

Exposition on Psalm 45

by St. Augustine

The sermon explores the themes of transformation, understanding, and the power of God's Word, as seen in the Psalm 45 and the life of Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 45:1-2, Psalm 45:8-9, Psalm 45:15-17

Topics: "Christ And Church", "Ecclesiastical Unity"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the sacred Marriage-feast, symbolizing the union of the Bridegroom (Christ) and the Bride (the Church), emphasizing the transformation from old to new, from sin to righteousness, and from unbelief to faith. The Psalms describe the beauty and glory of the Church, adorned with various languages and doctrines, led by the King into His Temple. The prophecy foretells the birth of new leaders (Bishops) in place of the Apostles, spreading the Church worldwide. The eternal confession and praise of God by the peoples signify the everlasting glory and unity of the Church in every generation.

Transcript

1. This Psalm, even as we ourselves have been singing with gladness together with you, we would beg you in like manner to consider with attention together with us. For it is sung of the sacred Marriage-feast; of the Bridegroom and the Bride; of the King and His people; of the Saviour and those who are to be saved....His sons are we, in that we are the children of the Bridegroom; and it is to us that this Psalm is addressed, whose title has the words, For the sons of Korah, for the things that shall be changed.

2. Why need I explain what is meant by, for the things that shall be changed? Every one who is himself changed, recognises the meaning of this. Let him who hears this, for the things that shall be changed, consider what was before, and what is now. And first let him see the world itself to be changed, lately worshipping idols, now worshipping God; lately serving things that they themselves made, now serving Him by whom they themselves were made. Observe at what time the words, for the things that shall be changed, were said. Already by this time the Pagans that are left are in dread of the changed state of things: and those who will not suffer themselves to be changed see the churches full; the temples deserted; see crowds here, and there solitude! They marvel at the things so changed; let them read that they were foretold; let them lend their ears to Him who promised it; let them believe Him who fulfils that promise. But each one of us, brethren, also undergoes a change from the old to the new man: from an infidel to a believer: from a thief to a giver of alms: from an adulterer to a man of chastity; from an evildoer to a doer of good. To us then be sung the words, for the things that shall be changed; and so let the

description of Him by whom they were changed, begin.

3. For it goes on, For the things that shall be changed, to the sons of Korah for understanding; a song for the beloved. For that beloved One was seen by His persecutors, but yet not for understanding. For had they known Him, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory. 1 Corinthians 2:8 In order to this understanding, other eyes were required by Him when He said, He that sees Me, sees My Father also. John 14:9 Let the Psalm then now sound of Him, let us rejoice in the marriage-feast, and we shall be with those of whom the marriage is made, who are invited to the marriage; and the very persons invited are the Bride herself. For the Church is the Bride, Christ the Bridegroom. There are commonly spoken by balladists certain verses to Bridegrooms and Brides, called Epithalamia. Whatever is sung there, is sung in honour of the Bride and Bridegroom. Is there then no Bridechamber in that marriage-feast to which we are invited? Whence then does another Psalm say, He has set up His tabernacle in the Sun; and He is even as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. The nuptial union is that of the Word, and the flesh. The Bridechamber of this union, the Virgin's womb. For the flesh itself was united to the Word: whence also it is said, Henceforth they are not two, but one flesh. The Church was assumed unto Him out of the human race: so that the Flesh itself, being united to the Word, might be the Head of the Church: and the rest who believe, members of that Head....

4. Mine heart has uttered a good word Psalm 44:1. Who is the speaker? The Father, or the Prophet? For some understand it to be the Person of the Father, which says, Mine heart has uttered a good word, intimating to us a certain unspeakable generation. Lest you should haply think something to have been taken unto Him, out of which God should beget the Son (just as man takes something to himself out of which he begets children, that is to say, an union of marriage, without which man cannot beget offspring), lest then you should think that God stood in need of any nuptial union, to beget the Son, he says, Mine heart has uttered a good word. This very day your heart, O man, begets a counsel, and requires no wife: by the counsel, so born of your heart, you build something or other, and before that building subsists, the design subsists; and that which you are about to produce, exists already in that by which you are going to produce it; and you praise the fabric that as yet is not existing, not yet in the visible form of a building, but on the projecting of a design: nor does any one else praise your design, unless either you show it to him, or he sees what you have done. If then by the Word all things were made, John 1:3 and the Word is of God, consider the fabric reared by the Word, and learn from that building to admire His counsels! What manner of Word is that by which heaven and earth were made; Hebrews 11:3 and all the splendour of the heavens; all the fertility of the earth; the expanse of the sea; the wide diffusion of air; the brightness of the constellations; the light of sun and moon? These are visible things: rise above these also; think of the Angels, Principalities, Thrones, Dominions, and Powers. Colossians 1:16 All were made by Him. How then were these good things made? Because there was uttered forth 'a good Word,' by which they were to be made....

