

# DE TRIBUS HABITACULIS ANIMAE<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Boyle

## Introduction

*De tribus habitaculis animae* ('Concerning the Three Dwelling-places of the Soul'), or the *Liber sancti Patricii episcopi* ('Book of the Holy Bishop Patrick') as it is called in some medieval manuscript-witnesses,<sup>2</sup> was an extremely popular text from the twelfth century onwards. It survives in more than one hundred manuscripts,<sup>3</sup> the earliest of which, from Salisbury, dates from *c.* 1100.<sup>4</sup> Its authorship was variously misattributed to a number of well-known Late Antique sermon-writers, such as Eusebius of Emesa, Caesarius of Arles and Augustine of Hippo,<sup>5</sup> but there is also a significant cluster

- 
- 1 The text of *De tribus habitaculis animae* printed here is that of Aubrey Gwynn's critical edition, published in his *The Writings of Bishop Patrick, 1074–1084*, SLH 1 (Dublin, 1955), pp 106–24. The text is reproduced by kind permission of the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies; I would like to thank Prof. Pádraig Breatnach for granting this permission. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust and the Isaac Newton Trust in funding my research.
  - 2 Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale 1562; Cambridge, University Library Ee.5.32; London, BL Royal 8.D.v; Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson C.33; Oxford, Corpus Christi College 212; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 239/125; Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek C.250.
  - 3 See Mario Esposito, 'Notes on Latin Learning and Literature in Mediaeval Ireland – II', *Hermathena* 22 (1932) 253–71 (pp 263–7); Walter Delius, 'Die Verfasserschaft der Schrift *de tribus habitaculis*', *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 108 (1937/8), 28–39 (pp 30–31). Gwynn does not seem to have been aware of Delius' article which argues, entirely unconvincingly, that *De tribus habitaculis* is the work of Anselm of Canterbury.
  - 4 Oxford, Bodleian Bodley 392.
  - 5 It should be noted that Mario Esposito suggested that *De tribus habitaculis animae* was 'a Latin translation, going back to the fourth or fifth century' of a homily by Eusebius of Emesa (died *c.* 359) or another Arian or semi-Arian author ('Notes', p. 269). Esposito's argument was based on the absence of any discussion of purgatory. The text however is concerned with collective eschatology, not individual eschatology – the events following the end of the world, and not the fate of the individual immediately after death – and so there is no need for any mention of purgatory. Indeed, the attribution to Eusebius of Emesa occurs in only two manuscripts (London, BL Royal

of early manuscripts which attribute it to a certain 'Patrick',<sup>6</sup> whom Aubrey Gwynn argued should be identified with Patrick (Patricius/Gilla Pátraic), bishop of Dublin, whose death by drowning is recorded in Irish annals for the year 1084.<sup>7</sup> Gwynn also attributed to the same Bishop Patrick a corpus of Latin poetry, of which three of the poems share with *De tribus habitaculis animae* some thematic parallels, as well as a more general Christian-Platonist worldview. However, it is clear that when medieval scribes attributed the text to 'Patricius', they meant to assign its authorship to Saint Patrick (thus, for example, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 239/125, p. 203, where the text has the title *Liber sancti Patricii episcopi et confessoris*),<sup>8</sup> despite the extreme unlikelihood of the saint being the author of the text. The biographical narrative which Gwynn proposed for Bishop Patrick rests on fragile evidence, some of which has recently been challenged.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, I here adopt the name Pseudo-Patrick for the author of *De tribus habitaculis animae*, until further evidence can be advanced to clarify the issue of authorship.<sup>10</sup>

Gwynn produced an excellent critical edition of the text in 1955, but did not provide a translation: rather, he printed a sixteenth-century translation (perhaps more accurately

---

5.E.IX and 8.B.XIV), and can be explained by their relationship with other manuscripts which contain homilies attributed to Eusebius alongside homilies attributed to Caesarius of Arles (London, BL Royal 5.F.X; Oxford, Bodleian Bodley 57 and 392), to whom *De tribus habitaculis animae* is more commonly attributed. The attributions seem to have become confused at some point in their transmission. Further evidence against Esposito's argument is that the author seems to quote Augustine's *Soliloquies*, which would date the composition of the text to after the first decades of the fifth century. The apparent influence of Boethius might lead us to place the *terminus post quem* later still.

6 See above, n. 2.

7 Gwynn, *op. cit.*, pp 1–21.

8 Some modern scholars also accepted this attribution: thus the text appears in Joaquín Lorenzo Villanueva, ed., *Sancti Patricii, Ibernorum apostoli, synodi, canones, opuscula, et scriptorum quae supersunt, fragmenta* (Dublin, 1835), pp 279–93. Esposito grouped it under 'pseudopatricia' ('Notes', p. 253).

9 Martin Brett, 'Canterbury's Perspective on Church Reform and Ireland, 1070–1115', in *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, ed. Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (Dublin, 2006), pp 13–35 (pp 33–5), where Brett argues that the 'Patricius' included among the Worcester community in the Durham *Liber vitae* must have been alive c. 1104, and therefore cannot be identified with Gilla Pátraic, who had died twenty years before.

10 See Elizabeth Boyle, 'The Authorship and Transmission of *De tribus habitaculis animae*', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 22 (forthcoming 2012). I have not translated the verse prologue which precedes the text in one manuscript copy only (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale 1562). That the author of the verse prologue names himself as 'Patrick' cannot, I think, be taken as evidence of the identity of the author, since adopting the poetic persona of a well-known saint was a common literary topos in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. See, for example, Máire Herbert, 'Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry', in *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, ed. J. F. Nagy and L. E. Jones (Dublin, 2005), pp 131–40.

described as an Early Modern English reworking of the text), which is verbose and inaccurate. Indeed, the clarity with which complex ideas are expressed in the original is obscured by the prolixity of the translation, which has until now been the only one available. In order that key themes and motifs might emerge more clearly, I have aimed to produce a more literal rendering of the text without sacrificing the rhythm and sophisticated rhetorical techniques of Ps.-Patrick's Latin. My translation is of Gwynn's critical edition, the text of which I reproduce below to facilitate ease of use. Readers should however still refer to the original edition for the *apparatus criticus*: to facilitate such reference, I have included indications of the line-numbers in Gwynn's edition in both text and translation below. I have also added paragraph breaks.

