

# WORKS OF SAINT BONAVENTURE

*Edited by*

PHILOTHEUS BOEHNER, O.F.M. AND SR. M. FRANCES LAUGHLIN, S.M.I.C.

---

Saint Bonaventure's

## ITINERARIUM MENTIS IN DEUM

With an Introduction,  
Translation and Commentary

*by*

PHILOTHEUS BOEHNER, O.F.M., PH.D.

THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE  
SAINT BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY  
SAINT BONAVENTURE, N. Y.

1956

NIHIL OBSTAT

Die 25<sup>a</sup> Maii, 1956

Eligius M. Buytaert, O. F. M., S. T. D., D. Litt. et Hist.  
Orient., Lect. G. lis, Censor Deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

Die 28<sup>a</sup> Maii, 1956

† Josephus Aloisius  
Episcopus Buffalensis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	7
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	9
I. Saint Francis, the model of the <i>Itinerarium</i> . . . . .	12
II. The meaning and place of the <i>Itinerarium</i> . . . . .	19
III. The plan of the <i>Itinerarium</i> . . . . .	25
TEXT WITH TRANSLATION . . . . .	29
Prologus . . . . .	30
Cap. I . . . . .	38
Cap. II . . . . .	50
Cap. III . . . . .	62
Cap. IV . . . . .	72
Cap. V . . . . .	80
Cap. VI . . . . .	88
Cap. VII . . . . .	96
NOTES AND COMMENTARY . . . . .	103
Prologue . . . . .	105
Chapter I . . . . .	109
Chapter II . . . . .	115
Chapter III . . . . .	120
Chapter IV . . . . .	125
Chapter V . . . . .	126
Chapter VI . . . . .	129
Chapter VII . . . . .	129

All rights reserved — no part of this book may be reproduced in any form  
without permission in writing from the publishers.

Printed by Ferdinand Schöningh at Paderborn, Germany

## ITINERARIUM MENTIS IN DEUM

### PROLOGUS

1. In principio primum principium, a quo cunctae illuminationes descendunt tanquam a *Patre luminum*, a quo est *omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum*,<sup>1</sup> Patrem scilicet aeternum, invoco per Filium eius, Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, ut intercessione sanctissimae Virginis Mariae, genitricis eiusdem Dei et Domini nostri Iesu Christi, et beati Francisci, ducis et patris nostri, *det illuminatos oculos mentis nostrae ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis illius, quae exsuperat omnem sensum*;<sup>2</sup> quam pacem evangelizavit et dedit Dominus noster Iesus Christus; cuius praedicationis repetitor fiut pater noster Franciscus, in omni sua praedicatione pacem in principio et in fine annuntians, in omni salutatione pacem optans, in omni contemplatione ad ecstaticam pacem suspirans, tanquam civis illius Ierusalem, de qua dicit vir ille pacis, qui *cum his qui oderunt pacem, erat pacificus: Rogate quae ad pacem sunt Ierusalem*. Sciebat enim, quod thronus Salomonis non erat nisi in pace, cum scriptum sit: *In pace factus est locus eius, et habitatio eius in Sion*.<sup>3</sup>

2. Cum igitur exemplo beatissimi patris Francisci hanc pacem anhelu spiritu quaerem, ego peccator, qui loco ipsius patris beatissimi post eius transitum septimus in generali fratrum ministerio per omnia indignus succedo; contigit ut nutu divino circa Beati ipsius transitum, anno trigesimo tertio ad montem Alvernae tanquam ad locum quietum amore quaerendi pacem spiritus declinarem, ibique existens, dum mente tractarem aliquas mentales ascensiones in Deum, inter alia occurrit illud miraculum, quod in praedicto loco contigit ipsi beato Francisco, de visione scilicet Seraph alati ad instar Crucifixi. In cuius consideratione statim visum est mihi, quod visio illa praetenderet ipsius patris suspensionem in contemplando et viam, per quam pervenitur ad eam.

<sup>1</sup> Iac. 1, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 1, 17; Luc. 1, 79; Phil. 4, 7. Cf. Ioan. 14, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 119, 7; Ps. 121, 6; Ps. 75, 3.

## THE ITINERARY OF THE MIND INTO GOD

### PROLOGUE

1. In the beginning<sup>1</sup> I call upon the First Beginning whence all enlightenment flows as from the *Father of Lights*<sup>2</sup> from Whom is *every good gift and every perfect gift*. I call upon the Eternal Father through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that through the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of that same Lord Jesus Christ, and through that of blessed Francis, our guide and father, He may enlighten the eyes of our mind to guide our feet into *the way of that peace*<sup>3</sup> which surpasses all understanding.

This is the peace which our Lord Jesus Christ preached to us and which He gave to us. This message of peace our father Francis ever repeated, announcing peace<sup>4</sup> at the beginning and at the end of every sermon, making every greeting a wish for peace, every prayer a sigh for ecstatic peace, like a citizen of that Jerusalem about which the Man of Peace, who was peaceable with those that hated peace, exhorts us concerning it: *Pray ye for the things that are to the peace of Jerusalem*. For he knew indeed that only in peace was fixed the throne of Salomon, as it is written: *In peace is his place and his abode is in Sion*.

