortunate one that I am,
that You wish to dwell with them,
that to be sensible and possessable and seen
You became sensible and graspable and visible, O Creator!
But among the impure as myself or rather among the unworthy
You divinize Your sensible body and blood
and You transform them without changing them,
making them totally unpossessable, unseizable,
or rather, in truth You make them spiritual and invisible.
Just as in times before with doors locked
You entered in and left and at the moment of the breaking of the bread,
You became invisible to the eyes of the disciples,
so now also You change this bread
and You make it Your spiritual body.
And I think that I possess You,
whether You wish it or not.
Because I communicate with Your flesh,
I think that I am receiving You and I can now
be considered as a saint, my Christ, and an heir of God,
Your co-heir and brother and participator in Your eternal glory.
From this then I show my utter stupidity,
from this clearly my ignorance shows itself in the words of my psalms
and of my own words and of my continual meditations and chants.
For if I thoroughly understood, I would perfectly know
that without change You became man, O my God,
so that You could divinize me completely, me whom You assumed,
but not in order that You might remain in our heaviness,
nor to be held in by corruption, You who are completely unpossessable,
You, God, who are by nature incorruptible and ungraspable.
If I knew this, I would believe that Your divine body
and Your holy blood have become unseizable,
truly a fire unapproachable for me, the unworthy one.
It is with trembling and fear and shaking that I communicate with these
and I would purify myself with tears and groanings.
But now I sit in darkness and I stumble in my ignorance.
I, wretched one, am bound by a perfect insensitivity.
But for this reason I beg You, for this reason

I implore You, as I fall down and entreat You and seek Your mercy.
Turn Your eyes as always so also now, O my universal King.
Show me Your tender pity, show me Your compassion.
Show me that You hold no resentment towards me, the publican,
or rather, the prodigal son who have sinned against You more
than any other nature in existence, both irrational and rational beings.
But even if in my life I have committed every crime,
nevertheless I confess You as God, the Creator of the universe,
You, the Son of God, I reverence as consubstantially of the same
essence as the Father;
You who were born of the Father before all ages
and who were born in the last times of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God,
Mary, as an infant and You were made man;
and who for my sake suffered, were crucified and buried, O Savior,
and delivered to the tomb to rise from the dead after the third day;
and You went up in Your flesh to a place from which
You had never left.
Because I so believe; because I so adore You,
and again I hope that You are coming to judge all men
and to render to each, O Christ, what is his due,
may my faith be considered in place of my works, O my God.
Do not seek works that would totally justify me,
but the faith itself is sufficient for me over everything else.
It is my faith that will come to my defence,
that will justify me.
It will make me to be a participator of Your eternal glory.
"For he who believes in Me," You said, O my Christ, "will live
and not see death forever."
If therefore faith in You saves those who despair,
look, I believe, save me by shining Your divine light upon me.
Appear, O Master, and You will illumine my soul
which is bound in darkness and the shadow of death!
Give me also compunction, Your life-giving drink,
the drink that penetrates the senses of my flesh and soul,
the drink which makes me joyful always and gives me life.
Do not deprive me of this, Christ,
for I am poor and a stranger,
who place all my hopes in You!

HYMN 27

What sort of a person a monk should be, what is his activity and what is his progress and ascension.

Transform your soul into a place where Christ and King of all
may dwell by your flood of tears, your cries and lamentations,
by the bending of your knees and the number of your groanings,
if you truly, O monk, wish to be one who lives alone.
And then you are not really living alone,
for you live with your king
and yet you really are living alone as far as we are concerned,
for you are separated from us
and you have cut yourself off from the whole world.
This is what it means to live completely alone.
Because you are united with your God and King, you are not alone,
but you have become numbered among all the Saints.
You share a life similar to that of angels
and you co-dwell with the just.
You are really the co-heir of all who are in Heaven.
How then is he a solitary who possesses a citizenship there
where the gathering of martyrs and saints dwell;
there where the choir of prophets and divine apostles is found;
there where the innumerable crowd of the just,
of pontiffs, patriarchs and all the other saints?
But indeed he who possesses Christ dwelling within him,
how can he be said to be alone, tell me?
For the Father and the Spirit are united with my Christ.
How therefore can we speak of being a solitary
when the monk is united with the Three as one?
He is not one who is united with God even if he lives alone,
even if he lives in a desert, even in a cave.
But if he has not found Him, if he does not know Him,
if he has not received Him completely, this enfleshed God-word,
he has not become a monk, alas, absolutely not!
Whence it follows that he is alone who is cut off from God.
Moreover, each of us, we have been separated completely
from other men
and we all also dwell alone as orphans,
even if we seem to be united in our co-habitation
and to be intermingled with each other
in the assembly of so many of us.
For we are separated in soul and body
which death shows to be true.

It separates each of us from relatives and friends
and it makes man forget all whom he now loves.
Like night and sleep and the activities of life,
death destroys the union of crowds, this is evident.
But he, who makes a heaven of his cell through virtue,
contemplates and looks upon the Creator of Heaven and earth,
installed in his cell.
And he adores Him and is united always with the Light that never sets,
the Light without the darkness of evening, the unapproachable Light,
which never leaves him, never completely wanders far from him,
day or night, whether he eats or drinks,
not even in his sleep or on the road or in moving from place to place.
and as he lives so he dies or rather even more clearly,
the Light is united with him completely in his soul eternally.
For how can the bride be separated from her spouse,
or the husband from his wife to whom he is once united?
The legislator, tell me, will he not observe the law?
The one who says: "They will be two in one flesh,"
how will the man not be totally spirit with her?
For the woman is in the man and the man is in the woman
and the soul is united in God and God is in the soul
and is known as He is in all the Saints.
So those who by repentance are united with God,
purify their souls in this world here
and they are considered as solitaries since they are
separated from others,
such as those who put on the mind of Christ, which means, there is
one mouth and one tongue, being without deceit by which
they communicate with the Father omnipotent and by which
they constantly cry out: "O Father, O universal King, O Creator of all!"
Their cell is Heaven, they indeed are a sun
and the light is on them, the unsetting and divine light
which enlightens everyone who comes into the world.
It is made possible by the Holy Spirit.
In them there is no night; how, I cannot tell you.
For I quake even in writing these things to you and I tremble
in pondering over them,
but I wish to teach you how they live
and in what way they serve God
and how they have sought Him above all other Creatures
and how they have found Him alone
and how they also love Him alone and are united to Him alone
and how they have become solitaries because they are one
with Him alone,
even if they remain in a people very numerous.

Only such then are monks and solitaries,
those who alone live with God alone and in God,
stripped both of every kind of reflexions and of rationalizations,
see only God in a mind that is without thought,
fixed on the light, as an arrow in the wall,
or as a star in the heavens or — I fail to express it.
And so they live in their cells as in another nuptial chamber,
all lighted up and they think that they are living in Heaven,
or that they are truly living there; now see and don't doubt it!
For they are not on this earth even if they are still held here,
but they live in the light of the future age,
in the light where the angels dwell
and where they move about, by which the Powers
and Dominations are ravished
and the Thrones and all the Lordships are subjugated.
For even if God reposes in all the Saints,
still it is in Him that the Saints live and have their movement,
for they march in the light as on a firm foundation.
O marvel! as angels and as sons of the Most High,
they will be after death gods united with God.
For He is God by nature; they are like to Him by adoption.
But they are deprived of this now only because they are held
in the body
by which they are covered over and enveloped, alas!
as prisoners in chains looking at the sun and its rays
which enter through an air-hole
and they are not able to imagine it completely
or when they see it after leaving the prison, or looking distinctly
at it in the heavens.
And this is what makes them suffer that they do
not completely contemplate Christ, even if they do see Him entirely,
for they are incapable of throwing off the shackles of flesh
even if they have been freed from passions and every attachment,
yet they still are held by one,
in spite of being freed from all the other many bonds.
For he who is bound in many fetters, does not even have hope of
obtaining deliverance from the many,
but he who has succeeded in cutting the greater part of his bonds
and is still held by only one,
suffers more than the others and ardently seeks always
to break free from it,
so as to appear free, so as to march with joy,
so as to go in haste towards that which he desires.
And this is why he eagerly seeks to break this bond.
Let us all from now on seek Him, who alone is capable of freeing us

from our shackles!
And let us eagerly desire Him, whose beauty fills all thoughts
and every heart
with wonder, wounds all souls and wings them towards love.
It attaches and unites them with God forever.
Yes, my brothers, run by means of your actions towards Him,
yes, my friends, stand up, yes, do not be outstripped.
Yes, do not speak against us deceiving yourselves.
Do not say that it is impossible to receive the Divine Spirit.
Do not say without Him you can be saved.
Do not say, therefore, that one can possess Him without knowing it!
Do not say that God is not able to be seen by men.
Do not say that men do not see the divine light
or that this is impossible in these present times!
This is a thing never impossible, friends,
but on the contrary it is very possible to those who so wish,
but only to those who lead a life purified of passions
and have purified, spiritual eyes.
But for the others, there is actually a blindness,
the mud of sins, and both here and there
in the life to come, it strips them of the divine light
and do not be mistaken, it will consign them to fire and darkness.
See, friends, how beautiful is the Master!
Yes, do not darken your mind by gazing downward toward the earth.
Indeed, do not through cares about worldly affairs and riches,
be in bondage by the desire for glory
and thus lose it, the light of life eternal!
Yes, friends, come with me; lift yourselves up with me,
not in body, but in mind and soul and heart,
crying out in humility to the good Master,
the God full of mercy, the only Lover of mankind!
And he will always hear us and always show mercy.
And He will always reveal Himself and continuously
appear and show us clearly His joyous light.
Why do you, so poor, hold back in hesitation?
Why do you continue in your negligence?
Why do you prefer the well-being of the body and glory,
that which is really without any honor and glory,
which is empty and vain?
What do you mean by a life without concern and of virtue?
It is in no way such, brothers, it is not, do not be deceived,
but just as those in real life have a wife and children
and work diligently in their ambition for riches and for a temporal glory
and run about to satisfy their fantasy,
in the same way also everyone who seeks repentance

and everyone who serves the Lord
should strive also to be always with the preoccupation
of how his repentance will be accepted
and how his service will be pleasing and perfect.
and then dwelling completely with God by means of these virtues
he is totally united and sees Him face to face
and receives the child-like confidence to turn to Him
in the proportion that he hastens to accomplish His will.
May we be reckoned worthy to do likewise ourselves
and participate in His mercy with all the Saints,
even now as far as it is possible in this world,
but then may we receive Christ entirely, the Divine Spirit entirely
in the Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 28

Concerning an intellectual revelation of the operations of the divine light and on the mental and divine activity of the virtuous life.

Let me be alone, locked in my cell.
Leave me with God, the only Lover of mankind.
Depart, go far away, let me be alone,
to die in the presence of God who has fashioned me!
May no one knock on my door; may no one speak to me.
May no one of my relatives or friends visit me.
May no one in drawing my thought to himself, distract me
from the contemplation of the good and beautiful Master.
May no one give me food, no one offer me drink!
For it will be for me sufficient to die before my God,
the merciful God, the God who loves mankind,
before Him who has descended to earth to call sinners
and with Him to lead them to divine life.
I do not wish any more to see the light of this world,
not even the sun itself, nor the things in the world.
For I see my Master. I see my King.
I see Him who is truly a light and the Creator of all light.
I look upon the source of everything good.
I see the cause of all things.
I gaze upon the beginning that is without a beginning,
out of whom all things have their being,
through whom all things live and are filled with food.
For it is through His will that all things exist
and are seen and by His decree that all things disappear.
Why then should I leave Him by my going out of my cell?
Leave me; I groan and I weep over the days and nights
that I have lost in looking at this world,
in looking at this sun, in seeing the light of this world,
which is perceptible and shadowy
and does not illumine the soul.
Those who are blind with no eyes, living in the world,
after they have left the world, will be like those who now see.
And I too was living in such error in the world,
I was completely enamored by it
and I never considered at all that there was any other light,
which is indeed life, as was said, and the cause of all being
whatever is or will ever be.
And I was as though I were an atheist
since I did not know my God.

But now as He was pleased in His ineffable mercy
to appear to me, such a wretch, and to reveal Himself to me,
I have seen and known that He is truly God of all things,
God whom no one among men in the world ever has seen.
For He is outside of the world, outside of light and darkness,
beyond air and spirit and every sensation.
This is why, having seen Him, I transcended the world of sensation.
Therefore, you who labor under the world of sensation,
let me not only lock my cell and there let me sit,
but also let me dig a hole in the earth and there I will hide.
And there I will pass my time beyond the whole world.
And looking on my immortal Master and Creator,
I will choose to die of love, knowing that I shall not die.
What gain then has come to me from having withdrawn from the world?
And what values now do they possess who are still in the world?
None, really, but rather they are like nude men living in tombs;
and they will rise nude and all will be judged
because they have rejected the true life,
the light of the world, I mean Christ, and they have loved darkness.
All of them have preferred to walk in this darkness.
They are the ones who have not accepted the light
which shines brilliantly in the world,
which the world cannot grasp nor see.
For this reason leave me and let me alone,
I beg you, to weep and eagerly to seek Him,
so that He may be given to me abundantly
and I may see Him limitlessly.
For He not only is seen, not only contemplated,
but He also communicates Himself and indwells and inhabits
and is as a treasury which is hidden in our breast.
And he who bears Him is filled with pleasure; seeing Him he rejoices
and he believes that all contemplate Him, hidden in him.
But He is not seen by all, for one cannot touch Him at all.
The robber cannot steal Him.
The thief cannot snatch Him.
Even if he were to kill him who carries Him,
if he seeks to drag him away, he will labor in vain,
if he tries to ransack his purse,
to go through his clothing,
to loosen his belt so as to search him thoroughly,
even if he were to cleave open the stomach, rummage
through the intestines,
he would never at all be able to find Him
or to capture Him.
For He is invisible; He escapes being held by human hands.

He is likewise untouchable; yet He is totally touched.
He is held so in human hands but only by those who are worthy.
Be gone, unworthy ones!
And He lies in our palm.
What is this, O marvel? What is it not?
For it has no name.
Overwhelmed then and desiring to hold onto Him,
I closed my hand, thinking that I held and possessed Him.
But He escaped from my hand where I was holding Him,
and full of grief, I opened my closed hand
and I saw again on the hand that which I saw earlier.
O marvel inexpressible! O strange mystery!
Why do we trouble ourselves vainly?
Why do we lead astray all?
Why do we stand before the light, this imperceptible one,
with our mouths wide open,
we who have been gifted in our consciousness
with intelligence and reason?
Why do we look upon matter, this corruptible matter,
we who have a completely immaterial and immortal soul?
Why do we admire all this completely with no awareness
and give preference as blind men to the weight of the iron
and the weight of its mass over that of a little gold
or a precious pearl as though it were a thing of no value.
And why do we not seek out the little grain of mustard
which is more precious than all the visible things,
greater than the invisible things and all creatures?
Why do we not give all to receive this?
Why do we even desire to live if we don't possess this?
It is better to die, believe me, several times if it were possible,
in order to possess only this, I mean, the little grain of mustard!
Woe to those who do not possess this, planted deeply
within the womb of their soul for they hunger terribly!
Woe to those who have not seen this seed growing,
because they are found nude as trees with no leaves.
Woe to those who do not believe in the Lord's word,
that this seed becomes a tree and is stretching out its branches.
Those who do not seek with zeal and vigilance of mind each day
to make this little seed grow,
cause the loss of its full fruition,
as a servant who foolishly hides the talent
and I am one of these also due to my daily negligence!
But, O Trinity immeasurable, O Oneness without confusion!
O Light in three Persons, Father, Son and Spirit!
O Beginning without a beginning and source of force, O Power!

O Light unnameable for it absolutely has no name!
O Light bearing also many names since it works in all things!
O unique glory and authority, power and reign!
O light that is as one will, thought, wish, might,
have mercy, show pity on me in my affliction!
Why should I not be afflicted, why not in grief,
I who have ignored and neglected Your great goodness,
Your great mercy, O ignorant and wretched person that I am,
who so cowardly traverses the path of Your commandments?
But even now have pity and now show me Your mercy.
Enkindle the fervor in my heart, my Christ,
which the comfort-seeking of my miserable flesh has extinguished,
sleep and the gorging of the stomach and the drinking of much wine!
This has also extinguished completely the flame of my soul
and dried up the fountain, the out-pouring of tears,
for indeed the fervor begets fire and fire in turn also fervor,
and from both the flame bursts forth, which is the source of tears.
The flame engenders little streams and the streams engender the flame,
where conversation of divine things led me,
and where preoccupation with Your commandments and decrees
also led me,
as well as the vigilance which took as a partner repentance
and they placed me in the midst of the present and future things.
And consequently I suddenly transcended the visible things.
I fell into fear when I saw from what I had been rescued.
I saw truly the things to come, from afar
and when I desired to understand these things,
the fire of my love flamed up
and little by little the flame ineffably was seen,
first in my mind, then in my heart —
and the flame of divine love made tears flow.
Indescribable was the sweetness that was given me along with the tears.
But then I began to rely on myself; it cannot be extinguished at all,
I said to myself, for it burns so beautifully.
And I yielded to sloth, giving myself over stupidly to be the slave
of sleep and gluttony.
Letting down my guard, I began to use freely wine,
not becoming intoxicated, but nonetheless fully satiated
and at once this awesome marvel was extinguished,
the love so deeply rooted in the heart,
the flame which stretches to Heaven and which in me
was burning so strongly without ever consuming my inward being
that resembled dry grass.
O what a wonder! It transformed my whole being into flame
and the grass touching the fire was not at all burnt;

but rather the fire surrounding the grass, united with it and
made it completely indestructible.
O power of this divine fire, O strange working!
You who dissolve the rocks and hills by only Your fear,
and by Your very look, O Christ, O my God,
how do You mingle Yourself in essence totally divine,
with grass, You my God who dwell in light absolutely unapproachable?
How do You, remaining unchangeable and totally inaccessible,
preserve without burning the nature of grass?
Indeed it remains grass yet it is light, but the light is not the grass.
But You, the light, are united without mixture with the grass
and the grass becomes like the light, transfused without a change.
I cannot bear to hide Your marvels in silence.
I am unable not to speak of Your plan of salvation,
which You have wrought in me, the prodigal and adulterer,
along with the inexhaustible riches of Your love for mankind.
I cannot contain myself from not announcing it to all, my Redeemer!
For I wish that the entire world would receive it
and that there be absolutely no one deprived of this richness.
But first, O King of all, shine brilliantly again in me,
indwell and illuminate my lowly soul,
show me distinctly the countenance of Your divinity
and invisibly show Yourself entirely to me, O my God!
For You are not at all seen by me; yet You entirely appear to me.
You are completely ungraspable, yet You wish to become for me
totally graspable!
You are totally uncircumventable; yet You truly have become small
and in my hands and on my lips,
You allow Yourself to be seen as a breast that gives light and sweetness;
You are shining brightly, yet ever turning, O strange marvel!
Give me Yourself in this way now so that I may be filled with You,
that I may kiss You profoundly
and I may be engulfed by Your unspeakable glory,
the light of Your face.
That I may be filled by it and may then pass it on to all others.
And thus, transfixed, I may come to You, completely glorified,
and that from Your light I may become light and may stand before You.
Then I may have no concern about all these evils
and I may be unchanged by fear
so as no more to be put to flight.
Yes, do this for me, Master, yes, favor me with this grace,
You who have given all the other things freely to me, so unworthy!
For I have indeed need of this; this is really everything.
For if even now You are seen by me, if even now You show mercy,
if even now You illumine me and teach me in a mystical manner,

and You protect and guard over me with Your powerful hand
and You stay close to me, chasing away the demons
and making them disappear,
and You put everything under my power, supplying me
with all my needs,
and You fill me with all blessings, O my God;
but all of these will not help me if You will not give me
the grace to overcome without confusion the gates of death.
If the prince of darkness, when he should come,
should not see Your glory surrounding me
and be not completely rendered powerless,
he with his darkness be not dissipated by Your inaccessible light
and if all the opposing powers with him be not put
to flight, seeing the sign of Your stamp on me,
and if I may not pass with confidence in Your grace,
completely unshaken, not able to approach You
and fall down before You,
of what use to me are all these which are now taking place in me?
Truly nothing! But they will make the fire burn in me more strongly!
For I am hoping to participate in Your blessings and Your eternal glory,
to be Your servant and friend.
If I am deprived of all these things along with You, my Christ,
how will my affliction be not worse than that of infidels
who have never known You,
who have never seen Your radiant light
and who have not been inundated by Your sweetness?
But if it should happen to me to obtain the perfection of
these promised rewards and receive the prizes, Savior,
which You have promised to those, Christ, who believe in You,
then I indeed will be happy and I will praise You, the Father, Son
and Holy Spirit, God, truly unique for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 29

That only those comprehend the things of God to whom entirely, by participation of the Holy Spirit, God is completely united.

From where do You come?
How do You enter?
I mean, within my cell, completely closed on all sides?
For this is indeed something strange, beyond word or thought.
But that You are with me,
suddenly whole and brilliantly shining
and You are seen under the form of a light,
as the moon in full brilliance,
this leaves me thoughtless and speechless, my God!
I know that You are
the one who has come to enlighten
all who sit in darkness.
I am beyond myself;
I am beyond senses and words
at seeing this strange wonder
which surpasses all creation,
every nature, every word.
Consequently, I will tell everyone the things
You give me to say.
O entire human race!
Kings and rulers,
rich and poor,
monks and laity,
every speaking person on earth,
now listen to what I am going to say
about the magnitude of the love of God for mankind!
I have sinned against Him
as no other human being in the world.
Let no one think that I say this through humility,
for I truly have sinned more than all men.
To tell you briefly, I have committed every act of sin and vice.
Still He called me, I know it,
and I responded at once.
Where do you think I meant that He called me?
Was it not to worldly glory
or pleasures or leisure
or even to riches
or the friendship of rulers
or to something else of the visible things

considered good in life?
Away with such blasphemy!
I meant He called me rather to repentance
and I at once followed the Master.
When He ran, I also ran after Him.
When He fled, I likewise pursued Him,
as a hound chasing a rabbit.
And when the Savior went far from me and hid Himself,
I did not lose hope,
as though I lost Him.
I did not turn back,
but right there in the place where I found myself,
I sat and groaned.
I wept and cried out to the Master hidden from me.
Then He appeared to me who had rolled in the dust and cried out.
He approached near to me.
On seeing Him I jumped to my feet
and I threw myself forward to grasp Him
and He immediately fled.
I ran vigorously
and often, as I ran,
I succeeded in grasping the fringe of His garment.
He stopped a bit.
I was greatly filled with joy;
and He took off
and I again in pursuit.
So He would disappear, then return.
He would hide, then appear.
But I never turned back.
I never became completely cast down.
I never gave up the chase.
I never took Him to be one who would deceive
or someone who was thoroughly testing me
but with all my strength
with all my power,
when I did not see Him, I sought Him.
I looked around the roads
and behind the fences to see where He may appear.
I was filled with tears
and I asked everyone,
whether they ever saw Him.
To whom do you think I said this
in my inquiry?
The wise ones of this world?
Or those learned, what do you think?

Absolutely not! But the prophets, apostles and fathers,
the true wise ones,
who possessed completely this wisdom,
which is He Himself, Christ, the Wisdom of God.
Therefore, to those with tears and a heavy pain of the heart,
I asked them to tell me
where they had ever seen Him
or in what place,
or how and in what manner.
And when they told me,
I ran with all my strength.
I did not even sleep,
but I forced myself.
When He saw my love,
He showed Himself to me moderately.
And seeing Him, as I said before,
I pursued Him energetically.
Then when He saw that I held all things as nothing
and that I was deeply convinced in my soul,
that all the things in the world,
even I say, the world itself and all those persons
living in the world have no real existence in my estimation
and that I was separated from the world by such an attitude,
then He appeared totally to me.
He united Himself entirely with me.
He who is outside the world
and who supports the world
and all the things in the world,
who holds them in His one hand,
the visible and the invisible.
Then He, listen to me, meets me
and reveals Himself to me.
Where and how He came, I do not know.
For how should I know from where
He came, whom no man ever has seen
and no one has known where He is
or where He pastures, where He lies down?
For one cannot absolutely see Him,
nor conceive Him
Because He dwells in an unapproachable light
and He is a light, inexpressible in three persons,
in illimitable places,
my illimitable God,
Father unique, likewise the Son with the Divine Spirit.
One are the three and the three are one God in an inexplicable way.

For the human word is incapable of expressing the inexpressible
and the mind incapable of conceiving it adequately.
I can scarcely express those things that touch us,
but then to explain to you those hidden things,
neither I nor anyone else absolutely has the power to do it.
How God is outside of all things
by His essence and nature,
by His power and glory,
and how can He dwell everywhere in all things
and yet in an extraordinary way dwell in the Saints
and pitch His tent in them in a conscious awareness
and in a substantial way, He who is totally above all substance?
How does He indwell their very entrails,
He who indwells every creature?
How does He shine radiantly in their heart
who is of flesh and has dimensions?
How is He within such a person
who is outside all
and fills all things?
How night and day He shines brightly and yet is not seen?
Tell me, is there any human mind
that can grasp all these mysteries
or is capable of telling you?
Absolutely not! No angel, not even an archangel
could explain it to you.
He is unable to explain all these things in words.
It is then God's Spirit who, being divine, alone knows and understands,
because He alone partakes of the same nature,
the same throne and is from all eternity with the Son and Father.
For those then the Spirit will shine brightly,
and with them He will be abundantly united,
pointing out all things in an ineffable way.
I say all this to you by His work.
It is like a blind man.
If he should see, he would first see the light;
then also all creation and this in the light.
O marvel!
In the same way the one enlightened by the Divine Spirit
in his soul immediately is made to participate in the light
and to see the light,
the light of God, truly God Himself,
who also points out all things
or rather all which God decides,
all which God desires and wishes.
To those whom He will illumine by His radiance,

He will give to see all
which are found in the divine light.
In proportion to their love and observance of the commandments,
enlightened by this light,
they see and are initiated into the depth
of the hidden and divine secrets.
It is like someone entering into a dark house,
carrying in his hand a light,
or another, precedes him.
He will see the things inside the house.
So likewise he who is enlightened
by the rays of the intelligible sun,
sees clearly all those things
that are ignored by all the others,
and he expresses, if not all,
at least those things
that he can express in words.
For whoever is able to show these things on earth, namely,
which one, how much, what kind? since these questions asked
about God are incomprehensible and He remains invisible to all?
For who can conceive the form of that which is without a form,
the extension of that which has no extension,
the beauty of that which is unconceptualized?
How does one measure this?
How is one capable even of speaking of it?
How can one describe in words the forms of what have no form.
Absolutely in no way, you will tell me.
But only those know these things
who contemplate them.
So it is not by words but deeds
that we should hasten to seek to see
and to understand the richness of the divine mysteries
that which the Master gives
to those who painfully seek Him
and who have obtained clearly a forgetting
of the whole world and of all the realities in the world.
For one seeking such things above,
by a choice with his whole soul,
how will he not forget truly all the things here below
and not obtain a mind stripped of all such things
and at once be found beyond everything, all alone?
Then God, the Unique One, seeing him alone on His behalf
and that he has left all the things of the world,
the One Alone finding the one alone,
unites Himself to him.

O awesome plan of salvation!
O unspeakable goodness!
Do not ask me about those things above,
do not investigate, do not seek after them!
For if the number of stars or even the drops of the rain
or the grains of sand cannot be numbered
and if also no one is capable, of speaking about or understanding
the greatness and the beauty or the natures and their states
of being of all the the other creatures
or their causes, such as they are,
how can anyone express the mercy of the Creator
which He manifests to the souls of the Saints
with whom He is united?
For He truly divinizes them by a very personal union.
But anyone wishing to speak concerning a soul divinized,
the ways in which this is done, the nature of the process,
the disposition, the thought
or tries to explain to you all the things concerning this,
does not know how to present it to you for this reason,
that it touches on the nature of experiencing God.
But it is certainly not permitted those in the world
or those living according to the flesh
to seek such things
but it is permitted only to those who receive such things in faith
and who imitate the lives of all the Saints,
by tears and repentance and all other mortifications
and who by patience under temptations
run in order to be outside the world as I have said,
and they will find, as I also said, all, absolutely all.
Having found all, they will be in awesome rapture
and wonderment and they will pray also for me,
the wretched one, that I may not be excluded from them,
but that I may be fortunate to have the same realities
that they desired to obtain and that I desire
and by this desire I may efface and blunt the desire.
Have you ever heard such a proposal?
For a desire usually ignites the desire
and fire nourishes the flame.
In me, however, it is not so,
but, how can I say it –
the excess of love extinguishes my love.
For I do not love as much as I wish
and I consider that in no way do I possess the love of God.
Seeking in an insatiable way to love Him
as much as I wish,

I lose also the love of God that I possessed.
O marvel!
It is like a man with a treasure who is a miser
because he does not have all,
he thinks that he does not possess anything at all,
even if he has much wealth.
So I think it is with me.
I suffer, o miserable one, in this quandary
because I do not desire as I wish,
not simply as much as I wish,
but I think that I do not even desire.
To desire then as much as I wish,
this is a desire that surpasses the desire.
And I force my nature
to love beyond its nature.
My nature becomes weaken
and is deprived of the force
which it has acquired.
And paradoxically this love dies, even as it lives more.
For it lives and expands in me.
How can I tell you that it expands?
I lack examples.
I will tell you this only.
All mankind is incapable of expressing in words these things.
May the Unique God who is the giver of all such blessings
give to all of them who seek
in repentance such realities,
who weep and groan
and purify themselves properly
to enjoy such blessings
and to be participants even here below
in a conscious way
and to take them along
and to find repose in them
and to enjoy life eternal
and to find themselves,
thanks to these blessings,
sharers in the ineffable glory. Amen.

