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Kevin Mc Clooskey, C.S.

The Spiritual Life
A Treatise
on Ascetical and Mystical Theology

BY
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FOREWORD

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

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Nihil obstat :

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Censor deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR :

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Archbishop of Baltimore

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The many American priests who studied under Father Tanquerey at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, will welcome this English translation of his treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology. After the lapse of more than a quarter of a century they take pride in recalling that Father Tanquerey published the first volumes of his Dogmatic Theology while he was their teacher. Always perfectly clear, and eminently practical, he had in a marked degree the gift of arousing interest and obtaining the co-operation of his students. These qualities have made his text-books of Dogma and Moral popular in seminaries and among the clergy all over the world. In this field Father Tanquerey had many models; the general outline, the questions treated and the method of procedure had been determined long before. Among our many excellent text-books there can be now but accidental differences.

It is quite otherwise with Asceticism, the science of the spiritual life. There are indeed innumerable books, ancient and modern, on spirituality, but most of them were written less for instruction than for edification. Very few of them can be looked upon as text-books covering the whole field and in a methodical way. As a theological science, Asceticism is far behind either Dogma or Moral. Father Tanquerey then appears as one of the pioneers. In his treatise of 800 pages he has a complete and orderly summary of all the questions of the spiritual life. Nearly one fourth of the work is devoted to the fundamental doctrines of the elevation and the fall of man and his redemption through the grace merited by Christ. These first pages constitute a brief review of Dogma from a practical, devotional point of view, and lay a solid foundation for the study of Christian perfection.

Father Tanquerey's book can be used and is indeed being used as a text-book; but it can be made to serve as well as a devotional treatise for spiritual reading, since it avoids in great measure the stiffness and dryness of the text-book style. In this work as in his other writings Father Tan-

query is what he was in his class-room at St. Mary's Seminary: clear, lively, and practical, careful to avoid extreme views and to reduce controversies to their proper place.

A mere glance at the table of contents and the alphabetical index will convince priests that they can find in this book an outline for sermons on many important subjects as well as material for their own meditations or for conferences or even a complete retreat to Religious.

Although the treatise was composed chiefly for priests and seminarians, it has also obtained wide circulation in religious communities and among the faithful who are striving to live a devout life in the world and are looking for a guide to point the way to an enlightened and well-balanced piety.

✠ MICHAEL J. CURLEY
Archbishop of Baltimore

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This is not an exhaustive treatise on the spiritual life, but rather an outline which may serve as the basis for deeper study. However, in order to avoid the dryness of a mere outline it was deemed necessary to develop the most important points of the spiritual life, such as, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul, our incorporation into Christ, the rôle of the Blessed Virgin in our sanctification, the nature of Christian perfection and the duty of striving after it. For the same reason the essential characteristics of the Three Ways are stressed in the Second Part of this treatise.

It is the writer's conviction that Dogma is the foundation of Ascetical Theology and that an exposition of what God has done and still does for us is the most efficacious motive of true devotion. Hence, care has been taken to recall briefly the truths of faith on which the spiritual life rests. This treatise then is first of all doctrinal in character and aims at bringing out the fact that Christian perfection is the logical outcome of dogma, especially of the central dogma of the Incarnation. The work however is also practical, for a vivid realization of the truths of faith is the strongest incentive to earnest and steady efforts towards the correction of faults and the practice of virtues. Consequently in the first part of this treatise the practical conclusions that naturally flow from revealed truths and the general means of perfection are developed. The second part contains a more detailed exposition of the special means of advancing along the Three Ways towards the heights of perfection.

This book has been written chiefly for seminarians and priests. It is the writer's hope however that it may also prove useful to Religious and even to such of the laity as are seeking to live a thoroughly Christian life and thus fit themselves for the lay-apostolate.

The author has developed first and foremost the teachings commonly received in the Church and has given but little space to disputed questions. There are of course various Schools of spirituality, but the more discriminating writers in all of them are of one mind on all that is of real importance for the direction of souls. It is such teachings as these that the author has tried to expose in logical and psychological order.

If at times the writer shows a certain preference for the spirituality of the French School of the seventeenth cen-

ture, a spirituality based on the writings of St. Paul and St. John and in complete accord with the doctrines of St. Thomas, he professes nevertheless a sincere esteem for all the other Schools, borrows largely from them and strives to stress the points of agreement rather than the points of difference.

The author humbly dedicates this book to the Word Incarnate and to His Blessed Mother, Seat of Wisdom, happy indeed to contribute in some way to the glory of the Most Holy and Adorable Trinity.

*Ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus
per Jesum Christum*

AD. TANQUEREY

Issy, France, the Feast of the Annunciation, 1923.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

The authors consulted are listed in their *chronological* instead of alphabetical order. They are further arranged methodically and, beginning with the Middle Ages, grouped according to schools of mysticism. This was thought of greater service for the reader. Only the most important authors are mentioned. For a complete survey of the field see Rev. P. POURRAT : *Christian Spirituality*, E. tr. Mitchell and Jacques, 4 vols. New York, 1922-1930. Works of non-Catholics should only be read with required permission and due caution.

I. — THE PATRISTIC AGE

During the age of the Fathers the elements of a theory of spiritual life come progressively to light and mature into a valuable body of teaching with the work of *Cassian* in the West and that of *St. John Climacus* in the East.

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St. Cyprian, (200-258), *De habitu virginum, De dominica oratione, De opere et elemosynis, De bono patientis, De zelo et livore, De lapsis, PL.* v 3 ;

¹ Migne, edr., *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Græca*, 161 quarto volumes, Paris, 1857-1866. The *Series græca prior* contains the works of the Fathers and Ecclesiastical writers down to Photius (c. 867). The *Series posterior*, down to Cardinal Bessarion (d. 1472.)

² *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, the Edinburgh Edition text edited by Drs. Roberts and Donaldson, Chronologically arranged, with Notes and Historical Prefaces, by Rt. Rev. A. Cleveland Coxe, D. D., Supplemented with General Index and Bibliographical Synopsis, and a new volume containing manuscripts discovered since the completion of the Ante Nicene Library. Edited by A. Menzies, 10 vols., New York : Scribners, 1926.

³ Migne, edr., *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, 221 quarto vols., Paris, 1844-55, and 1865-66 for the last four volumes containing the index tables. The *Series prior* goes as far as St. Gregory the Great (d. 604). The *Series posterior*, as far as Pope Innocent III (d. 1216).

Hurter : *SS. Pat. Opusc. select.*, i; the best text is that of W. Hartel : *S. Thasci Caeleii Cypriani opera omnia*, 3 vols., Vienna, 1868-71. Eng. tr. J. H. Newman, Oxford, 1839 in *LF.*; E. Wallis in *ANF.*, v; T. N. Bindley : *St. Cyprian on the Lord's Prayer*, London : S. P. C. K.

2. — THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH CENTURY

A) In the West :

St. Ambrose, (333-397), *De officiis ministrorum*, *De virginibus*, *De viduis*, *De virginitate*. *PL.* xvi. 25-302, reprints the editions of J. du Frische and N. Le Nourry, first issued, Paris, 1686-90; J. G. Krabinger has edited separately the *De officiis ministrorum*, Tübingen, 1857. Eng. tr. Rev. H. De Romestin : *Some of the principal works of St. Ambrose*, in *NPNF*, 2d series vol. x, New York, 1896^a.

St. Augustine, (354-430), *Confessiones*, *Soliloquia*, *De doctrina christiana*, *De civitate Dei*, *Epistola cxxi*, etc. St. Augustine's works contain the elements of a complete theology of asceticism and mysticism. His teaching supplements and corrects that of Cassian. For an exposition of it see Pourrat, *op. cit.* I, c. viii. The Latin text of the works listed above is found in *PL.* xxxii, xxiv, xli, reprinting the edition of the Maurists Blampin and Constant. A better text is given by the *Corpus Script. Ecclies. Latin.*, Vienna : *Confessionum libri xiii* ed. P. Knöll, 1896; *Epistola xxxi-cxxiii*, ed. A. Goldbacher, 1898; *De civitate Dei*, ed. E. Hoffmann, 1900. Also, *The Confessions of St. Augustine* ed. J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, (Cambridge Patriotic Texts) 1908, 2d edit. 1927; *De civitate Dei*, ed. J. E. C. Wellton, London : Macmillan, 1924; *De doctrina christiana*, St. Louis : Concordia Publish. House; *Soliloquiorum libri ii*, ed. P. E. Tourscher, Phila. : Reilly, 1922. *Confessiones* ed. and tr. by W. Watts (Loeb Clas. Lib.) New York : Putnam, 1912; Eng. tr. in *NPNF*, 1st Series : *Confessions* by J. G. Pilkington and *Letters* by J. G. Cunningham, vol. i, *City of God and Christian Doctrine* by M. Dods and J. F. Shaw, vol. ii, *Soliloquies* by C. C. Starbuck, vol. vii, 219-593. Also, *Confessiones* tr. W. Hutchings, London : Longmans, 1883; C. Biggs (*Library of Devotion*) London : Methuen; J. Healy (*Temple Classics*) New York : Dutton, 1903; E. B. Pusey (in *LF.* i, and *Everyman's Lib.*) New York : Dutton, 1907; Tobie Matthew revised by Dom R. Huddleston, New York : Benziger; *City of God*, tr. Healy (*Temple Classics*) 1903; F. R. M. Hitchcock (*Early Church Classics*) London : S. P. C. K.; M. Dods, New York, Benziger; *Letters*, tr. W. J. Sparrow Simpson (*Handbooks of Christian Lit.*) London : Macmillan, 1920; sel. and tr. Mary H. Allies, London : Burns and Oates, 1890. cf. also, Mary H. Allies : *Leaves from St. Augustine*, London : Washbourne, 1900; E. L. Cutts : *St. Augustine (Fathers for English Readers)* London : S. P. C. K. cf. Hewitt : *Studies in St. Augustine*, New York, 1868; E. C. Butler : *Western Mysticism*, New York; Dutton, 1923; A. Hatzfeld : *St. Augustine* (tr.) 3d ed. London : Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1924.

Cassian, (360-435), *Collationes xxxiii* recens. M. Petschenig, Vienna, 1886; *De institutis cenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remediis libri xvi.* — *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium libri vii* recens. M. Petschenig, Vienna, 1888. The older and less critical edition by Gazet is found in *PL.* xlix-l. The works of John Cassian tr. by E. S. Gibson in *NPNF*, 2d Series vol. xi. Cassian's conferences sum up the spiritual doctrine of the first four centuries as practiced in monasteries, and they became a storehouse from which all subsequent writers on spiritual life have drawn.

^a Pusey, Keble, Newman et al., *A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*, 47 vols., Oxford : Parker, 1838-1880.

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 28 vols. New York : Scribners 1886-1898. First Series edited by the late Philip Schaff. Second Series edited by the late Philip Schaff, and Henry Wave. *Dominican Contemplatives*, by a Dominican of Carisbrooke, with Preface by V. Rev. BEDE JARRETT, O. P., London : Burns Oates and Washbourne.

St. Leo I, the Great, Pope 440-461, *Sermoines*. The discourses of St. Leo for the principal feasts of the year are full of piety. The Church has borrowed from them for her liturgy; 96 of the *sermoines* current under his name are genuine. Quesnel's edition, Paris, 1675, improved by P. and G. Ballerini, Venice, 1753-57, is reprinted in *PL.* liv. 158-458. Hurter : *SS. Pat. opusc. sel.* xiv, xxv, xxvi. Eng. tr. by Charles L. Feltoe in *NPNF*, 2d Ser. xii. cf. C. Gore ; *Leo the Great (Fathers for English Readers)* London : S. P. C. K.

St. Benedict of Nursia, (480-543). His rule, brought from 66 to 73 chapters in its 2d edition, has become that of almost all the monks in the West from the 8th to the 13th century. It can be easily adapted to the conditions of any country and time and this is the key to its great success. The text of the *Regula* is available in *L.* lxvi, 215-932; better editions are those of E. Wölfflin : *Benedicti regula monachiorum*, Leipzig, 1895; Dom O. Hunter Blair (with tr. and notes) London : Sands, 1906, 2d ed. St. Louis : Herder, 1907; Abbot C. Butler, London : Herder, 1912. Eng. tr. London, 1886 and 1896 in Thatcher and McNeal, *Source Book*, pp. 432-485; in Henderson, *Documents*, pp. 274-313; by D. O. H. Blair, cf. above; Rt. Rev. Paul Delatte, *The Rule of St. Benedict : A Commentary*, London : Burns Oates and Washbourne. New York : Benziger, 1921; *The Rule of St. Benedict* translated with an introduction by Cardinal Gasquet, Oxford, 1925. Rt. Rev. Idephonous Herwegen, O. S. B. : *St. Benedict, A character study*, translated by Dom Peter Nugent, O. S. B. London : Sands and Co., 1924.

St. Gregory I, the Great, Pope, (540-604), *Expositio in Librum Job*, size *Morialium libri xxxv*, *Liber regule pastoralis curae*, *Dialogorum libri IV*. The edition of the Maurist Sainte-Marthe, Paris 1705, reprinted with additions by J. B. Gallicoli, Venice, 1768-76 is reprinted in *PL.* lxxx-xxxvii. The Dialogues have been often separately edited, particularly the 2nd Book on the Life and Miracles of St. Benedict. The Pastoral Rule also, cf. ed. Westhoff, Münster, 1860; Hurter S. J. in *SS. Pat. opusc. sel.* xx; A. M. Michelletti, Tournai, 1904; B. Sauter, Freiburg, 1904; Rt. Rev. J. C. Hedley : *Lex Levitarum*, New York : Benziger, 1905; St. Louis : Herder, with the *Regula pastoralis* of St. Gregory the Great. Bishop Hedley's work is a set of lectures adapting the work of St. Gregory to the needs of our time. Eng. tr. *The Morals of the Books of Job* in three volumes in *LF.* Oxford, 1844-50. King Alfred's West Saxon version of Gregory's Pastoral Care ed. H. Sweet, London, 1871; *The Book of Pastoral Care* tr. J. Barby in *NPNF*, 2d Series xii. An old English tr. of the *Dialogues* by J. W., Paris, 1668, was reprinted by H. Coleridge, S. J., London, 1874, and more recently reedited by E. G. Gardner with annotations by G. F. Hill, London : Macmillan 1911. cf. Rt. Rev. Abbot Snow, O. S. B., *St. Gregory the Great : His Work and His Spirit*, 2d edition, London : Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1926.

B) In the East :

St. Athanasius, (297-373), *Life of St. Anthony* gives an account of the spiritual doctrine of the great organizer of Egyptian monasticism. *PG.* xxvii. 838-976 reprints the edition of N. A. Giuntiani, Padua, 1777, based on that of the Maurists J. Lepin and B. de Montfaucon, Paris, 1627. Handy edition of the Greek by Maunoury, Paris, 1887 and 1890. The credibility of the work attacked by Weingarten : *Der Ursprung des Monachthums im nachconstantinischen Zeitalter*, Gotha, 1877 was defended by A. Eichhorn : *Athanasii de vita ascetica testimonia collecta* (inaug.-diss.) Halle, 1886; Mayer in *Der Katholik*, 1886, I. 495-516, 619-636, II. 72-86; Dom C. Butler : *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, I, Text and Studies, Cambridge, 1898. Eng. tr. T. W. Allies in *Monastic Life* (vol. vii of *Formation of Christendom*) London, 1869-96; H. Ellershaw in *NPNF*, 2d Series iv, 188-221; J. B. McLaughlin : *St. Anthony the Hermit*, London : Burns, Oates and Washbourne, New York, Benziger, 1924.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (315-386), in his *Catechetical Lectures* portrays the life of a true Christian. *PG.* xxxii reprints the ed. of the Maurist A. A. Touleté, Paris, 1720. A better edition is that of W. K. Reisch and J. Rupp 2 vols., Munich, 1848 and 1860. Eng. tr. J. H. Newman in *LF.* ii, Oxford,

1838; H. de Romestin : *Mysteries and other Sacramental Lectures* (the five catecheses on the Sacraments); E. H. Gifford in *NPNF*. 2d Series vii. 1-157.

St. Basil the Great, (330-379), describes in his book *On the Holy Ghost* the workings of the Holy Spirit in a regenerated soul, and in his two works on the rules of monastic life, the fundamentals of asceticism. The 55 longer rules, *Rules at length* (Horoi kata platon) set forth the principles. The 313 shorter rules, *Rules in abridgement* (Horoi kat' epitomen), their application to the daily life of a monk. These rules were universally received in the East and have survived to this day in the Greek Church. The best ed. of the works of St. Basil is still that of the Maurist J. Garnier, Paris, 1721 and 1730 in three vols., the last of them issued after the editor's death by his colleague P. Maran. An excellent critical ed. of the treatise *On the Holy Ghost* is that of C. F. H. Johnston, Oxford, 1892. A Latin version of the work is found in Hurter : *SS. Pat. opusc. sel.* xxxi. Eng. tr. G. Lewis : *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, London, 1888; B. Jackson : *The Book on the Holy Spirit in NPNF*. 2d Series viii. 1-50; E. F. Morison : *St. Basil and his Rule*, Oxford, 1913; W. K. L. Clarke : *St. Basil's Ascetical Works*, London : Macmillan, 1925.