*De tribus habitaculis animae* is a sophisticated composition which deserves a great deal more scholarly attention than it has received hitherto. For present purposes, it is worth noting that the text refers to only two eschatological kingdoms, heaven and hell (the third 'dwelling-place' of the soul being the present world): thus, there is no reference to any interim or purgatorial state, and the focus is on collective, rather than individual, eschatology. Contained within the text is an excursus on the problem of divine foreknowledge and free will, which may provide clues as to the intellectual context within which it was composed, as may the appearance towards the end of imagery drawn from discourse on Trinitarian theology. A recurrent theme is that of intellect, and the beatific vision is repeatedly presented as an intellectual process, with emphasis placed on the 'assiduous reading ... of the book of life' in which the righteous will engage in heaven (§4). Conversely, sinfulness is depicted as a result of childish ignorance, foolishness, or even insanity. Although some of the imagery of heaven and hell, righteousness and sinfulness, is formulaic and familiar, there are some striking images, which seem to be original to Ps.-Patrick. For example, when contrasting the reality of the glory of heaven with the illusory nature of earthly glory, he writes: 'Who would choose the image of gold in water, neglecting the gold itself, and would not immediately be believed by all to be an idiot or a madman? Who would love the orb of the sun reflected in a mirror or formed in any other material, more than the sun itself, and would not be derided by all?' (§3). The idea underlying these rhetorical statements ultimately derives from Platonic thought, and the metaphors used by Ps.-Patrick are reminiscent of Boethius; but Ps.-Patrick seems to be expressing himself in an elegantly original manner. Augustine's *Soliloquies* is the likely source for the idea that 'false evil is not evil, as false silver is not silver' (*falsum enim malum non est malum ut falsum argentum non argentum est*; §7),<sup>11</sup> and the palpable Augustinian influence throughout the

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, *Soliloquies*, I.xv.29: *et omnis falsa arbor, non est arbor, et falsum lignum non est lignum, et falsum*

text provides some justification for the misattribution of authorship to Augustine.

*De tribus habitaculis animae* raises important questions about the attribution of authorship of medieval Latin texts,<sup>12</sup> and the identification of texts composed in Ireland or by Irish authors. As Esposito noted, there is nothing in the work that suggests an Irish origin,<sup>13</sup> but equally there is nothing in the work which disproves such an origin. The extant manuscripts are entirely of English and Continental provenance (not an uncommon state of affairs for medieval Latin texts of Irish origin), and yet a group of scribes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries clearly believed this to be an Irish work. Therefore, we might justify its inclusion in the present volume by arguing that, for some medieval audiences, this text was understood to be an Irish treatise on eschatological thought, despite the fact of its ultimate origins being somewhat obscure. Although Gwynn's identification of the author as Patrick, bishop of Dublin, may seem attractive, it is not conclusive; one must therefore await further study of the text, its sources and its theology.

## Text

Incipit liber sancti Patricii episcopi.

§I. Tria sunt sub omnipotentis dei manu habitacula: primum, imum, medium. Quorum summum regnum dei uel regnum celorum dicitur: imum uocatur infernus: medium mundus presens uel orbis terrarum appellatur. Quorum extrema omnino sibi inuicem sunt contraria et [5] nulla sibi societate coniuncta. *Que enim societas esse potest luci ad tenebras et Christo ad Belial?* Medium autem nonnullam habet similitudinem ad extrema. Unde lucem et tenebras habet, frigus et calorem, dolorem et sanitatem, letitiam et merorem, odium et amorem, bonos et malos, iustos et iniustos, dominos et seruos,

---

*argentum non est argentum, et omnino quidquid falsum est, non est* (PL 32.884); 'and every false tree is not a tree, and false wood is not wood, and false silver is not silver, and anything at all which is false, is not'.

12 On this problem see Richard Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Medieval Latin Texts – An Evidence-Based Approach* (Turnhout, 2003).

13 Esposito, 'Notes', p. 268. Charles Wright suggested a parallel between the Irish *In Tenga Bithnua* ('The Ever-new Tongue') and *De tribus habitaculis* in the depiction of the sight of God providing respite to the damned (*The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* [Cambridge, 1993], p. 143); however, because Wright accepts the attribution of authorship to Patrick of Dublin, he presupposes that *De tribus habitaculis* is drawing on *In Tenga Bithnua* rather than *vice versa*. One would not wish to draw conclusions about the two texts on the basis of a single brief parallel, so further investigation is required to establish the relationship, if any, between *In Tenga Bithnua* and *De tribus habitaculis*.

## Translation

Here begins the book of the holy bishop Patrick:

§1. There are three dwelling-places subject to the hand of almighty God: the highest, the lowest, the middle. Of these, the highest is called the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven; the lowest is called hell; the middle is called the present world, or the sphere of the earth. Of these, the extremes are utterly contrary to one another, [5] and have no fellowship between each other. 'For what fellowship' can there be 'between light and darkness', and 'Christ and Belial'?<sup>14</sup> However, the middle has some resemblance to the extremes. Thus it has light and darkness, cold and heat, pain and health, happiness and sorrow, hatred and love, good men and evil men, just men and unjust men, masters and servants,

---

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14–15. Translations of Biblical passages are from the Douay-Rheims version.

regnum et subiectionem, famem et [10] satietatem, mortem et uitam et innumera huiusmodi. Quorum omnium pars una imaginem habet regni dei, pars altera inferni. Commixtio nanque malorum simul et bonorum in hoc mundo est. In regno autem dei nulli mali sunt, sed omnes boni: at in inferno nulli boni sunt, sed omnes mali: et uterque locus ex medio suppletur. Hominum enim huius [15] mundi alii eleuantur ad celum, alii trahuntur ad infernum. Similes quippe similibus iunguntur: id est boni bonis et mali malis, iusti homines iustis angelis et transgressores homines transgressoribus angelis, serui dei deo, serui diaboli diabolo. *Benedicti* uocantur ad *regnum* sibi *paratum ab origine mundi*, *maledicti* expelluntur in *ignem eternum qui preparatus est* [20] *diabolo et angelis eius*. Bona autem regni celestis dicere uel cogitare uel intelligere ut sunt nullus potest carne uestitus: multo enim maiora et meliora sunt quam cogitantur uel intelliguntur. Unde scriptum est: *quod oculus non uidit nec auris audiuit nec in cor hominis ascendit que preparauit deus diligentibus se*. Regnum nanque dei omni fama maius [25] est, omni laude melius, omni scientia innumerabilis, omni gloria que putatur excellentius. Mala etiam inferni dicere uel cogitare ut sunt, nemo potest: peiora quippe sunt ualde quam cogitantur.