HYMN 30

To one of his disciples – that the divine fire of the Spirit, when it touches the souls purified by tears and repentance, seizes them and purifies them even more, illuminating all their parts still darkened by sin and healing their wounds, it leads them to a perfect cauterization as well as making them resplendent by the divine beauty.

There really does exist the divine fire
of which the Master spoke,
that which He came to cast –
on what earth, tell me?
On men in general,
those who think earthly thoughts.
He wished and still wishes
to cast this fire to inflame all.
Listen and understand, child,
the depths of divine mysteries!
This divine fire then,
what kind is it, do you think?
Do you imagine it to be visible or created,
or something able to be grasped?
In no way for you have been initiated into this mystery
and you know certainly
that this fire is not a thing to be grasped.
It is uncreated, invisible,
eternal and immaterial,
completely unchangeable
as well as infinite,
inextinguishable, immortal,
absolutely illimitable,
beyond all creatures,
material and immaterial,
visible and invisible,
spiritual and fleshly,
earthly and heavenly.
It is beyond all things
by its nature, by its essence;
yes, and also by its power.
This fire then, into what kind of matter
will it be cast, tell me?
Into the souls which have
an abundant store of mercy
and even before possessing this and along with it,

these souls possess faith and works,
works such as solidify their faith.
Into such souls as into a lamp full of oil and a flax wick
the Master casts His fire,
which the world has not seen
and which it is incapable of seeing,
(I mean by world all those in the world
who think worldly thoughts).
But as a lamp is lighted
– I speak to you in sensible images –
when you touch it with fire,
so in the same way realize that I am speaking in a spiritual sense,
the divine fire touches the souls and sets it on fire.
If it will not first touch them, how can it set them on fire?
If it will not at first be cast, how will it touch them?
Absolutely not; completely impossible!
But if the lamp burns
and clearly illumines all,
and then there is no more oil,
would the lamp not go out?
Attend to me, for there is still something more important
which frightens me more than everything else!
My lamp shines very brightly.
It has a full supply of oil,
also sufficient flax wick.
But a rat has come or some other animal
and either it turned over the lamp
or little by little it absorbed it.
It drank the oil
and ate there the wick, thus extinguishing also the lamp.
But this is a thing even more strange
that the wick which is called a rush-wick,
when it falls into the oil,
the fire is extinguished at once,
and I am left with only a darkened lamp,
which shines absolutely no more.
The lamp, consider, as my soul,
the oil are my virtues.
My mind is my wick
and it is in it that the divine fire
burns and illumines the soul,
as well as dwells entirely in my whole body.
And all those in the house,
namely, the reasonings and considerations
as this lamp burns,

should any jealousy hit me
or a passionate thought of bitterness
or the love of fame
or any other desire,
mingled with any pleasure or passion,
it will turn the lamp over,
that is, the determination of my soul,
or it will absorb the oil,
I speak to you of the virtues
or still the wick,
this is my mind as I said
which possesses in itself the divine light, greatly radiant,
but it will completely eat it up by perverse thoughts,
or again it will cast it completely into the oil,
which refers to the reflecting over its acts of virtues
and, falling into vanity, the mind is made completely blinded.
And, if it happens that my lamp as a consequence
of these things mentioned,
or perhaps from something else,
nevertheless, my lamp is extinguished,
where is the fire found then,
or what is happening to it, could you tell me this?
Does it remain in the lamp?
Or does it separate from the lamp?
O ignorance! O folly!
How is it possible that without fire the lamp can burn
or that the fire can remain in the lamp that has no material
(i.e. oil and wick)?
Fire always desires and wishes to lay hold of some combustible material,
but it is up to us always to prepare this
and to furnish such generously.
We ourselves as lamps must be adorned with mercy
and all other kinds of virtues,
and the mind, the wick in this example, must hold itself erect
so that it may touch the fire
and little by little be inflamed.
And in this way the fire remains at the disposition
of those who have possessed it.
For in no other way,
let nobody be mistaken,
can it be seen, can it be possessed.
For it is, as I said,
outside of and beyond all creatures.
It becomes graspable only in an ungraspable way,
in an unspeakable union.

Likewise it becomes limited in an illimitable manner.
But do not search these mysteries in words only or in concepts,
but eagerly seek to receive the fire
which teaches and demonstrates
clearly to those who possess it
all these mysteries
and those even more mysterious still in an inexpressible way.
Listen, if you wish, child, to these more mystical secrets!
When this fire burns brightly, as I said,
and it chases away the swarm
of passions and purifies
the interior of your soul,
then it mingles with it without merging with it
and it unites with it in an unspeakable manner,
its essence with the essence of the soul,
absolutely in a total way,
and little by little it illumines the soul.
It sets it on fire and makes it light,
and – how to express it I am unable –
the two become one,
the soul is with the Creator
and the Creator is in the soul;
alone, totally, with the soul alone,
He who holds the whole creation in His own hand.
Do not doubt it,
This One, completely one with the Father and the Spirit,
takes up a place in a single soul
and completely surrounds the soul,
taking it wholly within Himself.
Think of, look at, meditate on these things!
For I told you that this light is unbearable
and unapproachable to angels;
yet it possesses the soul within itself
while also it dwells in the soul,
and yet, it does not inflame it completely.
Do you understand the depth of this mystery?
Man who is so little among the visible creatures,
a shadow and dust,
possesses in the center of his being God entirely,
God from whose finger
creation comes forth
and from whom every being has its existence,
its life and its movement;
every mind, every soul and every reason,
among the reasonable creatures, has its being from Him.

But also the breath of the irrational animals
and of all living beings,
those intellectual and those sensate beings,
all have their existence from Him.
He who possesses Him
and carries Him within
and looks upon His beauty,
how will he endure the flame of this desire?
How will he bear the fire of love?
How would he not pour out hot tears from the depths of his heart?
How will he explain such marvels?
How will he number these things
which are being effected in him?
Yet how also can he be totally silent,
when he is forced to speak?
For he sees himself as in Hell,
I mean in comparison to the brilliance of the light,
for no one sitting there in Hell without this light
has any knowledge of himself.
All of them are in ignorance, in obscurity
into which they have been plunged
concerning their own corruption and their death.
Likewise that soul about which I am speaking,
when it sees how the light shines
and knows that itself is completely in most terrible darkness
and in this completely enclosed prison
of most profound ignorance,
then it sees just where it is lying,
where it is locked in
and that this place is completely a mud hole,
full of slimy, poisonous snakes;
that it itself is chained,
both hands and feet bound by shackles
and that it is covered with dust and filth;
that it is also wounded
from the bites of the reptiles
and that its own flesh is puffed up
and also covered with numerous worms.
Seeing this, how will the soul not shudder?
How will it not weep?
And how will it not cry out?
And ardently be repentant and beg to be rescued
from such terrible fetters?
Yes, all who see such
indeed will lament and groan

and will want to follow after Christ
who makes the light so radiant!
Thus doing this as I said
and falling at the feet of Him who has illumined me
– give me your attention to what I am going to say!
He who has illumined me touches with His hands
my fetters and my wounds.
There where His hand touches
or where with His finger He approaches,
at once the bonds fall away,
the worms die,
the wounds disappear
as well as the filth covering them
and the disfigurement in my flesh
diminishes and the healing
takes place all over at once,
so that one no longer sees
any cut on a given spot,
but rather He makes that very spot completely brilliant,
similar to His divine hand.
Strange marvel, my flesh,
I mean, the essence of my soul,
yes, also my body,
participates in the divine glory
and radiates with a divine brilliance.
Seeing this which was effected in a part of my body,
how could I not desire it to effect my whole being?
How could I not beg that my body
would be freed from all its evils
and be granted likewise health
about which I spoke and glory?
While I was so doing
and even with greater ardor,
being so overwhelmed,
proportionately to these wonders,
the good Master, stretches out His hand,
runs it over the rest of my body,
and I see that all of it has been purified
in the way I had said,
and it was covered all over with the divine glory.
After I had then been cleansed
and freed from my fetters,
He extends to me His divine hand,
and lifts me out of the mud hole.
He thoroughly embraces me.

He throws Himself upon my neck.
Ah, how shall I bear these wonders!
And He kisses me over and over.
And He lifts me up on His shoulders,
me who had been so completely worn out
and had lost all my strength.
Ah me! how shall I ever describe adequately these favors!
What love, what goodness!
And He leads me out of Hell,
out of that place and its darkness,
and leads me into another place,
whether it is still this world or up in the air someplace,
I really am not able to say.
This I know, that it is a light
and it carries me and sustains me
and leads me toward a great light.
This great divine marvel,
not even angels could describe
or speak about among themselves,
in no way, so it seems to me.
After I arrived there,
He shows me still other things,
those things found in the light, I mean,
rather, those things that flowed from the light.
He gives me to understand the strange new form
which He Himself has re-fashioned in me.
He has freed me from corruption
and has liberated me completely
from death with a new awareness
and has given me immortal life.
He has separated me from the corrupt world
and from all the things of the world.
He has put on me a robe
that is immaterial and radiant.
He has given me also sandals
and a ring and a crown,
incorruptible and eternal,
all completely foreign to the things here below.
He has made me intangible,
untouchable, O wonder!
And likewise invisible,
united to the invisible things.
After having rendered me thus,
the Creator led me into a tent, a sensible one,
that of my body.

There He enclosed me
and He completely locked me in.
Having put me back again in the sensible and visible world,
again He decided that I should live
with those who dwell in darkness,
I who had been freed from the darkness,
and that I should be locked up with them,
those I mean who lived in the mud hole.
And more, that I should teach them,
that I should lead them to a knowledge
of the wounds that covered them
and of the shackles that held them fast.
Having ordered me to do such, He departed.
I was then abandoned alone,
I refer to the former darkness that I had been in.
I was displeased because He had given me all those things
which I described, ineffable blessings;
for he had completely re-newed me,
making me completely immortal
and transforming me into Christ.
But being deprived of Him made me
forget all the benefits, those that I mentioned,
and which it seemed to me now that I was deprived of.
For this reason, as though I had been smashed
into pieces by the former evil actions,
I was sorely afflicted.
I sat in the middle of the tent
as though I were locked in a basket or a jar.
I wept, I groaned vehemently,
completely unconcerned as to my exterior conduct.
For I eagerly was searching for Him,
Him whom I loved,
for whom I had a passion,
by whose splendid beauty I was wounded.
I was inflamed, I burned,
my whole being was on fire!
As I then so continued,
weeping together with pining away,
as though I were being terribly flogged
and crying out in great pain,
He heard my cry.
From unimaginable heights,
He leaned over and saw me.
He had pity on me
and again He who is invisible to all

made me worthy to see Him
as far as it is possible for man to see Him.
On seeing Him, I was struck with awe,
as I sat locked into my house
and enclosed in my jar,
in the midst of so much darkness,
I mean between Heaven and earth.
I call those things darkness, using sensible terms,
since they seriously darken all men
who are captives of their senses
as well as their thoughts
that are immersed in the senses.
However, I who was in the midst of these worldly realities
saw Him who was before all, as I said,
and who is now beyond all in a spiritual way.
I was filled with amazement,
I was in ecstasy,
filled with fear and also with joy
and I pondered on this marvel:
how He is outside of all things,
while I am so very much inside everything.
I alone see Him; He sees me.
Where He is, His size,
or the origin of Him whom I see
or how I see Him or what I see?
Likewise seeing the things which I have seen
and groaning that I am not able
to know this manner
nor completely to comprehend
nor to understand even a little
how He whom I see sees me.
I saw Him again inside my house,
inside my jar.
He was suddenly completely there,
united with me in an ineffable manner,
joined to me in an unspeakable way
and immersed in me without mixing
as the fire melds one with the iron,
and the light with the crystal.
And He made me as though I were all fire.
And He showed me myself as light
and I became that which before I saw
and I had contemplated only from afar.
I do not know how to express to you
the paradox of this manner.

For I was unable to know
and I still now do not know
how He entered, how He united Himself with me.
I was united with Him, how can I tell you?
Who is He who united Himself with me
and with whom I was united?
I shudder and I fear lest,
if I tell you, you will doubt,
and you will fall into blasphemy
because of your ignorance of such an experience,
and you may even lose your soul, my brother.
Nevertheless, having become one being,
I and He to whom I was united,
how shall I call myself?
God, having two natures, is one person;
He has made me a double being.
Having made me double,
He has given me two names, as you see.
But look at the difference!
I am a man by nature,
by grace I am god.
See, what a grace I refer to
is the union with Him,
made in a sensible and intelligible manner,
essentially and spiritually.
This union, as far as it is intelligible,
I expressed to you differently and in various ways.
But the union as far as it is sensible,
I speak of that which comes in the Mysteries
(the Sacrament of Holy Communion).
for, purified by repentance
and by the torrents of tears,
I receive in Communion
the Body divinized as being that of God.
I too become god
in this inexpressible union.
See what a mystery!
The soul then and the body
(I repeat it again to you
out of the great joy I derive in doing so)
are one being in two essences.
Therefore these are one and two
in communion with Christ
and drinking His blood,
they are united to two essences,

united in this way to the essences of my God,
they become god by participation.
They are called by the same name as that of Him
in whom they have participated on a level of essence.
They say that coal is fire
and the iron is black.
Yet when the iron is immersed in the fire
it appears as fire.
If it then appears as such,
we also can call it by that name.
We see it as fire,
we can call it fire.
If you have never known this in your own experience,
do not distrust the experiences
of those who describe them to you.

But seek with all your heart
and you will receive the pearl (of great price)
or the drop (of life-giving water)
or like the grain of mustard
or like a divine spark
you will receive the seed.
How will you seek for what I am describing to you?
Listen and then act with energy
and you will find it quickly.
Take my image that will clarify my point,
that of a stone and iron.
For there is inherent in them
truly the nature of fire;
yet no one can see it at all.
But if you continue striking them,
they will give off sparks of fire
and then everyone will at once see them.
However, they do not ignite a fire,
unless they fall on wood.
But if a single little spark unites with the wood,
little by little it ignites everything
and the flame stretches upward
and illumines the house
and dispels the darkness
and makes it possible for all to see,
all who dwell in the house.
Have you seen the marvel? Then tell me –
without being continually struck,
how can the stone and iron give off sparks?

But without a spark,
how can wood ignite itself?
Before being ignited, how can it illumine,
how can it chase away darkness?
How can it provide you with the possibility of seeing?
In no way, you will simply tell me,
can this ever be done.
Then you also be eager to do likewise
and you will receive —
what do I tell you that you will receive?
No less than a spark of the divine nature
which the Creator has likened
to the pearl of great price
and the mustard seed.
What am I telling you to do?
Listen carefully, child!
In your case substitute your soul and body
for the stone and iron.
Let your mind, since it is the one in charge
of your passions, meditate on virtuous deeds
and thoughts pleasing to God.
Let God take into His spiritual hands your body as a stone
and your soul as a piece of iron
and let Him draw and push them to do the deeds with violence,
for the Kingdom of Heaven is brought about by violence.
What are the deeds I speak to you about?
Vigil and fasting,
ardent repentance,
outpouring of tears and an abiding sense of sorrow,
the continual remembrance of death,
uninterrupted prayer,
and the patient bearing of all sorts
of all trials that come one's way.
Above all, silence
and profound humility
and perfect obedience
and the negation of one's own will.
Thus in exercising itself in these practices
and others like them
and in doing so constantly,
the soul will bring it about
that your mind will receive first of all illuminations,
but the mind quickly loses these
because it is not yet subtle enough
to be rapidly inflamed.

But when the divine illuminations will ignite also the heart,
then it also illumines it
and completely purifies the mind
and lifts it up to the heights
and leads it up to Heaven
and unites it with the divine light.
But before doing these things that I told you,
how, tell me, will you be purified?
And before being purified,
how can your mind receive divine illuminations?
But how, tell me, by what other means
and what is that means, can the divine fire
fall into your heart
and ignite it and make it burn
and unite with it and join to work together
by rendering it inseparable,
the creature with the Creator?
Absolutely in no way, you answer me,
will this be possible,
for any living human being
or anyone yet to be born!
But do not ask me about the things above!
For if you have been united with the light,
it itself will teach you all things
and reveal everything.
It will make you see gradually
such things as are important for you to learn.
For it is impossible in any other way
for you to learn by words these things here below.
Glory be to the Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 31

On theology – that the divine nature is unfathomable and completely incomprehensible to men.

Lord, my God, Father Son and Spirit!
You who in form have no visible shape,
but who are all beautiful to those who see You.
You with Your inconceivable beauty eclipse all other visions.
You surpass in splendor the sight of everything else.
You, infinite and yet see in finiteness by those
to whom You wish to show Yourself,
are in essence above every essence,
unknown even to the angels.
That You indeed exist, we know from Your works
and hence You are called God for You really are.
We say that that is Your essence,
we call it Your substance.
But he who does not exist is without essence and without a substance
and for this reason we dare to say
that You have an essence.
We speak of You as one substance,
You whom no one has ever seen;
God in three persons,
the unique Source with no beginning.
Otherwise how do we dare to call You one essence
or glorify three distinct persons in You?
Who will then understand completely what sort of unity is Yours?
If the Father indeed is in You
and You are in Your Father
and from Him Your Holy Spirit proceeds
and You Yourself, O Lord, are Your Spirit,
how then are You, my Lord and my God, called Spirit
and Your Father also is and is called Spirit?
No one among angels or men has ever seen You.
No one has contemplated these mysteries or understood
how one can say, how one can declare,
how one can dare to express:
the separation or union or composition
or fusion or mixture;
how to say that the one is three and the three are one?
Therefore because of this, Master, namely, according to the words
that You spoke which every faithful believes,
it is according to Your teachings

that every faithful sings Your power,
since everything which concerns You
is totally incomprehensible, unknowable and inexpressible
for all those created by You.
Indeed, Your existence escapes comprehension
because You are by nature uncreated,
and You are begotten in the same way.
And how can a creature understand
the manner of Your existence
or the begetting of Your Son, God and Word
or the procession of Your Divine Spirit,
so that he can know Your union
and contemplate Your separation
and accurately understand the idea of Your essence?
No one has ever seen anything of these mysteries
of which I have spoken.
For it is not possible for another to become God by nature,
so that he can fathom also Your nature,
essence, idea and form, likewise Your substance.
But You in Yourself are alone God, Trinity.
You alone know Yourself, Your Son and the Spirit
and You are known by them alone who share Your nature.
But the others – it is like their seeing well
the rays of the visible sun and seeing them distinctly.
As they sit within their house, they
view the rays shining inside,
but they do not see at all the sun.
In the same way it is with the light of Your glory,
with Your illuminations.
Those who seek to see You with all their soul,
with a purified mind are considered worthy
to see You, even though it is an enigma.
But You, what kind are You?
What sort of essence do You have?
Or how have You simultaneously
been begotten and still eternally beget,
without Him separating Himself from You, the begotten?
But He is entirely in You,
completely filling all with His divinity.
And You, Father, remain entirely in Him, Your Son.
And You possess the Divine Spirit who proceeds from You.
He knows all things and fills all, being God by essence.
He does not separate from You
for it is from You that He has His source.
You are the source of blessings

and Your Son is the sum total of all blessings,
who distributes these gifts through the Spirit
to all in justice, with mercy and love for angels and men.
No one among the angels has seen You.
No one among men has ever seen You or knows Your substance,
for, indeed, You are uncreated.
You have brought all things into being by only decree.
How then can the creatures You brought into being know You?
How do You beget Your Son?
How are You perpetually the source?
How does Your Divine Spirit proceed from You?
And how is it that You never beget Him (the Holy Spirit)
since You have begotten only once (the Son)?
And how, do You, being the source, not undergo
an emptying or dimunition?
For You remain overflowing,
inexhaustible beyond everything,
complete in the whole world,
the visible and the spiritual,
and yet also You remain outside and beyond all.
You cannot at all receive any addition or suffer any dimunition.
You are completely without movement, remaining always the same.
Yet in Your operations, You are always in motion,
for You possess, Father, an unending movement.
Also Your Son works for the salvation of all
and He foreknows and perfects and sustains and nourishes.
He gives life and He begets in the Holy Spirit.
For all that the Son sees the Father doing,
He also similarly brings about,
as He has said.
Thus You are immovable and yet always in movement.
You so not move nor stand nor again do You sit,
but You are always sitting and completely standing,
and standing You are always completely in movement
but without leaving Your place
for from where would You depart?
As was said, You fill all things, You transcend all.
In what other place or area would You be?
But You do not stand,
for You lack a body.
Being simple, You fill all, yet completely without a form.
Immaterial, without limit, You are totally incomprehensible.
How could we say that You sit down
and how again can You stand up?
How can we say that You sit or on what throne,

You who hold in Your hand Heaven and earth
and who rule by Your might all things under the earth?
What throne or what kind of house could enclose You?
How or where is it situated or on what foundations,
on what columns is it raised up?
Who could completely comprehend?
A plague on such men and all created nature
such as dare to fathom these mysteries concerning God,
before being illumined, before being enlightened,
before contemplating the divine realities
and before becoming a seer of the mysteries of Christ,
of those things which Paul was able to see,
but totally unable to express,
neither earlier Elias nor the great Moses.
The latter had not been reckoned worthy
to understand and to teach to others
the commandments of God and His decrees.
But he was not deemed worthy to hear,
to learn or to receive at all anything more about God Himself
unless it were that God is the Creator of all things,
the Master-builder and the One who sustains
all that He has made.
But we, most wretched ones, captives of darkness,
who are completely darkness, because we seek our joy in pleasures,
we who do not even know ourselves, where and how
we are held in bondage,
we who are enslaved by our passions, blind and dead.
We probe deeply Him who is truly without a beginning,
uncreated God, unique, who is immortal and invisible to all.
And we discourse as though we accurately know something about God,
we who are separated from God.
But if they indeed were united with Him,
they would never dare to speak about Him,
for they would see that all in Him
is inexpressible and incomprehensible,
and not only the mysteries about Himself
but also the great part of His works are unknown to all.
For whoever could explain how He forms me from the beginning,
with what hands He who has no body at all,
took dust of the earth,
He who has no mouth like us, how did He breathe into me?
And how did His breath become for me an immortal soul?
Out of mud, tell me, how can there come my bones,
nerves, flesh, my skin, hair, eyes, ears,
lips and tongue?

How can there come my organs of speech or the hardness of my teeth?
Can they distinctly from a breath produce an articulated word?
From matter containing the four elements of dryness and wetness,
hot and cold, He made me a living being
through a mixture of opposites.
How then is the mind bound to the flesh?
How does the flesh mingle with the immaterial mind
without mixture and without confusion?
And how without mingling together do the mind and soul
bring forth the word?
I speak of the immanent word within us and yet they
(the mind and soul)
remain also individually unchanged,
complete without confusion?
Therefore know, brothers, that these things
that concern our very selves are inexplainable
and for all incomprehensible.
How should we not tremble to explain
or to understand Him who made us so out of nothing
or to speak about the things that are beyond our reason and our mind?
Because you are creatures, fear therefore the Creator
and seek to ponder only His commandments.
Be prompt to observe them with all your strength
if you would wish to be heirs of life!
But if you disdain His decrees
and ignore His wishes, as He said,
and disobey Him in even one word,
then no glory, no dignity, no riches from this world,
and still less the vain knowledge from profane fields of learning,
neither the style nor composition of belles lettres,
nothing of the affairs or riches of the earth
will provide you with any help then,
when my God will judge all things and all men.
But the word of the Master ignored by us
will stand then accusingly against the person of each of us
and will condemn each one who has not observed it.
For it is not a sterile word but the living word of God
who lives and remains forever and ever.
To continue, the judgment will be such as I have already said,
at once as the commandment of God, alas, comes to meet our life,
it will point out the unfaithful from the truly faithful,
whose who obeyed or disobeyed the words of the Master,
those who were industrious or those who were negligent
and in this way the unjust will be separated from the just,
the disobedient from those who truly obey Christ;

those who now are lovers of the world from the friends of God;
and those merciless ones from those full of pity;
together with those without pity from the merciful.
And all will stand stripped both of their riches
and honor and power that they enjoyed in this world.
And, alas, they will condemn themselves.
Having become their own condemnators
by their works, they will hear:
"Depart, you, both little and great ones,
you did not obey Me, the Master and Lover of men!"
Master, may we be rescued from this just condemnation
and be found worthy of a portion among Your sheep,
O Word, through Your free gift,
since we have no other hope of salvation,
we who have been condemned by our works,
now and forever.

That those who receive glory on earth and those boasting in their riches chase in error after the shadows of the visible things, but those who have despised the present things are not walking in error since they share in the Divine Spirit.

Look at me, Master, at one accused by Your faithful ones
as being in error and completely wandering astray,
Because I say that I have received the Holy Spirit,
out of Your great love for mankind
and through the prayers of my spiritual father (Symeon the Venerable).
Have mercy and gift me with speech, knowledge and wisdom,
so that all my adversaries would recognize
that it is Your Divine Spirit who speaks in me!
Give me to speak as You have said,
give me also as You promised, Savior, words
which none of them can resist or contradict.
For You are the Giver of all blessings,
O Christ, even if they say that I, Your servant,
am in error, I will never be persuaded, I who see You, my God;
and I who contemplate Your immaculate and divine countenance
and who receive from You Your divine illuminations.
My spiritual eyes have been enlightened in the Spirit.
But do not grant, O God, that all those
who now believe in You are walking in error
while still in this mortal wandering,
that they do not believe that even now
You still enlighten all men,
making them radiant by the rays of Your divine divinity.
For You are full of mercy, while we are in our sins.
You live in unapproachable light, while we all are in darkness.
You are outside of creation and we are in creation,
but the greater part of us live outside of creation;
for they are in their consciousness totally unconscious
because they live as going against nature,
they really are outside of everything;
those who see without seeing, look without looking.
They are incapable of comprehending the marvels of God
in an intellectual awareness, but they are outside the world,
or rather, they are in the world like dead people,
even before their death.
They are even before their final departure
dwelling in the depths of Hell.

They are indeed those of whom Scripture speaks,
the glory seekers, the rich, those who lord it over all others
and believe themselves to be something totally great because of these,
while in reality they are incapable of being conscious
of their own shame.
For even if they possess in themselves the wisdom of the world
and wear its glory as a cloak,
because in their erroneous minds
they have put on their vain pride as a tent,
they are covered by it,
they live inside their pride.
They are seated in the abyss of Hell as in a ditch,
both ignorant of God and ignorant of the world
and they are ignorant of all the things made in the world
by the Creator.
For who would know the Creator before he has seen
the creation with his reason?
He is a reasonable being and with his mind
in an intellectual way can contemplate creation
through an intellectual perception.
Who is this one?
The one who contemplates creation in a spiritual way,
through the Divine Spirit, mystically illumined
and led at the same time –
how will he not come to the knowledge of his Creator,
at least in some obscure fashion?
He will thus merit to receive a purified, clearer knowledge
and this is what all of Scripture says.
But those caught in their passions, as I have said,
carry their pride as a robe;
they are clothed with their vanity as with a glory.
They rejoice and they laugh at the others
and they play in the shadows
after the fashion of little dogs.
If one throws them a nut
and it makes noise as it bounces,
they bound after it, grab it,
take it in their mouth
and with it they roll about, frisking about with it.
And if someone throws before their feet a whipping stick,
they somersault, tumble,
stretch their feet upward
and provoke all those men who see them
in their falling to peals of laughter.
So likewise these men about whom we were speaking

make the demons happy without being aware of it
by their own actions along with their dispositions.
Such persons as these are,
tell me, I ask you as you see it,
how could they explain the mysteries of God to others?
How would they be enlightened by even a little of the light
of the knowledge of God
and how could they pass it on to others
or how could they give with justice
a right judgment in a discussion concerning truth,
they who are clothed with the cloak of darkness,
who have senses but sense nothing,
those who are living, yet are among the dead?
But you, O friends of God, hear the truthful and amazing words
which the mouth of the Lord has already spoken
and is still now speaking to all!
If you do not push aside glory,
if you do not cast away your riches,
if you do not take off completely your vain pride,
if you do not become the least of all men in your works
and in your reasoning, even in your thoughts
and consider yourselves as the last of all,
you will not have the streams of tears
nor the purification of the flesh
nor will you see how these come about.
Therefore, weep for yourselves,
therefore, be repentant;
therefore, pour out each day fervent tears
to wash out the spiritual eyes of your heart,
to contemplate the light which radiates in the world,
that brilliant light which cries out in loud voice:
"I am the light of the world.
I was, I am and I will be the light
and I wish that they see me!
For it is for this that I came corporeally into the world.
I became two who am one
and I nonetheless still remain one,
so that those who adore Me faithfully, the visible God,
and keep interiorly all My commandments
may be illumined and may receive
spiritually the revelation of My glory, of My divinity
and of the flesh that I have assumed
and they may contemplate mystically the duality of My natures
and so may unswervingly hymn Me as the unique God.
For in no other way is it possible to know well

My divine plan of salvation and My condescension
and reverence and adore as God Him who took the form of a man
and yet who remained as God in an unexpressible way.
One is two inseparable in the person, not however in nature.
I am then the unique God, yet also perfect man,
completely fulfilled, perfect in all parts,
flesh, soul, spirit and reason.
Complete man and God in the two essences,
consequently with two natures, two sources of operations
and two wills in only one Person.
At the same time God and man, I am one of the Trinity.
Those who have believed and recognized that I am such,
by purifying themselves with diligence and repentance
and who have been able to contemplate in a purified heart
and to receive the spiritual revelation of My divine plan of salvation,
such will love Me with all their heart.
Such also will keep all of My commandments,
overwhelmed by My infinite mercy.
Such also will be united with Me and will share
in the glory,
that of My Father, forever and ever. Amen.