5. It proceeds: I speak of the things which I have made unto the King. Is the Father still speaking? If the Father is still speaking, let us enquire how this also can be understood by us, consistently with the true Catholic Faith, I speak of the things that I have made unto the King. For if it is the Father speaking of His own works to His Son, our King, what works is the Father to speak of to the Son, seeing that all the Father's works were made by the Son's agency? Or, in the words, I speak of My works unto the King, does the word, I speak, itself signify the generation of the Son?

I fear whether this can ever be made intelligible to those slow of comprehension: I will nevertheless say it. Let those who can follow me, do so: lest if it were left unsaid, even those who can follow should not be

able. We have read where it is said in another Psalm, God has spoken once. So often has He spoken by the Prophets, so often by the Apostles, and in these days by His Saints, and does He say, God has spoken once? How can He have spoken but once, except with reference to His Word?

Hebrews 1:1-2 But as the Mine heart has uttered a good Word, was understood by us in the other clause of the generation of the Son, it seems that a kind of repetition is made in the following sentence, so that the Mine heart has uttered a good Word, which had been already said, is repeated in what He is now saying, I speak. For what does I speak mean? I utter a Word. And whence but from His heart, from His very inmost, does God utter the Word? You yourself do not speak anything but what you bring forth from your heart, this word of yours which sounds once and passes away, is brought forth from no other place: and do you wonder that God speaks in this manner?

But God's speaking is eternal. You are speaking something at the present moment, because you were silent before: or, look you, you have not yet brought forth your word; but when you have begun to bring it forth, you as it were break silence; and bring into being a word, that did not exist before. It was not so God begot the Word. God's speaking is without beginning, and without end: and yet the Word He utters is but One. Let Him utter another, if what He has spoken shall have passed away.

But since He by whom it is uttered abides, and That which is uttered abides; and is uttered but once, and has no end, that very once too is said without beginning, and there is no second speaking, because that which is said once, does not pass away. The words Mine heart has uttered a good Word, then, are the same thing with, I speak of the things which I have made unto the King. Why then, I speak of the things which I have made? Because in the Word Itself are all the works of God.

For whatever God designed to make in the creation already existed in the Word; and would not exist in the reality, had it not existed in the Word, just as with you the thing would not exist in the building, had it not existed in your design: even as it is said in the Gospel: That which was made in Him was life. John 1:3-4 That which was made then was in existence; but it had its existence in the Word: and all the works of God existed there, and yet were not as yet works. The Word however already was, as this Word was God, and was with God: and was the Son of God, and One God with the Father.

I speak of the things I have made unto the King. Let him hear Him speaking, who apprehends the Word: and let him see together with the Father the Everlasting Word; in whom exist even those things that are yet to come: in whom even those things that are past have not passed away. These works of God are in the Word, as in the Word, as in the Only-Begotten, as in the Word of God.

6. What follows then? My tongue is the pen of a writer writing rapidly. What likeness, my brethren, what likeness, I ask, has the tongue of God with a transcriber's pen? What resemblance has the rock to Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:4 What likeness does the lamb bear to our Saviour, John 1:29 or what the lion to the strength of the Only-Begotten? Revelation 5:5 Yet such comparisons have been made; and were they not made, we should not be formed to a certain extent by these visible things to the knowledge of the Invisible One. So then with this mean simile of the pen; let us not compare it to His excellent greatness, so let us not reject it with contempt. For I ask, why He compares His tongue to the pen of a writer writing rapidly? But how swiftly soever the transcriber writes, still it is not comparable to that swiftness of which another Psalm says, His word runs very swiftly. But it appears to me (if human understanding may presume so far) that this too may be understood as spoken in the Person of the Father: My tongue is the pen of a writer. Inasmuch as what is spoken by the tongue, sounds once and passes away, what is written, remains;

seeing then that God utters a Word, and the Word which is uttered does not sound once and pass away, but is uttered and yet continues, God chose rather to compare this to words written than to sounds. But what He added, saying, of one writing swiftly, stimulates the mind unto understanding. Let it however not slothfully rest here, thinking of transcribers, or thinking of some kind of quick shorthand writers: if it be this it sees in the passage, it will be resting there. Let it think swiftly what is the meaning of that word swiftly. The swiftly of God is such that nothing exceeds in swiftness. For in writings letter is written after letter; syllable after syllable; word after word: nor do we pass to the second except when the first is written out. But there nothing can exceed the swiftness, where there are not several words; and yet there is not anything omitted: since in the One are contained all things.

7. Lo! now then that Word, so uttered, Eternal, the Co-eternal Offspring of the Eternal, will come as the Bridegroom; Fairer than the children of men Psalm 44:2. Than the children of men. I ask, why not than the Angels also? Why did he say, than the children of men, except because He was Man? Lest you should think the Man Christ 1 Timothy 2:5 to be any ordinary man, he says, Fairer than the children of men. Even though Himself Man, He is fairer than the children of men; though among the children of men, fairer than the children of men: though of the children of men, fairer than the children of men. Grace is shed abroad on Your lips. The Law was given by Moses. Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17 ...