2. Inspired by the example of our blessed father, Francis, I sought after this peace with yearning soul — sinner that I am and all unworthy, yet seventh successor as Minister to all the brethren in the place of the blessed father after his death. It happened that, thirty-three years after the death of the Saint,<sup>5</sup> about the time of his passing, moved by a divine impulse, I withdrew to Mount Alverno as to a place of quiet, there to satisfy the yearning of my soul for peace. While I abode there, pondering on certain spiritual ascents to God, there occurred to me, among other things, that miracle which in this very place had happened to the blessed Francis — the vision he received of the winged seraph in the form of the Crucified. As I reflected on this marvel, it immediately seemed to me that this vision suggested the uplifting of Saint Francis in contemplation and that it pointed out the way by which that state of contemplation can be reached.

3. Nam per senas alas illas recte intelligi possunt sex illuminationum suspensiones, quibus anima quasi quibusdam gradibus vel itineribus disponitur, ut transeat ad pacem per ecstaticos excessus sapientiae christianae. Via autem non est nisi per ardentissimum amorem Crucifixi, qui adeo Paulum ad *tertium caelum raptum* transformavit in Christum, ut diceret: *Christo confixus sum cruci, vivo autem, iam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*,<sup>4</sup> qui etiam adeo mentem Francisci absorbit, quod mense in carne patuit, dum sacratissima passionis stigmata in corpore suo ante mortem per biennium deportavit. Effigies igitur sex alarum seraphicarum insinuat sex illuminationes scalares, quae a creaturis incipiunt et perducunt usque ad Deum, ad quem nemo intrat recte nisi per Crucifixum. Nam *qui non intrat per ostium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur et latro. Si quis vero per hoc ostium introierit, ingrediatur et egredietur et pasqua inveniet*.<sup>5</sup> Propter quod dicit Ioannes in Apocalypsi: *Beati qui lavant vestimenta sua in sanguine Agni, ut sit potestas eorum in ligno vitae, et per portas ingrediantur civitatem*,<sup>6</sup> quasi dicat, quod per contemplationem ingredi non potest Ierusalem supernam, nisi per sanguinem Agni intret tanquam per portam. Non enim dispositus est aliquo modo ad contemplationes divinas, quae ad mentales ducunt excessus, nisi cum Daniele sit *vir desideriorum*.<sup>7</sup> Desideria autem in nobis inflammantur dupliciter, scilicet per *clamorem orationis*, quae rugire facit a *gemitu cordis*<sup>8</sup> et per *fulgorem speculationis*, qua mens ad radios lucis directissime et intensissime se convertit.

4. Igitur ad gemitum orationis per Christum crucifixum, per cuius sanguinem purgamur a sordibus vitiorum<sup>9</sup> primum quidem lectorem invito, ne forte credat, quod sibi sufficiat lectio sine unctione,<sup>10</sup> speculatio sine devotione, investigatio sine admiratione, circumspectio sine exultatione, industria sine pietate, scientia sine caritate, intelligentia sine humilitate, studium absque divina gratia, speculum absque sapientia divinitus inspirata. — Praeventis igitur divina gratia, humilibus et piis, compunctis et devotis,

4 II Cor. 12, 2; Gal. 2, 20.

5 Ioan. 10, 1; *ibid.* 9.

6 Apoc. 22, 14.

7 Dan. 9, 23.

8 Ps. 37, 9.

9 Hebr. 1, 3.

10 Ioan. 2, 20 et 27.

3. The six wings of the seraph can be rightly understood as signifying the six uplifting<sup>6</sup> illuminations by which the soul is disposed, as by certain grades or steps, to pass over<sup>7</sup> to peace through the exstatic transports of Christian wisdom. The road to this peace is through nothing else than a most ardent love of the Crucified, the love which so transformed Paul into Christ when he was rapt to the third heaven that he declared: *With Christ I am nailed to the Cross. It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me*. And this love so absorbed the soul of Francis too that his spirit shone through his flesh the last two years of his life, when he bore the most holy marks of the Passion in his body.<sup>8</sup>

The figure of the six wings of the Seraph, therefore, brings to mind the six steps of illumination which begin with creatures and lead up to God, Whom no one rightly enters save through the Crucified. For *he who enters not by the door, but climbs up another way, is a thief and a robber. But if anyone enter by this door, he shall go in and out, and shall find pastures*. For this reason Saint John writes in the *Apocalypse*: *Blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and that by the gates they may enter into the city*. That is to say, no one can enter by contemplation into the heavenly Jerusalem unless he enters through the blood of the Lamb as through a door. For no one is in any way disposed for divine contemplations that lead to spiritual transports<sup>9</sup> unless, like the prophet Daniel, he is also *a man of desires*. Now such desires<sup>10</sup> are enkindled in us in two ways: through the outcries of prayer, which makes us groan from anguish of heart, and through the refulgence of speculation by which our mind most directly and intently turns itself toward the rays of light.