On theology; that those who have lived according to the image (that is Jesus Christ) trample under foot the perverse powers of the prince of darkness, while the others who live according to their passions are held in bondage by him and are subject to his rule.

The Father is light, the Son is light, the Holy Spirit is light.
Watch what you are saying, friend, watch so as not to fall into error.
For the Three are one light, unique, not separable,
but united in Three Persons without confusion.
God is indeed completely indivisible by nature
and by His essence is truly beyond every essence.
He is not divided in power nor in form,
nor in glory, nor in aspect,
for He is contemplated completely as a simple light.
In them the Persons are One, the Three Hypostases are One.
For the Three are in the One, or rather, Three are One.
The Three are only one power, the Three one glory.
The Three only one nature, essence and divinity.
They are also the unique light which enlightens the world,
not this world, away with this idea, this visible world –
for it has not known God, nor can it know Him,
this visible world, nor the friends, of this world,
since the lover of this world is an enemy of God –
but this visible world is the man whom God created
according to His own image and according to His own likeness,
this we call the world,
since he is adorned with virtues,(*) he rules over the terrestrial beings,
in the same way as God has power over the universe,
and since man reigns over his passions
to the degree that he lives according to the image
and he subdues the demons, the perpetrators of evils,
he tramples upon the ancient, immense serpent,
as though he were a simple little sparrow.
And how does he do this? Listen, child!
The prince (devil), having been defeated
for, having been deprived of the light,
he has been at once thrown into darkness
and is there with all those who with him
fell from Heaven into darkness
and he reigns there, I mean in the darkness,
over those demons and humans held there in captivity.
Every soul who does not see the light of life shining

radiantly day and night is punished by the devil,
is wounded, subjugated, is dragged and chained,
and is pierced continually by the arrows of pleasures.
Even if the soul wishes to resist, even if it wishes not to fall,
still with great sweat, fatigue, pain and sorrow,
it carries on a perpetual war, made by the demon
with never the possibility of ending it.
But every soul that contemplates the divine light,
wherever the evil one has fallen,
it despises him,
and illumined by the light itself, inaccessible light,
it tramples under foot the prince of darkness,
as leaves falling to the earth from a high tree.
It is in darkness that he has power and might,
but in the light he is only a fallen cadaver.
As you hear me speaking of the light,
give your attention to the kind of light I tell you about!
Do not take it that I mean the light of the sun!
For you see in its light many men sinning as I do,
cruelly beaten, they fall and froth, in full daylight
and they suffer invisibly from evil spirits.
The sun shines and those given over to demons
receive from it nothing more of advantage.
I do not now speak of the light of the sensible sun,
not of the day, no indeed, nor at all that of a lamp,
nor the light from numerous stars,
nor that of the moon.
I wish to show that the brilliance of no other visible light
possesses a similar energy.
It is a characteristic of sensible lights to illumine
only the sensible eyes.
They shine splendidly and they furnish men only to see sensible things,
not however the intelligible things.
Therefore, all who look only at the sensible things
are blind as far as the spiritual eyes of the heart go.
The spiritual eyes then of the spiritual heart
ought to be illumined by a spirit light.
If he, whose pupils of the body have been put out,
is totally in darkness, not knowing where he is,
how much more he, who has the eye of the soul blind,
will be in total darkness and in his body and operations
and in spirit he will be nearly dead?
Consider then carefully about what kind of light I am speaking to you.
I do not mean the light even of faith nor that of works,
nor of repentance, nor at all of fasting,

nor of poverty nor of wisdom nor of knowledge,
not even that of teaching.
None of these is the light or the radiance of the light
of which I speak.
Nor is it exterior piety nor a humble and poor attitude.
For all of these are actions and the fulfillment of the commandments,
if they are done properly and carried out as
the Creator Himself orders.
Tears pour forth in many different ways
and they are either very profitable or rather even harmful
to such a point that they in themselves are totally without value.
The vigil is not just for monks alone,
but also for the ordinary people engaged in their works.
The women who weave, the casters in gold and bronze
make vigils (as they work) even more than most monks.
And this is why we say that nothing of all of these virtuous actions
is called the light.
Even all taken together as one, all the actions
and virtues in a block are not the divine light.
For all the actions of men are far away from it,
even these actions accomplished by us according to our own thinking,
for those others live in evil.
They call these lights since these actions lead them to good
and what is in me of darkness and blinds me
becomes light for my neighbor and enlightens those who see me.
And so that you may not suspect me of telling you a paradox,
listen and I will tell you how to solve the enigma.
I fast perhaps on your behalf, but in order that I may appear as fasting,
and this is really the incentive in my eyes,
which is simply like a beam pushed into my eyes.
But you, seeing me, are enlightened,
if you do not condemn me,
but rather if you accuse yourself of being truly a glutton.
By this you are led to the control of your stomach
and you learn how to despise conspicuously self-indulgence.
Again, I am dressed in very coarse clothing, even rags,
and I, who have only one tunic to my name,
reflect as I go about how I can gain the glory
and praises from those who see me
and to be regarded by them as another new apostle.
And this becomes for me the cause of a great damage,
indeed of darkness, really, and a thick cloud over my soul.
But still this illumines those who see me and teaches them
to despise making a display of oneself, to despise also riches
and to prefer simple and coarse clothing

which also is truly the habit of the apostle.
In the same way, all the other practices of virtues
are works without light, deeds deprived of radiance
for if all of them are joined together, as I earlier said,
supposing that it is possible to find them all in one man,
all the virtuous actions are made as only one,
still they are like a lamp having no light.
For just as we cannot say that the coals alone are the fire
and even more so that the wood is the live coal or flame,
so likewise neither the complete faith nor works
nor actions nor the observance of the commandments
are fire, flame or the divine light.
For they really are not these things.
But that they are able to receive the fire,
approach the light and be illumined by an unspeakable union,
all of this is praise and glory of virtues.
And for this reason all asceticism and all these actions are
accomplished by us in order to share in the divine light as a lamp does
For like a single candle, so the soul projects all of the virtuous actions
towards the unapproachable light,
or rather, as a papyrus is plunged into the burning candle,
so the soul, bulging with all the virtues,
is completely set on fire by the light,
insofar as it is capable totally of seeing it,
as it has a place to lead it into its house.
And then the virtues illumined from intimate communion
with the divine light
are they themselves called also light,
or rather, they themselves are the light, having become melded
with the light.
And they reflect brilliantly the light on the soul itself
and also the body; and they illumine truly first him
who possesses them
and then all those others living in the darkness of life.
Enlighten us in Your Most Holy Spirit, O Christ,
and make us heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom
with all Your Saints, now and forever, amen.

**Symeon plays on the double meaning in Greek of kosmos. It can refer to the world and also to any ornament, adornment, that which beautifies. A worldly person in this sense is one who is properly adorned as God wishes him to be with virtues.*

HYMN 34

That the union of the Most Holy Spirit with those souls who have been purified is effected in a distinct awareness, that is to say, in a perfect knowledge and those in whom this union is effected it makes luminous. He (the Spirit) is luminous and His light renders them light.

The invisible is completely different and separate from the visible,
as He also who first made them is different from His creatures,
as the Incorruptible is different from the corruptible,
the darkness from the light.
And the bringing of them together was effected when God descended.
For my Savior has then united those that stand in opposition,
but the blind have not seen their union,
the dead claim that they never had any awareness of this.
They think they are living and are seeing;
O ultimate in folly!
And they say in their disbelief: "No one has known or undergone
this by experience, nor has anyone seen it sensibly.
But they are only words used in speech and in teaching."
But, O my Christ, teach me to say something in response
to these statements
and to deliver those who so think from their abyssmal
ignorance and unbelief
and to help them see You, Light of the world!
Listen and understand, Fathers, the divine words
and you will know the union that is effected in knowledge
and in a sensible awareness absolutely both experientially and visibly.
God is invisible; we are completely visible.
If then He is united willingly with visible beings,
this is then a union of both in knowledge.
If you would say, not having this experience,
that this is effected without any consciousness,
it would be indeed a union of the dead and not of Life with the living.
God is the Creator of all creatures; we are likewise creatures.
If then God who has created them has descended so completely
and united Himself with His creation
so that the creature becomes like the Creator,
then the creature should really be able to perceive this true happening
that the creature in an unspeakable way is united with the Creator.
But if we do not admit this, our faith is finished
and our hope for the future blessings has completely vanished.
There is no resurrection and no general judgment.
Since, as you say, we creatures are united unconsciously with our Maker,

our mind has no vivid knowledge of this
and God, according to you probably, as He is not life,
does not give us life when He unites with us.
Again, the Creator is incorruptible; creatures are corruptible.
Now those who have sinned are led to corruption,
not only their body, but also their very souls.
And according to this reasoning, we are both in body and soul,
corruptible, for we have all together been put
under the bondage of the corruption of the spiritual death and of sin.
If then He who is by nature incorruptible is united with me corruptible,
truly one of two things will result,
which I will describe to you.
For either He will transform me and make me incorruptible
or the Incorruptible will be transferred into corruptible.
And in such a case, I perhaps would not be aware of it,
since it is He who has been transformed and has become as I am.
But if I become totally incorruptible from my corrupt state,
because I have been united with Him who is incorruptible,
how is it that I would not be aware of this?
How is it that I would not see this fact in my very experience;
that I would not know it consciously, the fact that I am
what I was not?
In fact, to say that God united Himself with men
and He does not give them a share in His divine incorruptibility,
but rather He is the One who is dragged down to their corruptibility,
this is, for him who so reasons, to assert emphatically
the destruction of the Indestructible.
He indeed blasphemes and he himself totally loses life.
Since this is impossible, accept rather the other possibility
and hasten to participate in incorruptibility before your end!
God is the Light, but we are in darkness,
but it is perhaps more true to say we ourselves are the darkness,
and God will shine in no other place, of this do not err,
if not in those souls alone with whom He will be united
before their death.
But for the others, even if they were brilliant preachers, as I have said,
He will appear as fire to them, completely unapproachable,
and He will prove what kind of work was proper to each one
and consequently He will depart
from them as unworthy of Him
and they will receive their just punishment.
Likewise here below as there in the life to come,
He alone is the light of souls.
But we are darkness; we have souls with no light.
If then the light of souls unites with my soul,

if that light will be extinguished and becomes then darkness,
or if my soul will be illumined,
then it is like the light.
For the light, when it is lighted, puts to rout at once the darkness
and this is surely the work of the visible light.
If then the created light does for you such work,
if it enlightens your eyes and gladdens the soul,
permitting you to see things that before you could not see,
what can the Creator of this sensible light not do in illumining
your soul,
He who said, "Let there be light" and immediately there was?
What then do you think, if He shines spiritually in a heart
or in a mind as a bright flash of light or as a great sun
what is He not able to accomplish in the soul, completely
immersed in the light?
Will He not illumine this soul
and make it experience Himself in an accurate knowledge
who He really is?
Yes, this is really what so happens.
This is what is thus brought about.
In this way is the grace of the Spirit revealed,
both through Him and in Him, the Son with the Father,
and one sees Them as far as it is possible to contemplate Them.
And then that which concerns Them he learns from Them
in an ineffable manner and he expresses this
and writes it for all the others
and he articulates doctrines befitting God
as all the holy Fathers who lived earlier taught.
Indeed in this manner did the holy Fathers articulate the divine symbol,
because they had become such as we said,
men who with God commented or declared the things of God.
For who could theologize about God
that He was both One and Three,
or who could refute heresies without becoming a "theologian"
or who received the title of saint without having participated in
the Holy Spirit?
No one absolutely!
In the same way also the intelligible light comes natural
in a conscious awareness to those who receive it.
Those who say that they receive it with no conscious awareness
are really calling themselves unconscious persons,
but we call them dead men, without any life,
even if they seem to be still living.
O error! O what folly!
But, O Light, shine on them, shine so that, in seeing You,

they may truly be persuaded that You are the true light!
And that those with whom You unite Yourself as a light,
You would make them like to You.
"I shine always and just as before the face of blind men,
but they do not wish to see, rather they close their eyes,
and do not wish to look upon Me, O child!
Even more they turn their eyes away to the other side
and I turn Myself around to stand directly in front of them,
but again they turn their eye away
and do not contemplate at all the light of My countenance.
Among them some on the one hand cover their eyes with a veil
while others even flee far away in their very great hatred towards Me.
What then should I do for them?
I really do not know.
To save them against their free will by violence?
This indeed would seem a torture for those not wishing to be saved.
For wanting the good will really then be a good.
If the good is not freely desired, then it is not a good.
And for this reason, I see those who wish it
and I am seen by them
and I make them co-heirs of My Kingdom.
But those not wishing it, I allow them their free will in the world.
And they themselves become their own judges before the judgment,
because, while I was shining, the unapproachable Light,
they alone brought darkness to themselves
in so far as they did not want to see the light
and hence remained in darkness."

HYMN 35

That all the Saints, having been illumined, are seen bathed in the light and contemplate the glory of God as far as it is possible to human nature to see God.

Look down from above, my God
and be pleased to appear
and converse with a poor person.
Reveal Your light,
opening up Heaven to me,
or rather, open my mind
and enter now deeply within me!
Speak as earlier
through means of my stained tongue,
concerning the things certain persons say
that today there is no one
who has seen God consciously
and that there never was anyone
in prior times, except the Apostles.
But not even those themselves, they say,
saw your God and Father distinctly,
but He is unknowable to all
as well as invisible.
They declare solemnly
that this is so, citing the word
of Your very beloved
disciple, John,
who said, "Nobody among men
has ever seen God."
Yes, my Christ, speak quickly
so that before those foolish ones
I may not appear to be talking nonsense!
"Write," He said, "what I tell you.
Write and do not fear!
I, God, was before all days,
all hours and times
but also before all ages
and before all creation,
visible and spiritual.
I exceeded every mind and reason,
beyond every thought,
Unique Intimacy of the Unique with the Unique.
Nothing of the visible creatures

and nothing even of the invisible creatures
existed before actually coming into existence.
I alone am uncreated
with My Father and My Spirit.
I am the only One without a beginning,
coming from My Father who is without a beginning.
No one among the angels,
not even among the archangels
nor among the other angelic orders,
has ever seen My nature
nor Myself, the Creator,
in My total being such as I am.
It is only a ray of glory
and a streak of My light
that they contemplate and by which they are divinized.
For it is like a mirror
which receives the rays of the sun
or a crystal stone
which radiates brilliantly in mid-day.
In like manner, they all receive the rays of My divinity.
But to contemplate Me totally,
this never has anyone been considered worthy to do
not among the angels
nor men nor the holy Powers.
For I am beyond all creatures
and invisible to all.
It is not because I bear at all bad will towards them
that they do not contemplate me,
nor because I am lacking in beauty
that I hide Myself so as not to manifest Myself to them.
But it is because none of them
is found worthy of My divinity.
There is no creature
who is equal in power to the Creator.
For such a thought is unfitting.
But, having seen a small ray of light,
they receive a revelation that I really exist
and they know that I am God
and that I brought them into existence.
And in wonderment and fear,
they celebrate Me in song."
For it is impossible that there be created another
who is God by nature,
equal in power with the Creator,
having the same nature as He.

It is indeed completely impossible
that any creature be
of the same essence as the Creator.
For how could the created
ever become equal to the Uncreated?
Created beings are inferior
to Him who is always equally
both eternal and uncreated.
And indeed you bear witness
that this is so
and that there is as much difference
as between a plow or a scythe
and the one who made them.
How therefore can the plow completely understand the one
who made it?
And how can the scythe know the one, tell me, who uses it?
At least if he does not give to them such a knowledge;
at least if he does not give them sight, he who has built them?
Is this not then impossible for all creatures?
Indeed no man, not even an angel has received completely the power
to bestow the Spirit upon others
or to give them life,
but only the Lord of all who has the power,
who has the might, as being the source of life.
He brings forth living beings endowed with souls,
such exactly as He wishes,
and He graces each one,
as an artisan, as a master,
with all that He desires and wishes.
To Him be glory and power,
now, always and forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 36

Thanksgiving for the exile and tribulations which the author has endured in the persecution raised against Him.

I give thanks to You, Lord, I thank You, Unique One,
who know the hearts of men, O just King, full of mercy!
I thank You, O eternal, all-powerful Word,
who have descended to our earth
and have taken on flesh, my God
and You became that which You were not, a man like me,
without change and diminution and sin,
in order that suffering, You, the impassible one, unjustly
from the unlawful one,
provide me, the condemned, with impassibility
in imitating Your sufferings, O my Christ!
Indeed, Your judgment is just
and also Your decree which You commanded us to observe,
in Your great mercy.
This commandment is to imitate Your humility
so that as You, being sinless, suffered Yourself,
so we who have sinned grievously may submit
both to the temptations and persecutions
and whippings and tribulations
and finally death from the hands of sinners.
For You were accused of being possessed by demons
and You were considered a fool, by the ungodly,
and as an enemy of God and violator of the Law.
You were captured as a criminal and bound by chains,
You were dragged alone,
since all of Your disciples and friends deserted You.
You also stood before the judge as one condemned.
And when You spoke, You received a blow from a servant.
And when You were silent, You were at once sentenced to death.
For Your words were like swords for the lawless,
while Your silence, O King, was the cause of Your condemnation.
Also, not bearing to see You who alone were just,
the unjust gave You over to a most shameful death.
They hit You on the head
and they crowned You with thorns.
They clothed You with a scarlet cloak.
They spit upon Your face. O Woe!
And they made fun of You.
"Hail, King!" You heard the Jews riduculing You.

You carried the Cross, Savior, on Your shoulders
and hoisted up upon it, You were nailed to it, my God.
They nailed Your hands and feet
and they gave vinegar for You to drink.
They pierced Your side with a lance, O all-Merciful One!
The earth did not support these insults but it trembled in fear.
And in a moment it gave up all the dead that were in its bowels.
The sun, in seeing You, was changed to blood
and the moon then was eclipsed in darkness.
The veil of the temple then was divided in two from top to bottom.
And the perpetrators of the crime do not understand anything
at all of this.
But after You were placed in the grave, they place guards there
and they seal it with a stone,
thinking they could thus contain You.
You indeed are risen, Master, by Your own power
and You left to Your sinners the unbroken seals.
The apparition of the angels rolled back the stone
and filled those who were there guarding the tomb with fear.
They did not want to comprehend anything at all of what happened
but they remained blinded in their mind,
preserving a heart that was hardened until the end.
What then is of great significance for me:
if I also undergo that which You Yourself who are without sin suffered
for the world, O Master, in order to save the world,
while I who have sinned so excessively from my early youth
and have angered You, O Christ, by my works and words?
What is important for me really, or rather, exceeds every glory
is that which makes me a participator of Your unspeakable glory,
the sharing in Your sufferings, the imitation of Your works,
the sharing in Your divinity, that which Your
humility brings about,
for those who diligently seek after it with consciousness.
I thank You, Master, for I suffer rather unjustly.
If it is justly, let it be in expiation of my crimes,
for the purification, O Christ, of my innumerable failings.
And do not permit me ever to have to bear sufferings
beyond my strength, O Master, or tests or afflictions,
but always grant me grace to come out of them successful, O my God,
and the strength of being able to withstand the sorrows!
For you are from the beginning the One who bestows all good
upon those who with all their heart fall down worthily
before Your force
and upon them You bestow the gifts of faith, of works and of precious
hopes and all the gifts

of the divine and adorable Spirit,
O Merciful One,
now and always and forever. Amen.

HYMN 37

A petition and prayer of the author to God for His help.

Master, Christ, Master and Savior of souls,
Master, God of all visible things and of the invisible powers,
since You are the Creator of everything in Heaven,
of all of that which is above Heaven
and that which is of Heaven,
of that which is under the earth
and that which is on the earth!
You are their Lord, God and Master.
You take under Your power in Your hand all creation,
because You hold in Your hand everything.
Your hand, O Master, is this great power
which fulfills the wish of Your Father,
who fashions, works out and creates
and fulfills the plan of salvation in all things
that touch our lives in an ineffable manner.
It is then this hand, which has led me also even until now,
out of nothing, it has made me come into existence.
And when I was born into this world,
I was totally ignorant of You, my good Master,
You, my Creator, You, O my Fashioner.
And yet I was in the world as one who was blind
and as an atheist, one not knowing my God.
Then You Yourself had mercy and looked down upon me.
You turned me to Yourself
and made Your light shine brightly within my darkness.
You drew me to Yourself, O my Moulder.
Then You led me out of the deepest pit,
from the darkness of my passions, the deepest darkness
of desires and pleasures of this life.
You showed me the way.
You gave me a guide to lead me along the way of Your commandments.
I followed him without a care; I fulfilled thoroughly his commandments.
I rejoiced with an unspeakable joy, O Word,
for I saw that he was following Your footsteps
and that he was in frequent converse with You.
But seeing You, my good Master, with my guide and my father,
I experienced an ineffable love and desire.
I was beyond faith and hope
and I was saying, "Look. I am seeing things of the future
and the Kingdom of Heaven is nearby

and I see with my eyes the blessings which no eye has seen,
no ear has heard."
Having all these, what more could I hope for
or in what other things could I show my faith?
For there will never be anything greater than this.
In such I thrived and found my pleasure.
But then You took from earth my father, alas,
You snatched my guide from before my eyes.
O Lover of mankind, You left me alone, completely an orphan,
totally isolated, completely without any help.
And then You placed me alas, as a superior and shepherd
over Your flock,
me who was truly a stranger with no protection
and You arranged all this by Your decrees which only You fathom.
For this reason I now beg You,
I am asking, imploring, prostrating myself before You.
Do not turn away, do not abandon me.
Do not leave me alone, O my Master!
You know how difficult is the route.
You know the madness of the robbers who attack us.
You know the multitude of evil wild beasts.
You know my weakness, O my Christ,
and my ignorance which I as a human being possess.
Besides, I do not even think I am completely human,
but I am much inferior to humans.
In all things, indeed, I am the last of all;
I am truly the least of all men.
Lavish me, my King and God,
with Your great mercy, I beg You,
so that this mercy completely would make up, O Savior,
for my deficiencies and my inadequacies,
and it would make of me a totally saved person,
no longer lacking the necessary things
and that it would place me, Your servant, in Your presence,
O Word, as one without condemnation, without blame.
And I would sing Your praises, forever and ever.
Amen.

HYMN 38

On theology: that the mind, having been purified from the corporeal passions, contemplates immaterially the Immaterial and the Invisible.

What road should I traverse?
What path ought I to avoid?
What ladder should I climb?
What gate should I enter
or how can I open the door and of what room?
How can I find inside of what house Him
who holds all things in His hand and in His palm?
On top of what mountain should I climb
and from what side and what cave ought I gropingly there to explore?
Or what swamp must one pass through in order to be worthy
to see and to possess Him who is present everywhere?
And who is unseizable and invisible,
O wretched one that I am?
Into what Hell should I have to descend,
to what Heaven climb
and to the ends of what sea should one have to go
to find Him who is completely inaccessible,
Him who is totally infinite, completely untouchable?
How should I find Him, who is immaterial, in matter,
the Creator in creation,
the Incorruptible in corruptible things, tell me?
How should I be outside the world, who am within the world?
How should I unite myself with the Immaterial
who am united with matter?
How should I embrace the Incorruptible, who am totally corruptible?
I who am in death how can I draw completely near the Life?
I am a cadaver, how can I approach the Immortal?
I who am completely grass, how would I dare to touch fire?
But yet listen now to the solution of these unspeakable mysteries!
Before there were the heavens, before earth was made,
God existed, the Trinity, the Unique One and He alone.
Light eternal, uncreated Light, Light absolutely inexpressible.
At the same time God immortal, without end, unique,
eternal, perpetual, the greatest good exceedingly.
Consider well, in the beginning, there was only God, the Trinity,
who was beyond any beginning, beyond any source,
incomparable, immeasurable in His height, in His depth and width,
without limit in His grandeur and His light.
There was no air as now, no darkness, absolutely nothing;

no light, no water, no atmosphere, nothing of such that exist.
But there was only spirit, God, totally in the form of light.
Likewise He was all powerful and immaterial.
Then He created the Angels, the Principalities,
and the Powers, the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Dominations
and the Thrones,
and the nameless hosts that serve Him
and stand around in His presence in fear and trembling.
Later He created the firmament, as a vault,
material and visible, sensible, having a thickness.
And in a blink of an eye, He stretched it out in a way only He knows.
Likewise He created the earth and the waters
and all of the abysses in the middle of the firmament in the same
unique thought, all such as we now see.
And the firmament, with visible limits as I said,
remained without having within itself any immaterial light.
It did not intercept the radiances of the immaterial light.
For, being material, as was said, it could not be outside
of the immaterial,
which is completely beyond any place, but by its nature and essence.
For the immaterial is separated from the material.
It has no place, being illimitable.
He brings by His word all things into existence in Him
and by nature He is separated absolutely from His creatures.
For just as the human mind and an angel are not limited
but are beyond any walls and doors and any house,
nor can they be confined within these limits,
all the more the Maker of all things is not only completely outside,
but also is not inside of the firmament,
nor found in any other place.
But God is absolutely everywhere present to all material beings
and all creatures are made by Him.
Thus the firmament was made material
and stands separated by nature, as was said, from the immaterial light.
It indeed remained without any light, a great dwelling place as it were.
But the Master of all lighted the sun and the moon,
to shine brightly in a sensible way for all creatures of sense
and He gave into our hands a light to shine in the night
born marvelously from iron and stone.
But He is separated from all light,
He is above light, above every radiance,
He completely transcends every creature.
For just as when the sun shines, the stars do not appear,
so likewise if the Master of the sun wishes to shine,
no living being can bear the rising of this Sun!

So He has joined together spirit with material dust –
and He has placed all of us humans among the material beings,
so that in a steady faith and through the observance
of His commandments,
having purified this spirit which we have disrupted
by the darkness of our disobedience, this spirit which has been immersed
in the concupiscence of material passions and the taste of pleasures,
we may again spiritually contemplate the immaterial Light
in the material creatures, this Light,
which I have said, was God, transcending any beginning;
an invisible light to sensible and material eyes,
inaccessible to the spiritual eyes of the heart.
Indeed, I stand in amazement how the soul, being completely immaterial
and possessing in its spirit a spiritual eye,
in using sensibly the eyes of the body, like two windows
towards which it inclines
sees through these all visible creation
and then again returns to contemplate immaterially
the intellectual and immaterial realities,
being held between the incorruptible and corruptible things
in an inexplicable way.
The soul is drawn by the latter realities towards pleasures and passions.
While on the other hand, from the former immaterial realities it is given
the wings to fly up high to Heaven.
There it tries to stay but at the same time
it is drawn downward
and again it ardently strives always to be carried upward,
desiring to fly clear beyond the visible things.
The soul, having regarded all things in the world as a snare,
absolutely fears even to walk on the earth or to settle down,
lest it allow itself to be snatched up by these traps
and become nourishment for wild beasts.
Such was the life of all the pious and faithful and holy persons,
such all ought to imitate
so that also they may stand without blame with them
near to Christ, God, the Judge of all,
and may be partakers of His glory and His Kingdom
for Ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 39

That the desire and love for God surpasses every love and human desire. The spirit of those who purify themselves are bathed in the light of God and is completely divinized and consequently is called the "mind of Christ."