§2. Regnum itaque dei plenum est lucis ac pacis et caritatis et sapientie et glorie et honestatis et dulcedinis et dilectionis et melodie et letitie et beatitudinis perennis [30] et omnis boni ineffabilis, quod nec dici nec cogitari potest. At lacus inferni plenus est tenebrarum discordie odii stultitie miserie turpitudinis amaritudinis offensionis doloris fetoris adustionis sitis famis ignis inextinguibilis tristitie uindictae perennis et omnis ineffabilis mali, quod nec dici nec cogitari potest. Ciues celi sunt iusti homines et angeli, [35] quorum rex est deus omnipotens: at contra ciues inferni sunt impii homines et demones, quorum princeps est diabolus. Satiat iustos uisio sanctorum hominum et angelorum et super omnia ipsius dei. Cruciat impios et peccatores uisio hominum damnatorum et demonum et super omnia ipsius diaboli. Nichil in regno dei desideratur quod non inuenitur: [40] at in inferno nichil inuenitur quod desideratur, nichil sentitur neque uidetur. In regno dei nichil inuenitur nisi quod placet et delectat et satiat: at contra in lacu miserie perennis nichil uidetur nichilque sentitur nisi quod displicet, nisi quod offendit, nisi quod cruciat. Omne bonum in regno dei abundat et nullum malum: omne malum in carcere diaboli

kingship and subjugation, hunger and [10] satiety, death and life, and innumerable such things. Of all of these, one side bears the image of the kingdom of God, the other side that of hell. For there is a mixture of good things and bad things co-existing in this world. However, in the kingdom of God, there are no evil people, but everyone is good: whereas in hell, there are no good people, but everyone is evil: and both of these places are supplied by the middle one. For, indeed, some people of this [15] world are raised up to heaven, others are drawn down to hell. For like are joined to like: that is, the good to the good, the evil to the evil, just people to just angels, sinful people to sinful angels, the servants of God to God, the servants of the Devil to the Devil. 'The blessed' are called to 'the kingdom prepared' for them 'from the beginning of the world'. 'The accursed' are driven out 'into the everlasting fire which was prepared [20] for the Devil and his angels'.<sup>15</sup> No one clothed in flesh, however, can speak of, or conceive of, or understand the good things of the heavenly kingdom, as they are: those things are far greater and better than can be conceived or understood. Whence it is written: 'For the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him'.<sup>16</sup> For the kingdom of God is greater than all fame, [25] better than all praise, more extensive than all knowledge, more excellent than all the glory that can be imagined. Also, no one can speak or conceive of the evils of hell as they are: for they are far worse than can be conceived.

§2. The kingdom of God, then, is full of light and peace and charity and wisdom and glory and honour and sweetness and love and melody and joy and constant blessedness [30] and every ineffable good thing, that can neither be said nor conceived of. But the lake of hell is full of darkness, discord, hatred, folly, misery, shamefulness, bitterness, offence, grief, stench, burning, thirst, hunger, unquenchable fire, sadness, constant vengeance, and every ineffable, bad thing, that can neither be said nor conceived of. The citizens of heaven are the just men and angels, [35] whose king is almighty God: on the other hand, the citizens of hell are the impious men and demons, whose leader is the Devil. The sight of holy men and angels and, above all, of God himself, satisfies the just. The sight of the damned and the demons and, above all, the Devil himself, tortures the impious and the sinners. Nothing in the kingdom of God is desired which is not found: [40] but in hell, nothing is found which is desired, nothing is felt or seen. In the kingdom of God, nothing is found which does not please and delight and satisfy: on the other hand, in the lake of perpetual misery, nothing is seen or felt which does not displease, nor which does not offend, nor which does not torture. All good abounds in the kingdom of God, and nothing evil: all evil abounds in the prison of the Devil,

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 25:34, 41.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9.

[45] abundat et nullum bonum. Nullus indignus in regno dei suscipitur: nullus uero dignus, nullus iustus ad infernum trahitur. Principalia autem sunt duo tormenta in inferno: id est frigus intolerabile et calor ignis inextinguibilis. Unde in euangelio legitur: *Illic erit fletus et stridor dentium*. Fletus nanque et liquefactio oculorum ex calore nascitur: [50] stridor uero dentium de frigore nascitur. Hinc etiam beatus Iob: *De aquis, inquit, niuium transibunt ad nimium calorem*. De quibus scilicet duobus innumera pendent penarum genera: uidelicet sitis intolerabilis, pena famis, pena fetoris, pena horroris, pena timoris, pena angustie, pena tenebrarum, seueritas tortorum, presentia demonum, [55] ferocitas bestiarum, crudelitas ministrantium, dilaceratio immortalium uermium, uermis conscientie, ignite lacrimae, suspiria, miseria, dolor sine remedio, uincula sine solutione, mors eterna, pena sine fine, absentia Christi post uisionem eius: que sola omnia supradicta superat et (est) omnibus penis intolerabilior.