St. John Chrysostom, (344-407), has left in his *Homilies* a vast storehouse of materials on both ethics and ascetics, and in his tract *On the Priesthood*, a stirring praise of the sacerdotal dignity. *PG*. xlviii-lxiv reproduces B. de Montfaucon's edition, Paris, 1718-38, except for the *Homilies on St. Matthew* for which the text edited by Field, Cambridge, 1839, is given. J. A. Nairn, (Cambridge Patristic Texts) 1906, has brought out a separate edition of the tract *On the Priesthood*. Eng. tr. of the *Homilies in LF*. iv-vii, ix, xi-xii, xiv-xv, xxvii-xxviii, Oxford, 1842-52; in *NPNF*, 1st Series ix-xiv, New York, 1903-1906. *On the Priesthood* tr. B. H. Cowpers, Lond. 1866; W. R. W. Stephens in *NPNF*. New-York, 1903; P. Boyle, C. M., New York : Benziger, 1903; T. A. Moxon (*Early Church Classics*) London : S. P. C. K. 1907. Selections by Mary A. Allies : *Leaves from Chrysostom*, London : Burns and Oates, 1889. cf. A. Puech, *St. John Chrysostom* (tr.) 2d. edn. London : Washburne, 1917.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, († 444), *Book of Treasures on the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity*, his chief work on the subject, studies the relations of the soul to the Trinity. *PG*. lxxxv reprints Canon J. Aubert's ed. Paris, 1638, with Latin version by B. Vulcain, Basle, 1676. Cardinal Pitra has edited fragments of the work in *Analecta Sacra and Classica*, Paris, 1888. While St. Cyril's works have received a great deal of attention on the part of modern scholars (cf. Bardenhever-Shahan : *Patrology*, p. 367-368) this book has not been the object of recent study, nor has it been translated into English.

Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, (c. 500), *On the Divine Names, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, Mystical Theology*, has influenced considerably later writers on the subject. The best complete edition of his works is that of B. Cordier, S. J., Antwerp, 1634, often reprinted. It is reproduced from the Venice edition of 1755-56 in *PG*. iii-iv. It is based on only some of the numerous Greek mss. and makes no account of the Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic versions. A great deal remains to do for the criticism of the text. A separate edition of the Greek of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* was issued by J. Parker, London, 1897, is trustworthy. cf. A. B. Sharpe : *Mysticism, its true Nature and Values*, London : Sands and Co., St. Louis : Herder, 1910.

St. John Climacus, († 649), *Ladder to Paradise*. *PG*. lxxxviii. 632-1164, reprints the *editio princeps* of the famous work by M. Rader, Paris, 1633. A more recent edition of the Greek is that of Sophronios Eremites, Constantinople, 1883. John the Scholastic or the Sinaite owes his surname Climacus to his book (Klimax) which contains a summary of ascetical and mystical theology. This work gained as much popularity in the East as Cassian's *Institutes* in the West, and remained for centuries a classic on the subject of spiritual life.

St. Maximus Confessor, (580-662), also known as the Theologian, or Maximus of Constantinople, developed the teaching of Pseudo-Dionysius on

contemplation, but threw greater light on the part played in spiritual life by the sacred humanity of the Savior, our leader and model.

His *Scholion on Dionysius Areopagite*. His *Treatise on Asceticism*, *PG*. xc. 912-956, in the form of a dialogue between an abbot and a young monk, and his *Mystagoga*, *PG*. xci. 657-717, a series of considerations on the symbolism of the Church and her liturgy, are reprinted from the edition of Fr. Combefis, O. P., Paris, 1675. The doctrine of St. Maximus is discussed by H. Weser : *S. Maximi Confessoris præcepta de Incarnatione Dei et deificatione hominis*, Berlin, 1869; A. Preuss : *Ad Maximi Conf. de Deo hominisque deificatione annotationes*, Schneeburg, 1894; E. Michaud : *St. Maxime le Confesseur et l'apocatastase*, in *Revue internationale de Théologie*, 1902, pp. 257-272.

The writers of the 8th and 9th centuries need not be mentioned. They contribute no element of importance to our subject.

II — THE MIDDLE AGES.

We shall indicate only the most noted writers of the principal schools of mysticism.

I. THE BENEDICTINE SCHOOL : —

In the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy : St. Anselm, (b. 1033. Archbishop of Canterbury 1089, d. 1109), one of the most attractive writers of the Middle Ages. His *Meditations* and *Prayers* are full of unctious and doctrine, *Libri Meditationum et Oratorum*, *PL*. clviii. 709-820, a reprint of the Venice, 1744, edition of St. Anselm's works by the Maurist G. Gerberon, first issued Paris, 1675, the best as yet. *Orationes*, *PL*. clviii. 855-1016. *Cur Deus homo*, an important treatise replete with solid considerations on Christ's atonement, *PL*. clviii. 359-432, or the separate edition by A. F. Fritzsche, Zürich : Schultes, 1894. Eng. tr. *Meditations and Prayers* with pref. by Card. Manning, London, 1872. *Cur Deus Homo?* tr. by Prout, London, 1887; S. N. Deane, with introd. and bibliography, Chicago, 1903.

In the Abbey of Cîteaux : St. Bernard (1090-1153), whose lofty piety and practical knowledge have deeply influenced the Middle Ages : *Sermones de tempore, de sanctis, de diversis, in Cantica Cantorum; De consideratione; Tr. de gradibus et humilitatis et superbie; Lib. de diligendo Deo*, ed. J. Mabillon, Paris, 1667, 1690, 1719. The 3d ed. is reprinted in *PL*. clxxxii-iv, and for the *Sermones de tempore, de sanctis, de diversis* in P. L. Janauček : *Xenia Bernardina*, vol. i-ii, with variants from additional mss., and a bibliography of St. Bernard to the year 1890, vol. iii-iv, Vienna : Hölder, 1892. Selections from the *Sermones in Cantica Cantorum* ed. with notes by B. Blasland; New York : Gorham. *De diligendo Deo* ed. with tr. and notes by E. G. Gardner; New York : Dutton, 1916; the same ed. W. W. Williams and *De gradibus et humilitatis et superbie* ed. B. E. W. Mills (Cambridge Patristic Texts) 1926. Eng. tr. S. J. Eales : *Life and Works of St. Bernard*, from the ed. of Mabillon, 4 vols. London, 1888-97 (contains letters and sermons only); *Sermones on the Canticle of Canticles*, tr. by a priest of Mount Mellery, Dublin : Browne and Nolan, 1921, St. Louis : Herder; *De diligendo Deo* tr. M. C. and M. Patmore, London : Paul, 1881; W. H. Van Allen, New York : Young, 1910. *Vitis Mystica : the True Vine* (tr.), London : Washbourne, 1884. *The Virgin Mother* (tr.), London, 1886. Cf. E. C. Butler : *Western Mysticism*, New York : Dutton, 1923; A. J. Luddy : *Life and Teaching of St. Bernard*, Dublin : M. H. Gill and Son, 1927. *Sermones on Advent and Christmas*, New York : Benziger; *Some Letters* selected by F. A. Gasquet, St. Louis : Herder, 1904.

In the Monastery of Rupertsberg, near Bingen : St. Hildegarde, Abbess, (1098-1179), whose voluminous works are in need of further criticism. Her

revelations entitled *Scævias* (scire vias Domini vel lucis) first ed. by Lefèvre d'Étaples, Paris, 1513 are reprinted in *PL.* cxvii. 383-738 from the edition of Cologne, 1628. Her *Liber divinorum operum simpliciter hominis* first edited by J. Mansi (in Baluze : Miscell. ii. 337) Lucca, 1761 reprinted in *PL.* cxviii. 739-1058, is a contemplation of all nature in the light of faith. Her *Liber vite meritorum*, first edited by Card. Pitra in *Analecta Sacra*, viii, Monte Cassino, 1882, is a picturesque description of Christian life. cf. F. M. Steele : *Life and Visions of St. Hildegard*, St. Louis, 1915.

In the Monastery of Hefta (or Helsepede) near Eisleben, Saxony : **St. Gertrude the Great**, (1250-1302-1311), a simple nun, not to be confused with the Abbess Gertrude von Hackeborn, *The Herald of Divine Love*. The German original of the work is lost. There remains its Latin version first printed by the Carthusian Johann von Lansperg, Cologne, 1536. The best edition of the *Legatus divina pietatis* is that of the Benedictines of Solesmes in *Revelationes Gertrudiana et Mechtildiana*, Paris, 1875-77. Eng. tr. *Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude*, London : Burns and Oates, 1892, New York : Benziger; The characteristic of St. Gertrude's mysticism is devotion to the Sacred Heart, cf. Dom Gilbert Dolan : *St. Gertrude*, London : Sands and Co., St. Louis : Herder, 1913; *Love of the Sacred Heart illustrated by St. Gertrude*, New York : Benziger, 1921; *Exercises of St. Gertrude*, same publisher; L. J. M. Cros, S. J. : *The Heart of St. Gertrude*, same publisher.

St. Mechtilde (Matilda von Heckeborn-Wippa), a sister of the Abbess Gertrude von Hackeborn, and the teacher of St. Gertrude the Great, († 1298), *Book of Spiritual Grace*, shows the same concept of spiritual life and the same devotion to the Sacred Heart as her disciple, who took down, unknown to her at first, the revelations consigned in this book. The original German, *Das Buch geistlicher Gnade*, was first printed at Leipzig, 1503, and a Latin version of it at Würzburg, 1510 with the title *Speculum spiritualis gratia*. A critical edition of this version is found in the *Revelationes Gertrudiana et Mechtildiana*, already mentioned. cf. *Life of St. Mechtilde*, St. Louis : Herder, 1900.

St. Mechtilde (Matilda von Magdeburg) at first a Beguine in her native town, later a nun at Hefta, where she died in 1280, wrote down her revelations in Low German. They were translated into High German, then into Latin as *Sororis Mechtildis lux divinitatis fluens in corda veritatis*, and are found in the *Revelationes Gertrudiana et Mechtildiana*. The *Divine Light flowing into hearts without guile* is marked by the same characteristics as the revelations with a foreword by the Lord Bishop of Salford, London : Burns and Oates, New York : Benziger, 1912; A. Kemp-Welch : *Six Medieval Women*, London : Macmillan, 1913.

In the Monastery of Vadstena, Sweden, the mother house of the Order of Saint Saviour or Brigittines founded by her, **St. Bridget**, (1302-1373), whose *Revelations* describe with great realism the life and particularly the passion of Christ. These revelations translated freely from the Swedish into Latin were first printed at Lübeck, 1492, from the official mss. preserved at Vadstena. The Roman edition of 1628 is considered the best. Heuser has published an abridged edition, *Revelationes selectae*, Cologne, 1851. cf. F. G. Partridge : *Life of St. Bridget of Sweden*, London : Burns and Oates, 1888; F. M. Steele : *St. Bridget of Sweden*, New York : Benziger, 1910.

In the Monastery of Cassel, Palatinat, Germany : **John of Cassel**, 1410, *De adhaerendo Deo, De lumine increato*. cf. Dom J. Huyben in *Vie Spirituelle*, Nov. 1922, p. 22 ss. Jan. 1923, p. 80 ss.

2. THE SCHOOL OF ST. VICTOR. This school of mysticism which developed among the Augustinian Canons of the Abbey of St. Victor near Paris made most correct use of Platonism. Its main representatives are :

Hugh of St. Victor, (1097-1141), the most influential theologian of the 12th century, who describes the progressive steps of the soul in the way to contemplation in his chief work *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, on the mysteries of the Christian faith. Among his other spiritual treatises must be mentioned :

De vanitate mundi, Soliloquium de arrha anime, De laude caritatis, De amore sponsi ad sponsam, De meditando, etc. The Rouen, 1648, edition of his works is considerably better than the *editio princeps*, Paris, 1518, but is hardly satisfactory. cf. Haureau : *Hugues de St. Victor : nouvel examen de l'édition de ses œuvres*, Paris, 1859. The *Praise of Love* has been tr. by J. Mc Sorley, New York : Paulist Press; the *Explanation of the Rule of St. Augustine*, by A. Smith, St. Louis : Herder, 1911.

Richard of St. Victor, († 1173), *Benjamin minor, seu de animi preparatione ad contemplationem, Benjamin major, seu de gratia contemplationis, Expositio in Cantica Canticozum*, *PL.* cxvii, are print of the best edition of his works by J. Bertelin, Rouen, 1650. cf. Von Hügel : *The Mystical element in Religion*, London, 1909.

Adam of St. Victor, the most important liturgical poet of the Middle Ages, († 1177), *Sequentia, PL.* cxvi. 1421-1534, a reprint of L. Gauthier's ed., Paris, 1858. Eng. tr. D. S. Wraugham : *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor*, 3 vols., London, 1881. Julian : *Dict. of Hymnology*, New York, 1892.

3.—THE DOMINICAN SCHOOL, unites liturgical prayer and contemplation with the ministry of preaching, according to the maxim of its founder, "Contemplari et contemplata alius tradere".

St. Dominic, (1170-1221), the founder of the Dominican Order patterned his *Constitutions* after those of the Premonstratensian Canons. *Life of St. Dominic* by T. Alemany, New York : O'Shea, n. d.; A. T. Drane, New York : Longmans, 1892; B. Jarret London : Burns and Oates, New York : Benziger, 1924. J. Guiraud (Eng. tr.) London-New York, 1901 and 1925; Jordan of Saxony (his first biographer, new translation) Columbus, O., Aquinas College, 1926.

Albertus Magnus (Blessed Albert the Great, 1206-1280), for a time bishop of Ratisbon, no less zealous for piety than for scientific and theological studies, has left many writings touching upon spiritual life, *Commentarii in Dionysium Areopagitanum, In quatuor libros sententiarum, Summa theologica, De sacrificio missae*. His works were edited by P. Jammy, O. P., Lyons 1051, and A. Bouquet, Paris, 1890-99. Cf. P. de Loë, O. P., *De vita et scriptis B. Alberti Magni in Analacta Bollandiana* xix (1900) 257-316 xxi (1902) 301-371; J. Sighart (Eng. tr. by T. A. Dixon) : *Albert the Great, his life and scholastic labors*, London, 1876; Dougherty : *Albertus Magnus in Cath. World* xxxvii (1883) p. 197 ff; Hewit : *Albertus Magnus vindicated in Cath. World* xlii (1871) p. 712 ff. *The Paradise of the Soul : a Treatise on Virtues Suitable for Mental Prayer*, by Blessed Albert the Great, edited by Raymond Devas, O. P., London : Burns Oates and Washbourne.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, (1225-1274), has treated excellently all the important questions of asceticism and mysticism in various parts of his works, but more especially in his *Summa theologica, Expositio operum epistoliarum D. Pauli, In Cantico Canticozum, In Evangelia, De perfectione vite spiritualis opusc.* etc. and *Officium de Corpore Christi*, which he prepared in 1254 for Pope Urban IV. Among the many editions of his works the Leonine edition, begun in Rome under the patronage of Pope Leo XIII in 1882 and

¹ See *Vie spirituelle* for Aug. 1921; the whole number is devoted to the ascetical and mystical teaching of the Dominican order. P. MANDONNET : *St. Dominique, l'idee, l'homme et l'œuvre*, 1921. Also, *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Predicatorum*, Rome, 3 volumes in-folio, a review published by wish of the Master General of the Order.

² The little treatises, *On union with God* (De adhaerendo Deo), and *The Paradise of the Soul* (Paradisus anime), published under his name, (St. Louis : Herder), are not his, but works of the 14th or 15th centuries.

continued under the Master General of the Dominicans is no doubt the best, although somewhat unwieldy on account of its size. The texts relating to ascetical and mystical theology have been excerpted from St. Thomas' works and arranged in a logical order by Th. de Valgornera : *Mystica theologia* D. Thomas, Barcelona, 1665, Turin, 1889 and 1911. For an account of St. Thomas see D. J. Kennedy in *Cath. Enycl.* xiv (select bibliography pp. 675-676); R. B. Vaughan, O. S. B., *Life and Labors of St. Thomas of Aquin*, London, 1872; Cavanaugh : *Life of St. Thomas Aquinas*, London, 1890; Conway : *St. Thomas Aquinas*, London-New York, 1911; A. Whitacre : *St. Thomas Aquinas*, St. Louis, 1925. Eng. tr. *The Summa theologia* by the Dominicans of the English Province in 21 vols. and Index, London-New York, 1911-25. Under the title "Aquinas Ethics" Jos. Kickaby, S. J., transl. the 2nd part of it in 3 vols. London-New York, 1892. A *Compendium de Summa theologia* was published in English by B. Bonjoannes, revised by W. Lescher, New York : Benziger, 1908. Of the minor works of the great Doctor the following are translated : *Apology for Religious Orders*, New York : Benziger, 1902; *On the Lord's Prayer*, *On the Commandments* (both by H. A. Rawes) New York : Benziger; *Religious State*, *Episcopate and Priestly Office* (by J. Proctor) St. Louis : Herder, 1902; *On Prayer and Contemplative Life* (by H. Pope) New York : Benziger, 1914. Selections translated and adapted : *Devout Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, drawn chiefly from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas by B. A. H. Wilberforce, St. Louis : Herder, 1902; *The Bread of Life*, or *St. Thomas Aquinas on the adorable Sacrament of the Altar arranged as meditations* by H. A. Rawes, New York : Benziger; *Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, gathered from St. Thomas Aquinas* by R. Fredt, transl. from the Ital. by F. J. Sullivan, St. Louis : Herder, 1904; *New Things and Old in Thomas Aquinas* transl. with introd. by H. C. Nell, New York : Dutton, 1909.

St. Vincent Ferrer, (1346-1419), *De vita spirituali*, a true masterpiece, a great favorite with St. Vincent de Paul. This little treatise was first printed at Magdeburg in 1493; it is found in the edition of the complete works of our Saint, Valencia, 1591, and in appendix to his *Sermons*, Augsburg, 1729. Separate editions, Mechlin, 1888; Paris, 1899 with French tr. by Rousset, O. P.; A. Pradel : *St. Vincent Ferrer, his Life, Spiritual Teaching, and Practical Devotion* (tr. from the French) London, 1875; Mary H. Allies, *Three Catholic Reformers of the 15th Century*, London, 1879; S. M. Hogan, *St. Vincent Ferrer*, London-New York : Longmans, 1911.

St. Catherine of Siena, (1347-1380), *The Dialogue*, exalts particularly the goodness of God who has created us, sanctifies us, and shows us his mercy even in the punishments He sends. Best edition of Complete Works G. Gigli, Siena, 1707-26, of the *Letters* N. Tomasso, Florence, 1880. Eng. tr. *The Dialogue* by A. Thorold, London : Paul, 1898 and 1907; the *Letters* with a brief introduction to each in V. D. Scudder, *St. Catherine of Siena as seen in her Letters*, London : Dent, New York : Dutton, 1905. *Life* by Bl. Raymond of Capua, her confessor, tr. from the French, St. Louis : Herder, New York : Kenedy; A. T. Drane, London-New York : Longmans, 1880, 4th ed. 1914; A. T. Pierson, New York : Funk and Wagnalls, 1898; M. Roberts, New York : Putnam; E. L. Aymé, New York : Benziger; F. A. Forbes, St. Louis : Herder 1914; C. M. Anthony ed. by B. Jarrett, O. P., St. Louis : Herder; Edmund G. Gardner, London : Dent, 1907, New York : Dutton, 1908 (the most elaborate and critical Bibliography).