Your beauty is extraordinary,
Your appearance is without comparison.
Your magnificence is inexpressible.
Your glory is beyond human language.
Your goodness and gentleness are constant, O Master Christ,
surpassing the thoughts of all earthly beings.
And for this reason the desire and love
that draw us to You
conquers over every other love and desire of mortals.
For so far as You, O Savior, exceed all visible things,
thus far the desire for You is greater
and eclipses all human love
and turns from the erotic passions of carnal pleasure
and quickly enough repels all concupiscences.
For concupiscence, rising out of our passions, is really darkness
and the practice of shameful sins is like the darkest part of night.
The light on the contrary are the passionate longing
and love for You, O Savior.
For this reason, when love rises up in the souls of those who love God,
at once it ushers in the day of impassibility, O my God,
and dissipates the darkness of passions and pleasures.
O marvel, O paradoxical work of the Most-High God
and power of the mysteries that are accomplished secretly!
Yes, You bestow upon us both the incorruptible and corruptible goods.
Yes, You give us the earthly, O God, along with the heavenly blessings,
the present as well also as the future goods, O Word,
since You are the Creator absolutely of all things.
You possess all power over heavenly things,
O Master, and of things down here below.
How is it that we wretches can love humans more than You
and even become, unfortunately, their slaves,
in order to receive from them little and ephemeral gifts
and to them we give over our wretched souls
and our bodies to be abused as vessels of little value?
And we, being Your members, O Master,
of You, the holy Master of the universe,
holy members in truth of the Sovereign Master,
should we not shudder at having abandoned ourselves

freely to the perverse demons,
to accomplish the shameful acts of sin?
Who then would not sob among Your faithful and dedicated servants,
who would not lament for the audacity of such a great arrogance?
Who would not be frightened at Your so great restraint, O my God?
Who would not tremble before the punishment of the divine judgment,
the unbearable and inextinguishable fire, alas, of Gehenna,
where there are weeping and gnashing of teeth
and a suffering without consolation and an indescribable sorrow?
But, O Sun, Creator of the sun and moon and of all the stars
and of every other kind of light,
hide me beyond such lights within Your very light,
so that, seeing You alone in Your light,
I may not look at the world nor the things in the world,
but, seeing them, I may be as one not seeing them,
and hearing, as one not hearing, O Word.
I will indeed become like those who are seated in the darkness
of the pleasures of this life,
covered over by the darkness of their love for glory.
Seeing, they do not see Your divine glory
and hearing, they do not completely comprehend
Your commandments and Your decrees.
I too would be like them in Your light:
not seeing the world nor the things of the world.
For who, after seeing You and after having been given
a new awareness by Your brilliant enlightenment
through Your glory, through Your divine light,
would not be changed in his intelligence, soul and heart
and would not be considered worthy in an extraordinary way
to see and hear in a manner quite different, O Savior?
For the intelligence is immersed in Your light
and it radiates and is transfigured into light,
similar to Your glory
and the intelligence of him who has been deemed worthy to arrive
at this state is called Your intelligence.
He indeed then merits to have truly Your mind
and he becomes inseparably one with You.
How indeed does he not see as You do and hears
all things with impassibility?
How could he desire at all, who has become god,
any sensible good, a thing or a glory
that is so temporal and perishable,
he who has transcended all these things
and is above every visible glory?
For he who transcends all visible things

and has approached near to God,
or rather, he himself has become god,
how could he wish to seek after glory or pleasure
in the things here below?
For these things are for him truly a shame, an insult,
a despising, a dishonor.
His glory and pleasure and richness are God, the Trinity,
the things of God and the divine attributes.
To Him is due are glory, honor and power,
always, both now and for all ages. Amen.

HYMN 40

A discourse on the grace of the gifts of God, how the Father writing these words was moved to act under the work of the Holy Spirit. A teaching enunciated by God Himself on what one must do to receive the salvation of those who have been saved.

Again the light illumines me, again it is distinctly seen.
Again it opens the heavens, again it cuts through the night.
Again it brings all things into being, again it alone is seen.
Again it takes me out of all visible things
and likewise, O marvel! it separates me from sensible things.
Again He who is above all the heavens,
whom no human has ever seen,
without opening the heavens, without destroying the night,
without leaving the atmosphere or the roof of the house,
is found indivisibly and entirely with me, wretch that I am,
within my cell, within my mind,
at the center of my heart, O awesome mystery!
While all things remain as they are,
the light approaches me and carries me above everything.
And as it is at the center of all things,
it lifts me out of everything.
I do not know whether it is also with my body,
but I arrive there on high, truthfully in one whole,
where there is only a light, simple,
which I gaze at and I become simple and with no evil left in me.
Such are the strange workings, O my Christ, of Your wonders,
such the works of Your power and of Your love for mankind,
which You accomplish in us who are unworthy.
This is why, therefore, Your fear grips me and I tremble
and why I am constantly preoccupied
and I push myself with force, asking what I can return to You,
what I can offer You for so many gifts,
for such great mercy, for the innumerable gifts
which You have rendered me.
But not finding anything in me nor anything that is my own in my life,
but that all things are at Your service, all are the works of Your hands,
I am even more overwhelmed with shame, even more filled with sorrow.
Even more, Savior, I implore You to teach me
what I ought to do, in order indeed to honor You,
in order to please You,
in order to be found without condemnation, O Savior,
before Your fearful tribunal on the day of judgment.

"Listen to what everyone should do who wants to be saved,
and especially you, more than all others, since you indeed beg Me!
Today, resolve; you have died; today you have renounced.
Today, be persuaded, you have abandoned the whole world.
Today, having left your friends, relatives, all vain glory,
at the same time renounce also any worries for the things here below,
and on your shoulders carry the cross, embrace it vigorously.
Up to your end, endure the labors of the conflicts, the sorrows of the
afflictions and the nails of sufferings.
Receive them joyfully as though they were a crown of glory.
Struck constantly by the lances of insults
and stoned violently by all sorts of dishonors,
in place of blood, by shedding tears you will become a martyr
and by carrying with constant thanksgiving the mockeries
and the slaps, you will be a participator in My divinity and My glory.
And if you show yourself as the last of all men
and the slave and servant, I will later declare you
as first before all those others, as I have promised.
If you love your enemies and all who hate you
and if you pray exceeding from the depths of your soul
for those who calumniate you
and if you do good to them as far as you can,
you really have become like your Father above.
And having acquired a clean heart through such deeds,
you will see in your heart God whom no man has ever seen.
And if it should also happen that you are persecuted for justice,
then leap with joy because the Kingdom of Heaven is yours
and what is there greater than this?
These and many others which I have prescribed practise
and teach others to do the same and you and all the others
who believe Me, if you wish to be saved and live with Me
forever and ever.
But if you refuse and reluctantly accept them
and regard it as a shame and a dishonor to suffer these
and to give your life on behalf of My commandments,
how indeed do you ask Me to teach you
how to be saved and by what actions you can be united with Me?
But why do you so simply call Me your God?
And why do you so foolishly think you believe in Me?
For I suffered all of these things willingly for you.
I was crucified, I died the death of criminals
and the insults raised against Me have become the glory of the world,
the life and splendor and the resurrection for the dead
and a boast for all who have believed in Me.
And My shameful death has been a garment of immortality

and of true divinization for all believers.
This is indeed why all imitators of My awesome sufferings
participate also in My divinity
and will become heirs of My Kingdom,
participators with Me in the ineffable blessings, so mysterious,
becoming my companions forever.
But the others who do not weep, who do not lament,
who do not show compunction for their great insensitivity
because they have left life
and have been given up to death, in a terrible way, have been
cut off from God."
Rescue me, O Master of all, from their number
and count me worthy to be a sharer in Your all pure sufferings,
me, the simple and last of Your servants,
so that, as You said, O God, I too may be a participator
of Your glory and the joy of Your blessings,
O Word, even now, as in an enigma and in an analogical way
and in a mirror,
but then, may I know You as I have been known. Amen.

HYMN 41

Thanksgiving to God for the benefits received from Him and a petition to comprehend why those who have reached perfection are submitted to be tried by the demons along with teaching concerning those who renounce the world and a rule given by the mouth of God.

You know my poverty, my abandonment,
You know my isolation, You see my weakness and infirmity.
O God, who have made me,
You do not ignore me, but You have a concern for me
and You know all things.
Look at my humble heart, look at my contrite heart.
Look at me as I approach You in despair, my God.
And from on high give me Your grace, give me Your Divine Spirit!
Give me Your Paraclete, O Savior, send Him as You promised.
Send Him even now upon me as I sit in the Upper Chamber,
O Master, completely transcending every earthly care
beyond the whole world,
and seeking You as I wait to receive Your Spirit.
Do not, therefore, delay, O Merciful One, do not turn away
Your eyes, O Compassionate One.
Do not forget him who seeks You with a thirsting soul!
Do not render sterile in me the Life I have unworthily received.
Do not reject me with disgust, O God and do not abandon me!
I cast myself upon Your tenderness,
I take refuge in Your mercy
and I appeal to Your love for me as grounds for Your intercession.
I have not labored, I have not done works of justice.
Never have I kept one of Your commandments,
but I spent my whole life as a prodigal son;
nevertheless, You have not turned Your eyes from me,
but You have searched me out and found me.
I had gone astray and You led me away from the road of error
and on Your immaculate shoulders
by the light of Your grace,
You lifted me up, O Christ,
You carried me away, O Merciful One
and not letting me feel the least fatigue
but rather letting me relax as in a carriage,
You made me travel effortlessly the rugged routes
until You brought me to the sheepfold of Your sheep,
until You made me enter into communion and numbered
among Your servants.

I proclaim Your pity, I sing Your mercy.
I stand in amazement as I thank You for the richness of Your kindness
I who have been called by You, as I said, my God,
I now see myself, as I think, completely dedicated to Your service,
suspended by Your light and attached to You,
held by Your love, bound by Your charity,
I am embarrassed, in a stupor
and I cannot understand how it is
that affliction does not await my unfortunate soul,
how Your anger does not overwhelm me,
how it does not completely cover me,
how it does not deprive me of Your sweetness, O my God,
and how the turmoil of the things of the earth does not separate me
from Your joy?
Why after so many falls and sinful actions,
why, after I have fully exhausted You, O my Christ,
do You not abandon me, O Good One,
leaving me through Your anger worse than the earlier one when
my soul was given up to passions?
Tell me and teach me now the depth of Your judgments;
tell me and do not feel a loathing for me
who speak so unworthily,
You once ate with sinners and prostitutes
and sat at table, O Master, with prodigals and publicans!
To this the Master replied to me and said:
"I have taken you from the world as an infant
and have carried you in My arms;
you know well what I am saying,
and I wrapped you in swaddling clothes,
covering all your members.
I nourished you with milk better than any nourishment and any drink,
for that which comes from Me is ineffable, completely inexpressible.
I gave you to a teacher – you know of whom I speak –
And as to a little baby which grows bigger each hour,
he prodigiously gave you all necessities,
he nourished you properly.
But already you were an adolescent
and I should say a young man!
You are not oblivious that it was I always with you
and growing in you and surrounding you with My protection
until you had passed happily through all the stages of growth.
And now are you not of age?
Or, rather, you are a man, truly come of an adult age and already
beginning towards old age.
How can you wish, now to be rocked in My arms as a baby?

How do you demand to be clothed in baby clothes and carried again?
How to be nourished by milk and be still under a teacher?
Are you not ashamed to speak thusly, tell Me?
You are a man, be then of service to others and nourish them
and procure for them all that will help them to grow.
Stand up well against the enemies and give blow for blow!
– You know what enemies I speak of, the armies of demons –
You receive a blow; hit unsparingly back,
you fall; get up!
The arrows sent against you, at once send them back
unceasingly upon those who sent them against you
and upon those who wish you all this evil.
Since they wound you with despair,
may they be wounded by hope that you send against them.
If their anger hits you as blows from their fists
and their fury presses hard upon you,
let your meekness bruise their face
which they present at your door
and thus drive them far from your house!
Is it, as I said, that you are a baby or a child,
that your soul now is still weak,
that your spirit is still very weak to fight back?
No, for indeed you know how to flee from the enemies
and how to counter-attack victoriously
for when you fight, you have Me as a helper and protector.
And when you take flight,
you have in Me a sure and invincible protection.
What things on earth afflict you, tell Me?
Is it gold or silver or precious stones?
But what is more radiant than I,
what has more brilliance or what gem is priceless,
absolutely without a price as I am?
Is it to be stripped of your lands or deprived of wheat
or to be without wine that completely shatters you?
But what other garden is similar to what I am?
What land of temporal inhabitants here below is comparable
to the land of the meek?
What bread all prepared or what wine of the world is like to My grace,
like to the Divine Spirit?
Is like to the Bread of Life which I give,
My Body and Blood – given to all those
who with a pure heart and with an unwavering faith
with fear and trembling
eat and drink Me both spiritually and sensibly.
What pleasure, what joy, what glory, tell Me,

on the earth is greater than to see Me alone,
to see Me reflected as an enigma,
to contemplate the light of My glory and it alone
and thanks to it to be instructed in all these things and many others.
To know accurately that I am God,
the Creator of all things;
and to comprehend that the man seated deep down in the ditch
has been reconciled with Me,
that he treats with Me without an intermediary
as a friend with his friend.
That, after having passed from the rank of a mercenary
and the fear of servitude,
he serves Me without resistance, honoring Me with love.
And thus he becomes one of My household
by obeying My commandments.
I am not speaking of those who serve Me as mercenaries
or again those who come to Me as slaves.
But I speak of My friends and those I know
who are My sons.
It is of their actions. What are they?
Write briefly:
To consider themselves as poorer than all men in the world,
– I do not speak only of fellow ascetics or men in the world,
but even as really worse than pagans themselves,
to consider as a loss of eternal life
a small infraction of one of the least commandments.
To treat little children as adults
and to show reverence to them
as though they were among the very famous.
To show also honor to the blind
by thinking that I from on high see the actions of all men
and to do likewise on My behalf – all that you are going to write!
Do not harbor anything at all in your heart against anyone,
even if it be a simple emotion or the least suspicion.
Pray with all your soul in time of suffering in your heart,
with compassion for all who sin against you,
equally as for those who boldly would do the same against Me.
With tears implore their conversion,
at the same time bless them who curse you
and praise those who with jealousy constantly criticize you.
Consider your benefactors those who wish ill of you,
but towards those who do not yield to you
or do not obey you
just as towards those who have absolutely denied Me, their Master,
groan and weep unceaselessly.

Do not cease to admonish them!
"For who receives you, receives Me," I have said,
"and who hears you, equally hears Me."
But he who does not receive in trembling your words and exhortations
and does not fulfill them until death,
will not have a share with My eternal glory.
He will not have a place with Me, the Crucified,
who have obeyed My Father even until death.
He will not be standing on My right nor will he be a co-heir
with those who have crucified themselves.
Therefore, do not cease to exhort,
do not cease to weep,
do not cease to eagerly desire their salvation,
so that if they obey and are converted,
you can consider them as your brothers,
having won them who are your members
and presented them to Me as sincere obedient subjects,
in order that I may receive them through your intercession
and glorify them that I may along with you
bring them as gift offerings to My Father.
But if they do not renounce their own personal wills,
if they do not despise even their own souls as I have said,
if they do not become dead to their own wills
and live in this life according to your will,
fulfilling through doing your will My own will,
you will not lose your reward,
you will not be deprived of it,
but rather I will give you a double portion instead of your simple lot,
because even when you were not obeyed, you did not stop speaking,
but rather you received for this more hatred and more aversion
and you were despised by them just as I was hated then and now
by those and by others who resemble them.
Such are the works by which I desire that you serve Me,
by such works and similar ones, strive to please Me.
In such works, in fact, I am greatly pleased.
Do not prefer laziness,
do not place at all anything before the good of your soul,
nothing of what is in the world!
For what profit is it if you gain the whole world
or instruct or teach all those in the world
or even save all of them if one does not save himself?
How is it, therefore, that someone could save others
and not save himself
but the miserable one would lose his own soul?
Whoever violates My commandment, the Master of all,

and so to say tramples on it and steps over it
whoever transgresses My laws by violating My ordinances,
once he has transgressed the enclosure and the cloister
of My commandments,
even if he would have saved the world and all in the world,
he will be a stranger to Me
and he will be excluded from My sheep.
And precisely because he has violated the cloister of the
enclosure and permitted the sheep to go out through other doors
than the one single door
and let wild beasts enter unlawfully,
he will undergo an indescribable punishment for all the lost sheep,
and he will be handed over to the fire of hell
and he will be the prey for worms, O wretched one!"
This is what the Father said through the Son,
what the Spirit pronounced who is the mouth of the Master.
And the angels approved with unceasing acclamations.
The just fell down, hearing these words and said:
"Your judgment is without fault,
Your sentence is above any suspicion,
for You have judged passionlessly, O all-merciful God.
For how can he who has not given up his own will
and who has not preferred as important
and who has not observed perfectly the will of Your representative
as Your very own, O Master,
– just as You Yourself kept the will of Your Father, O Merciful One,
how will he see himself as Your co-heir having with You any part?
And above all, if he continues in this attitude until death,
not doing anything but his own will,
not listening to the voice of blood,
not preferring that of flesh,
that is to say, of his parents, of natural attachment,
the affection which ties those who are on earth to those things given up
and leads them completely backwards?
The martyrs cried out: "Just judgment, truly!"
It is like him who generously offers himself up for martyrdom,
if consequently his family comes to him,
wives and children and they say to him such things with sorrow:
"Do you not have pity on your children,
do you not have compassion?
Are you without mercy, untouched by the solitude of your wife?
Does not their poverty touch you, not disturb you,
nor their loss, does it not make you reflect and have pity;
but you leave them orphans, wanderers, wretched,
and your wife a widow and you prefer only to save yourself?

How would you not be rather condemned as a criminal
for having abandoned us all to such loss
while you seek only to save your own soul?"
Yes, he ought not at all listen for a moment to their voice,
absolutely not give an ear to their cries
and neither by gifts should he escape his chains and his suffering,
nor by denying You, O Christ, be delivered.
But he ought, as if he were already delivered, to remain in his torments,
persevering in the jails, in hunger and in thirst
without a thought for his possessions or properties,
without even letting, if possible, his thought go out of
the prison even for a moment
but in prison to behold You, O Master of all,
and to devote himself with his whole mind to a contemplation
turned to You
and to hold fast until death for love of You, his only love.
Neither ought he at all to look at those who defect,
at those who deny You and turn back
to their early vomiting, to their past deeds,
to their earthly cares of their wives and children,
nor should he allow himself under any pretext
to be bound by such things,
since he no longer has control over his own life!
This is the reason why many, when you had opened the prisons,
and let fall their chains completely from their body,
Your servants did not wish to go out, nor to escape,
but remained as though they were still in chains.
In a like manner, therefore, O Savior, those who are now found
in the world
and who have renounced the world
and at the same time all their parents, friends, companions
and every concern for the things of the world,
and, above everything else, have renounced their own will,
such men have absolutely no more power over themselves,
but even if they are not enjoined by their abbots,
they ought to observe their duties for Your sake, O Master,
for they have said not to men,
but to God that they would observe obedience
and subjection to the abbots and to all the brothers
who with them practise in the monastery asceticism.
And island in the middle of the sea,
this is how they should live in the monastery
and as far as the whole world goes
to regard it as absolutely inaccessible for them
as though a great chasm were placed around their whole monastery

in order to prevent them in the world from coming to the monastery
and to prevent those on the island from passing over to them
in the world,
to prevent them from regarding them with attachment,
that is, not to entertain in their hearts or thoughts
a remembrance of those in the world,
but they should conduct themselves as
dead men before the dead,
without experiencing toward them any feeling.
and thus they become as truly lambs, voluntary victims."
Here are words similar to the saintly words of the martyrs,
words full of love, full of affection for their Master.
The Cherubim who have heard these, sang with fear:
"Glory to You," they said, "O King, glory to You, O most Merciful.
You have no need of tyrants to produce on the earth martyrs.
They suffer a martyrdom at each hour by reason only
of their love for You."
"Yes," said the Father again through the Son and the Spirit declared:
"Truly, those who love God with their whole heart,
who persevere in this love, His only love,
and at each moment they die to their own will,
these are My genuine friends,
these are My co-heirs,
these are indeed the martyrs, by only their free choice,
without combs or torture benches, brasiers or cauldrons,
and without fire to burn them
or swords to sever them."
To which all the heavenly orders together shouted:
"Your judgment is just, O most Merciful,
let it be written and sealed, now and for all the ages. Amen."

HYMN 42

That those who here below are already united with God through the participation of the Holy Spirit when they leave this life, they will be with Him there for all eternity. But if not, it will then be the reverse for those who here live differently.

The beginning of life for me is the end
and the end for me is the beginning.
Where I come from, I am ignorant,
where I am, I do not know,
and where I will go hence, I am unable to know, O unfortunate one!
I am born earth of earth, body from a body.
Corrupt, completely from a corruptible being and mortal as I wholly am,
I pass a little time on earth living in the flesh and I die.
And I begin another life, changing from this one.
I leave my body in the earth to be resurrected in the future,
to live an eternal life for ever and ever.
Now then, turn O Unique God, your look of mercy,
have mercy on me!
Behold, my strength has left me.
I am nearing, O Savior, old age, nearing the portal of Death.
The Ruler of the world is coming, wishing to inspect
my works and my deeds, my miseries and my sacrileges.
The executioners are standing by looking at me sternly
and they wait the order to seize and drag my miserable soul
into the abyss of hell, O Savior.
You then, O Merciful One by nature, O only Lover of mankind,
O most merciful Lord, then have mercy on me,
and do not look upon me with severity,
do not abandon me.
Do not give room against me to my cunning enemy,
who at each moment covers me with threats,
roaring against me, grinding his teeth
and who says to me:
"Where is the source of your confidence?
How do you hope to escape my hands
under the pretext that you leave me to run to Christ
and that you just now despise my commands?
But you will not at all escape, for where then would you run to?
Never will you be able completely to escape me,
for I have chased Adam and Eve from Paradise
and I made Cain an assasin of his brother.
It was I who, ever since the Deluge, have made

all men fall miserably into error and terrible death
who were completely seduced by my tricks.
It was I who led David astray into adultery and murder
I who have waged a war against all the Saints
and I have caused many of them to die,
then you – how will you escape from me!
How can you have courage and hope, completely weak as you are?"
Hearing these words, O my Master and God and Creator,
my Maker and Judge, You having power over my soul and body
since You fashioned both of them,
I am afraid and completely tremble,
I shake all over, O unfortunate one.
The deceitful one suggests to me, saying, O my Christ, these words:
"Look, you do not keep the vigils,
you do not fast, look, you are not a man of prayer.
You do not do the prostrations.
You do not perform the labors as formerly you did,
and it is for these reasons alone that I will separate you from Christ
and I will send you with me into inextinguishable fire!"
You know, O Master, I never trusted in my works or deeds
for my salvation.
But it was only in Your mercy, O Lover of mankind,
that I sought refuge,
having confidence that You will save me gratuitously,
O all-Merciful One.
And You will have mercy on me who are God
as once You did show mercy on the adulterous woman
and as You showed mercy to the prodigal son
who confessed, "I have sinned."
In such faith I have recourse, in such confidence
I have come, in this hope, O Master, I approach You
so that now he may not puff me up, Your servant;
that he may not say, "Where is your Christ,
where then is your Protector?
Is it not He Himself who handed you over into my hands?"
For if he would deceive me and take me captive,
he would neither attribute it to my free choice or to my cowardliness
but it would credit it to your defection saying in so many words:
"Look, at the one in whom you placed your confidence;
look at him to whom you had recourse,
look at him whom you believed loved you,
whom you believed was dear to you
and on whose behalf you considered yourself
a brother and friend, a son and an heir,
see how he has abandoned you

and delivered you into my hands, your enemy!
And see how suddenly he has turned his back on you,
how suddenly he has hated you!"
But do not let me hear such words, O Savior,
do not abandon me,
do not let me become an occasion, O my God, of shame for You.
Do not, O King, O Lord, allow him,
You who once rescued me from the darkness, from the hands
and the jaws
of that evil one, when You placed me free in Your light.
For seeing You, I am wounded deeply within my heart,
I am unable to look on You,
but I am incapable of not looking on You.
Your beauty is inaccessible; Your splendor not imitable,
Your glory incomparable,
and whosoever has ever seen You
or whoever could see You completely, You, my God?
What eye indeed has had the power to contemplate the All?
But He who is above the All, what mind could grasp Him,
be able to comprehend or render himself totally equal to His totality
and contemplate Him who holds together all things,
who is outside everything and fills the All and everything
and is found in an ineffable way always completely outside?
I see You especially as a sun;
I look on You as a star,
and I carry You within my breast like a pearl.
I see You also as a lamp, lighted inside a lantern.
But because You do not grow, because You do not make
me completely light
and You do not completely show Yourself,
such as You are and great as You are,
I do not seem to possess You completely, You, my life,
but I groan as one fallen from riches into poverty
and from glory into ignominy, stripped of any hope.
Thus seeing this the enemy says to me:
"You are not saved, for behold, You are in check,
you have lost all hope because you no longer have as before
any confidence with God."
To him I do not reply anything;
I do not honor him with an answer, O my God,
but I breathe over him and at once he disappears.
Thus I beg of You, O Master, thus I call upon You.
Give me Your mercy so that, my Savior, then, when my soul
will depart from this body,
I may have the strength with a single breath to cover with confusion

all those wishing to attack me, Your servant,
that I may be able without harm to pass over,
protected by the light of Your Spirit
and present myself before Your tribunal,
having Your divine grace, O Christ, within me,
to protect and to spare me from being completly confused.
Who then would dare in fact to appear before You
if he were not dressed in this grace;
if he did not possess it within himself and be illumined by it?
How could anyone whosoever be able to contemplate totally
this unsupportable glory?
For how will man be able to lift his eyes to see the glory of God,
how can the lowly nature of man look upon the nature of divinity?
For God is uncreated; we all are creatures.
He is incorruptible, we are corruptible and dust.
He is spirit and above every spirit
as the Creator of spirits and their Master.
We are flesh made from dust, earthly substance,
He, the Creator of all things, without beginning and inapprehensible.
We are both worms and mud and ashes.
Who among us is capable of ever seeing Him by his own proper
force or efforts
if He Himself does not send His Divine Spirit
and if He does not confer, thanks to the Spirit, to the infirmity of our
weak nature the strength, force and power,
making man capable of seeing His divine glory?
For otherwise no man will be able to contemplate or see the Lord
coming in glory.
Thus indeed the unjust will be separated from the just
and the sinners will be covered by darkness,
all those who here below will not possess the light in them.
But those joined to Him from this life,
then they also will be joined to God mysteriously and yet very really.
They will dwell inseparably in His intimacy.
But those who have left this life deprived of His light,
how then will they be united with Him or in what way,
I wish to learn from you, or to teach you.
God became man.
He united Himself to men.
He took upon Himself our humanity
and He shared with all those who believed in Him
and showed their belief by their works.
He communicated to them His divinity.
Therefore He said that only those were saved,
who shared with Him His divinity

as He shared our nature, He who was the Creator of all things.
Paul bears witness that the Church is to become the One Body of Christ,
the Divine Master, without stain, without any fault, freed of all blemish.
Such would be the faith, with Christ as their Head.
If then such is the case, how is it that anyone then should dare,
while being dirty, to touch Him,
to anyone unworthy to attach himself to Him?
If in fact they now drive out of the church and forbid sinners
from ever communicating or even if they forbid those from looking on
the Holy of Holies who are not saints,
how, alas, then will they unite themselves to the most pure Body of God,
how will they become members of Christ who are stained?
This is impossible, brothers, this will never happen!
Those who are separated from the Divine Body, that is, the Church
and from the choir of the elect,
tell me, where will they go,
in what kingdom, in what place, tell me, do they hope to dwell?
For surely Paradise, the bosom of Abraham or every other
place of repose
is reserved for the saved.
For the saved are indeed all the Saints
as the whole Divine Scriptures bear witness and teach us.
Many are the rooms within the wedding hall.
Just as there is one heaven and in heaven there are stars, each
differing from the others in honor and glory,
so it is, there is one wedding hall and one Kingdom,
indeed, Paradise, the Holy City,
and every place of repose is none other than God alone.
Just as no man has rest in this life
if he does not rest in God and God in him,
so also after death outside of God alone,
there will not be, I think, any repose,
or any place without sorrow,
any place freed of groaning and affliction.
Let us then hasten, brothers, hasten to the goal,
to attach ourselves to God, the Creator of all,
who has come down to earth for us wretched ones,
who has left the heavens and has hidden Himself among the angels,
who has pitched His tent in the womb of the Holy Virgin
and took flesh from her, without change in an ineffable manner.
And He came forth for the salvation of us all.
Our salvation is none other than this,
as we have often said and now still will say.
It is not we, but the mouth of God
who has manifested the great light of the future age.