§3. Ve igitur his perenne qui subire [60] hec omnia mala et sine fine merentur pro delectabili unius hore somnio. Talis est etenim et tanta omnis huius mundi gloria ad eternam comparata gloriam. *Melius erat* eis, quod dictum est de infelice Iuda, *non nasci* quam malis suis meritis plagas inferni sustinere. Quid stultius quidue insanius est quam umbra et imagine et similitudine uere glorie et uere [65] delectationis, uere pulchritudinis, ueri decoris, ueri honoris more infantium decipi et superari, et ipsam ueram gloriam non querere, non desiderare? Quis imaginem auri in aqua ipso auro neglecto eligeret, et non statim a cunctis fatuus uel insanus esse crederetur? Quis orbem solis in speculo redditum uel in qualibet materia formatum plus diligeret [70] quam ipsum solem, et non ab omnibus derideretur? Sic ridendus, immo dolendus est quisquis huius mundi caducam gloriam, fragilem et inutilem carnis uoluntatem diligit querit contendit, eterna gloria contempta et neglectis regni celestis ineffabilibus gaudiis. Hoc commercium insipientium ualde est et miserorum et cor sanum non habentium, etiamsi [75] plage inferni non sequerentur: que nec dici possunt nec cogitari. Duplex uero plaga est abesse a regno dei et esse semper in inferno: abesse a regno Christi et cum diabolo damnari: presentiam amittere angelorum et terribilem demonum semper pati presentiam. Quantum cauere uitari metui debet, nullo modo dici potest. Quis cum sano sensu pro unius

[45] and nothing good. No one unworthy is received into the kingdom of God: conversely, no one worthy, no one just is dragged off to hell. Moreover, there are two principal torments in hell: that is, intolerable cold and the heat of unquenchable fire. Hence we read in the Gospel: 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth'.<sup>17</sup> For tears, and the melting of the eyes, are generated from the heat: [50] gnashing of teeth, however, is generated from the cold. Hence, too, the blessed Job says: 'From snowy waters they will pass to excessive heat'.<sup>18</sup> Assuredly, on these two do innumerable other kinds of punishments hang: namely, intolerable thirst; the punishment of hunger; the punishment of stench; the punishment of horror; the punishment of fear; the punishment of anguish; the punishment of darkness; the severity of torturers; the presence of demons; [55] the ferocity of beasts; the cruelty of those who minister; tearing apart by undying worms; the worm of conscience; burning tears; sighs; misery; agony without remedy; shackles without release; eternal death; punishment without end; the absence of Christ after the sight of him: the last of which punishments alone exceeds all the other aforementioned and is more intolerable.

§3. Woe, then, to those who deserve to undergo [60] all these punishments perpetually and without end, in return for a delightful dream of one hour. For such and so much is all the glory of this world, in comparison with eternal glory. 'It were better' for ~~them~~, what was said of unhappy Judas, that they 'not be born',<sup>19</sup> than that they should endure the punishments of hell as the deserts of their wickedness. What could be more stupid, or more insane, than to be deceived and overcome like children by the shadow and image and similitude of true glory and true [65] pleasure, true beauty, true decency, true honour, and not to seek after, or desire, the true glory itself? Who would choose the image of gold in water, neglecting the gold itself, and would not immediately be believed by all to be an idiot or a madman? Who would love the orb of the sun reflected in a mirror or formed in any other material, more [70] than the sun itself, and would not be derided by all? Thus, whoever loves, seeks, and contends for the transitory glory of this world, the fragile and unprofitable will of the flesh, despising eternal glory and neglecting the ineffable joys of the heavenly kingdom, is to be ridiculed, and indeed to be lamented. This would be a transaction of the very foolish, and wretched, and of those lacking a sound heart, even if [75] the torments of hell (which cannot be spoken or conceived of) did not follow after. Indeed, it is twofold torment to be absent from the kingdom of God and to be forever in hell: to be absent from the kingdom of Christ and to be damned with the Devil; to lose the presence of angels and to suffer forever the terrible presence of demons. How much it ought to be guarded against, avoided, feared, cannot be expressed in any way. Who in their right mind

17 Matthew 8:12, 13:42.

18 Job 24:19.

19 Matthew 26:24; Mark 14:21.

[80] diei deliciis centum annorum penam eligeret? Et miseri tamen et sine ulla sapientia uoluptatem carnis sequentes non uitant, non effugiunt intolerabiles penas non centum annorum, non milies mille, sed omnium sine fine seculorum pro quadraginta uel sexaginta annorum deliciis uel qualibet corruptibili delectatione. Quantum autem interest inter unum [85] diem et centum annos, non tantum utique sed plus interest inter quadraginta uel sexaginta uel centum annos et eternitatem siue in bono siue in malo futuram. Unus enim dies aliqua proportio est in centum annorum spatio, quamuis ualde modica: at uero centum annorum spatium nulla proportio est in illa eternitate. Si enim uerbi gratia centesima uel millesima [90] pars esset eternitatis predictum eius spatium, post centuplum eius spatium uel milliplus eternitas esse desineret: quod ratio non sinit eternitatis. Que si ullo modo tempore finiretur, eternitas omnino non esset.

§4. Fortiter ergo carnali resistendum est uoluptati, fortiter contra fallaces huius mundi blanditias pugnandum est contraque multimodas [95] Satane suggestiones uigilandum omni studio. Lata uia seculi uitanda est que ducit ad mortem: at uero omni cordis desiderio uia angusta que ducit ad uitam adeunda est et appetenda. Via hec angusta est, uia abstinentie et castitatis et humilitatis et omnis religionis: quam uiam ante nos Christus attriuit, qua uia ad suum regnum migrauit. Cuius [100] uestigia et nos sequamur donec post eum eadem uia ad urbem regiam perueniamus in qua ipse regnat: de qua urbe quicquid homo dixerit, quasi stilla de mari est uel quasi scintilla de foco. In qua uidelicet urbe *fulgebunt iusti sicut sol*, ut dominus ait: ubi summa pax erit, summa quies, nullus labor, nullus dolor, nulla paupertas nec senectus nec ulla [105] mors nec ulla nox, nullum cibi desiderium, nullum sitis incendium: sed cibus et potus erit omnium uisio Christi et sancte trinitatis et contemplatio puro cordis oculo ipsius diuinitatis, et assidua lectio ut ita dicam libri uite, id est eterne ueritatis et summe sapientie et uerbi dei, quod est Jhesu Christi uisio. Ubi quicquid nunc nos latet manifestius erit: [110] ubi ratio manifesta erit cur hic electus est et ille reprobatus, cur hic in regnum assumptus est et ille in seruitutem redactus, cur alius in utero moritur alius in infantia alius in iuuentute alius in senectute, cur alius pauper est alius diues, cur filius adultere baptizatur et aliquando filius legitime coniugis ante baptismum moritur, cur qui bene incipit uiuere