4. Wherefore, it is to groans of prayer<sup>11</sup> through Christ Crucified, in whose blood we are cleansed from the filth of vices, that I first of all invite the reader. Otherwise he may come to think that mere reading will suffice without unction, speculation<sup>12</sup> without devotion, investigation without admiration, observation without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, study without divine grace, the mirror without divinely inspired wisdom.

To those, therefore, who are already disposed by divine grace, to the humble and pious, to the contrite and devout, to those who are anointed with the *oil of gladness*, to the lovers of divine wisdom and to those inflamed with a desire for it, to those who wish to give themselves to glorifying, admiring, and even savoring<sup>13</sup> God — to those I propose the following considerations. At the same time, I wish to warn them that the mirror of the external

unctis *oleo laetitiae*<sup>11</sup> et amatoribus divinae sapientiae et eius desiderio inflammatis, vacare volentibus ad Deum magnificandum, admirandum et etiam degustandum, speculationes subiectas propono, insinuans, quod parum aut nihil est speculum exterius propositum, nisi speculum mentis nostrae tersum fuerit et politum. Exerce igitur te, homo Dei, prius ad stimulum conscientiae remordentem, antequam oculos eleves ad radios sapientiae in eius speculis relucentes, ne forte ex ipsa radorum speculatione in graviolem incidas foveam tenebrarum.

5. Placuit autem distinguere tractatum in septem capitula, praemittendo titulos ad faciliorem intelligentiam dicendorum. Rogo igitur, quod magis pensetur intentio scribentis quam opus, magis dictorum sensus quam sermo incultus, magis veritas quam venustas, magis exercitatio affectus quam eruditio intellectus. Quod ut fiat, non est harum speculationum progressus perfunctorie transcurrendus, sed morosissime ruminandus.

Explicit Prologus

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ps.* 44, 8.

world put before them<sup>14</sup> is of little or no avail unless the mirror of our soul has been cleansed and polished. First, then, O man of God, arouse in yourself remorse of conscience before you raise your eyes to the rays of divine Wisdom reflected in its mirrors, lest perchance from the very beholding of these rays you fall into a more perilous pit of darkness.

5. I have thought it well to divide this tract into seven chapters and have prefixed a title to each for the easier understanding of the matter therein. I entreat the reader to weigh the intention of the writer rather than the work, the meaning of the words rather than the uncultivated style, the truth rather than the adornment, and the exercise of the affections rather than the instruction of the mind. He who would achieve this ought not to run hurriedly through these considerations, but rather take his time and mull them slowly.

## INCIPIUNT CAPITULA

Primum capitulum, de gradibus ascensionis in Deum et de speculatione ipsius per vestigia eius in universo.

Secundum capitulum, de speculatione Dei in vestigiis suis in hoc sensibili mundo.

Tertium capitulum, de speculatione Dei per suam imaginem naturalibus potentiis insignitam.

Quartum capitulum, de speculatione Dei in sua imagine donis gratuitis reformata.

Quintum capitulum, de speculatione divinae unitatis per eius nomen primum, quod est *esse*.

Sextum capitulum, de speculatione beatissimae Trinitatis in eius nomine, quod est *bonum*.

Septimum capitulum, de excessu mentali et mystico, in quo requies datur intellectui, affectu in Deum per excessum totaliter transeunte.

Expliciunt capitula.

## CHAPTER HEADINGS

### CHAPTER ONE

The Steps in the Ascent to God and the Consideration of Him through His Footsteps in the Universe

### CHAPTER TWO

The Consideration of God in His Footsteps in this Visible World

### CHAPTER THREE

The Consideration of God through His Image Imprinted on Our Natural Powers

### CHAPTER FOUR

The Consideration of God in His Image Reformed through the Gifts of Grace

### CHAPTER FIVE

The Consideration of the Divine Unity through Its Primary Name which is *Being*

### CHAPTER SIX

The Consideration of the Most Blessed Trinity in Its Name which is the *Good*

### CHAPTER SEVEN

The Mystical Transport of the Mind in which Rest is Given to Our Understanding and Our Affection Passes over Entirely to God

## INCIPIT SPECULATIO PAUPERIS IN DESERTO

### CAP. I

*De gradibus ascensionis in Deum  
et de speculatione ipsius per vestigia eius in universo*

1. *Beatus vir, cuius est auxilium abs te! ascensiones in corde suo disposuit in valle lacrymarum, in loco, quem posuit.*<sup>1</sup> Cum beatitudo nihil aliud sit, quam summi boni fruitio; et summum bonum sit supra nos: nullus potest effici beatus, nisi supra semetipsum ascendat, non ascensu corporali, sed cordiali. Sed supra nos levare non possumus nisi per virtutem superiorem nos elevantem. Quantumcumque enim gradus interiores disponantur, nihil fit, nisi divinum auxilium comitetur. Divinum autem auxilium comitatur eos qui petunt ex corde humiliter et devote; et hoc est ad ipsum suspirare in hac *lacrymarum valle*, quod fit per ferventem orationem. Oratio igitur est mater et origo sursum-actionis. Ideo Dionysius in libro de *Mystica Theologia*,<sup>2</sup> volens nos instruere ad excessus mentales, primo praemittit orationem. Oremus igitur et dicamus ad Dominum Deum nostrum: *Deduc me, Domine, in via tua, et ingrediar in veritate tua; laetetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum.*<sup>3</sup>