The Kingdom of Heaven has come down on the earth,
or, rather, the sovereign King of beings on high and of beings below,
has come, desirous to become like us
in order that all of us, having received from Him, as from a light,
could receive the second lights similar to the first,
in order that we might share in the Kingdom of Heaven,
having a participation at the same time of His glory
and having become heirs of the eternal blessings which no one
has ever seen.
These blessings, as I am persuaded and believe and tell you,
are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity,
this is the source of blessings, this, the life of all beings.
This is the joy and repose, this the robe and the glory.
This the inexpressible joy and the salvation of all
who partake of His ineffable illumination
and are conscious of being in communion with Him.
Listen, for the reason He is called Savior is that He may
bring salvation to all to whom He is united,
for salvation is the deliverance from all evils
and to find in this all good things for ever,
life in place of death; light in place of darkness;
and in place of slavery to passions and infamous deeds,
total freedom bestowed on all who are united to Christ, the Savior of all.
Then they become the possessors of all joy, never to be lost,
of all happiness and all bliss,
while those who have been separated from Him
and those who have never sought Him
or have never been united with Him,
never freed from the slavery of passions and of death,
even if they have dignity of being kings, rulers, powerful ones,
even if they enjoy luxuries and happiness and pleasures
and imagine that they possess good things,
nevertheless, they will never possess any real happiness,
compared to that which the servants of Christ,
those freed of all disorder of concupiscence, pleasures and fame, possess;
happiness, indescribable, totally ineffable,
which no one can ever know, or conceive or see,
if he is not sincerely and ardently united with Christ
and joined to Him in an inexpressible union,
to whom is due glory and honor, praise and every hymn
from all creatures and from everything that breathes,
forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 43

That it is better to live a good life than to lead those who do not wish to be led; for he will gain nothing who strives to save others, while he himself will be lost through his attempt to rule others.

Speak, Christ, speak to Your servant, light of the world.
Speak, O Knowledge of the Universe,
Speak, Word, Wisdom, You who know all in advance, see all in advance,
and teach us the things that are useful,
Speak and teach me the salvific ways of Your will,
O Savior, and of Your divine precepts!
Speak and do not turn Your eyes from me;
do not hide, O my God, Your divine will from Your unworthy servant!
What is better in Your eyes, which of the two is more pleasing to You,
tell me, O Savior, Lover of mankind:
that I live in the care of the affairs of the monastery
and unceasingly occupy myself with the material needs,
that are the sources of hostilities and battles in defending all (rights),
or always to cultivate solely tranquility
and to keep undisturbed the mind and heart
and to receive the illuminations of Your grace
and to let Your light always shine upon the senses of my soul
to pulsate mystically to Your divine words
and with meekness to teach others and also in turn to be taught myself –
for he who speaks should practise what he speaks about;
he should be the 1st to find those things always helpful?
Then of these, tell me, O my God and Creator,
which is better for me, which is more advantageous,
which is more pleasing to You and more perfect?
Yes, do not hide from me, O most merciful Word!
"Listen to what you ask, write the things you hear.
I am the God who is without beginning.
I am the Master by nature, the King of the heavens
and of all places under the earth.
And all, willy-nilly, are My servants.
I am the Creator of all things and the Judge and Master,
and I am still and I shall be for ages and ages.
But I never constrain anyone against his will.
I seek acts of service out of free will, out of a free choice,
done with fear and showing love on the part of those who obey Me.
Such, in fact, are My servants, such are My mercenaries,
such also are My friends whom I desire.
As for the others, I have not yet known them.

I have not been known by them.
This is why they call Me cruel, unsympathetic.
They give Me the name of one unjust, those children of injustice.
Those then who outrage Me, those who vilify Me,
those who heap Me with reproaches, how will they obey you?
Or how will they eagerly accept you as teacher, tell Me?
How will the wolves recognize you as their shepherd?
Or how would the wild animals follow your voice?
Leave, flee and disappear from their midst,
and if you save yourself, yes, it should be enough for you!
If, however, you would save the world, but lose yourself,
of what advantage would the world be to you, that you saved?
I do not wish you to be shepherd for anyone who is unwilling.
See, I have observed the same thing in the world.
Those who desire it, for them I am the Shepherd and Master.
But for the others, however, I am their Creator and God by nature;
but I am not at all their King, nor their Ruler,
those who have not taken up their cross and followed Me.
For they are children of the Adversary, children,
servants and instruments.
See these terrifying mysteries.
See their insensitiveness.
See and groan on their behalf, if you can, each hour!
For because they have been called out of darkness into lasting light,
out of death to live, to Heaven out of Hell,
from the temporal and corruptible to eternal glory,
they become angry and are furious against their teachers.
Against them they even plan all sorts of plots
and they prefer to die than to leave their darkness
and the works of darkness in order to follow Me.
Such men, tell me, how can you shepherd them?
How can you conduct them, guide them?
Tell Me, while they throw themselves on the fire,
making a pact with the enemy and with him eagerly do all
that is contrary to My precepts?
How can you shepherd as sheep, how can you make them enter,
tell me, the pastures of My commandments,
how to lead them out towards the water of My desires,
towards the spiritual mountains of mystical contemplation and
of My ineffable glory,
that which, when they see, causes them to despise the glory
of things below
and to forget all sensible things
and to regard all these things as shadow and as smoke?
Tell Me, how will you make yourself a defender of the enemy?

How will you persuade the enemy
who wars against you to be your friend?
It is easy that friends rather become enemies for a slight pretext,
but enemies with difficulty can become friends,
regardless of what good one does for them,
even heaping upon them the most beautiful and precious gifts.
They have the poison hidden in their heart
and when they find occasion, they suddenly vomit it forth.
And without mercy and compassion for those who do good to them,
they do not fear to kill them.
O extreme madness!
These people are imitators of Cain,
They are worse than Lamech,
these people are emulators of Saul,
imitators of the Hebrews and they rival Judas,
heirs of the art of hanging.
If you seek to guide such as those,
look where you will end up!
For they will not return back to where you would wish,
but they will force you to follow along their own path
and to be the first to fall into perdition even before them,
and to descend to the deepest abyss of Hell,
while you lead them, you can be sure, after you!
But if you absolutely refuse to imitate them,
if you do not desire to let yourself fall into their plots
and do not share in their wicked exploits,
you will have uprising, strife and irreconcileable war.
What will happen to you through them?
What will you find?
What will you gain?
Listen and I will briefly tell you.
Above all, you will not be capable absolutely of being My servant,
because I do not wish that My servant fights, absolutely not!
They will entertain for you an irrepressible hatred
and they will throw themselves at you to kill you,
both openly and in secret,
and you will give an account for their condemnation.
For your death will not be of profit to any others,
while My death was for the life of the world.
But you will be the reason for their condemnation
and you will leave this life with no security.
It would be then better to let yourself be shepherded
and not shepherd such as these,
but rather take care for your own affairs
and pray for those and for all men in order that they all

may return and come back to true knowledge.
Teach, then, and preach those among them who desire it.
But do not force them to do the things you teach,
but speak to them of My works and exhort them to observe them
as that which will bestow eternal life upon them!
And these very words will rise up when I come to judge
and they will judge them all, one by one,
according to their worth.
And you will remain without responsibility, completely without
any condemnation
because you did not cover over the silver of My words,
but all that you received you freely distributed to all.
This is what pleases Me, this is what my Apostles and Disciples
did who acted according to My commandments
to proclaim Me God throughout the whole world
and to teach My desires and My precepts
and to leave them in writing for men.
Struggle then also to do and to teach as they did.
In regard to those not wishing at all to hear My words,
speak to them as I spoke to those who replied:
"Your word is hard and who can hear it?"
And I replied: "If you do not wish to hear it, go,
and each of you do as you wish!"
Allow them the complete power to choose death or life.
For no one could ever become good, if he had no choice.
The unfaithful will never become faithful without wishing to be so.
No friend of the world will ever be a friend of God.
It is not involuntary that a wicked man will change his thinking
and become completely good,
for no one has become evil by nature but by intention
and in reverse, no one will become good and upright
from having a bad and perverse mentality
unless he wishes it.
But if he does not wish it, nothing will bring it about.
No one without desiring virtue will ever successfully
manifest a virtuous life in the world.
No one without wishing it will be saved.
Do not seek any further —
Strive to save yourself and those who hear you
if you should find on earth a man with ears ready to listen
and obedient to your words!"
Yes, I will do, O Master, as You command me,
but give me Your help, but give me Your grace!
Give to Your unworthy servant, O my God,
that I may always glorify You and sing Your power
in unending hymns forever and forever. Amen.

HYMN 44

What it means to be created according to the Image of God. In what sense is it proper to consider man as the image of the Model; and that he who loves His enemies as benefactors is an imitator of God and through this becomes a participator of the Holy Spirit, becoming god by adoption and grace, but this is recognizable only by those who are moved by the Holy Spirit.

Glory, praise, hymn, thanksgiving to Him
through whom from nothingness the entire creation has come into being,
thanks to His only Word and His own will.
To God of all, adored in the Trinity of Hypostases and in
the one essence!
For God is one, holy Trinity.
A being above all being,
One in Three Persons, and in Three Hypostases,
undivided and inseparable,
one nature, one glory, one power as also with one will.
It alone is the Creator of all.
It from mud fashioned me completely giving me a soul
and placing me on the earth.
It gave me light to see
and in it to contemplate the entire sensible world:
the sun, moon, I say, the stars and the heavens,
the earth and the sea and all creatures that are within it.
It gave me both an intellect and speech,
but be attentive to what I say!
It is thus according to the image of the Word
that the word has been given to us.
For we are endued with reason through the Logos
who is without beginning, uncreated,
incomprehensible, my God.
Thus the soul of each man according to the Image
is made a rational image of the Logos.
How is that, tell me, teach me?
Listen to His Word!
The Word, God from God,
is co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.
Therefore likewise is my soul according to His image.
It has an intelligence and reason;
this flows from its essence without separation and confusion.
They are likewise of the same substance;
three united together in one, but also distinct.
They are always united and still they are separated.

For they are united without confusion
and they are separated without division.
If you take away one from the three,
you take away at the same time all of them.
For the soul, without intelligence, without reason,
would be like to irrational animals,
but it is impossible without the soul
for the intelligence or the reason to subsist.
Therefore by starting from the image know what the model is!
Without the Spirit there is neither the Father nor His Son,
but the Father is spirit and His Son is spirit,
even if He has clothed Himself with flesh,
and the Spirit is also God.
For the Three constitute one in nature and in essence,
just as the intelligence, soul and reason.
But the Father in an ineffable way has begotten the Word,
so the intelligence is begotten from my soul, or rather in my soul.
Just as the Spirit comes from the Father
or rather both lives in the Father and in an ineffable manner proceeds.
And in a similar way my intelligence is always betting the word,
and emits it and sends it forth and manifests it to all who hear,
but still it is not separated from it,
but it begets the word
and holds it within itself.
Likewise think of the Father,
thus He has begotten the Word,
He is continuously begetting Him
without in any way separating the Father from His Son.
But on the contrary, He is seen in His Son and the Son abides in Him.
This is the exact image, even if it is obscured,
that my discourse has outlined,
the image which you will never see,
nor completely comprehend,
if first you do not purify,
if first you do not wash
the filth from your image,
if you do not separate the image
from the passions that entrammel it,
if you do not wipe it perfectly,
if you do not likewise strip it
and make it white as snow.
But even when you have done all of this
and have well purified yourself,
and have become the perfect image,
you will not see the Model.

You will not comprehend Him
unless He will be revealed to you through the Holy Spirit.
For the Spirit teaches everything, shining in an ineffable light,
and He will show you in an intellectual way
all the intelligible realities
as much as you can see,
as much as is accessible to me
according to the measure of the purity of your soul.
And you will become like to God,
in imitating exactly His works of not only temperance and courage,
but also His love for men,
also in bearing with patience trials
and in loving your enemies.
For this is love for mankind – to do good to your enemies
and to love them as your friends, as genuine benefactors,
to pray for all those who seek to injure you
and to have towards all, both the good and bad,
a genuine interior love;
indeed, to put your life at every hour for all;
I mean, for their salvation,
in order that one of them may be saved
or even all of them if possible.
Such things will make of you an imitator of the Master, my child,
and will manifest in you the true image of your Creator,
an imitator in all things of the divine perfection.
Then the Creator, be attentive to what I am about to explain to you!
will send the Divine Spirit.
I am not speaking of another soul such as you have;
but of the Spirit, I mean, who comes from God,
who breathes where He abides,
who will take His abode substantially in you
and will illumine and cast His light and recreate you completely
who will make you incorruptible,
you who are corruptible.
He will make new again the antiquated house,
the house of your soul, I mean.
And with it He will render totally incorruptible your complete body.
He will make you god by grace, similar to your Model.
O marvel! O mystery unknown to all,
who are prisoners of their passions,
unknown to the friends of the world,
unknown to the friends seeking glory,
unknown to the proud,
unknown to the irascible,
to those bearing malice,

to those friends of the flesh,
to those friends of money,
to the envious, to the detractors,
to hypocrites, to gourmands, gluttons, to drunkards and fornicators,
to those who speak idle words,
to those who speak crude words,
to the negligent, to those who are not constantly
concerned with repentance,
to those not constantly filled with compunction
to the impatient, to the retorters,
to those living with no fixed rule,
to those who believe themselves something they really are not,
to those who are puffed up or who take pleasure in their bodily stature,
or in their strength or beauty
or any other charism whatever it may be,
I mean, to those not given to a pure heart,
to those not seeking a fervent heart to receive the Holy Spirit,
to those not believing that God gives the Divine Spirit
to those who truly seek Him.
For disbelief disperses and chases away the Divine Spirit.
Whoever disbelieves does not seek;
not asking, he does not receive;
not receiving he is dead.
Who will not weep for the dead person,
who, dead though he is, thinks he is still alive?
The dead are totally unable either to see or to lament their dead selves.
The living, seeing them, are filled with sorrow.
For they see a strange marvel:
men who live have been struck down by death,
still they walk about.
The blind believe they see and the deaf think they can hear.
For they live and see and hear as do animals.
They think as irrational animals;
in their conscience they are unconscious;
in their life they are cadavers.
It is possible to live without living,
it is possible to see without seeing,
to hear without hearing.
How? tell me!
I will tell how immediately.
All who live according to the flesh,
all who see only the things below and who hear the divine words,
all of these according to the spirit, are deaf, blind and even dead.
If they are not born of God completely, in such a way
that they are living but have not received the Spirit,

their pupils (of their eyes).nave not been opened.
They do not see the divine light.
And not being able to do this, they remain perfectly deaf.
But such as these, tell me, how can they be called Christians?
Listen to the divine Paul who clarifies these matters to you.
Or rather it is Christ who speaks to you:
"Man, the first man was created from earth completely earthly;
the second man is of Heaven who descended."
Be attentive to these words!
So also just as the first man was earthly,
so also those born from him are earthly.
But such as is Christ, the Heavenly Master, so also are those
of Heaven who have believed in Him,
they are born from above,
and have been likewise baptized in the most Holy Spirit.
Such is the Spirit who, being God, gave birth to those
who became gods from God by adoption
and all sons of the All-High,
as the divine mouth says.
Have you heard the words of God?
Have you heard how He separates the believers from the other men,
how He gave a sign of recognition to His servants,
in order that they may not be led into error
by the words of strange teachers?
"From the earth," he says, "the first man came,
since he was created earthly;
but the Second Man, the Master of all,
has descended from the heavens."
The first man has procured death for all men
and by his turning away also corruptibility.
The Second, however, gave to the world and still now,
gives to all the faithful light, life and incorruptibility.
You have heard Christ saying about Himself and teaching men
what sort they are who have believed in Him
and who prove well their faith through their works?
Therefore, do not hesitate further if you are a Christian.
As Christ is heavenly, such also ought you to be.
But if you are not such, how can you be called a Christian?
If indeed the Master is heavenly,
so He says also are those who believe in Him heavenly,
Such as those who think worldly thoughts,
such as live according to the flesh,
are not of God the Word who came down from on high,
but they belong to him who has been fashioned out of the earth,
completely earthly men.

So ponder, conduct yourself, believe and strive to become such,
heavenly as He has come from Heaven has said and has given
life to the world!
This is He, the bread that comes down from above;
those who eat Him will never see any more death.
For, being of Heaven, they will always be completely
freed of corruption,
for they have put on incorruption.
They have put off death
and are intimately united to life.
For they have become immortal, incorruptible
and because of this are called heavenly.
Who in fact has ever merited this name,
I mean, among the sons of Adam up until He
descended from Heaven, the Master of all beings of Heaven and earth?
He it is who took on flesh, our flesh
and gave us the Divine Spirit, as I have often said,
and this Spirit, being God, procures for us all good things.
What are these?
Those that I have often told you about,
but I will now retell them.
Like a piscine (of Baptism) the Holy Spirit, divine and all luminous,
embraces all those who are worthy, all whom He finds inside –
how shall I explain, how express worthily these effects?
Give me the word, You who have gifted me, O my God, with my soul.
Being God, the Divine Spirit refashions completely those whom He
receives within Himself.
He makes them completely anew.
He renews them in an amazing manner.
How can He avoid taking on something of the same filth of them?
Not any more than fire takes on the black of iron;
but on the contrary it gives to it all of its own properties.
So likewise the Divine Spirit, incorruptible, gives incorruptibility.
Being immortal, He gives immortality.
Because He is light that never sets,
He transforms all of them into light
in whom He comes down and dwells.
And because He is life, He bestows life to all.
As He is of the same nature as Christ, being of the same essence
as well as the same in glory,
and being united with Him, He forms them absolutely similar to Christ.
For the Master is not jealous
that mortals should appear equal to Himself by divine grace,
that He does not disclaim as unworthy
His servants from becoming like to Him.

But rather He is happy and He rejoices
in seeing all of us, from mere humans to become by grace
such as He was and is by nature.
For He is our Benefactor
and He wishes that all of us become what He Himself is.
For if we are not strictly like unto Him,
how can we be united to Him as He said?
How indeed can we remain in Him
if we are not such as He is?
How will He abide in us if we are not similar to Him?
Therefore, as you wisely understand this,
hasten to receive the Spirit, who comes from God and is divine,
in order that you may become such as my discourse has explained,
heavenly and divine, such as the Master spoke of
in order to become heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom for ever.
But if you are not such
or if here below you do not become heavenly, as I said,
how can you even imagine to dwell with Him in Heaven?
How can you enter into the Kingdom with the heavenly creatures
and reign and live with the King and Master of all?
Run zealously therefore all of you, in order that you may be
judged worthy to be found within the Kingdom of Heaven and to reign
with Christ, the Master of all, to whom is due all glory with the
Father and the Spirit, for ages and ages. Amen.

HYMN 45

On the most exact theology and that he who does not see the light of God's glory is worse than the blind.

O my God, who love to show mercy, my Creator,
shine ever more on me Your inaccessible light,
so as to fill my heart with joy!
Yes, do not be angry, ah, do not abandon me,
but increase Your light in my soul.
For Your light is You, O my God.
If indeed You are called by many and different names,
still You are a Unique Being.
But this Unique Being is unknown to all nature.
He is invisible and ineffable.
He who in showing Himself is given all names.
This Unique Being is a nature in three hypostases,
one divinity, one Kingdom,
one power, for the Trinity is a Unique Being.
For my God is a Unique Trinity, not three beings,
because the one is three according to hypostases.
They are connatural, one to the other according to nature.
Entirely of the same power, having the same essence,
united without confusion in a way that transcends
any human intelligence.
Yet they are mutually distinct without being separated.
Three in One and One in Three.
For He is One who has created all things,
Jesus Christ with the Father who is without beginning
and with the Holy Spirit also without beginning.
The Trinity, therefore, is One, indivisible in all aspects.
In the One are the Three and in the Three are the One,
or rather, the Three are as One to me and the One again as Three.
Thus, think of this mystery, adore and believe now and forever.
For this Unique Being that appears, shines forth, is radiantly splendid,
is participating in, is communicating, is everything good.
For this reason we do not call Him by one name only but by several.
He is light and peace and joy,
life, food and drink, clothing, a robe, a tent and a divine dwelling.
He is the East, the resurrection, repose and a bath,
fire, water, river, source of lite and a flowing stream.
bread and wine, the new delight of believers,
the banquet, the pleasure which we enjoy in a mystical way,
sun, indeed, without any setting, star always shining,

lamp that burns inside the dwelling of the soul.
This One is for multitude, the One who purifies and creates.
This One by means of His Word has brought forth all things,
and through His Spirit of power holds all things in being.
This One has brought forth the Heaven and earth
out of nothingness, He gives them their being,
He holds them in existence in an ineffable manner.
This one has made the sun, moon and stars by His will,
a new and strange marvel!
This One had brought forth the quadrupeds, the reptiles
and wild beasts and the birds of all kinds
and all the animals of the sea by His command, all such as we see.
And lastly He created me as their king and gave me all of these
to serve me, as my slaves and in serving me to fill all my needs.
All of these then have kept the order imposed, as I say,
by this Unique God of the universe
and still are obedient.
But only I, o wretched one, I have shown myself ungrateful,
with no recognition, no obedience to God who has formed me
and who has poured out upon me ceaselessly all goods.
In transgressing His commandments, I have become
an unprofitable servant,
and I have appeared in a state worse than all other animals,
worse even than the wild beasts, the reptiles and the birds.
O wretched one that I am!
I have indeed wandered off from the straight and divine road
and have terribly fallen from the glory given me.
Truly, I have discarded the luminous and divine robe
and having fallen into darkness, now there I live.
I do not know even that I have been deprived of light
and I say: "See, the sun illumines the day and I see it.
Night has come now and the sun sets while I light for myself
candles and a lamp and I see."
Now, is there anybody of all human beings who has more than I?
Likewise all men certainly who see in this world,
no one of them sees any more than another.
But in saying this I lie and I ridicule myself.
It is I myself, O Savior, who err by boasting about myself.
In not wishing to know myself, that I really am blind,
in not wishing to exert myself, in not wishing to have my
blinded eyes open,
in not wishing, condemned as I am, to know my blindness.
I say: "Who ever has seen God, the light of the world?"
and in saying this, O Master, I am totally without awareness,
not understanding that I falsely reason and speak.

For he who does not see Your light and yet says he clearly sees it
or rather pretends that it is an impossible thing
to contemplate You, O Master, the light of Your divine glory,
he denies all of the Scriptures of the Prophets, the Apostles
and Your very own words, Jesus and Your whole plan of salvation.
For if You shone brilliantly from on high,
if You appeared in darkness and if You came,
O Merciful One, into the world wishing to dwell among men
in our same condition for love of mankind,
and if You, without deceit, declared that You are
the Light of the world,
and we still do not see You,
are we not completely blind and more miserable than the blind,
oh, yes, really, yes, truly we are both dead and blind
who do not gaze upon You as the life giving light.
The blind do not see the visible sun,
but they indeed live, O Master,
and they likewise can move themselves about.
For the sun does not bestow life, but only to see (visible things).
But You are all things good,
You give them continually to Your servants who see Your light,
since You are the life and You bestow life along with all other things,
I mean, with all the good things which You are.
He who possesses You truly possesses in You all things.
May I not be deprived of You, O Master,
not deprived of You, Creator,
not deprived of You, O Merciful One, I who am a lowly pilgrim.
For I am a pilgrim-wanderer by Your good pleasure
and a transient here below.
Not made such by my own choice or a pilgrim by my own will,
but by Your very grace I have become a stranger to the visible things
of this world, having been enlightened in my mind by Your light,
and having recognized that You lead and transport the human race
towards an immaterial and invisible world.
You divide and distribute to all the inhabitants, each according
to his merit,
as he has observed Your commandments, O Savior.
This is, therefore, why I beg You to place me with You,
even if I have exceeded in my sins all other men
and if I deserve chastisement and punishment.
But receive my supplication, as that of the publican
and as the adulterous woman, O Master,
even if I do not weep as they did,
if I do not wipe in the same way Your foot with my hair,
if I do not groan and lament, O Christ, in the same way.

But You pour out abundantly Your mercy and are full
to bursting with pity.
You gush forth with good things
and for these reasons I appeal, have mercy on me!
Yes, You have been pierced in Your hands,
yes, pierced in Your feet on the Cross
and Your side has been opened by a spear,
O all-Merciful One, have mercy and save me from eternal fire.
Deign that I may well serve You here below
and then stand without condemnation before You
to be received within Your wedding hall, O Savior,
where I will be happy with You, O my good Master,
in the inexpressible joy for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 46

A confession joined to a prayer; and on the union with the Holy Spirit and impassibility.

I have traveled far, O Lover of mankind,
I have lived in the desert,
hiding from You, my sweet Master.
I have been brought to this state by the night of life's cares,
where I have suffered many bites and wounds,
where I get up bearing many wounds in my soul
and I cry in my pain and in my suffering of heart:
"Have mercy, show pity on me, the transgressor!
O Doctor, Lover of souls, the One who only loves mercy.
You are the one who heals gratuitously the sick and wounded
heal my crimes, my wounds.
Let Your oil of grace drop, my God, and pour over my wounds,
stanch my ulcers, cauterize and revigorate
my weakened members and make all the cuts disappear,
O Savior, and give me perfect wholeness as I enjoyed before,
when I was not so stained,
when I was not a criminal,
not enflamed with wound or blemish, O my God,
but then I possessed serenity and joy,
peace and gentleness and holy humility and magnanimity
where there was the fullness of patience and of outstanding works,
an endurance and invincible power towards everything.
Then there was an abundance of consoling tears each day,
there was joyful exuberance in my heart,
which flowed out like a spring, pouring forth inexhaustibly
like a fountain from which poured forth honey, a drink of joy,
to which I ceaselessly returned in the mouth of my spirit.
There was complete health, there purity,
there the extinction of all my passions and vain thoughts,
there impassibility produced in me a face all illumined,
and it has always stayed with me, spiritual speaking,
understand me properly, I beg you, read these words,
not interpreting what I say in any stupid, impure image,
but it brought me an ineffable pleasure of union
and an unlimited desire for nuptial union with God.
receiving this, I also became impassible,
enflamed with pleasure, burning with desire for it
and I participated in the light,
yes, I became light, above every passion, beyond every evil,

for passion does not flower in the light of impassibility
any more than shadow or darkness of night flowers in the sun.
Therefore, having become such and really being such,
I relaxed, O Master, because I had confidence in myself.
I was overcome by the cares of sensible things
and I fell, O wretched one, to the worries of the concerns of life.
And as iron once it has cooled, I became black,
and dragged through the earth, I took on rust.
And this is why I cry out to You again to purify me,
I beg You, O Lover of mankind, to lead me back again
to my first beauty and to let me enjoy again Your light,
now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

On the spiritual Paradise, an illuminating contemplation and on the Tree of Life found in it.

You are blessed, O Lord, You are blessed, O Unique One;
You are blessed, O Merciful One,
most blessed for You put into my heart the light
of Your commandments
and You planted in me the tree of Your life.
And You have pointed out to me a different Paradise
in the midst of visible creatures,
a spiritual one, amidst the sensible things,
spiritual in the sense of a consciousness.
For You have united to my soul another spirit,
Your Divine Spirit, He who has dwelt within my bowels.
He is really the only tree of life, He who is planted
in whatever earth that is, in the souls of whatever men
or takes roots in their hearts, at once
He brings forth this resplendent Paradise,
adorned by all types of beautiful plants, trees and various fruits,
covered with flowers and with thousands of sweet-smelling lilies.
These flowers are the virtues of humility and joy,
peace, sweetness and compassion, compunction, the flood of tears
and the strange joy in all of those in Paradise whom the brightness
of Your grace illumines.
You are the cup which pours out to me the streams of life
and You provide me abundantly with the words
of Your divine knowledge.
But when You do not wish to give these graces,
but You withdraw them,
I become irrational with no more feeling than a stone.
The trumpet without breath can hardly make a sound,
so also without You I am as living without a soul,
without a soul it is impossible for the body to function as it should,
so also the soul cannot without Your Spirit move itself
and cannot keep Your commandments, O Savior.
It cannot contemplate You nor be present to You,
nor sing Your glory intelligently, O my God.
This is why then I cry out to You and why I clamor for You.
You who are both above with the Father and also with us,
not as some speculate, by only Your operation
nor as many think, by only Your will,
not by Your power alone, but also by Your essence,

if we must dare to speak or even to think of Your essence, O Immortal,
Superessential, Unique!
For if You truly exist as completely inexpressible,
invisible, unapproachable and incomprehensible,
intangible, impalpable, completely inapprehensible, O Savior,
how will we name You,
how also name Your essence?
What kind is it and what sort is it?
How will we dare to speak it of You?
Since You are completely nothing like all other things,
O my God, but everything is Your work brought forth
out of nothingness.
For You alone are uncreated, You alone without beginning, O Savior.
Holy Trinity, awesome, O God of all creatures,
You furnish us with the light of Your immaculate glory.
Now give me this still, that it may never be taken from me, O Savior.
Give me always to contemplate You in it, O Word,
and to penetrate somewhat into what is Your inaccessible beauty,
which, remaining totally inapprehensible,
still overwhelms my intelligence with awe
and transports me in the depths of my being
and illumines in my heart the fire of Your love.
This light brings about a flame of divine desire
which shows me more clearly Your glory, O my God.
This glory, as I adore You, I beg You, O Son of God, grant me,
that both now and in the future I may possess it without ever losing it
and I may contemplate You through it, You as God eternally!
Do not grant me, O Master, glory in this world, vain glory,
nor the riches that pass away,
nor the talents of gold, neither a sublime throne,
nor a rule over such ephemeral realities!
Join me with the humble, with the poor and the meek,
that I may become also humble and meek.
If I cannot carry the burden of my office in a way
that pleases You and serves You,
see to it that I may be driven from it.
O Master, may I weep for nothing but only for sins.
May my only concern be for Your just sentence
and the means of my defense before my many offenses against You!
Yes, O compassionate Shepherd, so good and gentle!
You who wish to save all who believe in You,
have mercy, hear this my prayer.
Do not be angry, do not turn away from me Your face,
but teach me how to fulfill Your will.
For I do not seek to do my own will,

but only Yours, so that I may serve You, O Merciful One!
I beg You, have mercy, You who are by nature merciful,
and bring about what is profitable for my wretched soul,
because You alone are God, the Lover of mankind,
uncreated, without end, truly omnipotent,
the life and light of all who love You
and who are so loved by You, O Lover of mankind.
Place me with them, O Master, and make me a participator
and a co-heir of Your divine glory,
for to You is due glory, to You, Father, with the co-eternal Son
and the Divine Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 48

That it is a glory and an honor for every man who is outraged and ill-treated for God's commandment, such dishonor borne for God's commandments; and a dialogue between the author and his soul, teach the inexhaustible riches of the Spirit.