4.—THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL, faithful to the spirit of its founder, is marked by a preference for affective spirituality, love of the Cross, and absolute poverty. For a more detailed bibliography of the Franciscan School see V. Mills, O. F. M., *Bibliography of Franciscan Ascetical Writers in Franciscan Educational Conference*, Washington, 1926, pp. 248-332. St. Francis of Assisi, (1181-1226), *Opuscula*, ed. crit., Quaracchi (near Florence) 1904. Eng. tr. P. Robinson, O. F. M., *The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* newly translated, Philadelphia : Dolphin Press, 1906, St. Louis : Herder. Oldest and weightiest sources for the Life of St. Francis : the two

Vita of Thomas of Celano (written 1228-9 and 1246-7) ed. Rosendale Lond. : Dent, New-York : Dutton, 1904, E. d'Alençon, Rome, 1906, tr. A. C. Ferrer Howell, London : Methuen, New-York : Dutton, 1908; *The Speculum perfectionis of Leo of Assisi* (written 1227), ed. Sabatier; Paris, 1898, tr. S. Evans, London, 1890, Countess de la Warr, ib. 1902, R. Steele (in *Temple Classics*) ib. 1903, New-York : Dutton; the *Chronicon* of Jordan of Giano (written about 1265) ed. Böhmer, Paris, 1908; the *Legenda trium sociorum* (Leo, Rufinus, and Angelus, written not later than 1270) ed. Faloci, Foligno, 1898, tr. Salter, London, 1902; the *Sacrum commercium* (anonymous of the year 1227) ed. E. d'Alençon, Rome, 1900, tr. M. Carmichael, Lond. 1901; the *Legende dua* by St. Bonaventure (written after 1260) ed. Quaracchi, 1898 tr. Salter (*Temple Classics*) London : Dent, New-York : Dutton, 1904. The autobiography of Salimbene (1221-1388) throws much light on St. Francis' times and indirectly on his life and the first developments of his work. It was translated under the title, *From Francis to Dante*, London : Nutt, 1906, 2d ed. 1907. Modern lives by Catholic writers : L. Le Monnier (tr. from the French) London : Paul; New-York : Benziger, 1894; J. Jørgensen (tr. from the Danish) London and New-York : Longmans, 1912; Fr. Cuthbert, O. S. F. C., New edition, London and New-York : Longmans 1921; Gilbert K. Chesterton, New-York : Dutton, 1924. Cf. also J. Heikless : *Francis and Dominic and the Mendicant Order*, New-York : Scribners, 1901; Fr. Cuthbert : *St. Francis and Poverty*, New-York : Benziger, 1910; id. *The Romanticism of St. Francis*, London-New-York : Longmans, 1915; 2d edition 1924; D. H. S. Nicholson : *The Mysticism of St. Francis*, Boston : Small Maynard and Co. 1923. A. Linne-weber, O. F. M., *Asceticism and Mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi* (Franciscan Educational Conference, Washington, 1926, pp. 37-96); H. Felder : *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi* (tr.), New-York : Benziger, 1926. For a short bibliography of St. Francis cf. P. Robinson : *A Short Introduction to Franciscan Literature*, New-York, 1907 and id. Art. *Francis of Assisi* in *Cath. Enycl.* The spirit of St. Francis is well illustrated by the exquisite compilation known as the *Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*, 1st. original ed. Sabatier; Paris, 1902, Italian version considered the best by Cesare, Verona, 1822, often reprinted and translated into other languages; there are several Eng. tr. of the same v. g., T. A. Arnold, New-York : Stokes, 1926, T. Okey, New-York : Dutton, 1919, the first English translation (by Lady Georgina Fullerton, published 1864) rev. with introduction by D. Devas, New-York : Benziger, 1927 etc.

St. Bonaventure, (1221-1274), has devoted a comparatively small part of his writings to mystical or ascetical theology. The many editions of his complete works are superseded by the critical edition of the Friars Minor, Quaracchi, 1881-1902. His ascetical treatises are gathered in vol. viii. Among them must be mentioned *Scolioquium*, *Lignum vite*, *Vitis mystica*, a work on the Passion, *De perfectione vite*, a treatise on religious perfection, but especially *De triplici via*, the shortest and most complete summary of his mysticism, and doubtless the first systematic exposition of the famous distinction between the three ways of the spiritual life: the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way. This excellent work is also known as *Stimulus amoris*, or *Incendium amoris*. His *Breviloquium*, one of the best expositions of dogmatics, and his *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, a tract on theodicy, contain also suggestive references to mystical theology. They are found, the former in vol. v, and the latter in vol. vii of the Quaracchi edition. *The Soul's Progress to God* is available in English in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* xxxi (1887). Other works in Eng. trns. *Stimulus amoris* tr. B. Lewis, edited by Phillipson, New-York : Benziger, 1927; *De perfectione vite*, tr. L. Costelloe ed. by Fr. Willfrid, St. Louis : Herder, 1923; *Franciscan view of the Spiritual and Religious Life*, being three treatises of Bl. Bonaventure tr. by P. D. Devas, New-York : Benziger, 1920. On the *Life and Writings of St. Bonaventure* see Ignatius Jeller in vol. x of the Quaracchi edition. Also, L. C. Skey, *Life of St. Bonaventure*, London, 1889, New-York : Benziger; L. Costelloe, *St. Bonaventure*, London-New-York : Longmans, 1911, and St. Louis : Herder; D. Dobbins, O. M. Cap. : *Franciscan Mysticism*;

A Critical Examination of the Mystical Theology of the Seraphic Doctor, New-York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1927.

The *Meditationes vite Christi*, for a long time attributed to St. Bonaventure, is a mystical biography of Christ, introducing many pious reflections in its narrative drawn from the Gospels and also from personal revelations. Its author was certainly a Franciscan of the 13th century and probably an Italian. It was done into English by N. Love in the 15th century. This translation has been edited by L. F. Powell, *Mirror of the blessed life of Jesus Christ*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908; *Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, by St. Bonaventure, New-York: Benziger.

Bl. Angela of Foligno, (1248-1309), the Umbrian penitent and mystical writer sets forth specially God's transcendence and Christ's sufferings in the *Book of Visions and Instructions*, which she dictated to her Franciscan confessor Fr. Arnold. The *editio princeps* of this work, known as *The Theology of the Cross*, Paris, 1598, remains the chief source for her life and teaching. It was reprinted at Cologne, 1601, *B. Angela de Fulgineo Visionum et instructionum liber*, and was reedited by Bollandus in *Acta S.S.* I, Jan. 186-234. The work is available in English as *Book of Visions and Instructions* tr. Cruikshank, Derby, 1872 and New-York: Benziger, 1903, or *Book of Divine Consolation* tr. Steegmann, London, Duffield, 1909, and Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922.

St. Catherine of Bologna, (1413-1463), Abbess of the Poor Clares of Bologna, an experienced master of the spiritual combat, has left in her *Treatise on the Seven Spiritual Weapons*, written in Italian in 1438, and translated into Latin by her first biographer Dionysius Paleotti, profound considerations on the way of overcoming temptations. Her *Life* written by Paleotti appeared in 1502 and a fuller *Life* by Christopher Mansueti was published in 1595. A Latin translation of both is included in the *Acta S.S.* March II, 35-89. Leo: *Lives of the Saints and Blessed of the Three Orders of St. Francis*, Taunton, 1885, I, 394-437.

5—THE GERMAN SCHOOL OF MYSTICS is indebted for its theology to the theories of pseudo-Dionysius and to Neoplatonism. Cf. J. B. Dalgairns: *The German Mystics of the Fourteenth Century*, London, 1856.

John Eckhart, O. P., († 1327), generally known as Meister Eckhart, may be considered as its founder. His last years were clouded by the accusation of heresy brought against him by the Archbishop of Cologne. Two years after his death 28 propositions drawn from his writings were condemned by Pope John XXII, March 27, 1329 (cf. Denziger's *Enchir.*, nos. 501-529). This has interfered with the preservation of his works, and renders it difficult now to form a correct estimate of his teaching. His *Sermons* in German were edited by Kachelon at Leipzig in 1498, and at Basel in 1521 and 1522 by A. Petri. A more complete edition is that of Franz Pfeiffer in *Deutsche Mystiker der 14 Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1857, but it is far from exhaustive. Additional material has been brought to light by Franz Jostes (*Collectanea Fröbnergensis*, ix, Freiburg, 1895), Steyers (*Z. f. d. A.* xv, 73-89q, 1568sq, 1725sq.), Berlinger (*Alemannia*, iii, 158sq.), and Bech (*Germania*, viii, 223sq, x, 391sq.). His Latin works bore the title *Opus tripartitum*. Portions of them have been recovered at Erfurt and edited by H. Denifle, *Meister Eckharts lateinische Schriften in J. F. L. u. K. G. d. M.*, ii (1886) 417-615 and Supplement 616-640. Cf. R. A. Vaughan: *Hours with the Mystics*, 8th ed., London, n. d. Eckhart's best known disciples were John Tauler and Bl. Henry Suso.

John Tauler, O. P., († 1361), one of the greatest preachers and mystics of the Middle Ages, often called *Doctor subtilis* or *Doctor illuminatus* has left *Sermons* which rank among the finest monuments in the German language. Of the three early editions, Leipzig, 1498, Bazel, 1521, Cologne, 1543, the 2d and the 3d contain much that is spurious. The 3rd edition was translated or rather paraphrased into Latin by L. Surius, Cologne, 1548, whose work was translated into various modern languages, including a German retranslation, Cologne, 1660. The best edition of the original German is that of F. Vetter,

Berlin, 1910, largely based upon the Engelbert manuscript, which represents substantially the collection as revised by Tauler himself. There are available in English: A. W. Hutton: *The Inner Way, 36 Sermons for Festivals by John Tauler*, London, 1911; *History and Life of John Tauler, with 25 Sermons* tr. by S. Winkworth, New-York, 1907; *Confidences and Sermons of John Tauler*, first complete trn. by V. Rev. W. Elliott, Washington, 1911. Tauler's *Opera Omnia* edited by L. Surius, Cologne, 1603, contain additional works which are doubtfully genuine, or certainly spurious. The *Medulla animae* and the *Institutiones divinae* were compiled in part from his genuine writings. Though not his work, they fairly represent his doctrine. The *Exeritia super vita et passione Christi*, in English, *Meditations on the Life and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, tr. from the French by A. P. G. Cruikshank, with preface by B. Wilberforce, new edition, New-York: Benziger, 1925, though current under his name are almost certainly not his work.

Blessed Henry Suso (Sus, Suse, or Seuse), also called *Amandus*, a name adopted in his writings, († 1366). His works were edited by F. Fabri, Ausburg, 1482, and A. Sorge, in 1512; L. Surius edited them in a Latin translation at Cologne in 1555. Modern editions of the original German are those of H. Denifle, Munich, 1880 and H. E. Bihlmeyer, Stuttgart, 1907. His chief work is *Das Bäcklein der ewigen Weisheit*, composed probably in 1328, and translated into Latin, with some additions, by Suso himself under the title *Horologium Sapientiae*. It is accessible in English in the translation made by C. H. McKenna, O. P., *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, New-York: Benziger, 1889. Denifle calls this Book the most beautiful fruit of German mysticism, and places it next to the *Homilies* of St. Bernard and the *Following of Christ*. It was one of the favorite books of meditation in the Middle Ages. Cf. also *The Life of Bl. Henry Suso written by himself*, tr. from the German by T. F. Know, London, 1865.

Blessed John Ruysbroeck (Jan van Ruusbroec), one of the greatest mystics, surnamed *Doctor Extaticus*, (1293-1381). Despite the precision with which he was able to express the profoundest thoughts, his language is frequently obscure, through digressions, repetitions, and subtle divisions. His works were translated into Latin by his disciples, and published by the Carthusian L. Surius at Cologne in 1552. The best Latin edition is that of Cologne 1609. The best edition of the original Flemish is that of J. B. David: *Werken van Jan Ruusbroec*, 6 vols., Ghent: Annoot and Braekman, 1858-69. He was a prolific writer. Twelve of his treatises have come down to us. The most important are: *The Mirror of Eternal Salvation* or *The Blessed Sacrament*, *The Book of the Enclosures*, *The Seven degrees of the Ladder of Spiritual Love*, *The Kingdom of the Lovers of God*, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*. Are available in English: *Reflections from the Mirror of a Mystic: being gleanings from the works of Ruysbroeck*, tr. E. Bailie, London, 1905, New-York: Benziger, 1906; *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, *The Sparking Stone*, *The Book of Supreme Truth*, tr. from the Flemish by Dom A. C. Wynschenck, ed. with an introduction and notes by Evelyn Underhill, New-York: Dutton, 1910; *Love's Gradatory tr.* with preface by Mother St. Jerome, New-York: Benziger, 1915; *The Kingdom of the Lovers of God*, now tr. for the first time from the Lat. of L. Surius, with an introd. by T. A. Hyde, New-York: Dutton, 1919. Ruysbroeck's life written by Henry Pomerius is edited in *Anat. Boll.* iv (1885) pp. 263 sqq. Cf. also V. Scully: *Short Account of the Life and Writings of the Blessed John Ruys-*

¹ Though belonging to the Low Countries, Ruysbroeck must be added to the list of German mystics. His writings show markedly the influence of Meister Eckhart. He was strongly encouraged in his work by Tauler and Suso, who were his friends, and his writings have contributed not a little to further the teaching of the German School.

² His doctrine is explained by G. J. Waffelaert, S. T. D., Bishop of Bruges, in *The Union of the Loving Soul with God, or Guide to Perfection*, according to the teaching of Blessed Ruysbroeck, Tr. from the Flemish by R. Hornaert, Paris, Little, Bruges, 1916.

broeck, London, 1910; id. *Medieval Mystie*, New-York: Benziger, 1911; E. Underhill: *Ruysbroeck*, London-New-York: Macmillan, 1915; Wautier d'Aygalliers: *Ruysbroeck the Admirable*, authorized trn. New-York: Dutton, 1925.

6. — THE FLEMISH SCHOOL is closely connected with the German School, but leaves aside pure speculation to concentrate on practical mysticism. Mysticism in the Low Countries is chiefly represented by the Brethren of the Common Life and the Canons Regular of Windesheim. Among them we may mention:

Gerard Groot (Geert de Groot), (1340-1384), called Gerardus Magnus, the founder of the Brethren of the Common Life. His activity was predominantly pastoral. The complete list of his writings, some still unpublished, is given by Bonet-Maury: *Gerard de Groot*, Paris, 1878, p. 91 sqq., and A. Anger in *Mémoires... publiés par l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, xli (Brussels, 1892) pp. 266 sqq. His life written by Thomas à Kempis, in *Founders of the New Devotion*, tr. J. C. Arthur, London and St. Louis, Herder, 1905.

Florentius Radewyns (Florens Radewijns, (1350-1400), the head of the community of the Brethren of the Common Life after the death of Groot, left but few writings, which were collected by his disciples, Gerard de Zutphen and Thomas à Kempis. His principal work is *Tractatus devotus de extriptione vitiorum et de acquisitione verarum virtutum*, ed. H. Nolle, Freiburg, 1862. His life by A. Kempis in *Founders of the new devotion*, London and St. Louis: Herder, 1905.

Gerard of Zutphen (G. Zerbolt van Zutphen), (1367-1398), also a member of the community of the Brethren of the Common Life, left among other writings, some of disputed authorship, two works which established his fame, *De reformatione anime* and *De spiritualibus ascensionibus*. His earliest life is by T. à Kempis: *Founders of the new devotion*, as above. A translation of the *De Ascensionibus* under the title, *Spiritual Ascent*, was issued by Benziger, New-York, 1908.

Gerlach Petersen (or **Peters**), (1378-1411), a scholar of Radewyns and a canon regular at Windesheim, presents great similarity to the doctrine of the *Imitation of Christ* in his various writings, the principal of which is the *Ignitum cum Deo soliloquium*, first edited Cologne 1616, and by Strange ib. 1849. Eng. trn. *The Fiery Soliloquy with God*, New-York: Benziger. The text of his *Breviloquium de accident. exterior.* has been edited by W. Moll in *Kerchistorisch Archief*, ii (Amsterdam, 1859) 179 sqq. An account of his activity is found in J. Busch: *Chronicon Wendeshemensis*, ed. Grube, Halle, 1886, pp. 157 sqq. See also R. A. Vaughan: *Hours with the Mystics*, i, 356 sqq., London, 1879. *The Fiery Soliloquy with God*, by Rev. Master Gerlach Petersen of Deventer, London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

Thomas (Hemerken) à Kempis, (1379-1471) owes the surname à Kempis to his birthplace, Kempen, in the Rhine Province. After studying under the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer, he became an Augustinian at Mount St. Agnes, Zwolle, near Amsterdam. His writings are all of a devotional character, and include tracts, meditations, sermons, letters, the *Life of St. Lydwine*, and biographies of Groot, Radewyns and nine other Brethren of the Common Life. The first edition of his works, Utrecht, 1475, included 15 different titles, but not the *Imitation of Christ*. The last and best edition of the *Opera omnia* is by M. J. Pohl, in 7 volumes, with an 8th volume containing a dissertation on the *Life and Writings* of the author, Freiburg: Herder, 1903-1922. Are accessible in English: *Alphabet of a scholar in the School of Christ; Garden of Roses and Valley of Lilies*, Baltimore: Murphy; *Golden Words*, New-York: Benziger; *The Little Follower of Jesus*, N.-Y.: Kennedy; *Lesser Imitation*, New-York: Benziger; *Meditations on the Incarnation of Christ*, tr. V. Scully, St. Louis: Herder, 1907; *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, tr. Wright and Kettlewell, New-York: Dutton; *Meditations on the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord*, New-York: Benziger; *Prayers and Meditations on the Life of Christ*, tr. W. Duthoit, St. Louis: Herder, 1904; *Sermons to the Novices Regular*, tr. V. Scully, St. Louis: Herder, 1907; *True*

Wisdom, tr. F. Byrne, New-York: Benziger; *Acceptable Time, Daily Readings for Lent, Babe of Bethlehem, Daily Readings for Advent, Thoughts on Holy Week*, New-York: Paulist Press; *St. Lydwine of Schiedam*, New-York: Benziger, 1912; *Founders of the New Devotion: Lives of G. Groot, F. Radewyns, and their Followers*, tr. J. P. Arthur, St. Louis: Herder, 1905; *Chronicle of the Canons Regular, of Mt. St. Agnes*, tr. J. P. Arthur, St. Louis: Herder, 1906. On the author see: S. Kettlewell: *Thomas à Kempis and the Brethren of the Common Life*, London, 1882, 2 vols., abridged edition 1885; Dom V. Scully: *Life of Thomas à Kempis*, London and New-York: Benziger, 1901; J. E. De Montmorency: *Thomas à Kempis*, London New-York: Putnam, 1906.