8. There have not been wanting those who preferred understanding all the preceding passage also of the Prophet's own person; and would have even this verse, Mine heart has uttered forth a good word, understood as spoken by the Prophet, supposed to be uttering a hymn. For whoever utters a hymn to God, his heart is, as it were, uttering forth a good word, just as his heart who blasphemes God, is uttering forth an evil word. So that even by what follows, I speak of the things which I have made unto the King, he meant to express that man's chief work was but to praise God. To Him it belongs to satisfy you, by His beauty; to you to praise Him with thanksgiving....

9. My tongue is the pen of a writer writing quickly. There have been persons who have understood the Prophet to have been describing in this manner what he was writing; and therefore to have compared his tongue to the pen of a writer writing quickly: but that he chose to express himself in the words writing quickly, to signify, that he was writing of things which were to come quickly; that writing quickly should be understood to be equivalent to writing things that are quick; i.e. writing things that would not long tarry. For God did not tarry long to manifest Christ. How quickly is that perceived to have rolled by, which is acknowledged to be already past! Call to mind the generations before you; you will find that the making of Adam is but a thing of yesterday. So do we read that all things have gone on from the very beginning: 2 Peter 3:4 they were therefore done quickly. The day of Judgment also will be here quickly. Do thou anticipate its quick coming. It is to come quickly; do thou become converted yet more quickly. The Judge's face will appear: but observe thou what the Prophet says, Let us come before (let us prevent) His face with confession.

10. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty Psalm 44:3. What is meant by Your sword, but Your word? It was by that sword He scattered His enemies; by that sword he divided the son from the father, the daughter from the mother, the daughter-in-law from the mother-in-law. We read these words in the Gospel, I came not to send peace, but a sword. Matthew 10:34 And, In one house shall five be divided against each other; three against two, and two against three; Luke 12:52 i.e. the father against the son, the daughter against the mother, the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. By what sword, but that which Christ brought, was this division wrought? And indeed, my brethren, we see this exemplified daily. Some young man is minded to give himself up to God's service; his father is opposed to it; they are

divided against each other: the one promises an earthly inheritance, the other loves an heavenly; the one promises one thing, the other prefers another. The father should not think himself wronged: God alone is preferred to him. And yet he is at strife with the son, who would fain give himself to God's service. But the spiritual sword is mightier to separate them, than the ties of carnal nature to bind them together. This happens also in the case of a mother against her daughter; still more also in that of a daughter-in-law against a mother-in-law. For sometimes in one house mother-in-law and daughter-in law are found orthodox and heretical respectively. And where that sword is forcibly felt, we do not dread the repetition of Baptism. Could daughter be divided against mother; and could not daughter-in-law be divided against mother-in-law?...

11. What does he mean to express by the thigh? The flesh. Whence those words, A prince shall not depart from Judah; and a lawgiver from his thighs? Did not Abraham himself (to whom was promised the seed in which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed), when he sent his servant to seek and to bring home a wife for his son, being by faith fully persuaded, that in that, so to speak, contemptible seed was contained the great Name; that is, that the Son of God was to come of the seed of Abraham, out of all the children of men; did not he, I say, cause his servant to swear unto him in this manner, saying, Put your hand under my thigh, Genesis 24:2 and so swear; as if he had said, Put your hand on the altar, or on the Gospel, or on the Prophet, or on any holy thing. Put (he says) your hand under my thigh; having full confidence, not ashamed of it as unseemly, but understanding therein a truth. With Your beauty and Your glory. Take to You that righteousness, in which You are at all times beautiful and glorious. And speed on, and proceed prosperously, and reign Psalm 44:4. Do we not see it so? Is it not already come to pass? He has sped on; has proceeded prosperously, and He reigns; all nations are subdued unto Him. What a thing was it to see that in the Spirit, of which same thing it is now in our power to experience in the reality! At the time when these words were said, Christ did not yet reign thus; had not yet sped on, nor proceeded prosperously. They were then being preached, they have now been fulfilled: in many things we have God's promise fulfilled already; in some few we have to claim its fulfilment yet.

12. Because of truth, meekness, and righteousness. Truth was restored unto us, when the Truth sprung out of the earth: and Righteousness looked out from heaven. Christ was presented to the expectation of mankind, that in Abraham's Seed all nations should be blessed. The Gospel has been preached. It is the Truth. What is meant by meekness? The Martyrs have suffered; and the kingdom of God has made much progress from thence, and advanced throughout all nations; because the Martyrs suffered, and neither fell away, nor yet offered resistance; confessing everything, concealing nothing; prepared for everything, shrinking from nothing. Marvellous meekness! This did the body of Christ, by its Head it learned. He was first led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, even so opened not His mouth; Isaiah 53:7 meek to that degree, that while hanging on the Cross, He said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34 Why because of righteousness? He will come also to judge, and to render to every man according to his works. He spoke the truth; He patiently endured unrighteousness: He is to bring righteousness hereafter.