Grant me, O Christ, the awareness that You already gave me.
Cover me with it, Savior, hide me completely within it
and do not let the sensation of the world get close to me,
that it may not penetrate within me,
that it may not inflict a wound on me, Your lowly servant,
upon whom You alone have mercy!
For by attacking quickly the one noble preoccupation (i.e. that of final judgment) worldly sense pleasures immediately stir up in my wretched soul evil desires.
For they point out the glory, they recall to memory the riches,
they stir me to approach the kings of this earth.
They say that these are great happiness.
Therefore from these thoughts just as under the effect of air
the billows puff up in the forge and the fire place bursts into flame,
so likewise the soul, inflated, is puffed up
and passionately stretches with desire towards glory, money
and prosperity of those who crawl around here below.
It seeks to be glorified with those who are glorified,
to be conspicuous and to appear in the company of dignitaries,
to possess riches with the wealthy,
this soul which You have glorified with Your ineffable light,
this soul which You Yourself robed with Your glory inexpressible,
this soul to which You Yourself have given Your divine effulgence.
The sense pleasures of the world, having taken the intelligence
of the soul captive, show it secretly kings,
call to memory glory and indicate the riches of the present life,
and make the soul stretch out towards such, at least in the desires of the imagination.
O, what darkness, O what hardness, O what crazy thoughts!
What an unclean attitude; what an illogical opinion,
that, leaving the vision of ineffable and incorruptible things,
I think of those earthly things and eagerly desire them.
The king, will he not reach an end?
Glory, will it not pass?
The rich man, will he not vanish as dust before the wind?
Will the bodies in the graves not decay?
And those who possess riches on earth

and after them, others will inherit them and others after them,
to whom tell me, O my soul, will their riches belong?
And whoever in the world was able to store away something,
no matter how small,
so that whether living or dead, he may take it with him?
Absolutely no one; you would be unable to point out anyone,
unless it be the merciful, those who possess nothing,
yet still give away all into the hands of the needy.
It is those who possess in safe keeping what they have given away
whenever they gave it as into the hands of the Master,
While on the other hand, all the others with nothing to give away,
the poor, the poorest of all the poor,
they become the possessors of cached riches,
for they were naked as the corpses thrown into the graves,
they were miserable, deprived of present goods,
but they were pilgrims of goods to come.
What do you see then, my soul, in them of good that could charm you?
What in all that we have said do you judge worthy of being desired?
You have absolutely nothing to reply, nothing to answer!
Woe to those who store up riches!
Woe to those who seek to receive glory from men!
Woe to those who ingratiate themselves with the rich,
instead of seeking the glory of God and His riches,
instead of desiring to be united with Him alone.
For the world is vain and everything in the world is nothing
but vanity of vanities.
So all will pass away,
and only God will be eternal and incorruptible, abiding forever.
And with Him there will be those who now seek Him,
those who have only loved Him above all other creatures.
But woe at that time for those who now love the world,
for they will be condemned along with the world for all eternity!
Woe, O my soul, to those who desire the glory of men,
for they will then be stripped of the glory of God!
Woe, O my soul, to those who hoard money,
because they will yearn down there for a drop of water!
Woe, O my soul, to those who here below enjoy their rest,
because there they will find tribulation for all eternity!
Tell me, my soul, why are you sad?
Why do you seek the things of this life?
Tell me, and I will teach you the usefulness of each thing
so learn and be taught the good in every creature.
You wish to be glorified, tell me, to be praised?
Hear then what is honor, and what is dishonor.
Honor is on the one hand to honor all things,

on the other hand, to honor God above all things
and to win His commandments as your riches,
and for the sake of His commandments to suffer injuries,
for them to suffer insults,
and for them to support all kinds of outrages.
For when, O my soul, you are forced in a certain case,
to honor God, to praise Him and because of this,
you suffer injuries and are despised,
then you have obtained honor and glory that last
because the glory of God will be completely upon you.
And then all the angels will praise you,
because you honored God whom they praise in song.
Do you wish, O my soul, to possess finery and riches?
Listen, I will show you now eternal riches.
Weep, repent, despise all things.
Become poor in spirit; become poor in heart.
Become indigent as regards money;
become a stranger to the world.
Become an enemy of all of your evil desires
and seek to do only the will of your Master
and follow Him in His footsteps ardently!
And then the Master will slacken His pace in order to be overtaken
by you, wretched soul.
But seeing Him, cry out and give a great clamor,
for He will turn to you with eyes of mercy
and He will look at you and will grant you to see Him a little.
And again He will leave you, covering Himself from your eyes.
Then you will groan, O wretched soul, then you will ardently cry,
then you will seek death, not able to bear the pain,
not able to support the separation from the gentle Master.
But He, the Good One, seeing you at the end of your strength,
yet seeing you also vehemently constant in your weeping and sorrow,
at once He will appear again, again He will illumine you.
Again He will show you the inexhaustible riches,
the unfading glory of the Father's face,
and He will gladden you as before, filling you with joy.
And then He will leave you completely filled with this joy.
But little by little the joy through worldly discourses
and mundane thoughts
will vanish from you and sadness will overtake you.
So again as earlier vehement groaning will be your lot.
As you piercingly cry out to Him,
as you seek Him out, the Provider of happiness,
the Giver of joy, the Riches that last and subsist forever,
while He tests your will,

see to it that you do not grow discouraged, my soul,
that you do not turn back,
that you do not say: "How long will He remain so
incomprehensible to me?"
that you do not say: "Why, when He has just appeared,
does He again hide Himself?
How long yet will He heap troubles upon me instead of mercy?"
That you do not say: "How can I undergo until the end such crosses?"
But do not shrink back, O my soul, in seeking the Master,
but as a soul which has once and for all given itself over to its own death,
do not grope to seek your own ease, do not seek out glory,
nor the pleasure of the body,
nor the affections of the neighbors.
Do not look at all to the right nor to the left,
but, as you have begun, so even run more ardently!
Make haste always to apprehend, to seize the Master!
As often as He should disappear, even 10,000 times,
likewise 10,000 times He will appear to you
and thus He who cannot be grasped will be grasped by you.
10,000 times, or rather as long as you still breathe,
seek with greater ardor to run towards Him!
For He will not forsake you, He will not forget you.
Little by little, nay, He will even show Himself more and more.
And the more frequently, my soul, the Master will be present to you,
and after having perfectly purified you by the radiance of His light,
He Himself, the Creator of the world, will be with you.
He Himself will be with you, the Creator of the world.
And you will have real riches such as the world does not possess,
but such as Heaven and those who are inscribed there possess.
If such will be yours, tell me, what more do you desire?
Tell me, ungrateful soul, tell me, ignorant soul,
tell me, my lowly soul, what is greater than this,
either in Heaven or on the earth to make you seek it?
The Maker of Heaven and the Master of earth
and of all things in Heaven and in the world,
Creator, the Unique Judge and King,
who abides in you, who shows Himself completely to you,
who totally illumines you with His light
and manifests to you the beauty of His face
and lets you see Him in person, ever more clearly outlined,
who gives you also a share in His very same glory,
tell me, what is greater than this?
Nothing, absolutely nothing, you answer me.
Then I ask again: before such glory, O my soul,
which you have been deemed worthy to receive,

why have you consumed yourself in corruptible things
when you have found those of the future?
Those are the things, my soul, exert yourself constantly to acquire,
to those things attach yourself completely, my soul,
so that you be found in possession of them after death,
of those eternal goods which you will have acquired here below
and with them you will stand before the Creator and Master,
enjoying yourself with Him forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 49

That it happens that in the concern and correction of his neighbor, the spiritual director may fall into the weakness that holds sway over the disciple.

Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me, O Unique One,
who have from my earliest years protected me, O Savior,
You who after my many sins done in full knowledge
have shown such total compassion towards me
by Your own proper goodness.
You have rescued me from the dreadful and vain world,
and from my relatives and friends and from illicit pleasures,
and You have deigned to place me here as on a mountain.
You who have shown me Your marvelous glory, O my God,
and have filled me with Your Divine Spirit, O my Christ,
and have covered me completely with Your spiritual illumination,
grant me irrevocably Your grace, O my God, to Your servant;
right to the end without diminishment.
Do not withdraw it, O Master, do not turn it away, O Creator.
Do not ignore me whom You have placed before Your face
and numbered among Your servants of light.
You have marked me with Your seal of grace and claimed me as
Your own!
Do not again reject me, do not again hide from me
the light of Your face, lest darkness cover me
and the abyss surround me and the heavens close up over me.
You have lifted me above the heavens, O my Savior,
and with the angels, or rather with You, the Creator of all,
You have deigned to let me share with You and to rejoice with You
and to look upon the incomparable glory of Your countenance,
to enjoy to the full Your inaccessible light,
to be filled with joy and to be gladdened
by Your unspeakable happiness,
in sharing, O Master, Your ineffable radiance.
Enjoying the delights of that unspeakable light,
I was exalted, I rejoiced being one with You, my Creator and Fashioner,
in grasping the inconceivable beauty of Your Countenance.
When I again returned back to earth with my intellect,
after having been wrapped in Your light,
I no longer saw the world,
nor anything of the realities, O Master, in the world,
but I transcended the passions and worries.
I was indeed shaken by these things. I questioned all vices.
To being with, I did not share in the wicked designs of men,

but when living for some time among them,
I was placed in responsibility over them
and, as I, O Master, was drawn vigorously into their quarrels,
motivated by the hope of helping them,
I too fell victim of their evil and alas,
I experienced so stupidly the darkness of passions
and, having come under the power of wild beasts, I am in danger.
Indeed, wanting to rescue others from the teeth of beasts,
I myself became the first prey to the beasts.
But anticipate Your mercy and hasten to deliver me
since it is because of You, O Lover of mankind, that I
have fallen into their claws.
It is because of Your commandments, O Merciful One, that I handed
over my soul,
O my most miserable soul, for my brothers' sake.
If, therefore, I have been wounded, You can heal me, Savior.
If I have fallen into the power of the enemies,
wretched prisoner that I am,
You, nevertheless, are powerful and strong to accomplish all things.
You have the power to rescue me by Your simply willing it.
If I have been caught in the mouths and claws of the beasts,
nonetheless, You only have to appear and at once
they will perish while I will live.
Yes, You are rich in mercy, ineffable in pity;
have mercy, show Your pity towards me, having fallen.
I have descended into the pit in order to rescue my neighbor,
and I also went hurling down.
Just Judge, Savior, let me not lie forever there in the pit!
Yes, I know what You have ordained, O my most merciful God,
that it is necessary always to rescue one's brother
from death and from the bite of sin,
but not to perish with him by that sin,
that which has happened to me, O wretched one,
who fell through being careless because I trusted in myself.
But it is necessary that You rescue him and myself likewise.
because if not the first, then to remain above and weep for him
who has fallen and to avoid, with all power, falling with him.
But now, raise me, lead me up out of the abyss
and place me on the rock, O Christ, of Your commandments
and show me again Your light which the world cannot receive,
but which puts outside of the world, outside of the visible light
and air, beyond the sensible heavens and all sensible things him
who contemplates it, O my Savior.
Whether he is in the body or even with the body, he does not know,
O God, at the very moment.

But I think, being like an immaterial bright star
and illumined by the beauty of the spiritual sun,
he lacks the power to contemplate in a sensible manner his own light,
but sees only that star, never declining,
and comprehending the incomprehensible beauty of His glory
and overwhelmed exceedingly, he is unable to understand completely,
neither can he understand the manner
by which he contemplates Him,
how or where He who is completely inexplicable is seen,
he wishes to be circumscribed within the saints.
But this is a fact that all of us know, those inducted into these mysteries
that in truth we are then outside of the world,
and we remain there as long as we see this light.
And then we are found back again in our body and in the world.
But remember this joy and that light,
and the sweet pleasure.
We are saddened and weep, as a little baby who wants to see its mother,
when it recalls the sweet taste of the mother's milk.
It bursts into sobbing until she takes it
and feeds it with her milk until it has had enough.
This is what we now beg, this is what we now implore of You,
for this, to obtain this in an inadmissible way.
We fall down before You, O Savior, in order that now we
may be nourished!
O most Merciful One, by this Bread which descends
spiritually from Heaven,
to give to all those who participate in this life
in order that at our departure, taking the road towards You,
we may possess Him as our viaticum, our help and our rescuer,
and with Him and through Him we may be present to You, O Savior,
and before the awesome tribunal of judgment,
our sins may be covered over by Him, O Master,
so as not to be hidden to Him nor to the view of all the angels and men,
but may He be for us a resplendent robe
and our glory and crown for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 50

On the contemplation of God, of divine matters and of the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit; on the characteristics of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity; concerning him who has not first succeeded in entering the Kingdom of Heaven, nothing will help him even if he is beyond the punishments of Hell.

What is the work You have accomplished in me,
O Cause of all things, O my God and their Lord?
What can I say, what can I even think?
Great indeed in my eyes is the wonder that I see,
it is unknown and invisible to all.
What is this, tell me? I will express it honestly.
I am bound by shadow and darkness, by sensible things and sensation,
by material creation, by blood and flesh.
I am hardened as a rock, O Savior, wretch that I am.
In such an unfortunate and miserable state,
I am overcome by fear when I wish to speak.
I see with the eyes of the intelligence.
Where and what and how? I do not know!
For the *how* is absolutely inexpressible.
The *where* appears to me as both known and unknown.
On the one hand it is known because I see it as in me.
And yet it appears again far away.
On the other hand, it seems unknown insofar as it carries me
along with it
to a place which has absolutely no dimension.
It encourages me to forget all sensible things
and all the visible, material things.
It leads me, naked, even out of the body.
What then is all this that is going on in me,
which, I repeat, I do see going on?
I cannot say.
Listen, nevertheless, and you will understand this reality.
It is completely incomprehensible to all.
It is still comprehended and participated in by those
who are worthy to receive it;
it is bestowed as a gift, being united with them
in an incomprehensible way,
united with the pure with being confused,
mixed with them, yet in a mixture that does not homogenize.
It is totally itself with them, totally themselves
who live unapproachable lives.

This shines brilliantly within me like a lamp,
or rather that first is seen in the heavens,
yes, which infinitely above the heavens in a very obscured way
invisibly makes itself seen.
But when I strive energetically and with force ask it to shine
or better to make itself more clearly to be seen from on high,
it separates me from all things below and unites me
with its unspeakable brilliance,
or it suddenly shows itself completely within me,
a spherical light, gentle and divine,
with form, with shape, in a formless form.
It is seen as such and speaks to me these words:
"Why do you seek to circumscribe Me within the boundaries
of the heavens?
And why do you seek me only there and think that there alone I reside?
What makes you think that I am on the earth
as you proclaim that I am with all creatures
and as you decree that I really exist everywhere?
This "everywhere" attributes to Me dimension,
but I exist totally beyond any dimensions;
know that my nature is beyond measurement.
The "on the earth" indicates a circumvention,
but I am completely and simply illimitable.
And in saying that "I am with all creatures,"
you show clearly your ignorance to all.
For you know that I am united with my saints,
I Myself, totally by My essence, in awareness,
and through contemplation,
but also by participation with My Father and the Divine Spirit,
and that I take My repose in a manifested way in them.
If then you say that we are united with each saint individually,
you multiply Us by dividing Us into many numbered persons.
If you are speaking of one saint, how can he be also entirely in
each of Us,
or, rather, how can one be both above and below?
How can He who fills all, how can He dwell in one person?
He who is one, how can He fill all?"
Listen to the ineffable mystery of the ineffable God,
a paradox, one that is indeed totally strange.
On the one hand, God truly exists, really is –
this all pious faithful confess –
On the other hand, however, He is absolutely nothing such as we know
Him to be,
not even is He anything such as the angels think Him to be,
And in this sense I say, He is nothing of all the created things,

since He is the Creator of all things and is above everything.
For who would say what God is, so as to say
He is this or He is that?
I totally am ignorant as to who He is, which He is,
of what kind He is, or how great he is.
Therefore, I am totally ignorant about God, as to who He is,
His form, aspect, His greatness, beauty,
how to explain His operations,
how He is seen who is invisible to all,
how He is present to all created nature,
how He dwells in all the Saints,
how He fills all and yet in no way is filled,
how He is above all and is everywhere?
All this, indeed, no one has the power in any way to say.
But, O You, whom no one has ever completely seen,
O You, the universal King, the Unique One, who surpasses all mercy,
I give thanks to You from the bottom of my heart,
because You did not turn Your face from me
when I fell down into darkness,
but You touched me with Your divine hand,
which raised me up at once, rejoicing.
For it indeed radiated more brilliantly than the sun.
I tried to seize it, O miserable one that I was,
and at once it disappeared from my eyes,
and again I was left alone in darkness.
I fell to the earth, mourning and weeping,
rolling about and lamenting vigorously,
so desirous was I to see again Your divine hand.
You stretched it out; it appeared to me ever more distinctly,
and clasping it, I kissed it over and over again.
O what sweetness and great mercy!
The Creator has given me His hand to kiss,
that hand that sustains all beings by its strength.
O what a favor! O inexpressible gift!
But again He who created me withdrew His hand
in order to truly test my fervent desire,
to test whether I desire it and Him who gives it;
if I despise all other things and prefer it to them;
and if I remain in His love.
I left at once the world and the things of the world.
I closed at the same time all my senses, my eyes, ears, nostrils,
mouth and lips.
I died to all my relatives and friends;
yes, in truth I died to any desire and I sought only the hand of God.
God, thus seeing me conducting myself in this way, touched me lightly

with His hand, seizing me and He guided me right to the center
of the darkness where I found myself.
I felt therefore His guiding hand and I followed with joy.
I ran with strength night and day.
I marched bravely with ardent desire,
and, while marching, I found myself again immobile,
and then it was rather that I made the quickest progress.
O mysteries, o rewards, o crowns!
That hand secretly went before me as I ran into the middle
of the stadium,
Through the prayer of my holy father (Symeon the Venerable),
it touched my wretched head,
and gave me the crown of victory,
or, rather, it itself became my crown.
And seeing it, what was the unspeakable happiness,
ineffable joy, ineffable desire that was mine!
For why not? I had conquered the whole world and overpowered
the Prince of the world;
I received from God's hand the divine crown,
or, rather, I received in place of a crown the very hand of the Master.
O marvel! This hand which was seen immaterially shone
brilliantly for me,
unceasingly and without setting.
It stretched out towards me as a bosom
and gave me to suck abundantly incorruptible milk,
as a son of God.
O what sweetness; O what ineffable pleasure!
It became for me a cup of a divine potion and an immortal stream.
Partaking of it, I was indeed filled with nourishment of Heaven,
of which the angels alone nourish themselves
and are sustained in immorality.
They are secondary light, participating in the First Light.
So also we all have become sharers in the divine and ineffable nature.
Children of the Father, brothers of Christ,
having been baptized by the most Holy Spirit.
But we all have not completely recognized the grace
nor the illumination,
nor the participation from the fact that we have not been regenerated,
since there is one out of a thousand or better out of 10,000
who has arrived at mystical contemplation.
The others, all of them, are as babies born dead,
who do not know the one who gave them birth.
For just as cadavers plunged into water or even fire
feel absolutely nothing,
so in no less way these are dead by their unbelief and weak by their

negligence in keeping the commandments.
They do not know that they are like victims
of a fearful catastrophe, of an erroneous faith.
Such a person thinks he is a son of God
and yet he does not recognize the same Father.
If, therefore, you say that by faith you recognize Him
and you think you by faith are a son of God,
and also the incarnation of God really happened; you know by faith,
do not say any more that He really became man,
nor that He rendered Himself visibly present.
But if He truly became the son of man, then He really makes you
a son of God.
If He did not become a body but only in appearance,
then we have become only a spirit as an idea,
but it is true that the Word became flesh,
so also He transforms us ineffably and makes us in truth
children of God.
Dwelling unchangeable in His divinity,
the Word became man in taking on flesh,
preserving His humanity unchangeable in His flesh and His soul,
He made me completely god.
He took on my condemned flesh and endued me with complete divinity.
For indeed baptized, I have put on Christ,
not in a sensible way, but completely spiritually.
And how is it that one made god by grace and by adoption
will not be god in awareness and knowledge and contemplation,
he who has put on the Son of God?
If the God Logos became man unconsciously,
then it is permissible that I also may become god in ignorance
of the fact as is natural to suppose.
But it is in knowledge, in fact and in conscious experience,
that God has assumed a whole human nature.
I am entirely god by sharing in God in a conscious awareness
and by knowledge, not by essence
but by participation, as is absolutely necessary to believe
to be orthodox.
As indeed God without change became man in body and appeared to all,
so likewise ineffably He begot me spiritually
and while I remained a man, He made me god.
And as He, seen in flesh, was ignored as God by the crowds,
so also we in a similar way are seen by all men,
O strange thing! to be simply men, but what we have become
by divine grace is not seen by the multitude.
It is only to those whose eye of the soul has been purified
that we appear such as we are like looking through binoculars.

While to the impure, neither God nor ourselves are seen as we really are,
such we completely believe that we are.
For they are unbelievers who rely only on faith without works,
or if they are not unbelievers, at least they are completely dead,
as the divine Paul expressed it.
Do not be incredulous, but tell me and answer wisely!
Which of these two do you prefer:
a dead faith sterile of works
or an unbelief with the works of faith?
Certainly you will tell me: What benefit is there of works
without a faith that is correct and complete?
But I will answer you again: Of what use is a faith without works?
If then you wish to know the things about which we have been speaking
and to become god by grace, not by faith alone, or appearance
or as an idea,
not by faith alone, deprived of works, but by experience,
in reality and in an intellectual contemplation and a very
mystical knowledge,
do those things which the Savior commands you —
and those things which He has undergone on your behalf —
then you will see the light most brilliantly shining,
in the atmosphere of the soul,
completely translucent in a spiritual way,
the immaterial Essence distinctly penetrating in deed
the entire soul thoroughly,
and following from this the entire body penetrated completely by it
is found similar to the soul incorporeal
and your body is resplendent as Your soul.
And your soul in its turn, like the resplendent grace,
will be radiant as God is.
But if you refuse to imitate the humiliations of Your Creator, His
sufferings and His insults,
and if you do not consent to undergo these,
at least spiritually, or better still, sensibly,
you will be abandoned, O stupidity!
in the obscurity and the hell of your flesh,
which is corruption,
for what is this than if not a death in an immortal vessel?
It is completely locked up for eternity
and deprived of all goods which are in the light and are of the light!
For I do not yet speak of being given over to fire and to the gnashing
of teeth and to the weeping and to the worms,
but only of living in the body as in an earthenware jar,
after the resurrection, just as before and never to cast
one's view outward,

never to receive any kind of light within,
but to remain in such a condition, deprived of all pleasures
here below and in the future.
I thus repeat, tell me, then, my listener, you who say:
"I do not wish to be inside of His immortal Kingdom,
nor to enjoy those goods from above,
but only to be freed from punishment and not to experience fire
in the least way."
Of what profit would this be to you, as I already said?
Answer me, o most wise one and tell me!
Can you imagine any other punishment which is or will be worse?
Away! But when you are alone in your solitude,
then you will confess that you are in torments and are being punished?
If indeed you answer that it will be a spiritual body,
then that you will receive,
how then will the soul be locked within itself as in a vessel?
Listen, learn how it will come about!
Just as the seed is sown according to its species,
I refer you to the grain of wheat, of barley and all other seeds
which grow up equally according to the species,
so also the bodies of those who have died,
they fall into the earth in the condition that they are.
So the souls which go out of their bodies in the future resurrection
of the dead, each will find according to his merit,
an abode full of light or of darkness.
On the one hand the pure souls will partake of the light
and will light their lamps.
They will be completely in the light that will never be extinguished.
But the impure and those who have eyes of the heart that are blind
and filled with darkness,
how will they see the divine radiance?
You will say, "Never!"
But tell me, who will hear them crying out for mercy after their death
and will open their eyes, alas,
those who willingly did not wish to see nor to light the lamp
of their soul?
A pitch black darkness then will cover them.
The bodies, as we said, in the same way, corrupt and disintegrate
into dust,
even of the Saints, but they are raised up,
just as they had been sown, pure wheat, sanctified wheat,
a holy vessel of the Holy Spirit, for having been most pure here below.
They are raised up now glorified, radiant, resplendent as the divine light.
The souls of the Saints which inhabited their bodies,
will shine then above the sun,

and they will become like to the Master,
whose divine laws they observed.
As regards the bodies of sinners, they likewise are raised up,
such as they have been sown in the earth,
muddy, smelly, full of corruption, impure vessels,
drunken with evil, pitch black, because they performed the work
of darkness and were used as instruments
of every sort of evil in the hands of the evil sower.
They are raised, even though they are immortal and also spiritual,
they are similar to darkness along with their wretched souls
to which they are joined.
They also, dark and impure, will become similar to the devil
since they imitated his works and kept his commands.
With them they also will be thrown into inextinguishable fire
and sent away into darkness and Hell.
Or rather they will be hurled according to the proportion
of their heaviness,
according to the merit of their sins of which each is accused.
And there each will abide for all eternity.
The Saints, however, as we said, each of them, will be lifted up.
On the wings of their virtues they will climb to meet the Master,
each according to his merit and as each one in advance
has well disposed himself.
Each will be near or far from the Creator,
united with Him for eternity,
exulting and rejoicing with unending joy. Amen.

HYMN 51

That when the Holy Spirit shines within us, all passion is dispelled as darkness before light, but when He retrenches His rays, we are again prey to the passions and evil thoughts.