2. In hac oratione orando illuminatur ad cognoscendum divinae ascensionis gradus. Cum enim secundum statum conditionis nostrae ipsa rerum universitas sit scala ad ascendendum in Deum; et in rebus quaedam sint *vestigium*, quaedam *imago*, quaedam *corporalia*, quaedam *spiritualia*, quaedam *temporalia*, quaedam *aeviterna*, ac per hoc quaedam *extra nos*, quaedam *intra nos*; ad hoc quod perveniamus ad primum principium considerandum, quod est *spiritualissimum* et *aeternum* et *supra nos*, oportet nos *transire* per *vestigium*, quod est *corporale* et *temporale* et *extra nos*, et hoc est *deduci in via Dei*; oportet, nos *intrare* ad mentem

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 83, 6 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Dionysius, *De Mystica Theologia*, I, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 85, 11.

## HERE BEGINS THE SPECULATION OF THE POOR MAN IN THE DESERT

### CHAPTER ONE

THE STEPS IN THE ASCENT TO GOD AND THE  
CONSIDERATION OF HIM THROUGH HIS FOOTSTEPS  
IN THE UNIVERSE

1. *Blessed is the man<sup>1</sup> whose help is from thee; in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps in the vale of tears, in the place which he hath set.* Since happiness is nothing else than the enjoyment of the Supreme Good and the Supreme Good is above us, no one can enjoy happiness unless he rise above himself, not, indeed by a bodily ascent, but by an ascent of the heart. But we cannot rise above ourselves unless a superior power raise us. However much, then, the steps of our interior progress may be well-ordered, we can do nothing unless divine aid support us. This divine aid is at hand for all who seek it with a truly humble and devout heart. To seek thus in this vale of tears is to sigh for divine aid in fervent prayer. Prayer, then, is the mother and origin of every upward striving of the soul. Thus Dionysius, in his book, *Mystical Theology*, wishing to instruct us in the transports of soul, opens first with a prayer. Let us, therefore, pray and say to the Lord, our God: *Conduct me, O Lord, in thy way and I will enter into thy truth; let my heart rejoice that it may fear thy name.*

2. By so praying, we are given light to discern the steps of the soul's ascent to God.<sup>2</sup> For we are so created that the material universe itself is a ladder by which we may ascend to God. And among things, some are vestiges, others, images;<sup>3</sup> some corporeal, others, spiritual; some temporal, others, everlasting;<sup>4</sup> some things are outside us, and some within. In order to arrive at the consideration of the First Principle, which is wholly spiritual and eternal and above us, we must pass through vestiges which are corporeal and temporal and outside us. Thus we are guided in the way of God. Next we must enter into our mind, which is the image of God — an image which is everlasting, spiritual, and within us. And this is to enter the truth of God. Finally, looking at the First Principle, we must go beyond to what is eternal, absolutely

nostram quae est *imago Dei aeviterna, spiritualis et intra nos, et hoc est ingredi in veritate Dei*; oportet, nos *transcendere ad aeternum, spiritualissimum et supra nos, aspiciendo ad primum principium, et hoc est laetari in Dei notitia et reverentia Maiestatis.*

3. Haec est igitur via trium dierum in solitudine,<sup>4</sup> haec est triplex illuminatio unius diei, et prima est sicut vespera, secunda sicut mane, tertia sicut meridies; haec respicit triplicem rerum existentiam, scilicet in materia, in intelligentia et in arte aeterna, secundum quam dictum est: *fiat, fecit, et factum est,*<sup>5</sup> haec etiam respicit triplicem substantiam in Christo, qui est scala nostra, scilicet corporalem, spiritualem et divinam.

4. Secundum hunc triplicem progressum mens nostra tres habet aspectus principales. Unus est ad corporalia exteriora, secundum quem vocatur *animalitas* seu sensualitas; alius intra se et in se, secundum quem dicitur *spiritus*; tertius supra se, secundum quem dicitur *mens*. — Ex quibus omnibus disponere se debet ad conscendendum in Deum, ut ipsum diligat *ex tota mente, ex toto corde et ex tota anima,*<sup>6</sup> in quo consistit perfecta Legis observatio et simul cum hoc sapientia christiana.