The Imitation of Christ, first issued anonymously about 1418, is ascribed to Thomas à Kempis by a great number of critics, although it would appear that this authorship is not fully settled. For a sketch of the history of the fascinating controversy on the question see L. A. Wheatley: *Story of the Imitation of Christ*, London, 1891, and Pourrat, *op. cit.*, li, 262sqq. and Kettlewell: *The Authorship of the Imitation of Christ*, London: Rivington, 1877.

John Mauburne (or **Mombaer**), Abbot of the Augustinian monastery of Livry, treats of the principal questions of ascetical theology, and in particular of the various methods of meditation, in his *Rosetum spirituale*, Spiritual Rosebush, first printed at Basel in 1491. Cf. L. E. Du Pin, *Bibliothèque des Auteurs ecclésiastiques au 15^e siècle*, Paris, 1698, p. 581.

7. — THE CARTHUSIAN SCHOOL counts four main writers:

Ludolf of Saxony, or the Carthusian, († Apr. 13, 1378), is commended to posterity by his two principal works, while many of his other writings whether tracts or sermons are either lost or doubtful. His *Commentary on the Psalms*, first edited in 1491 and more recently by the Carthusians of Montreuil in 1891, develops particularly the spiritual sense. His *Life of Christ*, repeatedly edited since it was first printed at Strasbourg and Cologne in 1474, and translated into various languages, is less a history than a series of meditations on the Gospel narrative, together with instructions on dogmatic or ascetical subjects related to it. It has been sometimes called *Summa Evangelica* and has been very popular in the past. Ludolph the Saxon: *Hours of the Passion* (tr.), London: Burns and Oates, 1887. On Ludolf cf. Doreau: *Ephemerides of the Carthusian Order*, iv, 384-393, Montreuil, 1900.

Dionysius (van Leeuwen) the Carthusian, the Ecstatic Doctor, (1402-1471), one of the most learned theologians of his time, is chiefly esteemed as an ascetical writer. His works include 187 titles in the catalogue issued by his first biographer, the Carthusian D. von Lohrer: *D. Dionysii Carthusiani, doctoris ecstatici, vita simul et operum ejus fiduciosus catalogus*, Cologne, 1532. The same is responsible for the first edition of Dionysius' works, Cologne, 1530 and Paris, 1531. A more complete edition to be in 45 volumes, when finished, has been undertaken by the Carthusians of Montreuil in 1896, and is being continued at Tournai. Among Dionysius' ascetical works may be mentioned: *De arcta via salutis et de contentu mundi*, *De gravitate et enormitate peccati*, *De conversione peccatoris*, *De remediis tentationum*, *De fomie lucis et semitis vitie*, the most complete and solid treatise of spiritual life, often reprinted separately, and translated into various languages. This treatise deals also at the same time with the mystical conceptions of the author. The same must be said of the *De discretione spirituum*, a much neglected work, which was only printed in 1620 at Aschaffenbourg. The principal treatises of Dionysius on mystical theology have been separately edited under the title, *Opuscula aliquot que ad theotiam mysticam egregie institunt*, Cologne, 1534, reprinted at Montreuil in 1894. The most remarkable of these treatises is the *De contemplatione*, in which the author seems to have been the first to make a formal distinction between *active* or *ordinary* and *passive* or *extraordinary* contemplation. His *Commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita* has two separate editions at Cologne in 1536. They appeared also in one volume with his simplification of Boethius and his explanation of the *Ladder* of St. John Climacus, Cologne,

1540. His tract *De quatuor hominis novissimis* with its appendix *De particali iudicio* has been recited more than 40 times, and particularly commended by the *Directorium* on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, approved by the general assembly of the Jesuits in 1549. The chief source for the biography of Dionysius is his *Life* by Dietrich von Lohrer, reprinted with annotations by the Bollandists in *Act.* SS., March, ii. 245-255.

John Lausperg (Johann Gerecht von Landsberg), a Carthusian famous for his devotion to the Sacred Heart, († 1539). His teaching paved the way for St. Margaret Mary and her mission. To him is due the first Latin edition of the *Revelations* of St. Gertrude, Cologne, 1536. A new revised edition of his works in Latin has been issued in 5 quarto volumes by the Carthusians of Notre Dame des Prés, Tournai, 1890. His chief work, *Alloquium Jesu Christi ad animam fideliem*, Louvain, 1572, was translated into English by Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, who died in the Tower under Elizabeth. This translation reached its 4th edition, London, 1867. Cf. Dom Boutrouin: *Lausperge le Chariteux et la dévotion au Sacré-Cœur*, Grenoble, 1878.

Laurentius Surinus, (1522-1578), the hagiographer of the Carthusian school, translated into Latin many of the works of the German mystics. He is known chiefly by his *Vite Sanctorum*, 6 vols., Cologne, 1570-75, continued after his death by a Cologne Carthusian, and republished under the title *De probatis Sanctorum historis*, Cologne, 1618. It was reprinted in 12 volumes at Turin in 1875. Surinus followed in the footsteps of his older contemporary A. Lippomani, Bishop of Verona (1560), but greatly improved upon him. Although his historical sense is not unimpeachable, the Bollandists have recognized Surinus as the best predecessor of their work.

8. — INDEPENDENT FROM THE PRECEDING SCHOOLS are :

Peter d'Ailly, (1350-1420), Chancellor of the University of Paris and later Archbishop of Cambrai and Cardinal. His numerous works are as yet partly unpublished. His two tracts *De falsis prophetis* have been edited by Elies Du Pin in the 1st volume of Gerson's *Opera omnia* (pp. 499-603) Antwerp, 1706. His mystical writings, *Tractatus and Sermones*, printed at Strassburg in 1499, at Mainz in 1574, and at Douai in 1634, are of great merit despite some blemishes coming from his leanings to Nominalism. His *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles* gives further proof that he deserves an honorable mention in the history of mysticism. Cf. Hurter: *Nomenclator lit.*, iv. 601sqq.; Innsbruck, 1899; L. Salembier: *Petrus de Alliaco*, Lille, 1886 (Bibliography).

John Gerson, (1363-1429), whose patronymic was Le Charlier, has adopted the name of his birthplace as his surname. A disciple of Peter d'Ailly at the College of Navarre, he became his successor in the chancellorship of the University of Paris. His works, first printed at Cologne in 1483 in four volumes, have been more completely edited by Elies Du Pin in five volumes at Antwerp in 1706, thus far the best edition. In vol. iii are gathered most of his mystical or ascetical writings. The most important of his mystical treatises are: *De monte contemplationis*, *De theologia mystica speculativa et practica*, *De elucidatione scholastica mystice theologie*, and several smaller tracts as *De meditatione*, *De perfectione cordis*, *De simplicitate cordis*, *De directione cordis*, *Alphabetum divini amoris* etc. In vol. i are found treatises on: *De probatione spirituum*, *De examinatione doctrinarum*, and *De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis*, which also belong with mystical theology. Gerson reacted against the exaggerations of some mystical writers and emphasised the fact that the mystical process culminated not in an actual, but in a close moral union of the soul with God. His ascetical writings are full of unction as well as doctrine. Among them may be mentioned: *De vita spirituali anima*, *De passionibus anime*, *De oratione et suo valore*, *De tentationibus diaboli diversis*, *De conscientia scrupulosa*, *De oratione*, *De Sacramento Altaris*, *De exercitiis divinis devotivum simplicium*, etc. and written in French: *Dialogue spirituel*, *Discours sur la virginité*, *Considérations sur St. Joseph* and *Conférences spirituelles*. Gerson was one of the first promoters of the devotion to

St. Joseph, and one of the great leaders in the field of catechetics. His little tract *De parvulis ad Christum trahendis*, Eng. trn. *A Treatise on Bringing Children to Jesus Christ*, St. Louis: Herder, is justly famous. His *Ad Deum vadit* has been edited by D. H. Carnahan, *University of Illinois Studies in Lang. and Lit.* vol. 3, n. 1, 1917. Cf. also, Jourdain: *Doctrina Joannis Gersonis de theologia mystica*, Paris, 1838; Reynolds: *Early reprints for English readers*: John Gerson, London, 1886; L. Salembier: *The Great Schism of the West* (tr.) New-York: Benziger, 1907; id. Gerson in *Diction. de Théol. Cath.* vol. vi, Paris, 1920; J. L. Connolly: *John Gerson, Reformer and Mystic*, Louvain: Uystpruyt, London and St. Louis: Herder, 1928.

Walter Hilton, († 1396), an Augustinian monk at Thurgarton (Nottinghamshire), who exercised great influence in England in the 15th century. His mystical system is in the main a simplification of that of Richard of St. Victor. The most famous of his works is the *Scala perfectionis* printed in London in 1494, 1517, 1659, Eng. trn. by Fr. Guy, O. S. B., London, 1869, reprinted by Fr. Dalgairn, London, 1870, *The Scale or Ladder of Perfection*, New-York: Benziger. *The Scale of Perfection modernized from the First Printed Edition with an Introduction* by Dom M. Nockinger, London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927. His *Letter to a devout man in temporal estate* first printed in London in 1506 is generally appended to the *Scala* in later editions. His *Song of Angels*, first printed London, 1521, is properly mystical and deals with spiritual consolations. It is included in Gardner: *The Cell of Self-Knowledge*, London and New-York, 1909. A number of other works, most of them unpublished, are ascribed to Hilton, cf. list given by S. Autore in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, vi. 2480-81, Paris, 1920. On Hilton consult Horstman: *Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers*, London, 1895 and W. R. Inge: *Studies in English Mystics*, New-York: Dutton, 1906.

Juliana of Norwich, († 1442), probably a Benedictine nun, whose doctrine is clearly influenced by the teaching of W. Hilton recorded in her book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, written about 1393, the mystical manifestations she had experienced some twenty years before on May the 8th or the 14th, 1373. Her book was first edited by S. Cressy, O. S. B., London, 1670. This was reprinted ib. 1845 and 1907. Other editions are by Collins, ib., 1877; G. Warack, ib. 1901, 4th edn. New-York: Gorham, 1911; Tyrrell, London, 1902, new edn. New-York: Dutton, 1920. On the author see W. R. Inge, *op. cit.* Extracts from her writings in *Meditations on the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus culled from the Writings of Juliana of Norwich* by F. A. Forbes, New-York: Benziger, 1921.

St. Lawrence Justinian, (1380-1456), Bishop and first Patriarch of Venice, noted as a zealous reformer of religious orders and distinguished by his practical piety. His ascetical writings include: *De computatione et complacentia christiane perfectionis*, *De vita solitaria*, *De contemptu mundi*, *De obedientia*, *De humilitate*, *De perfectionis gradibus*, *De incendio divini amoris*, *De regimine prelatorum* (a treatise on pastoral theology). They were first published in 1506 at Brescia. Their best edition is in the 2nd volume of his *Opera omnia*, 2 vols., Venice, 1751. His biography was written by his nephew, Bernardino Gustiniani, Venice, 1574. It is reprinted in *Act. SS.*, January, i. 501 sqq.

St. Catherine of Genoa (Caterina Fieschi Adorno), (1447-1510), whose mystical experiences are described in her life written by her confessor, Miracolli, first edited by Genuti at Florence in 1551. This life is as much a treatise on mysticism as a biography, and its editions usually include the works of the Saint, which are: *A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body*; *Self Love*, *The Mind and Humanity of Our Lord*, and *A Treatise on Purgatory*. They are translated from the original Italian in *Life and Doctrine of St. Catherine of Genoa*, London, 1858, New-York, 1874; *Life of St. Catherine of Genoa*, New-York: Christian Press, n. d. The *Treatise on Purgatory*, new edition, with preface by Cardinal Manning, London: Burns and Oates, New-York: Benziger, n. d. Consult further F. von Huegel: *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and her Friends*, London: Dent, New-York: Dutton, 1909, 2nd edn., 1923.

III. MODERN TIMES

The ancient schools continue to refine their doctrine, while under the influence of the Council of Trent and of the Counter-Reformation new-schools come into being and bring about a renewed spirituality. Hence one sometimes finds conflict in points of detail, but the doctrinal basis remains constant and rounds out through discussion.

Three ancient schools keep on developing: the Benedictine, the Dominican and the Franciscan.

1. The BENEDICTINE SCHOOL holds its tradition of affective and liturgical piety, adding to these certain refinements in doctrine.

Blosius (Louis de Blois) (1506-1566), Abbot of Liesse, published a great many spiritual tracts the chief of which is his *Institutio spiritualis*, a synthesis of asceticism and of mysticism containing the substance of his other works. Besides the edition of his complete works published at Antwerp (1632), there is also *Manuale vite spiritualis*, Freiburg: Herder, 1907; this ed. unfortunately lacks the *Institutio spiritualis*. Eng. tr. *Spiritual Works*, 6 vols., New-York: Benziger, 1926, include the following: *Book of Spiritual Instruction, Comfort for the Fainthearted, Mirror for Monks, Sanctification of the Faithful Soul, Paradise of the Faithful Soul*. Cf. *Opera*, ed. A. de Winghe, 2 fol., Cologne, 1633.

Baker, D. A. (1575-1641) wrote several treatises which were condensed by S. Cressy in *Sancta Sophia; Holy Wisdom*, Cressy-Sweeney ed., London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, New-York: Benziger, n. d.; *Contemplative Prayer*, abgd. ed. of *Sancta Sophia*, Weld-Blundell, London: Washbourne, New-York: Benziger, c. 1908.

Bona, Giovanni Cardinal (1609-1674), general of the Feuillants. *Manuductio ad calum*, Eng. tr. *A Guide to Eternity*, L'Estrange, London, 1900; *Principia et documenta vite christianae; De sacrificio missae*, Eng. tr. *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, Cummins, St. Louis: Herder, 1903; *De discretione spirituum; Horologium asceticum*, etc. Many eds. have been published, particularly at Venice, 1752-1764; cfr. extracts in *Opuscula ascetica selecta*, Freiburg: Herder, 1911.

Castaniza, John of, († 1598) : *De la perfección de la vida christiana; Institutioium divinae pietatis libri quinque*.

Schram, Dominicus (1722-1797) : *Institutiones theologiae mysticae*, a didactic treatise of asceticism and of mysticism with excellent advice for spiritual directors; 2 vols., ed. Paris, 1868; *Little Manual of Direction for Priests*, Eng. tr. H. Collins, London, 1882.

Ullathorne, W. B., Bishop (1806-1889) : *The Endowments of Man, Patience*, 1886; *Groundwork of the Christian Virtues*, 1882; *Christian*

Guéranger, Dom P. (1805-1875) : restorer of the Benedictines in France, he rendered an inestimable service to souls by his *Année liturgique; The Liturgical Year*, Eng. tr. Shepherd, Dublin, 1870 sqq., Worcester, Eng., 1895-1903, in 15 vols.

Lehodey, Dom Vital, Abbot of Notre-Dame de Grâce : *Les Voies de l'oraison mentale*, 1908; Eng. tr. *Ways of Mental Prayer*, Dublin, 1924; *Le saint abandon*, 1919; *Directoire spirituel à l'usage des Cisterciens réformés*, 1910. These works are characterized by clarity, precision and sureness of doctrine.

Abbess of Ste Cécile (C. J. Bruyère, Madame Cecilia) : *Spiritual Life and Prayer* (tr.), London, 1905.

Marmion, Dom Columba, late Abbot of Maredsous, Belgium (1858-1923) : *Christ the Life of the Soul* (tr.), London: Sands, St. Louis: Herder, 1925;

Christ in His Mysteries, London and St. Louis, 1924; *Our Way and Our Life* (abgd. ed. of previous), St. Louis: Herder, 1927; *Christ the Ideal of the Monk*, London and St. Louis, 1926.

Hedley, J. C., Bishop († 1915) : *The Holy Eucharist*, London, 1923; *A Retreat, 33 Discourses*, ib., 1894¹⁰; *Spiritual Retreat for Priests*, ib., Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1927; *Spiritual Retreat for Religious*, ib., *Lex Levitarum* or *Preparation for the Cure of Souls*, New-York: Benziger, 1928; *Christian Inheritance set forth in Sermons*, London, 1896; *Our Divine Saviour*, London, n. d., 7th ed.; *Light of Life*, London, 1899; *Spirit of Faith*, New-York, 1896.

Gasquet, F. Aidan Cardinal (1846-1929) : *Religio Religiosi*, New-York, 1923, on the purpose and end of the religious life; *Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*, ib., 1922.

Chantard, Dom J. B. : *L'Âme de tout apostolat*, 1915; *The True Apostolate*, tr. Girardey, St. Louis: Herder, 1918; also another tr., *The Soul of the Apostolate*, tr. Moran, S. M., London and New-York, 1926.

Morin, Dom G. : *The Ideal of the Monastic Life found in the Apostolic Ages*, tr. Gunning, London.

Butler, Dom E. C. : *Western Mysticism*, New-York: Dutton, 1927; *Benedictine Monachism*, London: Longmans, 1924.