Your light surrounds me, giving me life, O Christ,
for seeing You is life-giving, it is resurrection.
How to describe the works of Your light I am unable.
And only because of what I have actually experienced
and I am now experiencing, my God, I realize that even in sickness,
O Master, and in tribulations and in sorrows,
when I was held in fetters and suffered from hunger and was in prison,
when I was a victim of the worse kind of sufferings, O my Christ,
Your light, so radiantly shining, dissipated all these sufferings,
as so much darkness,
and in the repose, the light and the enjoyment of the light that
suddenly makes Your Divine Spirit present to me,
I recognized the tribulations as smoke,
the evil designs as darkness,
the temptations as arrows, the anxieties as obscurity,
the passions as calculating wild beasts, O Word.
From all of these You delivered me, from these
You had rescued me earlier,
when You, little by little, shone Your divine light on me;
and even now in the midst of these sufferings, O Christ, my God,
You are guarding me safely from wounds
as You cover me with Your light.
But when I fall so many times, committing sins every hour,
but when I rebel, when I make You angry,
I beg Your merciful correction, O my Christ,
whose effects I feel strongly within me,
when Your divine light is withdrawn that had covered me,
Your inaccessible, ever-shining and divine light, O Master.
Just as at the setting of the sun, night comes and darkness
and all the wild beasts come forth in search of food,
so when Your light no longer covers me, O my God,
at once the darkness of this life and the sea of evil thoughts
cover me completely over,
the wild beasts of passions completely devour me
and I am wounded by the arrows of all the evil temptations.
But when again You have pity on me,
when You condescend with Your mercy,
when You lend Your ear to my plaintive cries

and You hear my groanings and You accept my tears
and You consent to look down on my lowliness,
You show Yourself to me, who have committed so many
unforgiveable sins,
O my Christ, but from afar as a star that begins to rise,
You increase little by little, not that You undergo this change
in Yourself,
but You enlighten the mind of Your servant so he can see.
Ever more as the sun gradually is seen
and so also the darkness flees and disappears,
I reason that it is You coming,
You who are everywhere present.
And when You envelope me completely, as before, O Savior,
when You cover me completely, totally surrounding me,
I am freed from all evil and I am ransomed from the darkness,
and the temptations and the passions and from all evil thoughts,
for I am filled with sweetness, filled with joyfulness,
and I am covered over with joy, with an ineffable happiness,
seeing the awesome mysteries, seeing the strange marvel,
seeing all that the eye has not beheld
nor has it been in the power of man to see,
nor his ear to hear that which has not even entered into
the heart of mortals.
And I am extremely overwhelmed with awe, outside of myself
at seeing this,
and I am estranged completely from everything on the earth,
as I sing Your praises, O my God, with unceasing acclamations.
I reflect concerning this strange change happening within myself
and the manner in which Your all-powerful hand protects me.
How by the brilliance of only Your light and Your appearance,
You have driven away all my sorrow.
You have snatched me out of the world
and mysteriously You have united me with Yourself
and have reestablished me again in Heaven,
there where there is no sorrow, no groaning, no tear,
no serpent to bite the heel.
And how You, without tiring and with goodness
point out to me the opposite road, narrow, unpassable for men,
or to express it better, for all humans inaccessible.
For who ever has been able, or whoever will be able among men
to enter Heaven with his body or even without his body,
but flying with some sort of wings?
Elias was lifted up in a fiery chariot and before him Henoch,
but they didn't enter into Heaven but into another place.
And they didn't do it by their own force, but in truth

they were transported.
But what is this compared to the things that have taken place in us?
How can there be any comparison at all between shadow and truth,
or, tell me, between a spirit that is subservient and serves
only its own interests
and the Spirit of the Master, all powerful and divine,
who renders weak and strong every created essence?
For all things are His creation; He is their only Creator,
being inseparable from the Father and likewise from the Son.
The Three are God for the Trinity is One God.
It is the Trinity that has brought all things into being,
that has created all things.
It has created in the world the Word and Son of the Father made flesh
for our salvation, inseparable from the Father and the Spirit.
He takes on flesh through the descent of the Spirit
and becomes that which He was not, a man like me
with the exception of sin and every iniquity.
God and likewise man, visible to all, possessing the Divine Spirit,
who is united with Him in nature, with whom He has given life
to the dead,
and opened the pupils of the blind.
He has purified the lepers and driven out the demons.
He it is who suffered the cross and even death.
He was resurrected in the Spirit and has been raised in glory
and He has paved a new way to Heaven for all men
who have believed in Him with unfailing faith.
He has poured out abundantly the most Holy Spirit
upon all who showed faith by their works.
He even now pours Him unceasingly to those who do likewise
and He divinizes through this Spirit at once those with whom
He is united.
And from the men such as they were He transforms them
without changing them
and He makes them children of God, brothers of the Savior,
co-heirs also of Christ and heirs of God,
gods united with God in the Holy Spirit,
prisoners indeed in the flesh, but freed in the spirit,
elevated with Christ easily into Heaven
and there enjoying all the rights of citizenry
in the contemplation of all the goods which human eyes have not seen.
What then is the fiery chariot of Elias?
What is the translation of Henoch compared to these?
I think, similar to the sea divided by the rod (of Moses) of old
and the manna that came down from Heaven,
these are only types and the symbols of the truth.

The sea is a type of Baptism, the manna of the Savior.
So in a like manner the things mentioned are symbols
and a type of the realities endued with an incomparable transcendence
and glory — just as the uncreated transcends by nature the created.
The manna, indeed, which is called bread, the food of angels,
which those
men then ate in the desert, stopped, disappeared and all died,
yes, all such who ate of it, for it did not possess true life.
While the flesh of my Master, being divine and filled with life,
makes all participants in life, all those who eat it and it makes
them immortal.
It is not the depths of the sea over which He leads them;
it is not out of Egypt that this Body of Christ leads them to
another land, which produced for those men of old corruptible fruit.
It is not 40 years that He orders us to march, the Redeemer
of the World,
so that we can come into the possession of the promised land,
but as soon as we are baptized with an unwavering faith,
and having communicated with His blood and His flesh
from death to life at once He leads us,
to light from darkness, from earth to Heaven.
He first despoils me of corruption and death
and frees me completely in my conscious awareness,
and – more awesome than all the others – He has shown me
a new Heaven and has made His abode within me, He the Creator of all.
Of such a grace no one of the Saints of old was considered worthy.
In early times He spoke through the Divine Spirit
and by His action, He worked His marvels,
but never absolutely did God unite Himself with anyone
before Christ, my God, became man.
For having taken a body, He gave His Divine Spirit
and through Him He unites Himself substantially with all believers
and He effects an inseparable union with them.
Woe is me! For I groan bitterly over the error of men.
How do we not believe in Christ?
How do we not follow Him?
How do we not desire the life?
How not wish His riches, His riches inviolate, incorruptible,
His glory inaccessible of living in His presence?
How do we not desire this?
How, so attached to corruptible things, do we reckon ourselves saved,
since we do not love Christ more than the visible things,
since we do not hope to be united with Him after death?
But men are more insensitive than wood and stones.
But, O my Christ, save me from their stupidity

and show me clearly how to love You, the life of all the faithful!
For to You, with the Father and Divine Spirit is due glory and praise,
honor and worship, now and always, as to a King for ever and ever,
as to the Creator of all, God and Master. Amen.

HYMN 52

On theology. That he who has not been transformed by the participation of the Holy Spirit and has not become consciously god by adoption is not empowered to teach men the things of God.

Who will console me because of the pain in my heart?
But in saying pain, I should say the love of the Savior.
Love is the working of the Spirit, or rather His presence
which essentially and substantially is seen as a light within me.
This is an incomprehensible light.
It is completely inexpressible.
Who will separate me from sensible things from which I was once freed
and from which I hid myself, in leaving the world behind?
Who will give me the serenity and tranquillity towards all,
so that I may be captivated by His beauty and His vision?
That which is in Him incomprehensibly ignites my love
and all that is comprehensible is personalized love.
For love is not a name, but the divine essence,
both participable and yet incomprehensible, but totally divine.
That which communicates itself is comprehensible,
but that which is more than the former cannot be so.
This is therefore why I have told you that love is comprehensible
and it is personalized insofar as it is communicable and understandable.
For all that is understandable and communicable is always an essence,
substantially communicable and likewise understandable.
For what has no essence is called and is nothing but having a nature
that is above the nature of all creatures.
It is called super-essential; yet it still has an essence.
And it is substantially above every other essence.
In relation to a created substance, it is totally incomparable,
for it is completely by nature uncircumscribable.
But that which is circumscribed, how can you call it a substance?
And that which is not a substance is nothing; yet how can it be
communicated to me?
If you do not believe Me, I will show you Paul as a witness
who will convince you that both things are worthy of faith.
For when he (Paul) says that to possess Christ who speaks within himself
and that He is expressed by the most Holy Spirit,
he says that the divine can be communicated and circumscribed,
but in Him and with Him He is present but without being
circumscribed and comprehended.
But when He presents Himself as dwelling in an unapproachable light
and witnesses that never has any man seen Him,

then He manifests His uncircumscribable and incomprehensible quality.
For if no one among men has ever seen Him,
how either can anyone have a part of Him or even touch Him?
You will say, "Impossible," if you do not wish to quarrel.
But when He tells you again, "God who before said that He was a light,
brilliantly shining out of darkness,
and that light was shining within me."
What other God does He invite you, tell me, to know,
if not Him the one who dwells in unsupportable light
and whom no man has in any way ever seen?
For this is He, the super-essential, uncreated being,
before He took flesh and appeared to me as a creature.
He has divinized me completely and has taken me
to Himself in a wonderful way.
Do you thus believe, tell me, and completely have no doubt about it?
If, therefore, God became man, as you believe,
He has divinized me and assumed me to Himself,
thus I am become god by adoption and I see God by nature
that God whom no man ever has been able to see,
and whom no man has been at all able even to contemplate.
Therefore those who have received God by the works of faith
and who bear the name of gods by being born by the Spirit,
they see Him, their Father who unceasingly dwells
in unapproachable light.
They possess Him dwelling within them
and they themselves dwell in Him who is absolutely unapproachable.
This is the true faith, this the work of God.
This the seal of Christians, this the divine communion.
This is the participation, this the divine pledge money.
This is what life is, this is the Kingdom.
This is the garment, the robe of the Lord
which the baptized put on by faith,
and not by ignorance, I tell you, not unconsciously,
but through faith in consciousness and knowledge.
So you should not say, "I believe that I have put on Christ!"
I do not tell you, "Believe this!" but
"Possess the work of faith, the confirmation of faith
and the seal of faith and the perfection of faith without ambivalence,"
from the fact that you have put on Christ consciously and knowingly
who radiates, is resplendent in the glory of the divinity
and who in a light most clear completely transforms you,
leaving you in a way unchanged yet in a way you are now two things,
both one and the other: god by adoption and completely man by nature.
The same person has become such as I had told you.
So then come and place yourself with us, O my brother,

on the mountain of divine knowledge of divine contemplation
and together let us hear the Father's voice – O alas!
How far are we from the divine dignity!
How far away are we from eternal life!
How far is Heaven away from the deepest regions under the earth
and from those who are unfortunately held captives there
for a long time!
How far or even farther are we all, really,
from the dignity of God and divine contemplation,
even if we should affirm in a contradictory way that we abide in Him
and we possess in us Him who abides in unapproachable light,
who also entirely remains and abides in us,
and yet we would wish, seated in the bowels of the earth,
to philosophize on things that transcend this earth,
on things of Heaven and even higher things than that, as though
we saw reality accurately,
and so we seek to explain to everyone and enjoy being called
learned men,
theologians, experts and mystics of divine secrets
which just proves completely our stupidity.
The one, indeed, who unfortunately was born in
the subterranean regions
and dwells completely in darkness of this present world,
without having seen the light of the future life,
– a light which has always shone on the earth
and continually is shining –
and yet he attempts to speak of everything in Heaven,
claiming to have expert knowledge of it all,
to see everything that is there above
and to be able to teach it to others,
is such a person not stupid and even worse than that?
For he is like a blind man who loves to argue with those
who see and he says, "This coin is of bronze,
the image of such and such,
the writing on it says such and such."
It is really an unbelievable contradiction for his listeners
who clearly see that the coin is made of gold, of a much better alloy
and the image is really that of the emperor, which clearly without any
falsification shows his image and the writing is clearly his name.
So we also suffering from a similar sickness,
do not think that we are sick.
We do not feel any shame before anyone or even before the Saints
and the angels who from above see the realities that touch us.
But the Word of the Lord applies fully to us when He said that:
"Seeing they do not see," and again,

"Hearing they close the ears of their soul and do not hear the words
of the Spirit,
for they hear physically with their bodily ears,
but the spiritual ears of the heart they keep closed and are unable
at all to hear God."
For they are totally unable to lift from themselves
the veil of vanity and tepidity
since they themselves willingly have placed it there,
for they wish to cover their eyes and ears.
And for this reason they imagine that they both see and hear.
But if someone were to say to them: "Listen to me,
my children, and take off the veil from your heart!"
these words indeed would make them angry,
because he did not call them "Fathers"
but he addressed them as "children."
Only rather hatred would they have for such words,
unable as they are to be aware of the passion that corrodes them,
or rather of the passions that darken their mind and their thoughts
and separate them who have already been so afflicted from God.
These are the slaves of presumption and of pride,
who willingly consenting to be taken captives,
always fulfill their own will.
They have forsaken God's laws for themselves as their law.
And they worship not God but themselves.
O what audacity!
In place of God's glory they seek their own.
This is what they eagerly seek to promote
in all their works and in every way.
But the glory of Christ is the cross and the sufferings
which He bore for us in order to glorify us,
but these do not wish to suffer the things that He suffered,
and they refuse to become participators of God's glory
by refusing to suffer as He suffered.
They seek, alas, rather the glory that comes from men
and choose willingly separation from God.
But, O my Christ, deliver those who are tied to You
from the unclean vanity and pride.
Make us participators in Your sufferings and Your glory
and deign to make us never to be separated from You,
now and in the future world to come,
forever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 53

A discourse in the form of a dialog between God and the father of the discourse. How this father, a man divinely illumined by the Holy Spirit, deals with God and by Him was initiated into divine and human mysteries.

Look at my tribulations, O Christ.
Look at my cowardliness.
Look at my weakness,
Look at my poverty
and show mercy on me, O Word!
Shine on me even now as before
and illumine my soul, enlighten my eyes
to see You, Light of the world,
Joy, Happiness, Life eternal, Delight of angels,
Kingdom of Heaven and Paradise,
the Crown of the just,
and Judge and King!
Why do You hide Your face?
Why do You separate Yourself from me, O my God,
who never wish to be separated from those who love You?
Why do You flee from me, why do You burn me?
Why do You wound and crush me?
You know that I love You
and I seek You with all my soul.
Reveal Yourself, as You said,
and show Yourself to me!
For I know You are truthful.
I recognize that You do not lie
and You love all who love You
and You treat them as Your friends,
not in shadow nor in appearance,
nor as an intelligence towards another intelligence
but as the Word which You are from the beginning.
You are substantial life, born of the Father,
and united in one with Him
in an ineffable sharing.
In the same way those whom You beget by Your Holy Spirit
and whom You make Your sons,
or, rather, Your brothers
and sons of God, Your Father.
With them You share
and seeing them You are seen
by them in turn.

Show then Your mercy.
Show Your love for mankind
and Your pity, Savior,
which You have poured out so abundantly,
truly upon all flesh
that has believed in You.
Open to me the doors
of Your wedding hall, my God,
Yes, do not close the door on me,
of Your light, O my Christ!
"—What do you imagine by these words,
O son of men, to do — to force Me?
What do you mean so senselessly
that I hide My face from you?
How is it that you suspect Me of closing the doors and gates?
Whatever are you thinking of in saying
that I separate Myself from you?
What did you say — that I enflame you and burn and crush you?
Your words are not, indeed, correct,
nor is the idea right.
But listen rather to the words
that I will tell you.
I was light even before I created
all the things you see.
I am everywhere and I was everywhere,
and having created all creatures,
I am everywhere and in all things.
Listen to the words of wisdom;
understand the depth of mysteries!
Nevertheless I was none of these things,
not completely with all
nor even within all,
but without being united with anything,
still I was with all.
I was not therefore any of all these things;
yet I was in all without being there,
and I was in the midst of all visible things,
animate and inanimate,
those things enjoying sense life and those with no sense life,
those separated from Me
and those that totally do not know Me.
I shaped the dust into a body,
and I breathed into it a soul —
not out of My own essence,
but out of My own power.

Understand what things I am teaching you.
I have thus said, "By my power
I have breathed a soul into you,"
one endowed with reason and intelligence,
which, entering into the body as into a house,
it was attached to it
and it took it as its instrument.
And out of two, it appeared as one being.
I mean a reasonable animal,
man – a composite of two natures in an ineffable way,
with a visible body
that in itself lacks sensation and reason
and an invisible soul,
made according to My image,
reasonable and intelligent,
strange marvel! and placed in the middle of all things.
I mean in the midst of all creatures.
Of what kind of creatures?
Of material and immaterial.
For the material are those you see,
while the immaterial are the Angels.
It is therefore in the midst of these, I mean,
that living man – a composite being:
among those of sensation he is immaterial;
but among the immaterial beings, he is sensate.
I made him therefore as sensate,
lord of the visible creatures and their master.
I placed all visible things as slaves
in submission to him,
so that he may see My works
and praise Me, their Creator.
But as far as he was a reasonable being,
capable of intellectual contemplation,
I gave him the ability to see Me
and I placed him by this means
to be worthy of the angels.
See, be attentive to what I have just told you.
Man, being a composite being, saw with his sensible eyes
all My creatures.
But with those of his intelligence he saw My face,
his Creator.
He contemplated My glory
and conversed with Me hourly.
But when he transgressed My commandment
and ate of the tree,

he became blind
and was covered with the darkness of death, as I have said.
This is what it means — "to hide himself."
For it was this that man then thought stupidly he could do.
But where was he able to hide himself from Me,
in what place, tell Me?
But now you reason in a worse manner,
more irrational than he,
that it is *I* who am hiding, not wishing
to be seen at all by you.
Then if I do not wish to be seen,
why then did I appear in flesh?
Why did I simply descend?
Why was I seen by all?
Do not ignore My actions,
nor My plan of salvation.
Adam first became blind
when I reprimanded him and taught him to seek repentance from Me,
but he did not consent,
rather he showed no sign at all of humility.
He said, "It is the woman who sinned, whom You gave me,"
as if You accounted me the cause of her sin."
Likewise the woman in her turn accused the serpent,
and neither of them confessed at all
that he had sinned.
For this reason he was driven
from the delights of Paradise
and lived among only sensate beings,
deprived of reason.
Cut off from reasonable beings,
he became irrational, material,
separated from immaterial beings.
Strange marvel!
As a body deprived of eyes,
the soul was blind
and could not see God.
If the body were blind,
it is still moved by the soul;
but the soul was blind.
Therefore what sort of movement did it possess?
How was it even able to live?
In no way, but it died an eternal death,
which they, our first parents,
suffered, as I said, for their folly,
and they went down into Hell

and were thrown into corruption.
But I had pity on them.
I descended from on high.
Being absolutely invisible,
I took on the heaviness of flesh
and I assumed a soul.
I, being God, unchangeable,
I, the Word, became flesh
and received a beginning by taking on flesh.
I was seen as men before all.
For what reason, therefore, did I agree to do this?
Because for the same reason as I said that I have created Adam:
to contemplate Me.
But since he was blind and from him,
all who descended equally from him,
I did not hold on to that-being in the divine glory,
nor did I abandon them whom I created
by My hands when they had become blind by the deceit of the serpent,
but I became like to men in all things,
sensible to the sensible,
wishing to become one with them.
You see what desire I had
to be seen by men
as to wish to become man
and to be seen visibly.
How then could you say that I hide Myself
from you and am not seen?
I really do shine brilliantly but you do not see Me.
Be attentive to this mystery!
Adam was seeing the glory of My divinity
and he was living.
But when he transgressed, he became blind
and at once he was stricken with death
because he refused to repent and say,
"I have sinned against You."
This is the reason, therefore, that he was justly
condemned to return to the earth
from whence he was taken.
Consequently this death was
considered by all men as having been given
as a sentence for an inescapable punishment.
But it is not a punishment
but rather a benefit.
For I did not permit the corruption to be united with the incorruption.
For it would have been worse than being separated from the body,

namely, being immortal, to be tied eternally
to the evil of both body and soul.
For the soul, having lost life here on earth,
would have to support still the corruptible body united with it,
how would it not be worse than death,
worse than the separation of the soul, I tell you?
There are, thus, two deaths, that of the body and that of the soul.
He who is dead in his soul, tell Me,
who carries around united with himself a body that is corruptible
because of this death which little by little grows old,
dissolves and dissipates,
if the soul would not be delivered
and become separated from it,
but would eternally be tied to it,
how would such a life not be worse
than the worse of all punishments in Hell?
Look at, please, those suffering from leprosy,
how their flesh becomes corrupt and destroyed,
how they are without hands, feet, and eyes and lips,
and noses and ears!
How they are completely immobile,
how they are mute and deaf,
yet how they implore God with inarticulate sounds
to deliver them from this flesh.
For if then, as I said before, the soul were to live forever
in such a condition,
would not living be worse than death?
Therefore, in such a way the punishment has become a blessing,
or rather it is not a punishment
but a part of God's divine plan of salvation.
For the death of men
is a death of troubles.
Death is a liberation from anxieties,
Death is freedom from sickness and all sorts of sufferings.
Death is the suppression of sins of every kind.
Death is the removal of all evils of life.
And for those who have lived well,
it is the ambassador of unending joy,
of eternal delight and inextinguishable light.
Moreover, instead of seeing it as a separation of the body,
I tell you, look at My blessings,
My plan of salvation and learn what are My gifts!
I have manifested Myself to the world
and also have manifested My Father
and I have poured out abundantly

My Most Holy Spirit truly on all flesh.
I have revealed My name to all men
that I am also by My works Creator and Author
I have manifested and still now am manifesting
all that must be done.
Amen.

HYMN 54

That God has given to each man fittingly and for his good his own charism through the Holy Spirit to perform a work, not as he wishes but according to what He has ordered in advance not to be void in the midst of His Church.

The creature, what can it ever know about its Creator?
For the knowledge which it has received, it ought
to utilize in its practical affairs and activities
with justice and equity.
Indeed, a pickaxe, a scythe, a fork and saw,
a hatchet, a pole, a spear, a dagger and bow,
a javelin and all other instruments of daily life,
each has its own proper function,
but it does not receive it from itself, but certainly from us.
For the artisan constructs each instrument,
technically as he wishes to make it.
Thus it is not possible to harvest the fields with a pickaxe,
nor to build with a scythe,
nor to construct with a sword,
nor to pick with a saw,
nor to sew with a hatchet.
It is not possible to cut wood with a rod or to saw with a spear,
to sling with a dagger or to cut with a bow,
but it is necessary to use each tool for each proper purpose.
If you use them for other purposes than for which they were made,
you waste your life and all your efforts.
It is in a similar way also, believe me, that God has made us,
to work, each of us, faithfully, in the actions of life.
He has determined some to teach; others indeed to learn;
some to rule over the masses; others to obey the first,
and to some He has given wisdom; to others knowledge and reason.
To some the gift of prophesy, to others to speak in tongues;
to some to work miracles and to do works of power;
others He has made superiors.
These are the spiritual gifts.
But let us speak also of the other charisms of the Creator,
which He has given to men, each according to what is fitting to him.
He has made one man with a virile body;
another with much beauty and another with a good voice.
He has simply bestowed upon each person a gift
according to what is fitting him
and according to the designs which only God knows,
the Creator of all things,

who works ineffably in a beneficial way in life.
So each does not himself choose his trade that he is adapted to,
but he is created for it.
And it is for such a profession that he fittingly and properly is suited.
You will see how the sailor skillfully plows the waves of the sea
and finds more pleasure in that than the man who rides
a majestic stallion.
You will see the farmer who opens the furrows of the earth
with the plow,
esteeming much more the pair of oxen
that work with him than the span of four horses of the king,
and from this work he finds his joy
in the sweet hopes whereby he is fed.
The soldier in turn prefers himself to all farmers and sailors
and craftsmen,
and he prides himself as though crowned with glory
if he runs to the massacre and to death, to a prematured death.
Such a one, therefore, is not interested at all if you speak to him
of rowing an oar or how to hold a grub-hoe
or how to be a builder or a sailor or farmer or peasant.
Never! But each one, as I said,
exercises himself in that work which he has received from God
and man will not know how to do otherwise in this life
or even to wish otherwise.
For you see, I again repeat to you what I earlier said,
it is never possible for any instrument of all those mentioned above,
to move itself to accomplish some work
or to produce something without man's hand,
taking it and with it making something,
likewise man cannot without the divine hand
conceive anything good or do it.
For you see, the Word is the craftsman
who has produced me,
such as He wished me to be and placed me in the world.
How therefore, tell me, would I be able to think or do
or work at all at anything without the divine power?
He who bestowed on me the gift of an intelligence,
such as He has really wished,
it is He who gives me the gift to think of all
that He knows to be useful
and He furnishes me with the power to accomplish what He wishes.
If, therefore, I should do such, certainly He will give still more
and will furnish me with more perfect thoughts of love for mankind.
But if I should refuse to do even the least things
which He has entrusted to me,

then justly I should undergo the punishment
of being deprived of it by God who has given it to me;
and I would become ineffective, a useless instrument
for not wishing to put into practice the commandments of the Creator
and for having yielded to laziness and indifference.
This is the reason why I have been cast off by the hands of the Master,
and, because of my disobedience and my insubordination
that I have given proof of against Him,
I have been chased out of the true Paradise,
exiled far away from God and the hands of His Saints.
Then the all-evil serpent found me lying there,
totally abandoned in my sloth and negligence of good works.
He by trickery used me to perform all sorts of heinous deeds,
seeking by these my own pleasure and joys
for which transgressions I should have to be filled
with sorrow and lament and weep
because that for which I was created to do,
O wretched one, I willingly refused to do,
and I deliberately gave myself to those things
that are completely against my nature.
Having fallen so completely and miserably into the profaned hands
of the enemy,
who held me and moved me completely
for I was powerless to resist him, O miserable one that I was!
for how could I have been able to resist him in my state
of being a cadaver?
I had become an instrument for every evil, for every iniquity,
a tested tool for perverse deeds.
O wretch that I had become, victim of his cunning.
For he held me in his hand and he powerfully manipulated me,
pulling me down into the cesspools and all sorts of mud holes;
and he threw me into sharp smelling stenches
and with these he made me seek my pleasures, O what hardness of heart!
Rapes, murders, criminal assasinations,
injuries, angers, evils of all shapes and forms,
so as not to bore you with details, in such activities he found me,
or rather it was he who against my will was ready to help me
carry through with such.
For from that time when I deliberately threw myself far away
from the hand of God and from the hands of the Saints
and the dreadful prince (of this world) snatched me up,
the destroyer of souls and he held me in his hands, with my full consent,
I could do nothing but to do his will.
And so I did only the things he wished.
For the sword does not know how to talk back

to the one who wields it,
but rather it is the one who wields it who does with it
whatever he wishes.
Therefore, God, who made me, looked down from on high,
and, seeing me caught in the grip of the Tyrant,
had mercy on me and snatched me from his hand
and again led me back to the divine Paradise,
into His vineyard, where He gave me over again
into the hands of the vine-workers, the Saints, to work
at His divine labor, to cultivate the virtues and to observe
His commandments,
and no longer to move away from the hands of the Saints,
lest the worker of evil would again find me
far from the holy hand and snatch me up
and prepare me to do again his evil works.
Therefore the good vine-workers, full of compassion,
receive me and take my will completely into their own hands.
They order me to work at once at humility and at a true conversion
and to be unceasingly filled with sorrow for sins.
"For these three," they told me, "child, when they are observed
and persevered in by those doing good works,
quickly, without knowing how, elevate them to glory,
leading them to purification and impassibility and divine contemplation.
And they no longer fall into the hands of the perverse one,
but they are pardoned by God all their sins
and likewise all their failures,
and so they become sons of the Most High and gods by grace
and instruments, good and useful, that produce all sort of good works.
Or rather they become divine tillers of the soul
who lead others in the doing of truly good deeds, of salvific works."
I have believed all these things (said) – listen all of you –
and I have done them.
I have completely put myself into the hands of God's laborers
in the field, His servants.
I have discovered all their promises realized in me exactly,
and I have been overwhelmed
and I cry out to all men,
I exhort in a loud voice and advise and say –
for I cannot cover over in silence all these amazing things –
"Run, all of you who are aware of being outside of the hands of God
and His Saints!
Hurry and attach yourselves to them, never to be separated by faith,
a burning love and by a total determination.
Cut out every thought and every selfish seeking,
and surrender your souls into their hands

as an inanimate instrument, doing nothing,
not the least movement or action separated from them.
But may their thought become yours
and likewise also their holy will,
insofar as it is the will of God, be fulfilled by you
and thus going along this shortcut of a route freed from any obstacle,
you will become friends of the God Most High
and in a short time you will be seen as heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven
and of the ineffable goods."
Surely when you embark on this road of righteousness,
you will be numbered among all the Saints
and the route will render you finally all happy.
For me who have sinned more than all other mortals
and have coursed through this rugged road,
so narrow, so shortened and without peril,
which leads to the stretches of life eternal,
because I have pointed it out to you, pray, all of you, earnestly,
you who are well determined to march along this road
and to follow ardently in the footsteps of Christ,
in order that I and all of you may be found on this road,
marching without reproach, up to the end of our life,
but also all those who desire earnestly to see Christ,
so that all together with joy, leaving our bodies,
we may set off towards the repose up there,
towards the stretches of Paradise
and we may be received as the heirs of life.
And so we may be unseparable from God and all of the Saints,
in Christ, the only-begotten Son, God-Word
with the Divine Spirit, the Holy Trinity, now and always
for ages of ages. Amen.

HYMN 55

That in those who have kept pure their holy Baptism the Holy Spirit abides, but He separates Himself from those who have sullied it.