5. Quoniam autem quilibet praedictorum modorum gematur, secundum quod contingit considerare Deum ut *alpha et omega,*<sup>7</sup> seu in quantum contingit videre Deum in unoquoque praedictorum modorum ut *per speculum et ut in speculo,* seu quia una istarum considerationum habet commisceri alteri sibi coniunctae et habet considerari in sua puritate: hinc est, quod necesse est, hos tres gradus principales ascendere ad senarium, ut, sicut Deus sex diebus perfecit *universum mundum* et in septimo requievit, sic *minor mundus* sex gradibus illuminationum sibi succedentium ad quietem contemplationis ordinatissime perducatur. — In cuius rei figura sex gradibus ascendebar ad thronum Salomonis,<sup>8</sup> Seraphim, quae vidit Isaias, senas alas habebant;<sup>9</sup> post sex dies *vocavit Dominus Moysen de medio caliginis,*<sup>10</sup> et Christus *post sex dies,* ut dicitur in Mattheo, *duxit discipulos in montem et transfiguratus est ante eos.*<sup>11</sup>

6. Iuxta igitur sex gradus *ascensionis* in Deum sex sunt gradus *potentiarum* animae per quos ascendimus ab imis ad summa, ab exterioribus ad intima, a temporalibus conscendimus ad aeterna, scilicet *sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia et apex*

4 Exod. 3, 18.

5 Gen. 1, 3.

6 Marc. 12, 30. Cf. Matth. 22, 37; Luc. 10, 27.

7 Apoc. 1, 8.

8 III Reg. 10, 19.

9 Isai. 6, 2.

10 Exod. 24, 16.

11 Matth. 17, 1 seqq.

spiritual, and above us. This is to rejoice in the knowledge of God and in the reverent fear of His Majesty.

3. This triple way of seeing, then, is the three days' journey in the wilderness;<sup>5</sup> it is the threefold enlightenment of a single day: the first is like evening; the second, morning; and the third, noon day. It reflects the threefold existence of things: in matter, in the understanding, and in the eternal art,<sup>6</sup> according to which it was said: *Let it be made, He made it, and it was made.*<sup>7</sup> Finally, it reflects the threefold substance in Christ, Who is our ladder: the corporeal, the spiritual, and the divine substance.

4. In keeping with this threefold progression, our mind has three principal ways of perceiving.<sup>8</sup> In the first way it looks at the corporeal things outside itself, and so acting, it is called animality or sensitivity. In the second, it looks within itself, and is then called spirit. In the third, it looks above itself, and is then called mind. All three ways should be employed to ascend to God, so that He may be loved *with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* Herein lies the perfect observance of the Law and at the same time, Christian wisdom.

5. Each of the foregoing ways of seeing may be subdivided according to whether we consider God as the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, or whether we consider Him in any one of the aforesaid ways as through and as in a mirror. Or we may consider each of these ways in conjunction with another that is related to it, and in itself.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, these three principal steps of ascent must be increased to six in number. Thus, just as God completed the whole world in six days and on the seventh rested, so the lesser world is led in a most orderly fashion, through six progressive steps of enlightenment, to the quiet of contemplation. Symbolically, the ascent to the throne of Solomon rose by six steps; the Seraphim that Isaias saw had six wings; after six days the Lord called Moses out of the midst of the cloud; and as St. Matthew tells us, it was *after six days* that Christ *led them up a high mountain by themselves, and was transfigured before them.*

6. Corresponding, therefore, to the six steps in the ascent to God, there are six gradated powers of the soul, whereby we ascend from the lowest to the highest,<sup>10</sup> from external things to those that are within, and from the temporal to the eternal. These six powers are the senses, the imagination, the reason, the understanding, the intelligence, and the summit of the mind or the spark of synderesis.<sup>11</sup> We have these powers implanted within us by nature, deformed through sin, reformed through grace.



*mentis* seu synderesis scintilla. Hos gradus in nobis habemus plantatos per naturam, deformatos per culpam, reformatos per gratiam; purgandos per iustitiam, exercendos per scientiam, perficiendos per sapientiam.

7. Secundum enim primam naturae institutionem creatus fuit homo habilis ad contemplationis quietem, et ideo *posuit eum Deus in paradiso deliciarum*.<sup>12</sup> Sed avertens se a vero lumine ad commutabile bonum, incurvatus est ipse per culpam propriam, et totum genus suum per originale peccatum, quod dupliciter infecit humanam naturam, scilicet *ignorantia* mentem et *concupiscentia* carnem; ita quod *excaecatus* homo et *incurvatus* in tenebris sedet et caeli lumen non videt nisi succurrat gratia cum iustitia contra *concupiscentiam*, et scientia cum sapientia contra *ignorantiam*. Quod totum fit per Iesum Christum, *qui factus est nobis a Deo sapientia et iustitia et sanctificatio et redemptio*. Qui cum sit Dei *virtus* et Dei *sapientia*,<sup>13</sup> sit Verbum incarnatum *plenum gratiae et veritatis*, *gratiam et veritatem* fecit,<sup>14</sup> *gratiam* scilicet *caritatis* infudit, quae, cum sit *de corde puro et conscientia bona et fide non ficta*,<sup>15</sup> totam animam rectificat secundum triplicem ipsius aspectum supradictum; *scientiam veritatis* edocuit secundum triplicem modum theologiae, scilicet *symbolicae*, *propriae* et *mysticae*, ut per *symbolicam* recte utamur sensibilibus, per *propriam* recte utamur intelligibilibus, per *mysticam* rapiamur ad supermentales excessus.