Cabrol, Dom F. : *Liturgical Prayer*, tr. Benedictine nuns of Stanbrook, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1922.

Louismet, Dom L. : *Mystical Knowledge of God*, London and New-York, 1917; *Mystical Life*, ib., 1916; *Mysticism True and False*, ib., 1919; *Divine Contemplation for All*, ib., 1920; *Mystical Initiation*, ib., 1923; *The Burning Bush, a treatise on Ecstatic Contemplation*, London, 1924.

Doyle, Dom F. C. : *The Teaching of St. Benedict*, 1887; *Principles of Religious Life*, London: Washbourne, 1890.

2. The DOMINICAN SCHOOL, deeply rooted in the teachings of St. Thomas, clearly and methodically explains and clarifies his doctrine on asceticism and contemplation.

Cajetan, Thomas (1469-1534), in his profound commentary on the *Summa*. Louis of Granada (1504-1588), without attempting to write ascetical theology, treats with solidity and unction all the elements of Christian perfection. *The Sinner's Guide* (tr.), New-York, 1889.

Bartholomew of the Martyrs, Abp. of Braga (1514-1590) : *Compendium doctrinae spiritualis*, first published at Lisbon, 1582; other eds. at Madrid, Paris, etc., the last appearing in Venice (1711) under the title *Compendium mysticae doctrinae* with additions made by Ildephonso Manrique; cfr. *Compendium spiritualis doctrinae*, ed. Fessler, New-York: Benziger, 1864; Lady Herbert, *Dom Bartholomew of the Martyrs*, London, 1880.

John of St. Thomas (1589-1644) in his course of theology, which is partly a commentary on St. Thomas, treats in quite remarkable a manner of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Thomas of Vallgornera († 1665) : *Mystica theologia D. Thomae*, latest ed. Turin, 1911. Here the complete teaching of St. Thomas on the three ways is gathered and classified.

Contenson, V. (1641-1674) : *Theologia mentis et cordis*, 2 vols., Cologne, 1722; at the end of each section the author draws certain ascetic conclusions or corollaries.

Massoulié, A. (1632-1706) : *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu; Traité de la véritable oraison; Méditations sur les trois voies*. The writer explains the doctrine of St. Thomas in refutation of the errors of the Quietists.

Pliny, A. (1640-1709) : *L'Abandon à la volonté de Dieu; L'oraison du cœur; La clef du pur amour; La présence de Dieu; Le plus parfait*, and so on. The leading idea in these volumes is that perfection consists of conformity to God's will and of holy abandonment.

- Rousseau, R. P. : *Avis sur les divers états d'oraison*, 1710; ed. Paris : Lethielleux, 1913.
- Billuart, C. R. (1685-1757) : *Summa S. Thomæ hodiernis academicarum moribus accommodata*, 1746-1751.
- Lacordaire, H. D. (1802-1861) : *Letters to Young Men*, London and New-York, 1903²; *Conferences*, London, 1851; *Jesus Christ*, 1869; *God*, 1870; *God and Man*, 1872 (3 last in 1 vol. Manchester : Robinson, London : Chapman, 1902⁹); see especially Chocarné, *Inner Life of Père Lacordaire* (tr.), London : Burns and Oates, 1923¹¹; also, *Thoughts and Teachings*, New-York, 1904².
- Meynard, A. M. : *Traité de la vie intérieure*, Clermont-Ferrand and Paris, 1884, 1899; an adaptation of the work of Thomas of Vallgornera.
- Froget, B. : *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Souls of the Just*, Eng. tr. and adap. Racemers, New-York : Paulist Press, 1921; a very solid theological study.
- Rousset, M. J., *Doctrine spirituelle*, Paris : Lethielleux, 1902; a treatise on the spiritual life and union with God according to Catholic tradition and the spirit of the saints.
- Cormier, P., *Instructions des novices*, 1905; *Retraite ecclésiastique d'après l'Évangile et la vie des saints*, Rome, 1903.
- Gardeil, P., *Les dons du S. Esprit dans les saints dominicains*, Paris : Lecoffre, 1903; in course of translation by Dominicans of Washington, D. C.; cf. author's article on the same subject in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*; also *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique*, 2 vols., Paris, 1927.
- Hugueny, P. Et., *Psaumes et cantiques du bréviaire romain*, Brussels, 1921-1922.
- Janvier, M. A., *Exposition de la morale catholique*, Paris, Lethielleux; the conferences given at Notre Dame of Paris in which Christian morality and asceticism are eloquently expounded.
- Joret, R. P., *La contemplation mystique, d'après St. Thomas d'Aquin*, Lille, 1923.
- Jarrett, Bede, *The Abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost in the Soul*, New-York : Catholic Library, 1918.
- Raymond, V., *Spiritual Director and Physician*, Eng. tr. Smith, London : R. and T. Washbourne, 1917².
- Naval, *Theologie ascetica et mystica curus*, Turin, Marietti, 1925².
- Garrigou-Lagrangé, R., *Perfection chrétienne et Contemplation selon St. Thomas d'Aquin et St. Jean de la Croix*, 2 vols., Paris, 1923³.
- Ridolfi, N., *A Short Method of Mental Prayer*, Eng. tr. Devas, London : Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1920.
- Arintero, J., *Cuestiones místicas*, Salamanca, 1920².
- Francis Raphael, Mother, *Spirit of the Dominican Order*, London and Lexington : Art and Book Co., 1896.
- Ollivier, M. J., *The Friendships of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Keogh, St. Louis : Herder, c. 1903.
- Capes, F. M., *St. Catherine de Ricci, O. P.*, with treatise on the Mystical Life by Wilberforce, London, c. 1907.
- See also two Dominican reviews, *La vie spirituelle* (1919 sqq.) and *La Vida sobrenatural* (1921 sqq.).
3. The FRANCISCAN SCHOOL maintains its characteristics : evangelical simplicity, poverty joyfully endured, devotion to the Child Jesus and to the suffering Christ.
- Francis of Osuna (c. 1497-1540) : *Abecedario espiritual*, 1528 sqq., the third volume of which was for a long time St. Teresa's guide.

- St. Peter of Alcantara, († 1562), a director of St. Teresa, wrote a tract on prayer which has been translated into many tongues. Eng. tr. *Treatise on Prayer and Meditation*, New-York : Benziger, 1926.
- Alphonsus of Madrid, († c. 1529) : *Arte para servir a Dios*, Alcalá, 1578.
- John of Bonilla, († c. 1580) : *Tratado de la ley de l' alma*, Eng. tr. Collins, London, 1876; also included in St. Peter of Alcantara's *Treatise on Prayer and Meditation* (1926).
- Matthias Bellintani of Salo, (1534-1611) : *Praica dell' Orazione Mentale*, Brescia, 1573.
- John of the Angels, (fl. 16th Cent.) : *Obras místicas*, new ed. Madrid, 1912-1917.
- John Evangelist of Bois-le-Duc, (Balduke) (c. 1588-1635) : *The Kingdom of God in the Soul*, Eng. tr. Salvin (1657), ed. Nuns of Stanbrook, introd. Cuthbert, London : Sheed and Ward, 1930.
- Joseph du Tremblay, (1577-1638), "l'Eminence grise" : *Introduction à la vie spirituelle par une facile méthode d'oraison*, ed. Le Mans, 1897, entitled *Méthode d'oraison*.
- Mary of Agreda, (1602-1665) : *Divine Life of Blessed Virgin Mary*, abridgment of *Mystical City of God* (tr.), Philadelphia, 1872.
- Yves of Paris, († 1685) : *Progrès de l'amour divin*, 1644; *Miséricordes de Dieu*, Paris, 1645.
- Bernardine of Paris, († 1672) : *L'esprit de St. François*, ed. Paris, 1880.
- Peter of Poitiers, († 1680) : *Le jour mystique ou Eclaircissement de l'oraison et théologie mystique*, Paris, 1671.
- Louis Francis Yves d'Argentan, (1615-1680) : *Conférences théologiques et spirituelles*, (three series), Paris, 1670-1674; *Les exercices du chrétien intérieur*, Paris, 1664.
- Brancati de Laurea Laurentius, (1612-1693) : *De oratione Christiana*, Rome, 1675, a treatise on prayer and contemplation often cited by Benedict XIV. cf. ed. by Carthusians of Montreuil-sur-mer, 1896.
- Maes, Bonifacius, (1627-1706) : *Theologia mystica*, Ghent, 1668 (12 eds. since); *Franciscan Mysticism*, Eng. tr. Whelan, London : Sheed and Ward, c. 1929.
- Thomas of Bergamo, (1563-1631) : *Fuoco d'amore*, Augsburg, 1682.
- Ambrose of Lombez, (1708-1778) : *Peace of the Soul*, (tr.), London, a classic for dealing with the scrupulous; also, *Traité de la joie de l'âme*, 1779; *Lettres spirituelles*, 1766.
- Didacus a Madre Dei, († c. 1713) : *Ars mystica*, Salamanca, 1713.
- Louis Chaix de Besse, (1831-1910) : *The Science of Prayer* (tr.), London : Burns Oates and Washbourne, New-York : Benziger, 1925; *La science du Pater*, 1904; *Eclaircissement sur les œuvres mystiques de St. Jean de la Croix*, Paris, 1893.
- Adolphus Kestens, (1863-1925), of Denderwindeke : *Compendium theologie ascetica ad vitam sacerdotalem et religiosam rite instituendam*, 2 vols. Hong-Kong, China, 1921. A very well documented work in the second volume of which one may find a rich bibliography on each question treated.
- Devas, D., *A Franciscan View of the Spiritual Life*, New-York : Benziger, 1923; *Franciscan Essays*, 1924.
- Cuthbert, Fr., *The Romanticism of St. Francis*, London : Longmans, 1924².
- Vivès y Tuto, Joseph Galas, Cardinal (1854-1913) : *Compendium theologie ascetico-mysticae*, Barcelona, 1886, Rome, 1908³; quite serviceable as a text-book.
- Dobbins, D., *Franciscan Mysticism*, New-York : Wagner, 1927.
- Mills, V., *A Bibliography of Franciscan Ascetical Writers in Franciscan Educational Conference Reports*, vol. viii, n° 8, 1926, pp. 248-332; very detailed,

thoroughly scholarly, covering the complete field of Franciscan ascetical and mystical writing from the beginning to our own day.

Five of the new schools are especially noteworthy.

I.—The SCHOOL OF ST. IGNATIUS makes a speciality of *active, energetic and practical* spiritual life aiming at forming the will for personal sanctification and apostolic work.

St. Ignatius (1491, 1495-1556) : founder of the Society of Jesus; *Exercitia spiritualia*, new ed. Madrid, 1919. There are many English versions, for example those of Morris and of Joseph Rickaby. The *Exercises* comprise a method of procedure for *reforming* a soul and for *transforming* it to *conformity* with the divine model, Jesus Christ. "The work," says Father Watrignat (*Études religieuses*, vol. cix, p. 134), "condenses a vast movement of spirit and of thought which had slowly been developed during the preceding centuries. It is the starting point of a flood of spiritual life that has since the sixteenth century been constantly rising, wave on wave, and it is likewise the point of convergence for diverse currents coursing through the Middle Ages and finding their beginnings in the earliest days of Christianity."

Fully to understand the spirit of St. Ignatius, one should read the *Constitutions and Letters (Epistolæ)*, 12 vols., M. H. S. J., 1904-1918). Cfr. also Thompson, F., *St. Ignatius Loyola*, New-York, 1909; Rose, S., *St. Ignatius Loyola and the Early Jesuits*, New-York, 1896; Pise, C. C., *St. Ignatius, S. J.*, New-York, 1845; Mariani, F., *Life of St. Ignatius Loyola. Founder of the Jesuits*, Eng. tr. Faber, 2 vols., London, 1848; Joly, H., *St. Ignatius*, (tr.), London; Washbourne, 1899; Bartoli, D., *History of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, 2 vols., New-York, 1855; also, life by Pollen, 1922; Sedgwick, H. D., *St. Ignatius Loyola*, London and New-York : Macmillan, 1923; *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Eng. tr. Ir. Spanish, ed. Lattey, St. Louis : Herder, 1928; *Spiritual Exercises tr. from the Autograph*, Eng. tr. Mullan, New-York, 1814; *Tracts and Commentary on Spiritual Exercises*, Rickaby, J., London : Burns and Oates, 1915; Bernhardt, W., *Die vier Zentralstücken des Exercitienstüchens des hl. Ignatius*, Ratisbon : Habbel, c. 1928; Codina, A., *Los orígenes de los Ejercicios de S. Ignacio de Loyola*, Barcelona, 1926; Watrignat, H., *La genèse des Exercices de S. Ignace*, Amiens, 1897, and *La méditation fondamentale avant S. Ignace*, Enghien, 1907; Brou, A., *La spiritualité de S. Ignace*, Paris : Beauchesne, 1914, and *S. Ignace, Maître d'oraison*, Paris : Ed. Spes, 1925; *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Eng. tr. with *Directorium* and *Commentary*, Longride (Anglican), London : R. Scott, 1919; Redman, J., *Soldier's Companion to the Spiritual Exercises*, London : Burns and Oates, c. 1882; Curtis, J., *Way of Perfection in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Dublin : Gill, c. 1882; *Meditations on Life and Virtues of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Eng. tr. M. A. W., London : Burns and Oates, New-York : Catholic Pub. Soc., c. 1888.

Lefevre, B. P. : *Memorial*, a detailed account of one year of his life (June, 1542-July, 1543). It has been called "one of the jewels of ascetical literature."

Alvarez de Paz (1560-1620) : *De vita spirituali ejusque perfectione*, 3 folio vols., Lyon, 1602-1612; a complete treatment of the spiritual life especially for religious; also, *Opera spiritualia*, ed. Vivès, 6 vols., Paris, 1875.

Suarez, F., (1548-1617) : *De religione*, in which one finds practically a complete treatise on spirituality, including such topics as prayer, mental prayer, vows and obedience to rules. Cfr. Humphrey, *The Religious State : Digest of the Doctrine of Suarez*, London : Burns and Oates, c. 1884.

Lessius, Ven. L., (1554-1623) : *De summo bono*, Eng. tr. Semple, *Virtues Awakened*, St. Louis : Herder, 1924; *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis; De divinis nominibus*, Eng. tr. *Names of God*, New-York : America Press, 1912.

Bellarmino, Bl. R. (1542-1621) : *De ascensione mentis in Deum per scalas creaturarum*, Eng. tr. *The Mind's Ascent to God*, Milwaukee : Morehouse, 1925; also, Eng. tr. and ed. Broderick, New-York : Benziger, 1929; *De eterna felicitate sanctorum; De gemitu columbae sive de bono lacrymarum; De septem*

verbis a Christo in cruce prolatis; De arte bene moriendi. Cfr. recent ed., *Opuscula ascetica*, New-York : Pustet, 1925; also, Broderick, J., *Life and Work of Bl. Robert Cardinal Bellarmine*, 2 vols., London, 1928.

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Alphonus Rodriguez, († 1616) : *Exercicio de perfeccion and virtudes religiosas*, 3 vols., Barcelona, 1613; *Practice of Christian Perfection*, Eng. tr. Jos. Rickaby, Chicago : Loyola Univ. Press, 1929. This is an excellent work which, leaving aside all theorizing, deals only with the actual practice of virtues; many eds. in various languages.

St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, († 1617); a Jesuit brother who was raised to very high contemplation. Two of his tracts have been recently published in French (Desclée, de Brouwer, Lille).

De la Puente, (De Ponte) († 1624) : many works, of which in English there is available *Meditations on the Mysteries of our Holy Faith*, New-York : Benziger, 1916. He was a spiritual director of St. Teresa of Avila, being himself a contemplative.

Binet, Stephen, (1569-1639) : *Les attributs tout-puissants de l'amour de Jésus-Christ; Le grand chef-d'œuvre de Dieu et les souveraines perfections de la Ste Vierge*.

Saint-Jure, J. B. de (1588-1657) : *Le livre des élus on Jésus crucifié; L'homme spirituel; Treatise on the Knowledge and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr. Sister of Mercy, 3 vols., New-York : Union with Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Principal Mysteries (tr.), New-York : Sadlier, 1876. In some of his works Saint-Jure approaches the teachings of the French School of the seventeenth century.