13. And Your right hand shall lead You on marvellously. We shall be guided on by His right hand: He by His own. For He is God, we mortal men. He was led on by His own right hand; i.e. by His own power. For the power which the Father has, He has also; the Father's immortality He has also; He has the Father's Divinity, the Father's Eternity, the Father's Power. Marvellously will His right hand lead Him on, performing the works of God; undergoing human sufferings, overthrowing the evil wills of men by His own goodness. Even now, He is being led on even to places where as yet He is not; and it is His own right hand that is

leading Him on. For that is leading Him there which He has Himself bestowed upon His Saints. Your right hand shall lead You on marvellously.

14. Your arrows are sharp, are most powerful Psalm 44:5; words that pierce the heart, that kindle love. Whence in the Song of Songs it is said, I am wounded with love. Song of Songs 2:5 For she speaks of being wounded with love; that is, of being in love, of being inflamed with passion, of sighing for the Bridegroom, from whom she received the arrow of the Word. Your arrows are sharp, are most powerful; both piercing, and effective; sharp, most powerful. The peoples shall fall under You. Who have fallen? They who were wounded have also fallen. We see the nations subdued unto Christ; we do not see them fall. He explains where they fall, viz. in the heart. It was there they lifted themselves up against Christ, there they fall down before Christ. Saul was a blasphemer of Christ: he was then lifted up, he prays to Christ, he is fallen, he is prostrate before Him: the enemy of Christ is slain, that the disciple of Christ may live! By an arrow launched from heaven, Saul (not as yet Paul, but still Saul), still lifted up, still not yet prostrate, is wounded in the heart: he received the arrow, he fell in heart. For though he fell prostrate on his face, it was not there that he fell down in heart: but it was there where he said aloud, Lord, what dost Thou bid me do? Acts 9:6 But just now thou were going to bind the Christians, and to bring them to punishment: and now you say unto Christ, What dost Thou bid me do? O arrow sharp and most mighty, by whose stroke Saul fell, so as to become Paul. As it was with him, so was it also with the peoples; consider the nations, observe their subjection unto Christ. The peoples (then) shall fall under You in the heart of the King's enemies; that is, in the heart of Your enemies. For it is Him that he calls King, Him that he recognises as King. The peoples shall fall under You in the heart of the King's enemies. They were enemies before; they have been stricken by your arrows: they have fallen before You. Out of enemies they have been made friends: the enemies are dead, the friends survive. This is the meaning of, for those which shall be changed. We are seeking to understand each single word, and each separate verse; yet so far only are we to seek for their understanding, as to leave no one to doubt that they are spoken of Christ.

15. Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever Psalm 44:6. Because God has 'blessed You' for ever, on account of the grace poured over Your lips. Now the throne of the Jewish Kingdom was a temporal one; belonging to those who were under the Law, not to those who were under grace: He came to redeem those who were under the Law, and to place them under Grace. His Throne is for ever and ever. Why? For that first throne of the Kingdom was but a temporal one: whence then have we a throne for ever and ever? Because it is God's throne. O divine Attribute of Eternity! for God could not have a temporal throne. Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever-- a sceptre of direction is the sceptre of Your Kingdom. The sceptre of direction is that which directs mankind: they were before crooked, distorted; they sought to reign for themselves: they loved themselves, loved their own evil deeds: they submitted not their own will to God; but would fain have bent God's will to conformity with their own lusts. For the sinner and the unrighteous man is generally angry with God, because it rains not! and yet would have God not be angry with himself, because he is profligate. And it is pretty much for this very reason that men daily sit, to dispute against God: This is what He ought to have done: this He has not well done. Thou forsooth see what you do. He knows not what He does! It is you that are crooked! His ways are right. When will you make the crooked coincide with the straight? It cannot be made to coincide with it. Just as if you were to place a crooked stick on a level pavement; it does not join on to it; it does not cohere; it does not fit into the pavement. The pavement is even in every part: but that is crooked; it does not fit into that which is level. The will of God then is equal, your own is crooked: it is because you can not be conformed unto it, that it seems crooked unto you: rule you yourself by it; seek not to bend it to your own will: for you can not accomplish it; that is at all times straight! Would you abide in Him? Correct you yourself; so will the sceptre of Him who rules

you, be unto you a rule of direction. Thence is He also called King, from ruling. For that is no ruler that does not correct. Hereunto is our King a King of right ones. Just as He is a Priest (Sacerdos) by sanctifying us, so is He our King, our Ruler, by ruling us....

16. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity Psalm 44:7. See there the rod of direction described. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Draw near to that rod; let Christ be your King: let Him rule you with that rod, not crush you with it. For that rod is a rod of iron; an inflexible rod. You shall rule them with a rod of iron: and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Some He rules; others He breaks in pieces: He rules them that are spiritual: He breaks in pieces them that are carnal....Would He so loudly declare that He was about to smite you, if He wished to smite you? He is then holding back His hand from the punishment of your offenses; but do not thou hold back. Turn you yourself to the punishment of your offenses: for unpunished offenses cannot be: punishment therefore must be executed either by yourself, or by Him: do thou then plead guilty, that He may relieve you. Consider an instance in that penitential Psalm: Hide Your face from my sins. Did he mean from me? No: for in another passage he says plainly, Hide not Your face from me. Turn then Your face from my sins. I would have You not see my sins. For God's seeing is animadverting upon. Hence too a Judge is said to animadvert on that which he punishes; i.e. to turn his mind on it, to bend it thereon, even to the punishment of it, inasmuch as he is the Judge. So too is God a Judge. Turn Thou Your face from my sins. But you yourself, if you would have God turn His face from them, turn not your own face from them. Observe how he proposes this to God in that very Psalm: I acknowledge, he says, my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. He would fain have that which he wishes to be ever before his own eyes, not be before God's eyes. Let no one flatter himself with fond hopes of God's mercy. His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness. Do we say that God is not merciful? What can exceed His mercy, who shows such forbearance to sinners; who takes no account of the past in all that turn unto Him? So love thou Him for His mercy, as still to wish that He should be truthful. For mercy cannot strip Him of His attribute of justice: nor justice of that of mercy. Meanwhile during the time that He postpones your punishment, do not thou postpone it.

17. Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You. It was for this reason that He anointed you, that you might love righteousness, and hate iniquity. And observe in what way he expresses himself. Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You: i.e. God has anointed You, O God. God is anointed by God. For in the Latin it is thought to be the same case of the noun repeated: in the Greek however there is a most evident distinction; one being the name of the Person addressed; and one His who makes the address, saying, God has anointed You. O God, Your God has anointed You, just as if He were saying, Therefore has Your God, O God, anointed You. Take it in that sense, understand it in that sense; that such is the sense is most evident in the Greek. Who then is the God that is anointed by God? Let the Jews tell us; these Scriptures are common to us and them. It was God, who was anointed by God: you hear of an Anointed one; understand it to mean Christ. For the name of Christ comes from chrism; this name by which He is called Christ expresses unction: nor were kings and prophets anointed in any kingdom, in any other place, save in that kingdom where Christ was prophesied of, where He was anointed, and from whence the Name of Christ was to come. It is found nowhere else at all: in no one nation or kingdom. God, then, was anointed by God; with what oil was He anointed, but a spiritual one? For the visible oil is in the sign, the invisible oil is in the mystery; the spiritual oil is within. God then was anointed for us, and sent unto us; and God Himself was man, in order that He might be anointed: but He was man in such a way as to be God still. He was God in such a way as not to disdain to be man. Very man and very God; in nothing deceitful, in nothing false, as being everywhere true, everywhere the Truth itself. God then is man; and it was for this cause that God was anointed, because God was Man, and became Christ.

18. This was figured in Jacob's placing a stone at his head, and so sleeping. Genesis 28:11-18 The patriarch Jacob had placed a stone at his head: sleeping with that stone at his head, he saw heaven opened, and a ladder from heaven to earth, and Angels ascending and descending; after this vision he awoke, anointed the stone, and departed. In that stone he understood Christ; for that reason he anointed it. Take notice what it is whereby Christ is preached. What is the meaning of that anointing of a stone, especially in the case of the Patriarchs who worshipped but One God? It was however done as a figurative act: and he departed. For he did not anoint the stone, and come to worship there constantly, and to perform sacrifice there. It was the expression of a mystery; not the commencement of sacrilege. And notice the meaning of the stone. The Stone which the builders refused, this has become the head of the corner. Notice here a great mystery. The Stone is Christ. Peter calls Him a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God. 1 Peter 2:4 And the stone is set at the head, because Christ is the Head of the man. 1 Corinthians 11:3 And the stone was anointed, because Christ was so called from His being anointed. And in the revelation of Christ, the ladder from earth to heaven is seen, or from heaven to earth, and the Angels ascending and descending. What this means, we shall see more clearly, when we have quoted the testimony from the Lord Himself in the Gospel. You know that Jacob is the same as Israel. For when he wrestled with the Angel, and prevailed, and had been blest by Him over whom he prevailed, his named was changed, so that he was called Israel; just as the people of Israel prevailed Luke 23:23 against Christ, so as to crucify Him, and nevertheless was (in those who believed in Christ) blest by Him over whom it prevailed. But many believed not; hence the halting of Jacob. Here we have at once, blessing and halting. Blessing on those who became believers; for we know that afterward many of that people did believe: Halting on the other hand in those who believed not. And because the greater part believed not, and but few believed, therefore that a halting might be produced, He touched the breadth of his thigh. Genesis 32:25 What is meant by the breadth of the thigh? The great multitude of his descendants.. ..