8. Qui igitur vult in Deum ascendere necesse est, ut, vitata culpa deformante naturam, naturales potentias supradictas exercent ad *gratiam reformantem*, et hoc per orationem; ad *iustitiam purificantem*, et hoc in conversatione; ad *scientiam illuminantem*, et hoc in meditatione; ad *sapientiam perficientem* et hoc in contemplatione. Sicut igitur ad *sapientiam* nemo venit nisi per gratiam, iustitiam et scientiam, sic ad *contemplationem* non venit nisi per meditationem perspicuam, conversationem sanctam et orationem devotam. Sicut igitur gratia fundamentum est rectitudinis voluntatis et illustrationis perspicuae rationis; sic primo orandum est nobis, deinde sancte vivendum, tertio veritatis spectaculis intendendum et intendendo gradatim ascendendum, quousque veniatur ad *montem excelsum*, ubi *videatur Deus deorum in Sion*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Gen. 2, 15.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor. 1, 30; *ibid.* 24.

<sup>14</sup> Ioan. 1, 14; *ibid.* 17.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Tim. 1, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ps. 83, 8.

They must be cleansed by justice, trained by knowledge, and perfected by wisdom.

7. According to the original disposition of nature, man was created fit for the quiet of contemplation and thus *God placed him in the paradise of pleasure*. But turning away from the true light to a changeable good, he and all his descendants were by his fault bent over<sup>12</sup> by original sin, which infected human nature in a twofold manner: the mind with ignorance, and the flesh with concupiscence. The result is that man, blinded and bent over, sits in darkness and does not see the light of heaven, unless grace comes to his aid with justice against concupiscence, and with knowledge and wisdom against ignorance. These effects are brought about through Jesus Christ, *who has become for us God-given wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption*. For since He is the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the incarnate Word, *full of grace and of truth*, He made grace and truth. He infuses into us the grace of charity which, since it springs up *from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned*, rectifies the whole soul in the threefold power of seeing mentioned above. He has taught the knowledge of truth in its threefold theological sense,<sup>13</sup> so that through symbolic theology we may rightly use sensible things, through literal theology, we may rightly use intellectual things, and through mystical theology, we may be rapt to ecstatic experiences.

8. He, therefore, who wishes to ascend to God must first avoid sin, which deforms nature. He must bring the natural powers of the soul under the influence of grace, which reforms them, and this he does through prayer; under the influence of justice which purifies, and this, in daily acts; under the way of knowledge which enlightens, and this, in meditation; and finally, under the power of wisdom which perfects, and this in contemplation.<sup>14</sup> For just as no one arrives at wisdom except through grace, justice, and knowledge, so it is that no one arrives at contemplation except through penetrating meditation, holy living, and devout prayer. And since grace is the foundation of righteousness of the will, and of penetrating enlightenment of reason, we must first of all pray; next, we must live holily; then we must gaze at the spectacles of truth, and by gazing at them, rise step by step until we reach the mountain height *where the God of gods is seen on Sion*.

9. Quoniam igitur prius est ascendere quam descendere in scala Iacob, *primum* gradum ascensionis collocemus in imo, ponendo totum istum mundum sensibilem nobis tanquam speculum, per quod transeamus ad Deum, opificem summum, ut simus veri Hebraei transeuntes de Aegypto ad terram Patribus repromissam,<sup>17</sup> simus etiam Christiani cum Christo transeuntes *ex hoc mundo ad Patrem*,<sup>18</sup> simus et sapientiae amatores, quae vocat et dicit: *Transite ad me omnes, qui concupiscitis me, et a generationibus meis adimplemini. A magnitudine namque speciei et creaturae cognoscibiliter poterit Creator horum videri.*<sup>19</sup>

10. Relucet autem Creatoris summa potentia et sapientia et benevolentia in rebus creatis secundum quod hoc tripliciter nuntiat sensus carnis sensui interiori. Sensus enim carnis aut deservit intellectui *rationabiliter investiganti*, aut *fideliter credenti*, aut *intellectualiter contemplanti*. *Contemplans* considerat rerum existentiam actualem, *credens* rerum decursum habituaalem, *ratiocinans* rerum praecellentiam potentialem.

11. Primo modo aspectus *contemplantis*, res in seipsis considerans, videt in eis *pondus, numerum et mensuram*; *pondus* quoad situm, ubi inclinantur, *numerum*, quo distinguuntur, et *mensuram*, quam limitantur. Ac per hoc videt in eis *modum, speciem et ordinem*, nec non *substantiam, virtutem et operationem*. Ex quibus consurgere potest sicut ex *vestigio* ad intelligendum potentiam, sapientiam et bonitatem Creatoris immensam.

12. Secundo modo aspectus *fidelis*, considerans hunc mundum attendit *originem, decursum et terminum*. Nam *fide* credimus, *aptata esse saecula Verbo vitae*;<sup>20</sup> *fide* credimus, trium legum tempora, scilicet naturae, Scripturae et gratiae sibi succedere et ordinatissime decurrere; *fide* credimus, mundum per finale iudicium terminandum esse; in primo potentiam, in secundo providentiam, in tertio iustitiam summi principii advertentes.