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- The America Press, New-York, prints many ascetical pamphlets for the various ecclesiastical seasons.
- Since 1920 this school has under the editorship of J. de Guibert been publishing a quarterly magazine, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, at Toulouse, France. Its purpose is to study the more important questions of asceticism and mysticism from the threefold point of view of history, doctrine and psychology.
- 2.—The CARMELITE SCHOOL, or the School of St. Teresa, insists that God is everything and man nothing. It urges complete detachment in order to come, God willing, to a state of contemplation and inculcates the practice of the apostolate by prayer, example and sacrifice.
- St. Teresa (1515-1582) of Avila is model and teacher of the highest sanctity. The Church in the Missal invites us to study and to put into practice her spiritual doctrine "so we may be fed with the food of her heavenly teaching
- and grow in loving devotion towards Thee." Her works furnish us with the richest source on mystical states as well as the most orderly and lifelike classification. Critical ed., *Obras de Sta Teresa, editadas y anotadas por el P. Silveiro de St. Teresa*, 6 vols., Burgos, 1915; also, selections, 1 vol., 1922. Cf. also *Letters of St. Teresa*, Eng. tr. Benedictines of Stanbrook, London: Th. Baker, 1919 sqq.; *Autobiography and Book of Foundations*, ed. Burke-Elliott, New-York: Columbia Press, 1911; *Spirit of St. Teresa*, tr. anon., London: Burns and Oates, 1885; Frassinetti, *St. Teresa's Father Noster: Treatise on Prayer*, Eng. tr. Hutch, London: Burns and Oates, c. 1887; Hoornaert, R., *St. Teresa in Her Writings*, Eng. tr. Leonard, London: Sheed and Ward, 1930. See Maréchal, *Studies in the Psychology of Mysticism*, Eng. tr. Thorold, etc., ut supra.
- St. John of the Cross (1543-1591): a disciple of St. Teresa. His four works make up a complete treatise on mysticism. Critical ed. Gerard, Toledo, Spain; Eng. tr. Lewis, ed. Zimmerman, London: Th. Baker, 1906 sqq.; *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, showing the steps to be taken to arrive at contemplation; *The Dark Night of the Soul*, describing the trials that go along with contemplation; *The Living Flame*, explaining its marvelous effects; *The Spiritual Canticle* in lyric style summarizing the teaching of the previous works. Cf. Hervé, P., *St. John of the Cross*, Washington, 1919; other works in English are *Precautions, Counsels and Maxims, Spiritual Letters, Poems*.
- John of Jesus and Mary (1564-1615): *Disciplina claustralis*, 4 folio vols. in which one may find various ascetical tracts, among them the *Via vite*; cfr. also *Theologia mystica*, ed. Freiburg: Herder, 1911; *De virorum ecclesiasticorum perfectione; Instruction of Novices*, Eng. tr. fr. Latin, New-York: Benziger, 1925.
- Joseph of Jesus and Mary (1562-1626): *Subida del alma a Dios*, Madrid, 1656, a treatise dealing with the soul's ascent towards God.
- Bl. Mary of the Incarnation (Madame Acarie) (1599-1672), though she left no written work, may be understood from A. DUVAL'S: *La vie admirable de Mlle Acarie*, 1621, ed. 1893.
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- Thomas of Jesus (1568-1627): *De contemplatione divina libri VI*, ed. Cologne, 1684; *The Sufferings of Jesus* (tr.), 2 vols., London, 1869; also eds. Dublin and Philadelphia.
- Nicholas of Jesus and Mary: called by Bossuet the most learned interpreter of St John of the Cross; *Phynasium mystice theologie Ven. P. Joannis a Cruce... elucidatio*.
- Philip of the Trinity († 1671): *Summa theologiae mystica*, 3 vols., ed. Brussels and Paris, 1874; a classic, clearly and methodically describing the three ways of perfection.
- Anthony of the Holy Spirit († 1677): *Directorium mysticum*, ed Paris, 1904. A manual like the preceding, but shorter and in one volume.
- Honorius of St. Mary (1651-1729): *Tradition des Pères et des auteurs ecclésiastiques sur la contemplation*, a work important in the history of this subject.
- Joseph of the Holy Spirit: *Cursus theologiae mystico-scholastica*, Seville, 1710-1740; med. ed. Bruges: Beyaert, c. 1923.
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Études carmélitaines, a quarterly founded in 1911, present editor Father Mary Joseph, publishes interesting articles on ascetical and mystical questions with a view to spread a right understanding of the teachings of St. Teresa and of St. John of the Cross.

3.—THE SCHOOL OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (1567-1622) is chiefly concerned with the teachings of the founder himself. His great service was to show that devotion and even high sanctity are practicable in every state of life. A perfect gentleman and a devout humanist, an apostolic man and director, he knew how to make piety lovable without taking from it the spirit of sacrifice. The *Introduction to a Devout Life* is fundamentally a treatise on asceticism introducing souls to the purgative and illuminative ways; the *Treatise on the Love of God* raises them to the unitive way. In the latter work, contemplation is explained with the exact knowledge of a theologian and the psychology of a man who has gone through the experience. His *Conferences* directly address his own Visitandines, but do good to all. His many *Letters* apply the general principles explained in his books to each individual soul; one finds in them a delicately refined psychology, a quite exceptional tact, a good deal of frankness and simplicity. Best French ed., *Œuvres*, Anney.

In English, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, many eds., among them esp. Ross, New-York: Benziger, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne (Orchard Books), 1925; see also *Library of St. Francis de Sales*, 7 vols., 1908-1925. — *Treatise on the Love of God, Letters to Persons in Religion, Letters to Persons in the World, Catholic Controversy, Mystical Explanation of the Canticle of Canticles, Conferences*. Cfr. Sautreau, A., *Mystical Prayer according to St. Francis de Sales*, Eng. tr. Swinstead, London: Sheed and Ward, New-York: Benziger, 1930; Hamon, *Life of St. Francis de Sales*, adapted by Burton, Eng. tr., New-York: Kennedy, 1926-1929; Sanders, E. K., *St. Francis de Sales*, New-York: Macmillan, 1928; Bordeaux, H., *St. Francis de Sales*, (tr.) New-York Longmans, 1929; Stackpoole-Kenny, L. M., *St. Francis de Sales*, London, 1924; de Margerie, A., *St. Francis de Sales*, 6th imp., London, 1923; Sidney Lear, H. L., *St. Francis de Sales*, London, 1898; Marsollier, *Life of St. Francis de Sales, Bp. and Prince of Geneva*, (tr.), London, 1812; cfr. also Bremond, H., *Histoire littéraire*, etc., (vols. 1 and 2), now in course of translation.

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Msgr., *Life of St. Margaret Mary* (tr.) New-York: Benziger, 1920; Sr. Mary Philip, *Life*, St. Louis, 1919.

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Chaumont, H. (1838-1896): a founder of three Salesian societies, this priest published or had published several tracts filled with the teaching of St Francis de Sales.

Giraud, S. M., *The Spirit of Sacrifice*, Eng. tr. Thurston, New-York: Benziger, 1905.

4.—THE FRENCH SCHOOL of the seventeenth century: its spiritual teaching flows from doctrines of faith, above all from the dogma of the Incarnation. Since we have been incorporated into Christ through baptism and have received the Holy Ghost who dwells in us, we must glorify God in union with the Incarnate Word living in us, reproduce His virtues, and vigorously fight against the contrary tendencies of the flesh, of the old Adam: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus... putting off the old man and putting on the new."

The founder of the School was Cardinal de Bérulle. To it belong: the Fathers of the Oratory, St. Vincent de Paul, Father Olier and the Sulpicians, St. John Eudes and the Eudists, Bl. Grignon de Montfort, St. John Baptist de la Salle, Ven. F. M. Libermann and the Holy Ghost Fathers; de Renty, de Bernières, Boudon and Bishop Gay.

Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629): founder of the Oratory in France. *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bourgoing, Paris, 1657; also, Migne, Paris, 1856. His chief work is *Discours de l'Etat et des grands de Jésus*, but for a full understanding of his teaching this must be supplemented by reading his smaller works. De Bérulle is the apostle of the Word Incarnate. For him to be a true Christian means to cling to Christ, to make Christ live in us by His virtues, to cut oneself off from creatures and from oneself. Cfr. Bremond, H., *Histoire littéraire*, etc., *Literary History of Religious Thought in France*, Eng. tr. Montgomery, London: S. P. C. K., (now in course of pub. and trans.); also, Pottier, et supra, III, *La spiritualité béruillienne et les grands spirituels de la Compagnie de Jésus à l'âge d'or de l'ascétisme français, 1500-1650*. Paris: Tequi, 1929; also, Sidney Lear, H. L., *Priestly Life in France*, London: Longmans, 1894.

De Condren, C. (1588-1641): *Œuvres complètes* published after his death, first in 1668, later by Pin in 1857; see esp. his *L'idée du sacerdoce et du sacrifice* (Eng. tr. *Priesthood and Sacrifice*) and his letters. He completes de Bérulle's doctrine by his teaching on the priesthood and sacrifice: Jesus Christ, having become the unique adorer of the Father, by His self-abasement offers a sacrifice worthy of the Father; we share in this by abasing ourselves with Christ. Cfr. Sidney Lear, H. L., *Charles de Condren in Priestly Life in France*.

Bourgoing, F. (1585-1662): *Vérités et excellences de Jésus-Christ... disposées en méditations*, ed. Ingold, Paris: Tequi, 1892^o.

St. Vincent de Paul (1576-1660): founder of the Congregation of the Mission (Lazarists, Vincentians) and of the Sisters of Charity. Cfr. his *Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents*, ed. Coste, 1920 sqq. A disciple, but an original disciple, of de Bérulle, he in turn became a master whose prudence and sagacity really amount to genius. See Bougaud, Msgr., *History of St. Vincent de Paul*, Eng. tr. Brady, New-York, 1908; Boyle, P., *St. Vincent de Paul and the Vincentians*, London: R. and T. Washbourne, 1909; Lavedan, H., *Heroic Life of St. Vincent de Paul*, (tr.), New-York: Longmans, 1929; Leonard, J., *St. Vincent and Mental Prayer*, New-York: Benziger, 1925; Sanders, E. K., *Some Counsels of St. Vincent de Paul*, London and St. Louis: Herder, 1914; de Broglie, I., *St. Vincent de Paul*, Eng. tr.

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J. J. Olier (1608-1657): founder of the Society of St. Sulpice. Abbé Bremond says that he alone gives us the teaching of the French School in the full extent of its principles and applications (*op. cit.*, vol. 3). Besides many manuscripts, Father Olier has left the following: *Calécisme chrétien pour la vie intérieure*, in which he shows how by practicing the crucifying virtues we may arrive at intimate union with Jesus; *Introduction à la vie et aux vertus chrétiennes*, explaining in detail the virtues that perfect this union all through the acts and circumstances of our life; *Traité des SS. Ordres*, written to make the young cleric ready to become a religious man by his transformation in Jesus Christ, high priest, sacrificer and victim; his *Lettres* complete this teaching, applying it to spiritual direction. The *Pietas Seminarii S. Sulpitii* gives a summary of all Sulpician devotions. In Eng., *Catechism for an Interior Life*, Baltimore (out of print).

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St. John Eudes, (1601-1680), a disciple of de Bérulle and de Condren, founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (the Eudists) and of the Order of Notre Dame de Charité (Sisters of the Good Shepherd). He perfectly assimilated the spiritual teaching of de Bérulle, clearly, popularly and practically expounded it, and wove the practice of the spiritual life into the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, so much so that in the bull of beatification he is called the "father," the "teacher," and the "apostle" of the devotion to these sacred Hearts. His work, recited in 12 vols., Paris, 1905; among them the chief are: *La vie et le royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes*; here he explains that the Christian life is the life of Jesus in us and how we may do all our acts in Jesus and for Jesus; *Le contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le saint baptême*; *Le Cœur admirable de la Mère de Dieu*, the most important work of the Saint. Also, *Le mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*; *Règles et constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et de Marie*; these rules are made up of Scriptural texts logically grouped together, while the Constitutions consist of a practical commentary on the rules. In Eng., *Reign of Jesus*, tr. and ed. Granger-Harding, London: R. and T. Washbourne, New-York:

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Bl. L. Grignon de Montfort (1673-1716): founder of the Missionaries of the Company of Mary and the Daughters of Wisdom. Initiated into the spiritual doctrine of de Bérulle at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, he later wrote clear, popular and forceful treatises. Cf. *Lettre circulaire aux amis de la croix*, Tours, Mame, many eds.; and in Eng., *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, tr. Faber, London: Burns and Oates, New-York: Benziger, 1904¹¹; *Secret of Mary*, (tr.), London: Burns Oates and Washbourne; Secular Priest, *Life of Blessed Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort*, 2 vols., London: Art and Book Co., 1892; *Life and Select Writings* (tr.), London: Richardson, 1870; Denis, G., *Reign of Jesus through Mary*, Eng. tr. Somers, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne.

St. John Baptist de la Salle (1651-1719): founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Christian Brothers). Being trained at St. Sulpice (Paris), he adapted the spiritual teachings of de Bérulle to his new institution. Cf. in Eng., Thompson, F., *Life and Labours of St. John Baptist de la Salle*, London: Burns and Oates, St. Louis: Herder, 1911; F. C. N., *Life and Work of Ven. J. B. de la Salle*, New-York: Sadlier, 1878; Bro. Leo, *Story of St. John Baptist de la Salle*, New-York: Kenedy, 1921; Mrs. Wilson, *Christian Brothers, their Origin and their Work*, London, 1883; Burke, P., *Thoughts of St. John Baptist de la Salle, etc.*, New-York: Sadlier, 1868; Bro. Agathon, *Virgins of a Good Master, etc.*, New-York: O'Shea, 1907; Anon., *Bl. de la Salle and his Educational Methods*, Chicago, Flanagan; Bro. Philip, *Meditation on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, New-York: O'Shea, 1872; also, *Considerations for Christian Teachers*, Baltimore: Murphy, 1922.

Libermann, Ven. F. M., (1803-1852), founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary which was later joined to the Society of the Holy Ghost. He was trained at St. Sulpice and became an exponent of de Bérulle's spirituality in his treatises on prayer, especially on affective prayer, on the interior life and humility; cfr. his letters. Goeppfert, P., *Life of Ven. Francis Mary Paul Libermann*, Dublin: Gill, 1880; Lee, G., *Life of Ven. F. Libermann*, St. Louis: Herder, 1911; *Spiritual Letters*, Eng. tr., Grunnenwald, vol. 1, Detroit: Bornmann, 1901; *Constitution of the Society of the Heart of Mary*, Winchester, 1890.

De Renty, († 1649): his doctrine is given in the *Life*, by Saint-Jure, 1652; in Eng., *Life of Baron de Renty or Perfection in the World Exemplified* (tr.), London, 1873.

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5.—THE SCHOOL OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI is notable for its practical

- and intense piety. Being based on the love of God and of Our Redeemer, it stresses prayer and mortification as *the* means for arriving at this love.
- St. Alphonsus Liguori (1691-1787) : a most prolific writer. Besides his works on dogmatic and moral subject, he wrote on nearly every phase of the spiritual life; for Christian perfection in general see his *Complete Ascetical Works*, Eng. tr. Grimm, Cent. ed., 22 vols., New-York : Benziger, 1886-1892. St. Alphonsus' works are translated into French, German and English from the original Italian, the latest edition of which is that at Naples, 1840. Cfr. des Rotours, Angot, *St. Alphonsus Liguori* (tr.), New-York, 1916; Berthe, *Life of St. Alphonsus Liguori*, Eng. tr. Castle, 2 vols., St. Louis : Herder, 1906.
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- 6.—OUTSIDE THE PALE OF THESE SCHOOLS, there ought also to be mentioned : Scupoli, L. (1530-1610) : *Spiritual Combat*, Eng. tr. fr. Italian, a work justly esteemed as one of the best treatises on the spiritual life by no less an authority than St. Francis de Sales. Many eds., among them Baltimore : Murphy; London : Burns, Oates and Washbourne.
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- prayer, first ed. E. Levesque, Paris : Didot, 1897; also, *Les Elevations sur les mystères; Méditations sur l'évangile; Tr. de la concupiscence*; other small works on abandonment, prayer of simplicity, and so on, have recently been gathered in *Doctrines spirituelle de Bossuet*, Paris : Téqui, 1908.
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INTRODUCTION

It is the *perfection of the Christian life* that constitutes the proper object of ascetical and mystical Theology.

1. A God of all goodness vouchsafed to give us not only the natural life of the soul, but also a *supernatural life*, — the life of *grace*. This latter is a sharing of God's very life, as we have shown in our treatise *De gratia*.² Because this life was given us through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and because He is its most perfect exemplary cause, we call it rightly the *Christian life*.

All life must needs be perfected, and it is perfected by pursuing its end. *Absolute* perfection means the actual attainment of that end. This we shall attain only in Heaven. There, through the Beatific Vision and pure love, we shall possess God, and our life will have its complete development. Then we shall be like unto God, *because we shall see him as he is*.³

Here on earth, however, the perfection we can reach is only *relative*. This we attain by ever striving after that intimate union with God that fits us for the Beatific Vision. The present treatise deals with this relative perfection. After an exposition of general principles on the *nature of the Christian life, its perfection, the obligation of striving after it, and the general means of arriving thereat*, we shall describe the *three ways, purgative, illuminative and unitive*, along which must go all generous souls thirsting for spiritual advancement.

2. First, however, some preliminary questions must be made clear in a short introduction.

In it we shall treat five questions :

- I. The *Nature of Ascetical Theology*;
- II. *Its Sources*;
- III. *Its Method*;
- IV. *Its Excellence and Necessity*;
- V. *Its Division*.

¹ TH. DE VALLGORNERA, O. P., *Mystica Theologia D. Thomæ*, t. I, q. 1; E. DUBLANCHY, *Ascétique* in *Dict. de Théol.*, t. I, col. 2038-2046; HOGAN, *Celestial Studies*, ch. VI, art. 1; SCANNELL, *The Priest's Studies*, ch. VI.

² This treatise is found in our *Synopsis Theologia Dogmaticæ*, t. III.

³ *1 John*, III, 2 : " Similes ei erimus quoniam videbitur eum sicuti est."

§ I. The Nature of Ascetical Theology

In order to show exactly what Ascetical Theology is, we shall explain : 1° The *chief names* given to it; 2° Its relation to the other theological sciences; 3° Its *relation*, both with *Dogma and Moral*; 4° The *distinction* between *Ascetical and Mystical* Theology.

I. ITS DIFFERENT NAMES

3. Ascetical Theology goes by different names.

a) It is called the *science of the Saints*, who have rightly so, because *it comes to us from the Saints*, who have taught it more by their life than by word of mouth. Moreover, ascetical theology is calculated to *make saints*, for it explains to us what sanctity is, and what the means are of arriving at it.

b) Some have called it *spiritual science*, because it forms spiritual men, that is to say, men of interior life, animated by God's own spirit.

c) Others have called it *the art of perfection*, for it is really a practical science, having for its goal to lead souls to Christian perfection. Again, they have called it *The Art of Arts*. And indeed, the highest art is that of perfecting the soul's noblest life, its supernatural life.

d) However, the name most commonly given to it to-day is that of Ascetical and Mystical Theology.

1) The word "*ascetical*" comes from the Greek ἀσκησις (exercise, effort) and means any arduous task connected with man's education, physical or moral. Christian perfection, then, implies those efforts that St. Paul himself compares to the training undergone by athletes with the purpose of obtaining the victory.¹ It was, therefore, natural to designate by the name of asceticism the efforts of the Christian soul struggling to acquire perfection. This is what *Clement of Alexandria* and *Origen* did, and, after them, a great number of the Fathers. It is not surprising, then, that this name of *asceticism* is given to the science that deals with the efforts necessary to the acquisition of Christian perfection.