[80] would choose one hundred years of punishment for the sake of one day of pleasure? And yet, wretched and without any wisdom, they do not shun following the pleasures of the flesh, they do not escape the intolerable punishments – not of a hundred years, not of a thousand times a thousand, but of all time, without end – for the sake of forty or sixty years of pleasure, or of any such perishable delight. But however great the difference is between one [85] day and a hundred years, it is certainly nothing like the difference between forty, or sixty, or a hundred years, and an eternity to come, whether of good or evil. For there is some relation between the space of one day and that of a hundred years, although it is minimal: but there is no relation between the space of a hundred years and eternity. If, for instance, the aforementioned space of time were a hundredth or thousandth [90] part of eternity, after a hundredfold or a thousandfold of that time, eternity would cease to exist: which the definition of eternity does not permit. For if it could in any way end in time, it would not be eternity at all.

§4. Therefore, carnal pleasure should be resisted bravely: the deceitful flatteries of this world should be fought against bravely, and one should be vigilant against Satan's manifold [95] suggestions with all zeal. The broad way of this world, which leads to death, is to be avoided: but truly, the narrow way, which leads to life, is to be approached and sought with all the desire of the heart.<sup>20</sup> This is the narrow way: the way of abstinence, and chastity, and humility, and all piety: the way which Christ trod before us, by which way he departed to his kingdom. Let us too [100] follow his steps until after him, by this same way, we may reach the royal city in which he himself reigns: of which city, whatever man might say about it is, as it were, but a drop in the ocean, or a spark of a fire. In that city 'shall the just shine like the sun',<sup>21</sup> as the Lord said: where there will be absolute peace; absolute rest; no labour; no pain; no poverty nor old age, nor any [105] death, nor any night; no desire for food; no burning thirst: but the vision of Christ and the Holy Trinity will be the food and drink of all; and the contemplation of his divinity with the pure eye of the heart, and assiduous reading, so to speak, of the book of life, that is, of eternal truth and the highest wisdom and the word of God, which is the vision of Jesus Christ. Where whatever is now hidden from us will be clearer: [110] where the reason will be clear why this one was chosen and that one rejected; why this one was received into kingship and that one driven into servitude; why one dies in the womb, another in childhood, another in youth, another in old age; why one is poor and another wealthy; why the son of an adulterous woman is baptised, and sometimes the son of a legitimate wife dies before baptism; why one who starts life well

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Matthew 7:13–14.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew 13:43.

[115] aliquando male finitur et qui male incipit sepe bene finitur. Hec omnia et huiusmodi multa in libro uite plana et aperta erunt. In eadem urbe premium singulorum per caritatem erit omnium et omnium erit singulorum. Ibi omnium bona omnibus patebunt, ibi omnes inuicem suas cogitationes cognoscent: ibi nullus superbus superior erit, nullus inferior [120] inuidus. Quomodo enim qui omnes sicut se ipsum diligit alicui inuidere poterit cum nemo sibi ipsi inuidet? Ibi nullus esse melius uel superius concupiscet quam erit, quia aliter esse quam meretur non decorem prestabit sed deformitatem. Nemo autem se deformem esse, nemo igitur aliter esse desiderabit quam erit: quia ita esse ut erit pulchrum erit, non [125] solum sibi ipsi sed etiam uniuerso corpori ecclesie celestis. Quomodo enim quodlibet membrum in corpore si superius uel inferius ponatur quam natura constituit monstruosum efficit corpus et turpe, sic nimirum si aliquis in regno dei superius uel inferius ordinetur quam postulat ars et uoluntas omnipotentis artificis, turpitudinem efficiet non solum [130] sibimet sed omni congregationi: in qua qui erit minimus maiorem sine dubio habebit gloriam quam totum habens mundi regnum etiam si eternum esset.

§5. Vile enim ualde est elementis frui in comparatione fruendi et gaudendi ipso deo: et uisibilibus delectari et corporalibus nichil est comparandum delectationi et gaudio quod nascitur ex inuisibilibus et [135] incorporeis et ex societate angelorum et iustorum omnium et ex certa scientia et cognitione ipsius diuine nature et ex dei ipsius uisione facie ad faciem. Cuius pulchritudinem mirantur angeli: cuius imperio suscitantur mortui: cuius *sapientie non est numerus*: cuius regnum finem nescit: cuius gloria nequit narrari: cuius lux tam solem obscurat ut in [140] eius comparatione nullam habeat sol lucem: cuius dulcedo tam mel superat ut ei comparatum uelut absinthium sit amarissimum: cuius faciem si omnes carcere inferni inclusi uiderent, nullam penam nullum dolorem nullamque tristitiam sentirent: cuius presentia si in inferno cum suis habitatoribus appareret, continuo infernus in amenum conuerteretur [145] paradysum: cuius sine nutu nec folium de arbore cadit: cuius oculus flammiumi profundum penetrat inferni: cuius auris tacitam cordis uocem audit, id est cogitationem: cuius oculus non minus audit quam uidet, cuius auris non minus uidet quam audit, quia non corpus sunt sed summa sapientia et certa cognitio: cuius deliciae sine fastidio

[115] sometimes finishes badly, and one who starts out badly often finishes well. All these, and many other such things, will be plain and open in the book of life. In the same city, through charity, the reward of each will be that of all, and the reward of all will be that of each. There, the good things of all will be open to all; there, all will know one another's thoughts: there will be no haughty superior, no envious inferior there. [120] For how can one who will love everyone as himself be able to envy someone, when no one envies himself? There, no one will desire to be better or superior to what he will be, because to be otherwise than is merited will not provide beauty, but deformity. Indeed, no one will desire to be deformed, therefore no one will desire to be otherwise than what he will be: so to be as one will be, will be beautiful; not [125] only to oneself, but also to the entire body of the heavenly church. For just as any limb in the body, if it is placed higher or lower than nature determines, renders the body monstrous and vile; so indeed, if anyone in the kingdom of God were to be ranked higher or lower than the skill and will of the almighty Creator's desire, it will create an ugliness, not only [130] to himself, but to the whole congregation: in which, without doubt, whoever will be the least will possess greater glory than if he possessed the entire kingdom of the world, even if it were eternal.