19. God, Your God, has anointed You. We have been speaking of God, who was anointed; i.e. of Christ. The name of Christ could not be more clearly expressed than by His being called God the Anointed. In the same way in which He was beautiful before the children of men, so is He here anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Who then are His fellows? The children of men; for that He Himself (as the Son of Man) became partaker of their mortality in order to make them partakers of His Immortality.

20. Out of Your garments is the smell of myrrh, amber, and cassia Psalm 44:8. Out of Your garments is perceived the smell of fragrant odours. By His garments are meant His Saints, His elect, His whole Church, which he shows forth, as His garment, so to speak; His robe without spot and wrinkle, Ephesians 5:27 which on account of its spots He has washed in His blood; on account of its wrinkles extended on His Cross. Hence the sweet savour which is signified by certain perfumes there mentioned. Hear Paul, that least of the Apostles (that hem of that garment, which the woman with the issue of blood touched, and was healed), hear him saying: We are a sweet savour of Christ, in every place, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 He did not say, We are a sweet savour in them that are saved, and a foul savour in them that are lost: but, as far as relates to ourselves, we are a sweet savour both in them that are saved, and in them that perish....They who loved him were saved by the odour of sweet savour; they who envied him, perished by means of that sweet savour. To them that perished then he was not a foul savour, but a sweet savour. For it was for this very reason they the more envied him, the more excellent that grace was which reigned in him: for no man envies him who is unhappy. He then was glorious in the preaching of God's Word, and in regulating his life according to the rule of that rod of direction; and he was loved by those who loved Christ in him, who followed after and pursued the odour of

sweet savour; who loved the friend of the bridegroom: that is to say, by the Bride Herself, who says in the Song of Songs, We will run after the sweet savour of your perfumes. But the others, the more they beheld him invested with the glory of the preaching of the Gospel, and of an irreproachable life, were so much the more tortured with envy, and found that sweet savour prove death to them.

21. Out of your ivory palaces, whereby kings' daughters have made You glad. Choose whichever you please, ivory palaces, or magnificent, or royal palaces, it is out of these that the kings' daughters have made Christ glad. Would you understand the spiritual sense of ivory palaces? Understand by them the magnificent houses, and tabernacles of God, the hearts of the Saints; and by these self-same kings those who rule their flesh; who bring into subjection to themselves the rebellious commonalty of human affections, who chastise the body, and reduce it to bondage: for it is from these that the daughters of kings have made Him glad. For all the souls that have been born through their preaching and evangelizing are daughters of kings: and the Churches, as the daughters of Apostles, are daughters of kings. For He is King of kings; they themselves kings, of whom it was said, You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28 They preached the Word of Truth; and begot Churches not for themselves, but for Him....Therefore as raising up seed to their brother, to as many as they begot, they gave the name not of Paulians or Petrians, but of Christians. Observe whether that sense is not wakefully kept in these verses. For when he said, out of the ivory palaces, he spoke of mansions royal, ample, honourable, peaceful, like the heart of the Saints; he added, Whereby the kings' daughters have made You glad in Your honour. They are indeed daughters of kings, daughters of your Apostles, but still in Your honour: for they raised up seed to their brother. Hence Paul, when he saw those whom he had raised up unto his Brother, running after his own name, exclaimed, Was Paul crucified for you? 1 Corinthians 1:13 ...No; for he says, Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

The daughters of kings have made You glad in Your honour. Keep, hold fast this in Your honour. This is meant by having a wedding garment; seeking His honour, His glory. Understand moreover by kings' daughters the cities, which were founded by kings, and have received the faith: and out of the ivory palaces (palaces rich, the proud, the lifted up). Kings' daughters have made You glad in Your honour; in that they sought not the honour of their founders, but have sought Your honour. Show me at Rome a temple of Romulus held in so great honour as I can show you the Monument of Peter. In Peter, who is honoured but He who died for us? For we are followers of Christ, not followers of Peter. And even if we were born from the brother of Him that is dead, yet are we named after the name of Him who is dead. Deuteronomy 25:26 We were begotten by the one, but begotten to the other. Behold, Rome, Carthage, and several other cities are the daughters of kings, and yet have they made glad the King in His honour: and all these make up one single Queen.

22. What a nuptial song! Behold in the midst of songs full of rejoicing, comes forth the Bride herself. For the Bridegroom was coming. It was He who was being described: it was on Him all our attention was fixed.