2) Yet, during many centuries the name that prevailed in designating this science was that of *Mystical* Theology (μυστικός, mysterious, secret, and especially a religious secret)

because it laid open the secrets of perfection. Later a time arrived when these two words were used in one and the same sense, but the usage that finally obtained was that of restricting the name *asceticism* to that part of the spiritual science that treats of the first degrees of perfection up to the threshold of contemplation, and the name of *mysticism* to that other part which deals with *infused* or *passive contemplation*.

Be that as it may, it follows from all these notions that the science we are dealing with, is indeed the science of Christian perfection. This fact allows us to give it a place in the general scheme of Theology.

II. ITS PLACE IN THEOLOGY

4. No one has made more clear the organic unity that holds all through the science of Theology than did St. Thomas. He divides his *Summa* into three parts. In the first, he treats of *God as the First principle*. He studies *Him in Himself*, in the Oneness of His nature, in the Trinity of His Persons, in the *works* of His creation preserved and governed by His Providence. In the second part, He deals with *God as the Last End*. Towards Him men must go by performing their actions for Him under the guidance of the law and the impulse of grace, by practising the theological and the moral virtues, and by fulfilling the duties peculiar to their state of life. The third part shows us the Incarnate Word making Himself *our way* whereby we may go to God, and instituting the Sacraments to communicate to us His grace unto life everlasting.

In this plan, ascetical and mystical theology belongs to the second part of the *Summa*, with dependence however on the other two parts.

5. Later theologians, without setting aside this organic unity of Theology, have divided it into three parts, *Dogmatic, Moral* and *Ascetical*.

a) *Dogma* teaches us what we must *believe* of God: His divine life, the share in it which He has willed to communicate to intelligent creatures, specially to man, the forfeiting of this divine life by original sin, its restoration by the Word-made-flesh, the action of that life on the regenerated soul, its diffusion through the Sacraments, and its completion in Heaven.

b) *Moral* theology shows us how we must respond to this love of God by cultivating the divine life He made us

¹ I Cor., IX, 24-27; Ephes., VI, 11-16; I Tim., IV, 7-8.

share. It shows us how we must shun sin, practise the virtues, and fulfil those duties of state to which we are strictly bound.

e) Yet, if we wish to perfect that life, desiring to go beyond what is of strict obligation, and wish to advance systematically in the practice of virtue, it is to *Ascetical* theology that we must turn.

III. ITS RELATIONS WITH MORAL AND DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

6. Ascetical theology is a part of the Christian Life. In truth, it is its most noble part, for its purpose is to make us perfect Christians. Although it has become a special, distinct part of Theology, it holds the closest relations both with Dogma and Moral.

¹⁰ *Its foundation in Dogma.* When describing the nature of the Christian life, it is from Dogma that we seek light. This life being actually a participation in God's life, we must soar up to the Blessed Trinity itself. There we must find its principle and source, see how it was bestowed on our first parents, lost through their fall, and given back by the Redeeming Christ.

There we must see its organism, its action in our soul, the mysterious channels through which it comes and grows, and how it is finally transformed into the Beatific Vision in Heaven.

All these questions are indeed treated in *Dogmatic* Theology. But if these truths are not set down once more in a short and clear synthesis, Asceticism will seem to be devoid of all foundation. We shall be demanding of souls costly sacrifices without being able to justify these demands by a description of what Almighty God has done for us. In truth, Dogma is fully what Cardinal Manning called it, the fountain-head of devotion.

7. ²⁰ *Ascetic Theology also depends on Moral Theology and completes it.* The latter explains the precepts we must observe in order to possess and preserve the divine life. Ascetical Theology gives us in turn the means of perfecting it, and plainly presupposes the knowledge and the practice of those precepts. It would be indeed a vain and dangerous illusion to neglect the precepts and, under the pretext of observing the counsels, to undertake the practice of the highest virtues without having learned to resist temptation and avoid sin.

8. ³⁰ Withal, Ascetical Theology is truly a *branch* of Theology distinct from Dogma and Moral. It has its own proper object. It chooses from among the teachings of Our Lord, of the Church, and of the Saints, all that has reference to the *perfection* of the Christian life, and so coordinates all these elements as to constitute a real science. 1) Ascetical Theology *differs* from Dogma in this that, though grounded upon dogmatic truths, it actually directs these truths towards *practice*, making us understand, acquire a taste for, and live the life of Christian perfection. 2) It differs from Moral Theology, because, while it presents to our consideration the commandments of God and of the Church, which are the bases of all spiritual life, it insists also on the evangelical counsels, and on a higher degree of virtue than is strictly obligatory. Ascetical Theology, then, is truly *the science of Christian perfection*.

9. Hence its twofold character, at once *speculative* and *practical*. Without doubt, it contains a *speculative* doctrine, since it goes to Dogma when it explains the nature of the Christian life. Yet, it is above all *practical*, because it seeks out the means that must be taken to develop that life.

In the hands of a wise spiritual counsellor it becomes a *real art*. Here the art consists in applying the general principles with devotedness and tact to each individual soul. It is the noblest and the most difficult of all arts — *ars artium regimen animarum*. The principles and rules which we shall give will help to form good spiritual advisers.

IV. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

10. What we have heretofore said of Ascetical Theology holds good also of Mystical Theology.

A) In order to make a distinction between them, we may thus define *Ascetical* Theology: that part of spiritual doctrine whose proper object is both the theory and the practice of Christian perfection, from its very beginnings up to the threshold of infused contemplation. We place the beginning of perfection in a sincere desire of advancing in the spiritual life; Ascetic Theology guides the soul from this beginning, through the *purgative* and *illuminative* ways, as far as *active* contemplation or the *simple unitive* way.

11. B) Mystical Theology is that part of spiritual doctrine whose proper object is both the theory and the prac-

tice of the *contemplative life*, which begins with what is called the first *night* of the senses, described by St John of the Cross, and the prayer of *quiet*, described by St. Theresa.

a) We thus avoid defining Ascetical Theology as the science of the *ordinary* ways of perfection, and Mystical Theology as the science of the *extraordinary* ways. Nowadays the word extraordinary is rather reserved to designate a special class of mystical phenomena such as ecstasies and revelations which are special gifts (*charismata*) superadded to contemplation.

b) We do not distinguish here between acquired and infused contemplation so as not to become involved in controversy. Acquired contemplation being as a rule a preparation for infused contemplation, we shall treat it when speaking of the unitive way.

We purposely unite in this one treatise both Ascetical and Mystical Theology. 1) Surely there are *profound differences* between them. These we shall take care to point out later. There is, all the same, a certain *continuity* running through these two states, ascetic and mystic, which makes the one a sort of preparation for the other. *When He sees fit*, Almighty God makes use of the generous dispositions of the ascetic soul and raises it to the mystic states.

2) One thing is certain, the study of Mystical Theology throws no little light upon Ascetic Theology and vice versa. This, because there is harmony in God's ways; the powerful action which He exercises over mystic souls being so striking, it renders more intelligible the milder influence He exerts over beginners. Thus the *passive trials*, described by St. John of the Cross, make us understand better the ordinary aridity that is experienced in lower stages. Again, we understand better the mystic ways, when we see to what degree of docility and adaptability a soul can arrive that has for long years given itself up to the laborious practices of asceticism.

These two parts of one and the same science naturally throw light on one another and their union is profitable to both.

§ II. The Sources of Ascetical and Mystical Theology

12. Since this spiritual science is one of the branches of Theology, it has the same sources as the others. We must

give the first place to those that contain or interpret the data of revelation, that is, Holy Scripture and Tradition. Next in turn come the secondary sources, that is, all the knowledge that we acquire through *reason* enlightened by *faith* and *experience*. Our task is simply to point out the use we can make of them in Ascetic Theology.

I. HOLY SCRIPTURE

We do not find in Holy Scripture a scientific exposition of spiritual doctrine, yet, scattered here and there both in the Old and the New Testaments, we do find the richest data, in the form of *teachings, precepts, counsels, prayers* and *examples*.

13. 1° We find there the *speculative doctrines* concerning God, His nature and attributes, His immensity that pervades all things, His infinite wisdom, His goodness and justice, His mercy, His Providence exercised over all creatures and above all on behalf of men, in order to effect their salvation. We find likewise the doctrine concerning God's own life, the mysterious generation of the Word, the procession of the Holy Spirit — mutual bond of union between Father and Son. Lastly, we find God's works, in particular, those wrought for the welfare of man: man's share in the divine life, his restoration after the fall through the Incarnation and the Redemption, his sanctification through the Sacraments and the promise of everlasting joys.

It is obvious that such sublime teaching is a powerful incentive to an increased love for God and to a greater desire for perfection.

14. 2° As to the *moral teaching*, made up of *precepts* and *counsels*, we find: The *Decalogue*, which is summed up in the love of God and the neighbour. Next, comes the high moral teaching of the *Prophets*, who ever proclaiming the goodness, the justice, and the love of God for His people, turn Israel away from sin, and especially from idolatrous practices, whilst at the same time they inculcate into the nation respect and love for God, justice, equity and goodness towards all, chiefly towards the weak and the oppressed. We have further the Sapiential Books, whose counsels, so full of wisdom, contain an anticipated exposition of the Christian virtues.

Towering above all else, however, stands the wonderful *teaching of Jesus*. His *Sermon on the Mount* is a condensed

synthesis of asceticism. We find still higher doctrines in His discourses as recorded by *St. John* and commented upon by the same apostle in his Epistles. Finally, there is the spiritual theology of *St. Paul*, so rich in doctrinal ideas and in practical application. Even the bare summary which we shall give in an *Appendix* to this volume will show that the New Testament is already a code of perfection.

15. 3° We find also in Holy Writ *prayers* to nourish our love and our interior life. Are there any prayers more beautiful than those of the Psalter? The Church has deemed them so fit to proclaim God's praises and so apt to sanctify us, that She has incorporated them *into* her Liturgy, the Missal and the Breviary. Other prayers we also find here and there in the historical and sapiential books. But the prayer of prayers is the Lord's Prayer, the most beautiful, the most simple, and in spite of its brevity, the most complete that can be found. Added to this we have Our Lord's Sacerdotal Prayer, not to mention the doxologies contained in the Epistles of *St. Paul* and in the *Apocalypse*.

16. 4° Finally there are in Scripture *examples* that incite us to the practice of virtue : a) The Old Testament musters before us a whole series of patriarchs, prophets and other remarkable personages who were not indeed free from weaknesses, yet, whose virtues merited the praise of *St. Paul*, and are recounted at length by the Fathers, who propose them to us for imitation. Who would not admire the piety of *Abel* and *Enoch*, the steadfastness of *Noe*, who wrought good in the midst of a corrupt generation? Who would not pay homage to the faith and trust of *Abraham*, the chastity and prudence of *Joseph*, the courage, the wisdom and constancy of *Moses*, the fearless zeal, devotion and wisdom of *David*? Who would not admire the austerity of life in the Prophets, the heroic conduct of the *Maccabees* and countless other examples?

b) In the New Testament, it is of course *Jesus Christ* who appears as the ideal type of sanctity. Next, *Mary* and *Joseph*, His faithful imitators. Then, the Apostles, who imperfect as they were at first, gave themselves up so completely in body and soul to the preaching of the Gospel and to the practice of the Christian and Apostolic virtues, that their lives cry out to us, even louder than their words, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ."¹

¹ *1 Cor.*, IV, 16.

If some of these holy ones had their faults, the manner in which they redeemed them adds greater worth to their example, for it shows us how we can, by penance, atone for our faults.¹

II. TRADITION

17. Tradition completes Holy Writ. It hands down to us truths which are not contained in the latter. More, it interprets Scripture with authority. It is known to us by the *solemn* and *ordinary* teaching of the Church.

1° The *Solemn Teaching* consists chiefly in the definitions of Councils and Sovereign Pontiffs. It has but rarely concerned itself, it is true, with questions ascetical or mystical properly so-called; yet, it has often had to come to the fore in order to clear up and define those truths that form the bases of the science of perfection, to wit: God's life considered at its source; the elevation of man to a supernatural state; original sin and its consequences; the Redemption; grace communicated to regenerated man; merit, which increases in our souls the divine life; the sacraments, that impart grace; the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in which the fruits of Redemption are applied. In the course of our study we shall have to make use of all these definitions.

18. 2° The *ordinary teaching* is exercised in two ways, *theoretically* and *practically*.

A) The *theoretical* teaching is given us first in a *negative* way, by the condemnation of the propositions of false mystics; secondly, in a *positive* manner, in the common doctrine of the Fathers and theologians or in the conclusions that follow from the lives of the Saints.

a) False mystics have at different times altered the true notion of Christian perfection. Such were the Encratists and the Montanists in the first centuries, the Fraticelli and the Beguines or Beghards² of the Middle-Ages, Molinos and the Quietists³ in modern times. By condemning them, the Church has pointed out to us the rocks we must avoid and marked the course to which we must hold.

¹ In order to give an idea of the ascetical treasure contained in Holy Writ, we shall give, in the form of an *Appendix*, a synthetic summary of the spirituality of the Synoptics, *St. Paul* and *St. John*.

² DENZINGER, *Enchiridion*, 471-478; CATH. ENCYCL., *Beguines*.

³ DENZINGER, *Enchiridion*, 1221-1288, 1327-1349; CATH. ENCYCL., *Molinos* and *Quietism*.

19. b) On the other hand, a *common doctrine* has gradually evolved from all those major questions that make up the living commentary of biblical teaching. This doctrine is found in the Fathers, the theologians and spiritual writers. In reading them we are impressed with their agreement on all vital points that have reference to the nature of perfection, the necessary means of arriving thereat, and the principal stages to be followed. Doubtless, there remain a few controverted points, but these concern secondary questions. Their very discussion simply brings into relief the moral unanimity that exists with regard to the rest. The tacit approval which the Church gives to this common teaching is for us a safe guarantee of truth.

20. B) The *practical* teaching is to be found chiefly in the processes of the canonization of Saints, who have taught and practised the whole of these spiritual doctrines. We are all acquainted with the meticulous care exercised both in the revision of their writings and in the scrutiny of their virtues. It is easy to find out from the study of these documents just what principles of spirituality are the expression of the Church's mind with regard to the nature and the means of perfection. This can be clearly seen by perusing the learned work of Benedict XIV entitled: *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Canonizatione*, or some of the processes of Canonization, or even by reading biographies of the Saints, written according to the rules of sound criticism.

III. REASON ENLIGHTENED BY FAITH AND EXPERIENCE

21. Human reason is a gift of God absolutely indispensable to man for the attainment of truth, whether natural or supernatural. It plays a very important rôle in the study of spirituality, just as it does in the study of the other ecclesiastical sciences. When it is question, however, of revealed truth, it needs to be guided and complemented by the *light of faith*; and in the application of general principles to souls, it must look for help to *psychological experience*.

22. 1° Its first task is that of gathering, interpreting and setting in order the teachings of Scripture and Tradition. These are scattered through many books and need be put together if they are to form one consistent whole.

Besides, the sacred utterances were pronounced under diverse circumstances, elicited by particular questions, spoken to different hearers. In the same way, circumstances of time and place are often responsible for the texts of Tradition.

a) Therefore in order to grasp their meaning, we must needs place them in their proper setting, harmonize them with analogous teachings, and lastly, arrange them and interpret them in the light of the sum-total of Christian truths.

b) Once this first work is done, we may *draw conclusions* from these principles, show their legitimacy and their manifold applications to the thousand and one details of human life in its most varied situations.

c) Lastly, these principles and conclusions will be coordinated into one vast *synthesis* and thus will constitute a real science.

d) It is likewise the work of reason to *defend* ascetical doctrine against its detractors. Many attack it in the name of reason and science, seeing nothing but illusion in what embodies sublime reality. It is in the province of reason to make answer to such criticisms with the aid of philosophy and science.

23. 2° Spirituality is a science that is *lived*. It is important therefore to *show historically how it has been carried out in practice*. This requires the reading of the biographies of the Saints both ancient and modern, who lived in diverse countries and under different conditions. Thus we make sure of the way in which ascetical rules were interpreted when adapted to different epochs and peoples and to peculiar duties of state. More, since the members of the Church are not all holy, we must be thoroughly acquainted with the obstacles encountered in the practice of perfection and with the means employed to surmount them.

Psychological studies then are paramount, and to reading must be joined observation.

24. 3° It is further the task of reason enlightened by faith to *apply principles and general rules to each person in particular*. In this, account must be taken of the individual's temperament, character, sex and age, social standing, duties of state, as well as of the supernatural attractions of grace. One must also be mindful of the rules governing the *discernment of spirits*.

In order to fulfil this threefold rôle, it is not only necessary to possess a keen mind, but also a sound judgment and great tact and discernment. One must add to this the study of practical psychology, the study of temperaments, of nervous ailments and morbid conditions, which exert such a great influence over mind and will. Then, since it is question of a *supernatural* science, one must not forget that the light of faith plays a predominant part, and that it is the gifts of the Holy Ghost that bring this science to its supreme perfection. This is true in particular of the gift of *knowledge* which makes us rise even up to God; of the gift of *understanding* which gives us a deeper insight into the truths of faith; of the gift of *wisdom* which enables us to discern and relish these truths; of the gift of *counsel* that gives us skill to apply them to each individual case.

Thus it is that the Saints, who allowed themselves to be led by the Spirit of God, are the best fitted to understand and the best to apply the principles of the spiritual life.

They have a sort of instinct for divine things, a kind of second nature, that enables them to grasp them more readily and to relish them more. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones."¹

§ III. The Method to be followed.*

What method must be followed in order to make the best possible use of the sources we have just described? Ought we to employ the *experimental*, also called the *descriptive* method? the *deductive* one? or the combination of both? What attitude should we adopt in the employment of these methods? What aim should control their use?

25. 1° The *experimental* method, also called *descriptive* and *psychological*, consists in the observation of ascetical or mystical phenomena in oneself or in others, and in classifying these, in order to glean from them the characteristic marks peculiar to each state, as well as the virtues and dispositions proper to them. This, without taking into account the nature or cause of these facts, without any further inquiry as to whether they have their origin in virtues, or proceed from the gifts of the Holy Ghost or from

miraculous graces. This method, on its positive side, has many advantages, since facts must be well ascertained before we proceed to explain their nature and their cause.