§5. For it is absolutely worthless to derive pleasure from created things, when compared to taking pleasure in and enjoying God himself: and to be delighted by visible and corporeal things is nothing in comparison with the delight and pleasure which proceeds from invisible and [135] incorporeal things, and from the fellowship of the angels and all the just, and from the certain knowledge and recognition of divine nature itself, and from the vision of God himself, 'face to face'.<sup>22</sup> Whose beauty the angels admire; by whose command the dead are awakened; of whose 'wisdom there is no number';<sup>23</sup> whose kingdom knows no end;<sup>24</sup> whose glory cannot be related; whose light so obscures the sun that [140] in comparison with him the sun has no light; whose sweetness surpasses honey to such an extent that in comparison it is like the most bitter wormwood. Whose face, if all those enclosed in the prison of hell saw it they would feel no punishment or pain or sadness; whose presence, if he appeared in hell along with its inhabitants, would instantly transform hell into a pleasant [145] paradise; without whose command no leaf falls from a tree; whose eye penetrates the abyss of flame-vomiting hell; whose ear hears the unspoken voice of the heart, that is, thought; whose eye hears no less than sees, whose ear sees no less than hears, since they are not corporeal, but supreme wisdom and certain knowledge; whose delights satisfy without disgust;

22 1 Corinthians 13:12.

23 Psalm 146:5.

24 Cf. the Creed: *cuius regnum non erit finis*.

[150] satiant, que cum a beatis inueniuntur semper tamen desiderantur et esuriem et sitim sine pena efficiunt, id est ardenti semper desiderio delectant: cuius secreta mirabilia uidentibus ea semper noua et mira sunt, et non plus cum incipiunt uideri pariunt stuporem cernentibus quam post mille annos et milies mille, et cum angeli ab initio mundi [155] ea soliti sunt uidere, tamen non minus hodie admirantur ea quam in primo die, alioquin dudum coram angelis assiduo uidendi usu uilescerent.

§6. Cuius cognitioni preterita et futura non preterita et futura sed presentia sunt, unde nec diem iudicii uidebit et primum diem seculi non uidit, sed utrumque uidet: cuius prescientia neminem cogit ad [160] peccandum ut multi errantes dicunt. Si enim, inquit, presciuit deus Adam peccaturum esse, non peccare non potuit: ex quo errore nascitur deum causam esse peccati, quod nefas est dicere. Illi tamen suis uerbis alligantur. Si enim quod prescientia dei habet necesse est fieri, ideo uoluntate propria homo peccauit et non aliqua necessitate: quia in [165] prescientia dei fuit ut uoluntate et libero arbitrio et non necessitate cogente peccaret. Si ergo prescientia dei non potest uitari, non potuit homo aliter peccare nisi uoluntarie, nulla alia ui cogente: quia ita deus presciuit illum peccaturum: si ergo uoluntarie, non coactus est: si autem non coactus est ad peccandum, potuit sine dubio non peccare si uellet, [170] ideoque penam meruit quia non inuitus peccauit: alioquin a deo penam mortis non susciperet. Cuius locutio est occulta inspiratio qua mentibus suam uoluntatem et suam ueritatem inuisibiliter ostendit, quam uidendo angeli per omnia ei obediunt. Cuius laus est qua electos laudabit manifestatio qua suorum bona omnibus manifestabit electorum: assidua [175] autem laus qua electi eum laudabunt est admiratio eius perennis. Qui miro modo non tempore precessit mundum et tempus: nullius enim hore spatio fuit ante mundum et tamen semper erat sine initio: non enim erat tempus ante tempus, tempus autem cum mundo concreatum est. Si igitur tempus ab initio mundi cepit currere, ante mundum factum [180] non erat: ideoque nullo tempore, ut prediximus, precessit deus tempora et mundum sic coeuum, immo paulo eis priorem: eius enim motu ceperunt currere: quicquid enim mouetur suum motum precedit. Ineffabili enim eternitate precessit deus mundum, non tempore: cuius tempus ante mundum non erat. Cuius lux tenebras depellit ignorantie:

[150] which delights, when the blessed have found them, are always desired and bring about hunger and thirst for them, without torment; that is, they delight always in ardent desire. Whose wondrous secrets are always new and wonderful to those who see them, and they create no more wonder when they begin to be seen than for those who observe them for a thousand years, and a thousand thousand; and while the angels are accustomed to seeing these since the beginning of the world, [155] nevertheless they admire them no less today than on the first day – otherwise, from being constantly accustomed to see them, they would long ago have become base in the sight of the angels.