Upon Your right hand stood the Queen Psalm 44:9. She which stands on the left is no Queen. For there will be one standing on the left also, to whom it will be said, Go into everlasting fire. Matthew 25:41 But she shall stand on the right hand, to whom it will be said, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25:34 On Your right hand stood the Queen, in a vesture of gold, clothed about with various colours. What is the vesture of this Queen? It is one both precious, and also of various colours: it is the mysteries of doctrine in all the various tongues: one African, one Syrian, one Greek, one Hebrew, one this, and one that; it is these languages that produce the various colours of this vesture. But just as all the various colours of the vesture blend together

in the one vesture, so do all the languages in one and the same faith. In that vesture, let there be diversity, let there be no rent. See we have understood the various colours of the diversity of tongues; and the vesture to refer to unity: but in that diversity itself, what is meant by the gold? Wisdom itself. Let there be any diversity of tongues you please, but there is but one gold that is preached of: not a different gold, but a different form of that gold. For it is the same Wisdom, the same doctrine and discipline that every language preaches. In the languages there is diversity; gold in the thoughts.

23. The Prophet addresses this Queen (for he delights in singing to her), and moreover each one of us, provided, however, we know where we are, and endeavour to belong to that body, and do belong to it in faith and hope, being united in the membership of Christ. For it is us whom he addresses, saying, Hearken, O daughter, and behold Psalm 44:10, as being one of the Fathers (for they are daughters of kings), although it be a Prophet, or although it be an Apostle that is addressing her; addressing her, as a daughter, for we are accustomed to speak in this way, Our fathers the Prophets, our fathers the Apostles; if we address them as fathers, they may address us as children: and it is one father's voice addressing one daughter. Hearken, O daughter, and see. Hear first; afterward see. For they came to us with the Gospel; and that has been preached to us, which as yet we do not see, and which on hearing of it we believed, which by believing it, we shall come to see: even as the Bridegroom Himself speaks in the Prophet, A people whom I have not known served me. In the hearing of me with the ear it obeyed me. What is meant by on hearing of me with the ear? That they did not see. The Jews saw Him, and crucified Him; the Gentiles saw Him not, and believed. Let the Queen who comes from the Gentiles come in the vesture of gold, clothed with various colours; let her come from among the Gentiles clad in all languages, in the unity of Wisdom: let it be said unto her, Hearken, O daughter, and see. If you will not hear, you shall not see....

And incline your ear. It is not enough to hearken; hearken with humility: bow down your ear. Forget also your own people, and your father's house. There was a certain people, and a certain house of your father, in which you were born, the people of Babylon, having the devil for your king. Whencesoever the Gentiles came, they came from their father the devil; but they have renounced their sonship to the devil. Forget also your own people, and your father's house. He, in making you a sinner, begot you loathsome: the Other, in that He justifies the ungodly, Romans 4:5 begets you again in beauty.

24. For the King has greatly desired your beauty Psalm 44:11. What beauty is that, save that which is His own work? Greatly desired the beauty-- Of whom? Of her the sinner, the unrighteous, the ungodly, such as she was with her father, the devil, and among her own people? No, but hers of whom it is said, Who is this that comes up made white? She was not white then at the first, but was made white afterwards. For though your sins shall be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow. Isaiah 1:18 The king has greatly desired your beauty. What King is this? For He is the Lord your God. Now consider whether you ought not to forego that your father, and your own people, and to come to this King, who is your God? Your God is your King, your King is also your Bridegroom. Thou weddest to your King, who is your God: being endowed by Him, being adorned by Him; redeemed by Him, and healed by Him. Whatever you have, wherewith to be pleasing to Him, you have from Him.

25. And the daughters of Tyre shall worship Him with gifts Psalm 44:12. It is that selfsame King, who is your God, that the daughters of Tyre shall worship with gifts. The daughters of Tyre are the daughters of the Gentiles; the part standing for the whole. Tyre, a city bordering on this country, where the prophecy was delivered, typified the nations that were to believe in Christ. Thence came that Canaanitish woman, who was at first called a dog; for that you may know that she was from thence, the Gospel speaks thus.

He departed into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, with all the rest that is related there. She who at first, at the house of her father, and among her own people, was but a dog, who by coming to, and crying after that King, was made beautiful by believing in Him, what did she obtain to hear? O woman, great is your faith. Matthew 15:21-28 The King has greatly desired your beauty. And the daughters of Tyre shall worship with gifts. With what gifts? Even so would this King be approached, and would have His treasures filled: and it is He Himself who has given us that wherewith they may be filled, and may be filled by you. Let them come (He says) and worship Him with gifts. What is meant by with gifts?...Give alms, and all things are clean unto you. Come with gifts to Him that says, I will have mercy rather than sacrifice. To that Temple that existed aforetime as a shadow of that which was to come, they used to come with bulls, and rams, and goats, with every different kind of animal for sacrifice: that with that blood one thing should be done, and another be typified by it. Now that very blood, which all these things used to figure, has come: the King Himself has come, and He Himself would have your gifts. What gifts? Alms. For He Himself will judge hereafter, and will Himself hereafter account gifts to certain persons. Come (He says), ye blessed of My Father. Why? I was an hungred, and you gave Me meat, Matthew 25:34-35 etc. These are the gifts with which the daughters of Tyre worship the King; for when they said, When saw we You? He who is at once above and below (whence those ascending and descending are spoken of), said, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of Mine, you have done it unto Me. Matthew 25:40

26. ...The rich among the people shall entreat Your face. Both they who shall entreat that face, and He whose face they will entreat, are all collectively but one Bride, but one Queen, mother and children belonging all together unto Christ, belonging unto their Head....