13. Tertio modo aspectus *ratiocinabiliter investigantis* videt, quaedam tantum *esse*, quaedam autem *esse et vivere*, quaedam vero *esse, vivere et discernere*; et prima quidem *esse* minora, secunda media, tertia meliora. — Videt iterum, quaedam *esse tantum corporalia*, quaedam *partim corporalia, partim spiritualia*; ex quo advertit, aliqua *esse mere spiritualia* tanquam utriusque meliora

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 28, 12; Exod. 13, 3 seq.

<sup>18</sup> Ioan. 13, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Sap. 11, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Hebr. 11, 3.

9. Now since it is necessary to ascend before we can descend on Jacob's ladder, let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, setting the whole visible world before us as a mirror through which we may pass over to God, the Supreme Creative Artist. Thus we shall be as true Hebrews passing over from Egypt to the land promised to the fathers; we shall be Christians passing over with Christ from this world to the Father; we shall be lovers of the Wisdom Who calls to us and says: *Pass over to me all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits. For by the greatness and the beauty of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen so as to be known thereby.*

10. The supreme power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Creator shine forth in created things in so far as the bodily senses inform the interior senses. This is done in a threefold way.<sup>16</sup> For the bodily senses serve the intellect when it investigates rationally, or believes faithfully, or contemplates intellectually. He who contemplates considers the actual existence of things; he who believes, the habitual course of things; he who investigates with his reason, the potential excellence of things.

11. In the first way of seeing, the observer considers things in themselves and sees in them weight, number, and measure:<sup>16</sup> weight in respect to the place towards which things incline; number, by which things are distinguished; and measure, by which things are determined. Hence he sees in them mode, species,<sup>17</sup> and order, as well as substance, power, and activity. From all these considerations the observer can rise, as from a vestige, to the knowledge of the immense power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator.

12. In the second way of seeing, the way of faith, the believer considers this world in its origin, development, and end.<sup>18</sup> For *by faith we understand that the world was fashioned by the word of God*; by faith we believe that the periods of the three laws of nature, of the Scriptures, and of grace followed one another and have flowed on in a most orderly way; by faith we believe that the world must come to an end in the final judgment. In the first of these beliefs we consider the power of the highest Principle; in the second, His Providence; and in the third, His Justice.

13. In the third way of seeing, he who investigates with his reason sees that some things merely exist, that others exist and live, that still others exist, live, and discern. He also sees that the first of these are the lesser ones, the second are intermediate, and the third are the better. Likewise, he sees that some things are merely corporeal, while others are partly corporeal and partly spiritual. From this observation he realizes that others are wholly spiritual, better and of more dignity than the first two modes of

et digniora. — Videt nihilominus, quaedam esse *mutabilia* et *corruptibilia*, ut terrestria, quaedam *mutabilia et incorruptibilia*, ut caelestia; ex quo advertit, quaedam esse *immutabilia et incorruptibilia*, ut supercaelestia.

Ex his ergo visibilibus consurgit ad considerandum Dei potentiam, sapientiam et bonitatem ut entem, viventem et intelligentem, mere spiritualem et incorruptibilem et intransmutabilem.

14. Haec autem consideratio dilatatur secundum septiformem conditionem creaturarum, quae est divinae potentiae, sapientiae et bonitatis testimonium septiforme, si consideretur cunctarum rerum *origo, magnitudo, multitudo, pulchritudo, plenitudo, operatio et ordo*. — *Origo* namque rerum secundum creationem, distinctionem et ornatum quantum ad opera sex dierum divinam praedicat potentiam cuncta de nihilo producentem, sapientiam cuncta lucide distinguentem et bonitatem cuncta largiter adornantem. — *Magnitudo* autem rerum secundum molem longitudinis, latitudinis et profunditatis; secundum excellentiam virtutis longe, late et profunde se extendentis, sicut patet in diffusione lucis; secundum efficaciam operationis intimae, continuae et diffusae, sicut patet in operatione ignis, manifeste indicat immensitatem potentiae, sapientiae et bonitatis trini Dei, qui in cunctis rebus per *potentiam, praesentiam et essentiam* incircumscriptus existit. — *Multitudo* vero rerum secundum diversitatem generalem, specialem et individualement in substantia, in forma seu figura et efficacia ultra omnem humanam aestimationem, manifeste trium praedictarum conditionum in Deo immensitatem insinuat et ostendit. — *Pulchritudo* autem rerum secundum varietatem luminum, figurarum et colorum in corporibus simplicibus, mixtis et etiam complexionatis, sicut in corporibus caelestibus et mineralibus, sicut lapidibus et metallis, plantis et animalibus, tria praedicta evidenter proclamat. — *Plenitudo* autem rerum, secundum quod *materia* est plena formis secundum rationes seminales; *forma* est plena virtute secundum activam potentiam; *virtus* est plena effectibus secundum efficientiam, id ipsum manifeste declarat. — *Operatio* multiplex, secundum quod est *naturalis*, secundum quod est *artificialis*, secundum quod est *moralis*, sua multiplicissima varietate ostendit immensitatem illius *virtutis, artis et bonitatis*, quae quidem est omnibus "causa essendi, ratio intelligendi et ordo vivendi."<sup>21</sup> — Ordo autem secundum rationem *durationis, situationis et influentiae*, scilicet per prius et posterius,

<sup>21</sup> August., VIII *de Civ. Dei*, 4.

being. Moreover, he sees that some of these things are changeable and corruptible, such as terrestrial things; others are changeable and incorruptible, as celestial things. And from this observation he realizes that some things are changeless and incorruptible, that is, supercelestial things.