§6. To whose cognition past and future things are not past and future but are present, so that neither will he see the day of judgement, nor did he see the first day of the world, but he sees them both [now]: whose foreknowledge compels no one to [160] sin, as many who are mistaken say. For if, they say, God foreknew that Adam was about to sin, then Adam could not but sin: from this error it arises that God is the cause of sin, which is wicked to say. However, they are bound up with their own words. For, if it is inevitable that that which God foreknows be done, therefore man sinned through his own will and not somehow through destiny: because it was in [165] God's foreknowledge that he should sin by will and free choice, and not by the force of destiny. Consequently, if God's foreknowledge cannot be avoided, man could not do other than sin voluntarily, with no other force compelling him: in this way God foreknew that he would sin. Consequently, if it was voluntary, it was not compelled. If, moreover, he was not compelled to sin, he was able without doubt not to sin, if he wished; [170] and thus, he deserved punishment, because he did not sin unwillingly: otherwise he would not have received the punishment of death from God. Whose speech is a hidden inspiration, through which he invisibly reveals to their minds his will and his truth, which the angels see and obey him in all respects. Whose praise is the manifestation of his elect by which he will manifest the good things of his elect to all: moreover, the constant [175] praise by which the elect will praise him is the perpetual adoration of him. Who in a miraculous way has not preceded the world and time temporally: for he did not exist for the space of any time before the world, and yet he always existed without beginning. There was no time before time; indeed, time was created with the world. If, therefore, time began to pass from the beginning of the world, it was not made before the world: [180] and therefore, as we have said, God did not precede time and the world by any time, thus [the world] being coeval [with time], and by no means a little prior to it; for by his motion, they began to run: whatever, indeed, is set in motion, precedes its being moved. For, in ineffable eternity, and not in time, God preceded the world: whose time did not exist before the world. Whose light drives out the darkness of ignorance:

[185] cuius aliqua particula hec omnia que diximus uera et certa esse cognoscimus.

§7. Eadem luce melius esse uerum quam falsum uidemus, et tamen peius esse uerum malum uel uerum peccatum quam falsum malum uel falsum peccatum: non quia uerum est, sed quia malum uel peccatum est. Sed si eo malum uel peccatum est quod uerum malum uel peccatum [190] est (aliter enim non posset esse malum uel peccatum nisi uerum esset malum uel peccatum: falsum enim malum non est malum ut falsum argentum non argentum est), potest aliquis dicere a ueritate malum uel peccatum ortum esse uel factum, et quodam modo opus esse ueritatis malum, quod omnino falsum est. Omne enim uerum a ueritate est, et [195] omne uerum quantum uerum bonum est. A ueritate igitur est uerum esse ut sit malum uel peccatum, non ipsum malum uel peccatum: aliud nanque est ipsum malum, aliud uerum esse illud. Quamuis igitur ipsum malum non est bonum, bonum est tamen uerum esse ut sit illud: nisi enim bonum esset esse malum, nullo modo sineret deus illud fieri. [200] Multa quippe bona de malis omnipotens facit, ut de adulterio hominum bonos format et facit homines. Si autem quadam illius lucis particula quasi per angustas rimas infusa hec et alia omnia uera que nouimus uera esse cognoscimus, quali et quanta luce scientie et sapientie illic illustrabimur ubi ipsum solem ueritatis *facie ad faciem uidebimus*, id est certa [205] et uera scientia cognoscemus? Cuius presentia similes ei facit presentes: qui enim uere sapientie uere pulchritudini uere eternitati adhaerebit, sapiens utique et pulcher et eternus erit. Sic etiam absentia eius dissimiles ei omni modo facit. Cuius eternitas sine initio et sine fine est: si enim esset tempus quando non esset, quis eum faceret? Quia ipse est solus [210] deus, et ante eum deus alius non erat nec est nec erit. Num forte se ipsum creauit cum nichil se ipsum creat? Qua enim potentia qui omnino non esset se ipsum faceret? Restat igitur quia omnino non factus est deus. Cum ergo deus nullo modo factus est deus, sine initio ante omnia erat. Quicquid enim factum est initium habet: et quicquid initium [215] habet sine dubio factum est: non ab alio nisi a deo non facto sed omnia faciente. Cuius scientia sine ulla uarietate cogitationis et sine ullo cursu huc et illuc innumerabilem uarietatem omnium creaturarum angelorum hominum stellarum arenarum capillorum uerborum cogitationum momentorum omnium simul et semel comprehendit et intelligit. Fons [220] igitur et origo omnis scientie deus est: quem quanto plus quis bibat, tanto plus sitiet. Incomparabiliter ergo totius mundi regno, ut supra diximus, etsi eternum esset, precellit societati angelorum et sanctorum et presenti ipsius dei adesse uisioni.

[185] by some small part of which we recognise that all the things of which we have spoken are true and certain.

§7. By the same light, we see that the true is better than the false, and yet that true evil or true sin is worse than false evil or false sin: not because it is true, but because it is evil or a sin. But, if it is evil or a sin because the evil or sin is true [190] (otherwise it could not be evil or a sin, unless the evil or sin were true: for false evil is not evil, as false silver is not silver), then someone could say that evil or sin has arisen from, or has been created by, truth, and that in some way evil is the work of truth, which is entirely false. For all that is true comes from truth, and [195] all that is true, insofar as it is true, is good. Therefore, it is the case that a thing being true derives from truth, whether it be evil or a sin, not the evil itself or the sin: for the evil itself is one thing and truth is another. Therefore, although evil itself is not good, nevertheless it is good to be true though it be that [*sc.* evil]: for if it were not good to be evil, in no way would God permit it to happen. [200] There are many good things that the Almighty makes from evil, as from the adultery of men he fashions and makes good men. If, however, we recognise from some small part of that light, infused, as it were, through narrow cracks, that these, and all other true things which we know, are true, of what kind and how great will the light of knowledge and of wisdom be there, with which we shall be illuminated when ‘we shall see face to face’<sup>25</sup> the sun of truth itself, that is, [205] we shall understand through certain and true knowledge? Whose presence makes those who are present similar to him: for he who will cling to true wisdom, true beauty, true eternity, will thus be wise and beautiful and eternal. So too, his absence makes people unlike him in every way. Whose eternity is without beginning and without end: for if there had been a time when he was not, who would have created him? For he is the only [210] God, and there was no other God before him, nor is, nor will be. Surely he did not create himself by chance, since nothing creates itself. Indeed through what power would one who does not exist at all, make himself? Therefore, it remains that God was not made in any respect. Therefore, since God was in no way made God, he was without beginning, before all things. For whatever was made, has a beginning: and whatever has a beginning [215] without doubt was made: not by another unless by God, who was not made but makes all. Whose knowledge, without any diversity of thought, and without running here and there, comprehends and knows the innumerable variety of all creatures, of angels, of men, of stars, of sands, of hairs, of words, of thoughts, of all moments, simultaneously and at once. Therefore, God is the source [220] and beginning of all knowledge: of which, the more one drinks, the more one thirsts. Therefore, as we said above, to be in the fellowship of angels and saints and the present vision of God himself incomparably surpasses the kingship of the whole world, as we said above, even if it were eternal.