27. All the glory of her, the King's daughter, is from within Psalm 44:13. Not only is her robe, outwardly, of gold, and of various colours; but He who loved her beauty, knew her to be also beautiful within. What are those inward charms? Those of conscience. It is there Christ sees; it is there Christ loves her: it is there He addresses her, there punishes, there crowns. Let then your alms be done in secret; for all the glory of her, the King's daughter, is from within. With fringes of gold, clothed with various colours Psalm 44:14. Her beauty is from within; yet in the fringes of gold is the diversity of languages: the beauty of doctrine. What do these avail, if them be not that beauty from within? The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her. It has been fulfilled indeed. The Church has believed; the Church has been formed throughout all nations. And to what a degree do virgins now seek to find favour in the eyes of that King! Whence are they moved to do so? Even because the Church preceded them. The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her. Her near kinswomen shall be brought unto You. For they that are brought unto Him are not strangers, but her near kinswomen, that belong to her. And because he had said, unto the King, he says, turning the discourse to Him, her near kinswomen shall be brought unto You.

28. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought and shall be led into the Temple of the King Psalm 44:15. The Temple of the King is the Church itself: it is the Church itself that enters into the Temple of the King. Whereof is that Temple constructed? Of the men who enter the Temple? Who but God's faithful ones are its living stones? 1 Peter 2:4 They shall be led into the Temple of the King. For there are virgins without the Temple of the King, the nuns among the heretics: they are virgins, it is true; but what will that profit them, unless they be led into the Temple of the King? The Temple of the King is in unity: the Temple of the King is not ruinous, is not rent asunder, is not divided. The cement of those living stones is charity.

29. Instead of your fathers, children are born to you Psalm 44:16. Nothing can be more manifest. Now consider the Temple of the King itself, for it is on its behalf he speaks, on account of the unity of the body

that is spread throughout all the world: for those very persons who have chosen to be virgins, cannot find favour with the King unless they be led into the Temple of the King. Instead of your fathers, are your children born to you. It was the Apostles begot you: they were sent: they were the preachers: they are the fathers. But was it possible for them to be with us in the body for ever? Although one of them said, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: to abide in the flesh is necessary for your sakes. It is true he said this, but how long was it possible for him to remain here? Could it be till this present time, could it be to all futurity? Is the Church then left desolate by their departure? God forbid. Instead of your fathers, children have been born to you. What is that? The Apostles were sent to you as fathers, instead of the Apostles sons have been born to you: there have been appointed Bishops. For in the present day, whence do the Bishops, throughout all the world, derive their origin? The Church itself calls them fathers; the Church itself brought them forth, and placed them on the thrones of the fathers. Think not yourself abandoned then, because you see not Peter, nor see Paul: see not those through whom thou were born. Out of your own offspring has a body of fathers been raised up to you. Instead of your fathers, have children been born to you. Observe how widely diffused is the Temple of the King, that the virgins that are not led to the Temple of the King, may know that they have nothing to do with that marriage. You shall make them princes over all the earth. This is the Universal Church: her children have been made princes over all the earth: her children have been appointed instead of the fathers. Let those who are cut off own the truth of this, let them come to the One Body: let them be led into the Temple of the King. God has established His Temple everywhere: has laid everywhere the foundations of the Prophets and Apostles. Ephesians 2:20 The Church has brought forth sons; has made them instead of her fathers to be princes over all the earth.

30. They shall be mindful of your name in every generation and generation; therefore shall the peoples confess unto You Psalm 44:17. What does it profit then to confess indeed and yet to confess out of the Temple? What does it profit to pray, and yet not to pray on the Mount? I cried, says he, unto the Lord with my voice: and He heard me out of His holy hill. Out of what hill? Out of that of which it is said, A city set upon a hill cannot be hid. Matthew 5:14 Of what hill? Out of that hill which Daniel saw grow out of a small stone, and break all the kingdoms of the earth; and cover all the face of the earth. Daniel 2:34-35 There let him pray, who hopes to receive: there let him ask, who would have his prayer heard: there let him confess, who wishes to be pardoned. Therefore shall the peoples confess unto you for ever, world without end. For in that eternal life it is true indeed there will no longer be the mourning over sins: but yet in the praises of God by that everlasting City which is above, there will not be wanting a perpetual confession of the greatness of that happiness. For to that City itself, to which another Psalm sings, Glorious things are spoken of you, O City of God, to her who is the very Bride of Christ, the very Queen, a King's daughter, and a King's consort;...the peoples shall for this very cause confess even to herself; the hearts of all, now enlightened by perfect charity, being laid bare, and made manifest, that she may know the whole of herself most completely, who here is, in many parts of her, unknown to herself....

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