119 Church (*Ecclesia*)

The church is read to be double. One is material, which consists in a heaping together of wood and stone. Concerning which is the Psal. [67:27]: “In the churches bless the Lord.” There is also another, the spiritual church, which consists in the congregation of the faithful. But in that it is double. For some part is yet here struggling on earth, because it still fights against vices, about which Matt. 18[:17]: “If he will not hear them: tell the church.” The other is the church triumphant in heaven which reigns in glory of which part is this which is yet struggling here, about both of which it is said in Psal. [25:12]: “In the churches I will bless you, O Lord,” that is, in those triumphing and in those struggling. Of the first churches justification is stated, of which the first is signification. The second, that is, dedication is the sign and signification of meaning. And because the outside is discussed in the material to signify, what ought to be done in the spiritual and thus concerning both can be explained by that of Eph. 5[:25-26]: “Christ loved the church … that he might sanctify it,” and because the church is said to be our mother. Therefore, we must obey it in its precepts just as in paying it its tithes about which see above, c. [99] Tithes. And so that also there would not make in the church the useless, dissolute, and jabbering impeding the divine service.

¶ For it is considered a monstrous thing if the infant in the womb would speak, so if one jabbers in the church, Tob. 3[:17]: “Never have I joined myself with them that play: neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness.” But for sorrow, now in these most recent times the Church can be figured through the statue of Nabuchodonosor, Dan. 2[:32-33]: “The head of this statue was of fine gold, but the breast and the arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass … the feet part of iron and part of clay.” Thus, the church in its first days was of gold through wisdom, silver through cleanliness, bronze through eloquence, which three are necessary to the preacher, namely, the lightning of wisdom, the cleanliness of life, and the sonority of eloquence. But the feet, that is, of our latest modern times some are clay through the lust of the flesh.

¶ One time Peter archbishop of Sens[[1]](#endnote-1) came to Clairvaux so that he might hear there some vision from a certain convert frequently carried off in an ecstasy. The convert narrated that he had seen the most beautiful lady, whom when she was admired, she asked, “For who am I?” And that one replied, “The Blessed Virgin Mary.” And she showing her back, her heart was covered with worms. “Now you can know,” she said, “that I am not Mary, but I am the church deformed in these last times, according to that of Isai. 1[:22]: ‘My silver is turned into dross.’” Formerly Moses covered his face because the children of Israel could not look upon him on account of the glory of his countenance. But today our superiors can cover their face because the subordinates are ashamed to imitate them. Wherefore Gregory in a *Homily*,[[2]](#endnote-2) in necessity is shown what each one has gained. There Peter comes with Judea, Paul with the gentiles, and Thomas with India. Therefore, when the shepherds come with so many flocks, what are we to say, who after business return empty to the Lord. We have the name of shepherd, but we have no sheep to show.

1. Peter of Corbeil (died June 3, 1222), born at Corbeil, was a preacher and canon of Nôtre Dame de Paris, a scholastic philosopher and master of theology at the University of Paris, ca 1189. He is remembered largely because his aristocratic student Lotario de' Conti became pope as Innocent III. In 1198 Innocent appointed him to the sinecures of prebendary and archdeacon of York. The following year Innocent raised his former master to the see of Cambrai, an immensely important diocese with a jurisdiction that covered Flanders. Peter became Archbishop of Sens in 1200. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\_of\_Corbeil [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *Moralia* 28.10.22 (PL 75:461): Sic cuncta moderatur, ut dum singula quaeque sunt omnium, interposita quadam charitatis necessitudine, fiant omnia singulorum, et unusquisque sic quod non accepit in altero possideat, ut ipse alteri possidendum quod accepit humiliter impendat. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)