---

25 1 Corinthians 13:12.

§8. In cuius uisione trina scientia nascitur, id est homo qui cernit et deus qui cernitur et ceteri omnes: et [225] omnia uidebuntur et intelligentur. Sicut enim per speculum uitreum trina nobis uisio administratur, quia nos ipsos et ipsum speculum et quicquid presens adest uidemus: sic per speculum diuine claritatis et ipsum deum ut est uidebimus quantum possibile erit creature, et nos ipsos uera et certa scientia cognoscemus. Tunc abdita creaturarum et [230] ipsius inferni uidendo deum uidebimus. Tunc iustus manifestum erit quomodo deus est inuisibilis incommutabilis, sine initio et sine fine, ante omnia et post omnia: et quicquid inter nasci quod ad filium pertinet, et procedere quod ad spiritum sanctum, excepto quod unus ex uno natus sit, alter ex duobus processit: et quomodo pater non precessit filium [235] tempore sed origine, nec spiritum sanctum: et quomodo omnia dei unum sunt in deo, excepto quod ad relationem pertinet. Nam sapientia dei et ueritas et eternitas non diuersa sunt inter se, sed unum sunt sicut cetera omnia. Sapientia enim dei non magis sapientia quam ueritas est, et non magis ueritas ueritas est quam sapientia, quam eternitas, quam [240] cetera dei omnia: unum enim sunt in deo, et non solum hec inter se eadem sunt in deo, sed non aliud sunt quam ipse deus. Et quomodo mundus erat in deo antequam in se ipso esset, non mundus sed deus. Et quomodo ubique totus sine loco, magnus sine quantitate, bonus sine qualitate: et quomodo omnia penetrat munda et immunda sine sui [245] pollutione. Si enim lux ista uisibilis omnia loca illustrat et sterquilinia etiam penetrat sine sui fetore et sine sui pollutione, quanto magis deus qui est inuisibilis et incommutabilis lux omnia penetrat regit sustinet circumdat illustrat sine ulla mutatione uel pollutione: non solum celestia et terrestria, sed etiam infernalialia. Tunc erit electis dei trina uisio: id est [250] corporalis qua corpora cernentur, quorundam splendentia ut sol, quorundam ut luna, aliorum ut stella: et spiritalis qua similitudines corporum in spiritu non fallaci fantasia inspicient, qua uisione etiam hodie fruuntur spiritus iustorum post corporum claustra: et uisio intellectualis qua puro mentis oculo ipsum deum uidebunt et suas [255] animas et uirtutes intimas et spiritus angelicos. Tunc duplices deo acturi sunt gratias, pro sua uidelicet liberatione a perpetua damnatione et pro bonorum ineffabili retributione. Tunc communis omnium reus et hostis diabolus in conspectu omnium dei electorum damnabitur: cuius damnatio et intolerabilis pena delectabile spectaculum prestabit electis. Tunc [260] ardentissimo ardore liberatorem suum et omnium bonorum datorem amabunt, et sine fine et sine fastidio clamore cordis laudabunt deum omnipotentem benignum misericordem: cui est honor et gloria et nunc et per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

§8. In whose threefold vision knowledge is born, that is, man who discerns, and God who is discerned, and all the others: and [225] all things shall be seen and understood. For just as through a looking-glass a threefold vision is administered to us, because we see ourselves, and the mirror itself, and we see whatever is present: thus through the mirror of divine clarity we shall see God himself as he is, as much as it will be possible for a creature, and we shall recognise ourselves with true and certain knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Then by seeing God we shall see the secrets of creation, and [230] of hell itself. Then it will be manifest to the just how God is invisible and unchangeable, without beginning and without end, before everything and after everything: and whatever difference there is between being born, which pertains to the Son, and proceeding, which pertains to the Holy Spirit, except that the one is born of one, and the other proceeds from two: and how the Father preceded neither the Son [235] nor the Holy Spirit in time, but in origin: and how all things of God are one in God, except what pertains to their relationship. For the truth and eternity and wisdom of God are not divided between themselves, but are one, as are all the rest. For the wisdom of God is no more wisdom than it is truth, and his truth is no more truth than it is wisdom, than eternity, than [240] all the other things of God: for they are one in God, and not only are these the same among themselves in God, but they are nothing other than God himself. And in the way that the world existed in God before it existed in itself, it was not the world, but God. And in the way he is complete everywhere without place, great without quantity, good without quality: and in the way that he penetrates all places, clean and unclean, without [245] defiling himself. For if that visible light illuminates all places, and even penetrates shit-holes without making itself stink, without defiling itself, how much more does God, who is invisible and unchangeable light, penetrate, govern, sustain, surround and illuminate all things, without any alteration or defilement, not only celestial and earthly things, but also infernal things. Then will be the threefold vision of God for the elect: that is, [250] corporeal, through which bodies shall be discerned, those of some bright as the sun, of some as the moon, of others as a star; and spiritual, through which they will observe the likenesses of bodies in spirit, not in a deceitful apparition, which vision the spirits of the just enjoy even today after the imprisonment of bodies; and intellectual vision, by which they will see, with the pure eye of their mind, God himself and their own [255] souls and innermost virtues and angelic spirits. Then they will give double thanks to God, namely for their delivery from eternal damnation and for the ineffable recompense of good things. Then, in the sight of all God's elect, the common culprit and enemy of all, the Devil, shall be condemned: whose damnation and intolerable punishment will provide a delightful spectacle for the elect. Then, [260] with a most fiery passion, they will love their liberator and giver of all good things; and without end, without weariness, they will praise, with acclamation of the heart, almighty, beneficent, merciful God: to whom is honour and glory, now and forever and ever.

Amen.

---

26 Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12.

