

rather, whence is this to me, that my Lord himself should come to me? Who is he, and what am I; or what agreement between light and Belial? Does God desire to be born over again in a stable, that is, in my heart? Have mercy on me, that I may know thy coming.

10. Depart from me O Lord, for I am a sinful man. Yes, from me, O good Jesus, because I am in reality a sinner, and so hideous a criminal, that already I am scarcely a man, whilst sin reigns so long in my mortal body, and I am almost like a beast of burthen beside thee. And I am always in thy company! O what confusion! what a subject of shame! Always with my God; and yet like a beast before his eyes!

11. He humbled himself taking the form of a servant. Phil. ii. "When he descended into the most immense bottom of the purgatory of worms, God is said to have humbled himself, what expression shall be used when he descends into the bottom of the vilest sinner, and the most filthy worm, that is, into my heart? Ah Lord I have heard thy work, and I feared. Hab. iii.

12. The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. John i. Who? Amongst whom? From the bosom of his father, he came into the miserable breast of a vile sinner! a sinner so ungrateful, so often unfaithful and rebellious! Be astonished O ye heavens at this, and O ye its gates be vehemently troubled! Jer. ii.

13. My spirit, says he, shall not remain in man, because he is flesh. Genes. vi. And yet, not only his spirit but his flesh, my Christ while and entire reunites in man, who is not only flesh, but rottenness and worms, and the outcast of all; nor does he cease coming to abide in him every day. Hast thou forgotten thy declaration O Lord, or is it love, that induces thee, to these excesses of humility?

14. What is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou considerest him. Ps. 143. Man is made like to vanity. How then can this vanity feed on truth, man on God, or man partake of the bread of angels? Thou hast said, O Lord, do not throw pearls to swine, and lo! thou throwest the pearl of Paradise into our body, and into our bosom, so full of brutes' desires and shameful affections. O goodness! O Love! O infinite humility of thy love!

15. I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. John i. He, thou whom a greater has not arisen amongst the born of women, is unworthy to touch the feet of Jesus, and I will have Him in my hands in my mouth, on my bosom, in my heart! Ah, Lord! truly I am not worthy thou shouldst enter under my roof. The heaven of heavens does not contain thee, the pillars of heaven and the angels tremble before thee, and shall such a wretch as I dare to handle thee?

16. Blessed is the soul with which he has found rest, and in whose tabernacle he reposes. But who is this, and we will praise him? Or who is fit for this? He has wrought wonders in his life. S. Bern. de anim. 8.

17. Shall I speak to my God, who am but dust and ashes? Gen. xviii. O immortal God!

So great a Patriarch scarcely ventures to speak to God, as he is only dust and ashes; and shall I who am really nothing, may: the vilest of all mankind, dare not only to speak to him, but to touch, to eat, to bear in my heart the God of immense majesty!

18. Behold, as clay is in the hands of the potter, so am I you all in my hand says the Lord God of Hosts. Jer. xviii. O Guardian of men! what shall I say, or what shall I answer thee? But do thou answer me, O God of my heart! We are clay in thy hand, and thou, O God, art in the hands of us, who are clay. O how is the gold changed? How is the excellent colour tarnished, and the majesty of God fastened in the depths of mire? Job, Jer. Ps.

19. God beheld man lying on a dunghill, aggravated by vermin, and yet he did not despise his own work, but like an excellent physician made use of the best remedies to heal him. O bowels of pity! O abyss of humanity! S. Chrysost. Sermon. 3. ad Phillip.

20. All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof like the flower of the field. Isai. xl. And is this all the majesty of man, that he should be like a dry straw, or as dust that is scattered over the face of the earth by the wind? And yet he wishes to be on this grass, on this earth, he that is fed amongst the lilies of Paradise, and amongst the choirs of angels!

21. O how wonderful, how lovely, how desirable are the tabernacles of thy house, O Lord my God! My soul indeed desires them, but how can it enter into them? S. Aug. Medit. c. xxxvii.

22. Suffer little children to come to me; for such is the kingdom of heaven. How sweet is this word, O eternal truth! For I am a little child; and amongst the little ones of thy family, I desire to enter into thy bosom, and into the kingdom of heaven, to go to thee, and to feed on thy body. But, alas! my iniquities regard me, and I cannot behold the beauty of thy countenance. Behold my humiliation and my labour, and pardon all my sins. Matt. xix. S. Aug. Solil.

23. For I have not come to call the just, but sinners. Matt. ix. A sinful sinner, and worthy of all attention. Who will now enquire of the benignant goodness of God? Who will not go to him with his whole heart, to eat the bread of eternal life, and drink the precious wine which he has mingled for us?

24. O Lord, what prayers do you hear, if not those of the humble. God be merciful to me a sinner, said the lowly publican, and he would not venture to raise his eyes to heaven. The entire Godhead came down to him because he thus humbled himself to the very centre of humility, and almost annihilated himself. S. Aug. de Civit. Dei. xx. 8.

25. The Lord hath regarded the humility of his handmaid. Luke i. If the Mother of God speaks thus that she might worthily receive God; O man what art thou that thou answerest God.

27. Do not fear, then, little flock, because it has pleased thy father to give thee a kingdom.