Therefore, from visible things the soul rises to the consideration of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, in so far as He is existing, living, intelligent, purely spiritual, incorruptible, and immutable.

14. We may extend this consideration to the sevenfold general properties of creatures,<sup>19</sup> which bear a sevenfold witness to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, if we consider the origin, greatness, multitude, beauty, plenitude, activity, and order of all things. The origin of things, according to their creation, distinction,<sup>20</sup> and adornment<sup>21</sup> as the work of the six days, proclaims the power of God that produced all things out of nothing, the wisdom of God that clearly differentiated all things, the goodness of God that lavishly adorned all things. The greatness of things also — looking at their vast extension, latitude, and profundity, at the immense power extending itself in the diffusion of light, and the efficiency of their inner uninterrupted and diffusive operation, as manifest in the action of fire — clearly portrays the immensity of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Triune God, Who, uncircumscribed, exists in all things by His power, presence, and essence.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the multitude of things in their generic, specific, and individual diversity of substance, form, or figure, and the efficiency which is beyond all human estimation, manifestly suggests and shows the immensity of the three above-mentioned attributes in God. The beauty of things, too, if we but consider the diversity of lights, forms, and colors in elementary, inorganic, and organic bodies, as in heavenly bodies and in minerals, in stones and metals, and in plants and animals, clearly proclaims these three attributes of God. In so far as matter is full of forms because of the seminal principles,<sup>23</sup> and form is full of power because of its active potentialities, while power is capable of many effects because of its efficiency, the plenitude of things clearly proclaims the same three attributes. In like manner, manifold activity, whether natural, cultural, or moral, by its infinitely multiple variety, shows forth the immensity of that power, art,<sup>24</sup> and goodness, which is for all things "the cause of being, the basis of understanding, and the norm of orderly conduct." Finally, when we consider order in reference to duration, position, and influence, that is, from the standpoint of prior and posterior, superior and inferior, more noble and more ignoble, it clearly

superius et inferius, nobilius et ignobilius, in libro creaturae insinuat manifeste primi principii *primitatem, sublimitatem et dignitatem* quantum ad infinitatem *potentiae*: ordo vero divinarum *legum, praeceptorum et iudiciorum* in libro Scripturae immensitatem *sapientiae*; ordo autem divinorum *Sacramentorum, beneficiorum et retributionum* in corpore Ecclesiae immensitatem *bonitatis*, ita quod ipse ordo nos in primum et summum, potentissimum, sapientissimum et optimum evidentissime manuducit.

15. Qui igitur tantis rerum creaturarum splendoribus non illustratur caecus est; qui tantis clamoribus non evigilat surdus est; qui ex omnibus his effectibus Deum non laudat mutus est; qui ex tantis indicibus primum principium non advertit stultus est. — Aperi igitur oculos, aures spirituales admove, labia tua solve et cor tuum appone,<sup>22</sup> ut in omnibus creaturis Deum tuum videas, audias, laudes, diligas et colas, magnifices et honores, ne forte totus contra te orbis terrarum consurgat. Nam ob hoc *pugnabit orbis terrarum contra insensatos*,<sup>23</sup> et econtra sensatis erit materia gloriae, qui secundum Prophetam possunt dicere: *Delectasti me, Domine, in factura tua, et in operibus manuum tuarum exsultabo. Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, Domine! omnia in sapientia fecisti, impleta est terra possessione tua.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Prov.* 22, 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Sap.* 5, 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ps.* 91, 5; *Ps.* 103, 24.

points out, first of all, in the book of creation, the primacy, sublimity, and dignity of the First Principle, and thus the infinity of His power; secondly, in the book of Scriptures, the order of divine laws, commands, and judgments, and thus the immensity of His wisdom; and lastly, in the body of the Church, the order of the divine Sacraments, benefices, and rewards, and thus the immensity of His goodness. So it is that order leads us to that which is first and highest, most powerful, most wise, and best.

15. Therefore, whoever is not enlightened by such great splendor in created things is blind; whoever remains unheedful of such great outcries is deaf; whoever does not praise God in all these effects is dumb; whoever does not turn to the First Principle after so many signs is a fool. Open your eyes, therefore; alert the ears of your spirit, unlock your lips, and apply your heart that you may see, hear, praise, love, and adore, magnify, and honor your God in every creature, lest perchance, the entire universe rise against you. For because of this, *the whole world shall fight against the unwise*. But on the contrary, it will be a matter of glory for the wise, who can say with the prophet: *For thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in thy doings, and in the work of thy hands I shall rejoice. How great are thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom, the earth is filled with thy riches.*