You know me, O Christ, one who has done all sorts of wickedness,
really, a receptacle of every kind of evil.
I know it only all too well and I am overwhelmed by shame,
and the pain of confusion and affliction overpowers me
and an insupportable suffering takes hold of my heart.
However, the light of Your countenance shines brilliantly over me
in a mystical way and has driven away the evil thoughts
and has dissolved the pain
and has substituted in my humbled soul joy.
Therefore, I wish to be afflicted, O Christ, and yet
the affliction does not cleave to me,
since I am afflicted so that I may, rather by this means,
not lose and be deprived of this joy in the life to come.
But, O Master, never deprive me of this joy,
not now nor in the life eternal to come, O my King,
for this joy is the contemplation of Your countenance,
for You alone are, O my God, all good,
and to those who look upon You, You bestow every good.
You fill those whom You look upon with a sharing
and a communicating,
not only in the life to come, woe to those who speak thus!
but even now in the body those who are worthy of You,
those who seek to purify themselves by a true repentance.
You see them; You give to them the power to see You, distinctly,
in no way only in the imagination or by an act of the intelligence
nor in a simple remembrance, as some so think —
but in truth by means of a divine reality and an awesome work,
for the fulfillment really of the divine plan of salvation.
For it is in such a way that You accomplish
the union of that which has been separated.
You are God, the salvation of all sinners.
For those who have received Your Baptism in infancy
and have lived their life unworthily of that Baptism,
their condemnation will be worse than that of the un-baptized,
as You have said, since they have disgraced Your holy robe.
And knowing, O Savior, this to be certain and true, You have
given repentance unto a second purification
and You have fixed it as a term for the grace of the Spirit
that which we had received before in the first Baptism,

for it is not only "by water" as You have said that grace comes,
but also rather "by the Spirit" in the invocation of the Trinity.
Because, therefore, we have been baptized as children with no awareness,
having been imperfect, so we also receive imperfectly the grace
when we received the pardon of the first transgression.
This indeed is the only reason, as I see it,
why You prescribed this to be done, O Master,
this divine bath, namely, those who are baptized
enter inside into the vine, since they have been purified
totally of darkness and Hell
and are totally freed from death and corruption —
the vine I understand as and it actually is Paradise —
from which we recall once earlier we fell.
Such was Adam before his sin,
such also are all those who have been baptized and know the cause,
but it does not apply to those who in their insensibility
have not received the intellectual awareness
which the Spirit brings about in coming by His works.
Likewise all of us have received the commandments as Adam
to practise them and to keep them similarly in spirit
since they are a spiritual and divine law
as well as corporeally in body, perfected in deeds.
For being a composite, man has need of a composite law,
for insofar as he neglects one, he also fails in the other.
For the soul alone does not have the power to perform good works,
and the body, acting without divine knowledge,
is like an ox that toils or a beast of burden.
Those then who through Your Baptism have again been reinserted
into the vine, that is to say, into Paradise
and who are completely without sin or are sanctified,
when they have become like the first Adam,
being unconcerned similarly with salvation
and despising, O Christ, Your ineffable providence,
they even commit worse deeds than Adam.
They disregard at the same time also Your love for mankind,
by not esteeming as a work of Your awesome plan of salvation
the bath of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
Is it possible, as so many men think,
that they will be saints, even when they are stained
and have shamefully sullied Your robe, O my Savior?
Would You, O Pure, O Holy One, abide within their filthy heart
for even a moment?
Away, God would say, never would this happen to Me, child!
for you know, as you have indeed been baptized,
but you have sullied yourself

and as a child you sinned, as a senseless being you went astray.
And you know, how you wept,
how you were torn in your heart,
how you renounced the entire world
as soon as I yielded to the prayers
of Symeon (the Venerable), your spiritual father, at once
in your intelligence, in your intellectual awareness.
I deigned to grant you to hear My voice
and then to see Me as a ray,
and after this, I appeared to you as a flash, in my love for man.
Then I became a little cloud, which was in the form of a fire
which came down and settled over your head.
And I bestowed on you the gift while contemplating only
this manifestation
and in your awe to pour forth tears with great compunction.
I burned out the heaviness of your body,
dispelled the darkness of your head,
just as if from them an odor arose
like meat burnt on a fire, as you remember.
In regard to all the evils and the anguish that you then underwent,
you completely have forgotten,
but, however, I know, I, God who know all things,
I know your faith, your humility towards your spiritual father
and your complete renunciation of your will
which I regard as a martyrdom and it really is.
For one not seeking his own will is completely dead,
but, as he is found in My will, he still lives.
While then you were in this state
and he each day, by his tears, forced Me who am good by nature,
I began to appear to you more often, as you know,
purifying your soul little by little by repentance
and setting on fire the deep underlying roots of your passions
like thorns, not carnal, not material, but immaterial
and dispelling them as clouds, dense opaqueness, mist and darkness
I refer to your fasting by which you have become delicate
and your labors during the night vigils,
from your prayer, from all your sufferings
which unceasingly caused you to be inundated by burning tears
whenever you betook yourself to prayer or to eat or even to drink.
And so I succeeded in making you a receptable quite malleable
to do good,
not only to do good, but, having been purified,
so were able to remain in the middle of the fire
without being burnt, note that!
After therefore having made you such, the light which you

were then seeing
flew into you and completely surrounded you.
It entered totally inside of you, the light that is unapproachable
by its nature,
and in a strange way, it changed you by a beautiful transformation.
But if you do not serve Me well in all your works,
should you entertain in your heart the least evil thought
or the least resentment towards anyone,
whether called for or not,
if you merely allow the beginning suggestion of a stern word
to rise up in you or an evil thought,
if you were not to repent ardently with tears
and drive such thoughts out of your mind by repentance,
but if you harbored any sort of evil desire in your heart,
this light would not abide any longer in you.
For it is the Divine Spirit who is united with Me and the Father
as being consubstantial with Me,
but who disappears at once secretly as the sun does in setting
and once He is hidden, like the blinking of an eye, He is no longer seen.
How then can He exist in the soul which has not been
completely purified
and which has never reached the conscious awareness of repentance?
How would the soul be able to support the nature of an unbearable fire,
if it were completely filled with the thorns of passions and sin?
How would the soul be able to limit His nature that is completely
unlimited?
How would it, being darkness, mix itself with unapproachable light
and yet would not be obliterated in its presence?
It is impossible, child, this is totally impossible!
For I am separated from all creatures
and yet when I became a creature, I, the Creator of all things,
by flesh, became just like men,
taking on a soul and an intelligence similar to theirs.
But I have, by doing this, not automatically made all men god-men,
but it was I who became man.
It is by faith and by fulfilling My commandments, also by Baptism,
and in the Divine Communion of the awesome Mysteries that I
give My life to all.
But when I say Life, I refer to My Divine Spirit.
Whenever they recognize this fact, just as Paul said,
they possess My Spirit in their hearts.
They have Him as a brilliant light and as a cry
to My Father and on their behalf, He says to Me,
"O Abba, O my Father!"
For they have become as children of God

and with child-like confidence they know Me
and see Me and address Me as Father.
And He says to each one of them who presently possess Him
truly within themselves:
'O children, do not fear!
Behold, I, as you see, am within you
and I dwell within you and I am freeing you once and for all
from corruption and death.
And I am showing you, My children and My friends,
look, what I have made you to be!
Rejoice in the Lord!"
Therefore, this is the true sign to Me
that they have become sons and heirs of God,
that they have received and really possess My Divine Spirit
and by this they really merit to be called Christians
in truth and in fact and not in name only —"
All these things are realized by faith and love, my Christ.
To those whom You have known intimately in advance
and to whom You have given to be made conformable
to Your image in the Divine Spirit,
all this is completely within their realization
since they have been called to ıneffable joy by You from all eternity.
To all the others these things seem however not possible.
They even object and do not believe at all.
They wander deeper into error by even imagining
that they, totally senseless ones, are consoling themselves
by empty hopes.
They strut about as clever persons with their involved explanations
and they allegorize these promises according to what
meets with their fancy to the utter disregard of Your
awesome commandments.
For they do not wish to seek You,
they indeed do not believe that they possess You.
But if they profess that they do not possess You, my God,
then they preach that You are totally incomprehensible for all men,
and that no one among men is capable of seeing You;
that there is no one who possesses more knowledge
than they themselves.
Indeed, they teach in fact that You are comprehensible
and accessible to men
or that You are absolutely incomprehensible and unapproachable.
But in both cases they are mistaken
for they do not understand the divine and human things
since they are in darkness.
Give them the lighr of knowledge;

stretch out to them the hand of divine fear.
Give them the ability to rise from the pit of their evil interpretation
and to come into a consciousness that they are lying in a pit
and that they are sitting in darkness, not seeing the divine light!
that to which they witness, that which they profess
but which they do not believe in
but that now is a reality for those who see You.
As long as Your light does not radiate brilliantly for them
and they do not see You in true knowledge,
how can they ever believe clearly
that You show Yourself to those who are worthy,
that You converse and inhabit them even now and for all ages,
as with Your friends,
as with Your faithful servants, as You have said?
But You are God for the faithful, not however for the unfaithful.
And this is the reason why You do not at all look upon the latter.
For to those who deny You and say that Your eternal light
does not shine for the souls of the worthy,
how can You manifest the face of Your light, my Savior?
In no way! Not unless they acquire a full faith, as You said,
and observe Your divine law ardently until death,
by surrendering themselves on Your behalf
in the practice truly of Your wise commandments.
This therefore is the salvation of all those saved.
There is no other road, as You said, O my God.
Give mercy, give mercy to those
who implore You, Savior, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 56

Prayer to God for all the things that have happened to the author at the same time also a petition and a thanksgiving.

Lord, give me intelligence; Lord give me knowledge!
Lord, teach me how to do Your commandments!
And even though I have sinned as a man
and even more than everyone else, You know this!
still, You by Your very personal mercy, my God,
You have shown pity on me, a wretch, an orphan alone in the world
and You have wrought, O Master, that which only You know.
From my father and brothers, relatives and friends,
from the land of my birth,
from my parents' home, as out of darkness of Egypt,
like out of Hell, You have closed me off.
When You indeed gave me, Your worthless servant,
right understanding about them and the ability to speak
of them with intelligence,
You took me aside, O merciful One, and You received me
You took me by Your awesome hand and led me
to him whom You were pleased to make on this earth
my spiritual father.
And You threw me at his feet and into his embrace.
And he has led me to Your Father, my Christ,
and to You through the Spirit, O Trinity, my God –
I weep as the prodigal son and I prostrate myself, O Word,
as You Yourself know that You taught me
and You have not deemed me unworthy to be called Your son.
O mouth of one so unworthy and lips stained.
O discourse from such an inadequate tongue, not capable of singing
Your praises,
nor of giving thanks and expressing Your good works
which You have accomplished in me, the orphan and the stranger,
the stranger on this earth;
for all those are strangers who belong to You.
But Your goods and the goods of those dedicated to You
eyes have not seen,
the tongue cannot express, nor can the world contain them.
For this reason therefore, O Master, the world hates us.
It pursues us, inflicts abuse, is jealous, is enraged, kills us
and pours out all in attacking against us in all of these.
But we, as it pleases You, are Your humble servants.
We are strong in our weakness

and we are made rich in our poverty.
In all affliction we rejoice, being out of the world.
We, O Master, are with You, the world however possesses only the body.
In a word, the world wanders in error,
a blindman possesses only a bit of clay
which itself will not hold on to.
For it will have to give it up, as You promised,
in the last trumpet blast,
as it, the human body, will also be spiritual
and then it will be all alone to hold on to its own evil
with those like unto it,
also blind, the devotees of the world.

HYMN 57

That he who loves God hates the world.

I am held captive by darkness and I see the truth
which is nothing but certain hope.
What kind, therefore, of hope?
Such as eyes have not seen.
In what does it consist?
It is life, which every man desires.
But this life, what is it if not God, the Creator of all?
Love Him and hate the world!
The world is death for what does it possess
that is lasting?

HYMN 58

An instruction joined with a reproach to all men, kings, bishops, priests, monks, laity, presented as spoken by the mouth of God.

O Christ, furnish me with words of wisdom,
words of knowledge and divine intelligence!
For You know the weakness of my word
and how it has no part with worldly learning.
You know that I belong only to You.
You are my life, my word, my knowledge, my wisdom,
my Savior God and my Protector in this life
and the one who comforts my lowly soul.
I am a stranger and poor in such words.
You are my hope, You are my recourse.
You are my boast, You my riches, my glory.
It is You who desired in Your mercy to take me out of this world,
O Word, and make me a stranger to it,
one so unworthy, a miserable man
and worse than all men, even worse than all brute beasts.
This is why I take courage in Your mercy
and beseech You and address You and fall at Your feet.
Give me a direct language, give me strength,
give me power to speak to all those dedicated to Your service,
and, worshiping You, King of all,
to address myself to the initiated, to rulers
as well as those who serve,
to those who believe they see You
and obey and serve You sincerely as their Master.
All you men, kings and potentates,
priests, bishops, monks and married laity.
Do not disdain to hear my voice
and my words that come from a miserable man
but open the ears of your heart to me
and hear and understand what the God of all is saying,
He who is before all ages.
He is the inaccessible One, the only Omnipotent One,
who holds in His hand the breath of all living things!
"Kings! You do well in waging war against the pagans,
provided you yourselves do not imitate the works of them
and their customs and their desires and their opinions
and through all of your undertakings and in your words
you do not deny me, your King.
It would be much better for you to observe My words,

keep exactly all My commandments
and follow closely the life of a simple person
living in poverty which I declared as blessed.
For what profit is there in rescuing the world from death
and temporary servitude and yet you become yourselves slaves,
both of passions and of demons each day by your works
and heirs of inextinguishable fire?
Indeed, all works, such as anyone should do on My behalf
out of compassion and mercy towards the neighbor are good,
but the first of all works is to show mercy towards oneself
and to observe with every care My words
and to show a sincere repentance
for the bad deeds one may have done in former times
and then never to fall back into those actions
but to persevere in My words, the Master,
in My decrees and My laws of truth
and to act thus without negligence in all things
until death without failing in a simple word
or a single dot or tittle of the written words.
For such is for Me a sacrifice,
this is for Me incense and an offering and gift.
And without this you are worse than the pagans."
"And you, bishops, understand!
You are the imprint of My image.
You have been given a charge to communicate with Me worthily.
You have been placed over all the just
since you follow in the name of My disciples
and you bear My divine character.
You who have received power even over the least community
such as that which I, the Word, received from the Father.
I who being God by nature became flesh
and became two in My energies and in My wills
as well as in My natures,
being undivided without mixture,
God-Man, as well as Man-God.
For as man, I have allowed Myself to be held in your hands,
but as God, I am totally uncontainable
by hands made of clay and invisible to those who do not see
and inaccessible, I who have been immolated on behalf of all.
I am two in one hypostasis.
For this reason you bishops look down upon all the least
as lowly and completely inferior!
You bishops who fail in your worthy calling.
I am not referring to those whose life corresponds with their preaching
and is a seal of their divinely inspired teaching and divine eloquence,

but those whose life contradicts their preaching
and who remain ignorant of My awesome and divine mysteries
and who think they hold in their hands bread instead of fire!
who despise Me as just simple bread
and believe they gaze and eat a morsel
without seeing My invisible glory.
You bishops and these are the majority,
who exalt themselves even though they are
debased by their wretched wickedness,
they seek the glory of men
while they turn their eyes from Me, the Creator of all
as from a poor man, a despised beggar.
They unworthily handle My body
and seek avidly to dominate the masses.
They enter within my sanctuary, not having been called,
they enter without the wedding robe the banquet of My mysteries
without My grace, which they have not received,
and they gaze on those things which it is not lawful to see.
And I magnanimously put up with this in my very great
love for mankind.
I support their shameful boldness.
They enter and converse with me as with a friend,
Me to whom they have not remained faithful
like servants overcome with fear,
and they show themselves as familiar members of a family,
those who have not known My grace.
They also are ready to serve others as mediators
who have been charged with so many failings.
Externally they adorn beautifully their body.
They are seen to appear as brilliant and pure,
but their souls are worse than mud and dirt,
worse even than any kind of deadly poison,
these evil and perverse men!
For it is like Judas of old who betrayed Me,
by receiving unworthily bread from Me.
He ate it as though it were a piece of ordinary bread
and by this action Satan entered into him at once
and he made him a traitor betraying Me shamefully, his Teacher.
Satan possessed him as his servant and slave
and as one who carried out all of his wishes.
Such is what happens to them in their ignorance,
those who boldly and presumptuously
touch unworthily My divine mysteries.
Those who from their exalted thrones dominate all others.
Those who dominate the clerics, the priests.

Those who possess a conscience that is already corrupted
and as a consequence is completely condemned.
Those who enter My temple and stand shamelessly in the sanctuary,
full of temerity before Me,
while never seeing My divine glory.
For if they saw it, they would never act in such a way.
They would never be so completely audacious
with such boldness to step over the portals of My divine temple."
All these things therefore which I have written
anyone will recognize as true and certain
from the works which we priests are doing
and he will find no lie in my words and he will be persuaded
and he will confess that it is God Himself
who has spoken these things through me.
There is no one among those who so act
who would push himself even with deceitful words
to obfuscate and to cover over his own shame,
this shame which, before the angels and men He will uncover
who uncovers all the hidden secrets of darkness,
the Lord God of all –
Who among us, the priests of today, has begun to purify himself
of his iniquities,
as to be so completely audacious in exercising his priesthood
who could say this with full confidence
that he has despised the glory here below
and acts as a priest solely for that glory from above?
Who has loved Christ and Him alone
and has scorned all gold and riches?
Who has made himself content with only the bare necessities
and has not cheated in any matter his neighbor?
Who does not have an accusing conscience
because of the gifts pushed upon him to become a priest
or to ordain other priests in buying or selling grace?
Who has never judged as more preferable a friend over one more worthy
in pushing his preference in spite of his unworthiness?
Who does not strive to nominate as bishops his friends,
in order to receive in his possession all that will come to him!
For this is still considered as proper and not sinful in any way,
nay, it is even judged as those providing for the good of another church!
Who has never consecrated another bishop
because of a request from those of the world,
from rulers, friends, the rich and the powerful,
without the candidate being worthy?
Really, there is no one today who in these matters has a clean heart
and who does not feel a disturbed conscience,

because he has done at least one of the things I mentioned?
But we all have sinned unscrupulously
without making any effort to eliminate the evil,
without engaging in the practice of good,
and for this reason we do not repent,
since we are inundated in an abyss of evil deeds
and we feel no pain for such doings.
For since we are ignorant of the divine glory,
we are unable to despise the glory here below.
The passion of glory, I mean, of men,
prevents the soul from being thoroughly humbled,
from reproaching itself willingly.
How then, tell me, in such circumstances can he
who is captivated by the glory of men
and seeks perishable riches,
he who eagerly desires to possess a pile of money,
who is insatiable for loot
and who despises those who do not give generously,
how will he dare to say that he possesses God,
dwelling within him?
Or that he loves Christ or has the Spirit of Christ?
But he who has not received Christ and His Father and the Holy Spirit,
who does not in a conscious way have the unique God dwelling
and ranging freely within his heart,
how can he show himself a sincere servant?
From what other master will he learn humility
or how will he be instructed in the divine will?
Who will act for him as mediator or who will
reconcile him with God?
And who will present him as an unreproachable hired servant
before God, the only Pure and Immaculate One,
before whom the Cherubim do not dare to gaze upon,
who is unapproachable to all the angels?
Who will certify that such a one holds God in his hands without sin
and celebrates without blame
the awesome Liturgy of the immaculate Victim?
What angel, what man can say this
or will be capable of doing this?
For I say and witness to all —
let no one be deceived, let no one be led astray by words!
Whoever firstly will not abandon the world
and will not hate with all his soul the things of the world
and will not sincerely love only Christ
and will not lose his soul for Him
without being concerned with the things touching man's life,

but who will be considered as one dying at each hour
and for His sake who will not weep abundantly and be filled
with compunction
without any desire but Him,
such a one through many afflictions and labors
would not be judged worthy to receive the Divine Spirit
whom He also gave to His Divine Apostles
in order that through Him He may expel every passion,
that He may succeed in readily attaining every victory
and that He may spring forth the inexhaustible fountains of tears
from whence flow the purification of the soul and contemplation,
whence comes the knowledge of the divine will,
whence comes the illumination of the divine radiance
and the contemplation of the light inaccessible
from which comes impassibility
and holiness is given to all those judged worthy
to see and to possess God in their heart
and to be protected by Him
and to keep unhindered His divine commandments –
that such a man would not dare to accept the priesthood
and the authority over souls or to push himself to accept such!
Likewise Christ before God, His Father, both is offered
and offers Himself,
so He offers us also
and He Himself in His turn likewise receives us.
And since it is to be reckoned as a crime and worthy of condemnation
to lay one's hands in such circumstances,
it is something worse than murder, worse than adultery and fornication,
worse than all other sins.
For all such sins are perpetrated against mortals
since we sin completely against one another,
but he who dares to deal with divine things
and makes a business of the grace of the Spirit,
such a one sins absolutely against God Himself.
For he who has been raised up to stand in place of the Word,
likewise he ought to live in a similar way as He did.
And he ought to be able to say as He did,
"Follow me!
The foxes have their dens indeed and the birds all have their nests,
but I have not where on to lay My head!"
since he has been worthy to be the servant of Christ.
For he ought not to have absolutely anything of his own,
to possess nothing of this world,
but only what is necessary for his body,
and all the rest belongs to the poor and the stranger

and to their Church.
But if he should dare to misuse these for his own expenses as if
they belonged to his personal property,
to give gifts of the goods that belong to strangers,
to build houses and buy fields
and to have a great number of slaves following after him,
alas! What will not be his condemnation!
He is very much like a man who out of stupidity
illegally devours all of the dowry of his wife.
When he is apprehended and does not have any money to give her
when he is questioned, well then, besides the separation from his wife,
he is also thrown into prison and there detained.
In the same way therefore will it be for us priests and servants
who spend on ourselves and relatives and friends
the revenues of the Churches
without a care at all for the poor,
but we build houses, baths, monasteries, towers,
we arrange dowries and weddings while ignoring,
and even looking down on our own churches, as though
they were strangers.
We also leave for long periods
and pass that time in another region,
while we forsake the widows, our own spouses,
by not having any care for them.
And even if we persevere on their behalf and dwell with them,
it is not because we hold them in such love,
but only in order that we might live off of their revenues,
living in plenty and having a good time!
But who among us priests is concerned
with the beauty of the soul of the spouse of Christ?
Show me one and I would be satisfied with him!
But, woe to us, at the turn of this millenium,
priests, monks, bishops and servants of Christ,
because we have trodden upon the laws of our God and Savior
as though they have absolutely no value!
And if anyone appears little in the eyes of men,
yet before God he is great as he is known to Him,
who, not condescending to our passions, is at once cast out
as some sort of a criminal and is chased by us out of our midst
and he is "excluded from the synagogue" as once our Christ was
by the high priests of that time and by the cruel Jews,
just as He Himself said and always repeats the same
in a voice resplendent with His marvels.
But there is God who will raise him up
and will receive him, even in this life

and likewise in the life to come and will glorify him
with all the Saints whom this man has loved.
But what does the Word say to us?
"You, monks, who appear to be zealous!
Interiorly form yourselves in piety
and the exterior will always be in My eyes pure.
Indeed, the exterior will be helpful for you
and for those who see your good works,
but for Me the interior is what I, the Creator of the universe, desire
as well as My spiritual and divine hierarchies.
But if you adorn the exterior part of the statue,
concerned only with its conduct,
and you appear to act friendly to those who see you,
because of the works you do exteriorly
you do not consider at all that which is dear to Me,
My image and its purification and its adornment
by fervor and tears and labors.
It is by such means that you will appear to Me and all others
as men distinctly reasonable and divine.
Otherwise, you will be in My eyes like smelley tombs,
as once I branded the Pharisees in reproaching their stupidity:
"Outside radiant, inside full of decay,
full of dead bones, all rotten,
with a perverted heart, desires, words, passions, reflections
and with a calculated deceitfulness."
For who of you has eagerly sought such things,
I refer to fasting, mortifications, labors, unconcern for hair grooming,
iron chains, coarse clothing,
calloused knees, sleeping on the bare earth, sleeping on a straw mat,
and all such sufferings in this life?
All of these are good if also the exercises of your spiritual
and hidden work are well done with knowledge, wisdom and reason.
But if you, lacking this inner work, consider what you do
as something great,
without this inner work,
you are nothing,
you are like lepers who dress up with brilliant clothing
to deceive those who see them.
But bid goodbye to all such exterior works
and give yourselves exclusively to interior work.
Be ardently zealous for the sweat and labors needed
to acquire divine virtues and for the holy struggles
in order to appear to Me as virgins in your thoughts,
your intelligence completely illuminated
and you united to Me, the Word, in the word of My wisdom

and superior knowledge!"
"All My holy people, come ardently to Me, your Master!
Come, cut yourself from the bonds of this world,
despise all of the trickery of its pleasures.
Flee with haste from the sources of all evils,
the concupiscence of the eyes and of the flesh,
the pride of thoughts and of life
and all other vain desiring!
Realize that all these things belong to the world of iniquity
that they all lead to his loss who so uses them
with a passionate attachment in this life
and who thus makes of himself unfortunately My enemy.
Receive of the love for My divine realities in your heart,
eternal blessings which I by My Incarnation have prepared
for you as for a friend,
so that you might always be My banquet partner ineffably
at the table of My Kingdom, of My Heaven, with all the Saints!
Indeed, know yourself that you are mortal and corruptible,
that you do not have left but a little more of life
and that nothing of the things of this world will follow you,
nothing of the splendors, or delights and pleasures
from here below, when you depart towards the tabernacles up there,
nothing, except only those works done by you in this life,
the wicked or the good works!
And recognize the corruptible and the ephemeral
in all these things and leave them here below,
stretch upwards,
I call/you to Me, the God of all and the Savior,
in order that you may truly live in the ages of ages,
and enjoy all My blessings,
which I have prepared for those who love Me,
always and now. Amen, for all the ages!"

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Luke 11, 9-13.

2. *Hymn* 25, 9-48; pp. 256-258. I shall use the Greek edition of the hymns edited by Johannes Koder in: Sources Chrétiennes; Vol. 156 (1-15); Vol. 174 (16-40); Vol. 196 (41-58) (1969; 1971; 1973 resp.) Abbrev. *H.*

3. *E.* 2; 269-273; p. 352. I use for the *Catecheses* and the Eucharistic Prayers the three volumes edited by Archbishop Basil Krivocheine in: Sources Chrétiennes; Vol. 96 (1963); Vol. 104 (1964); Vol. 113 (1965). The Eucharistic Prayers are found in Vol. 113, abbrev. *E.* the *Catecheses* are abbreviated *C.T.*

4. *E.* 1, 114-116; p. 314.

5. Cf. J. Koder: *Introduction: H.* Vol. 156, pp. 82-93.

6. Cf. *H.* 15, 17, 18, 22, 23, 53, 58.

7. *H.* Vol. 156; p. 79.

8. Cf. I. Hausherr, S.J.: *Un grand mystique Byzantine. Vie de Symeon le Nouveau Theologien par Nicetas Stethatos* in: *Orientalis Christiana; Periodica:* Vol. 12, no. 45 (Rome, 1928); 131, 6-11; pp. 188-190; 132, 10-16; p. 190.

9. For a more detailed description of Symeon's life and his mystical thought, cf: *The Mystic of Fire and Light: St. Symeon the New Theologian* by George A. Maloney, S.J.; Dimension Books (Denville, N.J. 1975).

AS BREAD THAT IS BROKEN...

Father Peter G. van Breemen's first book deals directly and cogently with the confrontation of God and man in prayer. It treats specifically biblical themes and Gospel incidents to explore the meaning of prayer, acceptance, faith, sin, service, suffering, and joy. Quietly, without benefit of the great advertising funds available to so many lesser books published in our generation, the work was passed from hand to hand and discussed by important religious leaders until suddenly it skyrocketed to the head of the major lists of best-selling books. Its importance in 1974, the date of its first publication in casebound form, can hardly be over-emphasized. Father Edward Farrell, himself the author of four very important Catholic books, called the work "a dangerous book." "Read with faith and openness, it will compel you to follow Him more totally or 'to go away sad' (Mk 10:22)." In the February 8, 1975 issue of **America** John McDonald recommended the work as "a stirring book (which) reveals the depth and clarity of the author's insights into the Gospel message." Writing in the **Review for Religious**, Sister Ann Goggin enthusiastically recommended the book as "timely and valuable," "a clearly written and perceptive work stemming from (the author's) own life with God which he graciously shares. His own enthusiasm for and commitment to Christ in the message of the Gospel set the tone for this inspiring book." "Those who have heard Father van Breemen preach," wrote Sister Ann, "will be happy to see that the book retains the living-water quality of his spoken word."

Of special interest in **As Bread That Is Broken** was the magnificent first chapter entitled "The Courage to Accept Acceptance," which many religious leaders and writers in various publications and conferences described as the single most important chapter published in Catholic literature in over a decade.

DIMENSION BOOKS / Denville, N.J. 07834