26. a) But if this method were employed *to the exclusion* of the others, Ascetical Theology could not be made into a real science. This method does furnish the bases for a science, that is, facts and conclusions from these facts; it can even establish which are the practical means that ordinarily succeed the best. Yet, as long as one does not go on to the intimate nature and to the cause itself of these facts, one is dealing with psychology rather than with theology. Again, if one simply describes in detail the means of practising such or such a virtue, one does not sufficiently disclose the principle that motivates that virtue.

b) One would thus be exposed to form ill-founded opinions. For instance, if in studying contemplation, one does not make a distinction between what is miraculous, like ecstasy or levitation, and that which constitutes the essential element of contemplation, to wit, a prolonged and loving regard of God under the influence of a special grace, then one can easily reach the conclusion that all contemplation is *miraculous*. This, however, is opposed to the common doctrine.

c) Many a controversy over the mystic states would amount to little, if to the descriptions of these states were joined the distinctions and accuracy, which the study of theology supplies. Thus a distinction between *acquired* and *infused* contemplation enables us to understand better some very real states of soul and to harmonize some opinions which at first sight appear to contradict one another. Again, there are numerous degrees in *passive* contemplation: some may be accounted for by the habitual use of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; in other cases, God intervenes in order to provoke ideas and to aid us in drawing to the most striking conclusions. Finally there are some that can be hardly explained by anything save infused knowledge. All these distinctions are the result of long and patient research in the fields of speculation and practice. In abiding by them we shall reduce to a minimum the differences that divide the various schools.

27. 2° The *doctrinal* or *deductive* method consists in studying the teaching of Holy Scripture, Tradition, and theology (especially the *Summa* of St. Thomas) concerning

¹ *Mathth.*, XI, 25.

* R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., *La Vie spirituelle*, 10 Oct. 1919, p. II.

the spiritual life, and in drawing conclusions about its nature and perfection, about the obligation we have of making it the aim of our efforts, and about the means to be employed. In this method not enough stress is placed on psychological phenomena, on the temperament and character of individuals, on their special attractions, on the effects produced on individuals by certain particular means; nor is there a detailed study made of the mystic phenomena experienced and described by such persons as St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, etc. As we are liable to err in drawing conclusions, especially if we multiply them, it is simply wisdom to control our conclusions by facts. If, for instance, we discover that infused contemplation is rather rare, we shall then lay a few restrictions round the thesis sustained by some schools, namely, that all souls are called to the highest degrees of contemplation.¹

28. 3^o *Combination of both methods.*

A) Evidently, one must know how to harmonize both methods. This is in fact what most authors do, with this difference, that some lay more stress on *facts*, others on *principles*.²

We shall try to keep the golden mean without, however, making bold of success. a) The principles of mystical theology, drawn by the great masters from revealed truths, will help us to a better observation of the facts, to analyze the facts more thoroughly, to arrange them more systematically, and to interpret them more wisely. We must not forget the fact that, at least very often, the mystics describe their impressions without meaning to explain their nature. The principles spoken of will aid us also in seeking the cause of the facts, by taking into account truths already known, and to coördinate them into a real science.

b) *The study of the facts*, ascetical and mystical, will in turn correct whatever is too rigid and too absolute in purely dialectic conclusions. The truth is that there can be

¹ We rejoice therefore that two Reviews of different tendencies, *La Vie Spirituelle* and *la Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* have entered upon the course of making most careful and precise distinctions with regard to the call to contemplation: the *general and individual* call, the *proximate and remote*, the *efficacious* and *sufficient*. By narrowing down the sense of these words and studying the facts, the different schools come to understand one another better.

² Thus, *Th. de Vallgornera* gives more prominence to the deductive method while P. Poullain, in the *Grâces d'oraison*, emphasizes the descriptive method.

no absolute opposition between the principles and the facts. Hence, if experience shows us that the number of mystics is quite limited, we cannot hasten to the conclusion that this is due solely to resistance to grace.¹ It is also well to keep in mind that in the process of canonization the Church ascertains genuine sanctity rather from the practice of heroic virtue than from the kind of contemplation. This goes to show that the degree of sanctity is not always and necessarily in proportion to the kind and degree of mental prayer.

29. B) *How can these two methods be combined?* a) It is necessary first of all to study *the deposit of revelation* as presented to us by Scripture and Tradition, including, of course, in the latter the ordinary teaching of the Church. From this deposit of truth we must determine by the *deductive* method what is Christian perfection and Christian life, what are its different degrees, what are the stages usually followed in order to reach contemplation, passing through mortification and the practice of the moral and theological virtues. Finally, from it we must also determine in what this contemplation consists, considering it either in its essential elements or in the extraordinary phenomena that at times accompany it.

30. b) This doctrinal study must be accompanied by methodical *observation*: 1) Souls must be examined with care; their qualities and their faults, their peculiar traits, their likes and dislikes, the movements of nature and of grace that take place within them. This psychological data will allow us to know better the means of perfection that are best suited to them; the virtues they stand in greatest need of and towards which they are drawn by grace; their correspondence with grace; the obstacles they encounter and the means most apt to insure success. 2) To widen the field of experience we must read attentively *the lives of the Saints*, especially those that, without hiding their defects, describe their tactics in combatting them, the means they availed themselves of to practise virtue, and lastly, how they rose from the ascetical to the mystical life, and under what influences. 3) It is also in the life of *the contemplatives* that we must study the different phenomena of contemplation, from its first faint glimmers to its full splendour. In them

¹ The full meaning of these remarks will be better understood when we come to the study of the contemporary discussions on contemplation.

we must study the *effects of sanctity* these graces work, the *trials* they had to undergo, the virtues they practised. All this will complete and, at times, correct the theoretical knowledge we may already possess.

31. e) With clear theological principles, with well-studied and well-classified mystic phenomena we can rise more easily to the *nature* of contemplation, its *causes*, its *species*, and distinguish what is normal from what is extraordinary in it. 1) We shall investigate how far the *gifts of the Holy Ghost* are formal principles of contemplation, and in what manner they must be cultivated so as to enter into the interior dispositions favorable to mystic life. 2) We shall examine whether the duly verified phenomena can all be accounted for by the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*, whether some of them postulate *infused species*, and how these work in the soul. Again we may have to inquire further and see whether love alone produces these states of soul without any added knowledge. 3) Then we shall be able to see better the nature of the *passive state*, in what it consists, to what extent the soul remains active, and what part is of God and what of the soul in infused contemplation. We shall be able to determine what is ordinary in this state and what is extraordinary and preternatural. Thus we shall be in a better position to study the problem of vocation to the mystical state and of the number of real contemplatives.

Proceeding in this manner, we shall have a better hope of arriving at the truth, and at real practical conclusions for the direction of souls. Such a study will prove as attractive as it is sanctifying.

32. 4° *What must be our attitude in following this method?* Whatever the method employed, it is essential that we study these difficult problems with calmness, aiming at knowing the truth, not at making capital at all costs in behalf of a pet system.

a) Hence it is fundamental to seek out and place to the fore whatever is *certain* or *commonly admitted*, and to relate to a second place whatever is disputed. The direction souls must be given *does not depend on controverted questions*, but on commonly accepted doctrine. All schools are unanimous in recognizing that charity and renouncement, love and sacrifice are indispensable to all souls and in all the ways of perfection, and that the harmonious combination of

this twofold element depends largely upon the character of the person directed. It is admitted on all hands that no one can afford at any time to put out of his life the spirit of penance, even though it may take different forms according to the different degrees of perfection. In the same manner, it is agreed that, in order to arrive at the unitive way, one must exercise oneself more and more perfectly in the practice of both the moral and the theological virtues; that the gifts of the Holy Ghost, cultivated with care, endow the soul with a certain docility...at renders it more submissive to the inspirations of grace, and, should God call it thither, prepares it for contemplation. No one questions the important fact that infused contemplation is essentially a *free gift of God*; that God bestows it upon whom He wills, and when He wills; that consequently it is not in anyone's power to place himself within the passive state, and that the indications of a proximate call to such a state are the ones described by St. John of the Cross. Likewise, all agree that once souls have reached contemplation, they must advance in perfect conformity with God's will, in a holy abandon and above all in humility.

33. b) It is our opinion that if we approach these problems in a *conciliatory manner*, looking for what tends to harmonise rather than for what would emphasize differences, we shall eventually not indeed eliminate these controversies, but shall certainly mitigate them and come to recognize the soul of truth contained in every system. This is the most we can do here and now. For the solution of certain difficult problems we must patiently await the light of the Beatific Vision.

§ IV. Excellence and Necessity of Ascetic Theology

The little we have said on the nature, sources, and method of Ascetical Theology will enable us now to survey briefly its *excellence* and its *necessity*.

I. EXCELLENCE OF ASCETICAL THEOLOGY

34. Its excellence comes from its object, which is one of the most exalted man can possibly study. It is in fact

the divine life present and constantly fostered in the soul of man. If we analyse this notion we shall readily note how worthy of our attention this branch of theology is.¹

¹⁰ First of all, we make a study of *God in His most intimate relations with the soul*. That is, we consider the Most Blessed Trinity dwelling and living in us, giving us a share in the divine life, collaborating in our good works and thus ever aiding us to develop that life; we see the same Triune God helping us to purify and beautify our soul by the practice of virtue, transforming it till it be ripe for the beatific vision. Can we imagine a like grandeur? We cannot think of anything more sublime than this transformation God works in souls in order to unite them to Himself and assimilate them perfectly.

²⁰ We next study *the soul itself cooperating with God*. We see it weaning itself little by little from its faults and imperfections, nursing Christian virtues, making efforts to imitate the virtues of its Divine Model in spite of the obstacles it finds both within and without, fostering the gifts of the Holy Ghost, developing a marvellous responsiveness to the least touch of grace, and becoming each day more and more like its Father in Heaven. To-day, when *life* and the questions related thereto are considered the ones most worthy of our attention, we cannot overestimate the import of a science that treats of a supernatural life, of a participation in God's own life, that tells us its origin, its growth and its full development in eternity. Is it not the most noble object of study?

II. NECESSITY OF ASCETICAL THEOLOGY

To be the more precise in such a delicate matter, we shall explain: ¹⁰ Its *necessity* for the *priest*; ²⁰ its *usefulness* for the faithful; ³⁰ the *practical way* of studying it.

¹⁰ Its necessity for the Priest.

35. The priest is bound to sanctify himself and his brethren, and from this twofold point of view, he is obliged to study the science of the Saints.

¹ « The value of the science of Ascetic Theology is so obvious from its very definition that it need not be dwelt upon at any great length. The higher christian life is the noblest and greatest thing in the world. Its principles and its laws are of more importance to the Christian than all other philosophies and legislations, its methods more important to know than those by which fame is won and wealth accumulated. » HOGAN, *Clerical Studies*, p. 265.

A) We shall demonstrate with St. Thomas, later on, that the priest is not only obliged to strive after perfection, but that he must possess perfection in a higher degree even than the *simple religious*. Now, a knowledge of what the Christian life is and of the means of perfecting it is *normally* necessary to reach perfection, for *nil volitum quin praecogitum*.

a) Knowledge fires and stimulates desire. To know what sanctity is, its sublimity, its moral obligation, its wonderful effects on the soul, its fruitfulness, to know all this, we say, is to *desire* sanctity.

One cannot for any length of time behold a luscious fruit without conceiving the thought of tasting it. Desire, especially when vivid and sustained already constitutes an incipient act. It sets the will into motion and urges it on to the possession of the good the mind has apprehended. It gives it impulse and energy to obtain it; it sustains the effort required to seize upon it. This is all the more necessary when one considers how many are the obstacles that work counter to our spiritual advance.

b) To know in detail the various steps in the way to perfection, and to see the sustained efforts made by the Saints to triumph over difficulties and to advance steadily towards the desired goal, will stir up our courage, sustain our enthusiasm in the midst of the struggle and prevent us from becoming lax or tepid, especially if we recall the helps and consolations which God has prepared for souls of goodwill.

c) This study is of capital importance and all the more in our day: we actually live in an atmosphere of dissipation, of rationalism, of naturalism and sensualism. It envelops even unawares a multitude of Christian souls, and finds its way into the sanctuary itself. It is idle to repeat, that the very best way to react against these fatal tendencies of our time is to live in close contact with Our Lord by a systematic study of the principles of the spiritual life — principles that are in direct opposition to the threefold concupiscence.

36. B) For the sanctification of the souls entrusted to their care. **a)** Even in the case of *sinners*, the priest must know Ascetical Theology to teach them how to avoid the occasions of sin, how to struggle against their passions, resist

temptations and practise the virtues opposed to the vices they must avoid. No doubt Moral Theology suggests these things, but Ascetical Theology coördinates and develops them.

b) Besides, in almost every parish one finds *chosen souls* whom God calls to perfection. If they are well directed, they will by their prayers, their example, and the thousand means at their disposal, be a real help to the priest in his ministry. At all events a priest can train up such by choosing carefully from among the children attending Sunday school or sodalities. In order to succeed in this important task, the priest must of necessity be a good guide of souls. He must know thoroughly the rules given by the saints, which are contained in spiritual books. Without this, he will have neither the taste nor the ability required for this difficult art of guiding souls.

37. c) One more reason for the study of the ways of perfection lies in the guidance to be given *fervent souls*. These one meets with, at times, even in the most secluded country districts. In order to lead these souls to the prayer of simplicity and to ordinary contemplation one must, not to blunder and actually place obstacles in their way, know not only Ascetical but also Mystical Theology. On this point *St. Theresa* remarks: "For this, a spiritual director is very much needed — but he must be experienced... My opinion is, and will always be, that as long as it is possible, every Christian must consult *learned men* — the more learned the better. Those that walk in the ways of prayer have more need of such than the rest; and the more so, the more spiritual they are... I am thoroughly persuaded of this, that the devil will not seduce with his wiles the man of prayer who takes counsel with theologians, unless he wishes to deceive himself. According to my opinion, the devil is in mortal fear of a science that is both humble and virtuous; he knows full well that it will tear his mask and rout him." ¹ *St. John of the Cross* speaks in the same way: "Such masters of the spiritual life (who know not the mystic ways) fail to understand the souls engaged in this quiet and solitary contemplation... they make them take up again the ordinary ways of meditation, to exercise the memory, to perform interior acts in which such souls meet with nothing but dryness and distraction... Let this be well understood :

¹ *Life by Herself*, ch. 23. The whole passage to be read with others scattered through the works of the Saint.

Whoever errs through ignorance, when his ministry imposes on him the duty of acquiring knowledge that is indispensable, shall not escape punishment in proportion to the resultant evil." ¹

Let no one say to himself: If I encounter such souls, I will abandon them to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. — The Holy Ghost will make answer that He has entrusted them to your care, and that you must coöperate with Him in guiding them. Without doubt, He can Himself guide them, but to preclude any fear of illusion, He wills that such inspirations be submitted to the approbation of a human counsellor.

²⁰ *Its usefulness for the Laity.*

38. We say *usefulness* and not necessity, since lay folk can well entrust themselves to the guidance of a learned and experienced director and are not therefore absolutely bound to the study of Ascetical Theology.

Nevertheless the study of Ascetical Theology will be most useful to them for three good reasons: — a) In order to stimulate and sustain *the desire* of perfection as well as to give a definitive *knowledge* of the Christian life and of the means which enable us to perfect it. No one desires what one does not know, *ignoti nulla cupido*, whereas reading spiritual books creates or increases the sincere desire to put into practice what has been read. Many souls, as is well known, are ardently carried on to perfection by reading *The Following of Christ*, the *Spiritual Combat*, *The Introduction to a Devout Life* or the *Treatise on the Love of God*.

b) Even when one has a spiritual guide, the reading of a good Ascetical Theology *facilitates* and *completes* spiritual direction. One knows better what must be told in confession, what in direction. It makes one understand and retain better the advice of one's spiritual adviser because it may be found again in a work to which one can return and reread. It, in turn, relieves the spiritual director from entering into endless details. After giving some solid advice he can have the penitent himself read some treatise where he will find supplementary information. Thus he can shorten his direction without causing any loss to his penitent.

¹ *La vive flamme d'amour*, strophe III, v. 3. § II, p. 308-311.

e) Finally, if a spiritual guide cannot be had or if spiritual advice can be had but at rare intervals, a treatise on the spiritual life will, in a way, *take the place* of spiritual direction. There is no doubt, as we shall repeat later on, that spiritual direction constitutes the normal means in the training to perfection. But if for some reason or other one is unable to find a good adviser, God provides for the lack; and one of the means He uses is precisely some such book as points out in a definite and systematic manner the way to perfection.

3° *The Way to study this Science.*

39. Three things are needed to acquire the knowledge necessary for the direction of souls: a *Manual*, reading the *great masters*, and *practice*.

(A) *The Study of a Manual.* The seminarian is indeed helped in acquainting himself with this difficult art by the spiritual conferences he listens to, the practice of spiritual direction, and above all by the gradual acquisition of virtue. To this, however, the study of a good Manual must be added.

1) The spiritual conferences are chiefly an exercise of piety, a series of instructions, of advice and exhortation concerning the spiritual life. Rarely, however, do they treat *all the questions concerning the spiritual life* in a methodical and complete fashion. 2) At all events, seminarians will soon *forget* what they heard and will lack competent knowledge, unless they have a Manual to which they can relate the varied advice given them and which they can reread from time to time. Rightly did Pius X say that one of the sciences young clerics should acquire at the Seminary is: "*The science of Christian piety and practice, called ascetical theology.*"¹

40. (B) *A deep study of the Spiritual Masters, par-*

¹ *Motu proprio*, 9 Sept. 1910, A. A. S., II, p. 668 — Pope BENEDICT XV has ordered that a chair of Ascetical Theology be established at the two great theological Schools of Rome.

In the meeting of the Seminary Department of the Educational Association at Cincinnati in 1908 the late Bishop Maes of Covington complained that our young men do not seem to be acquainted with the spiritual life and added: "If I were to put my finger on the great defect in the training of many Seminarians, I would point to the absence of a course of Ascetic Theology."

In the meeting of the same Seminary Department at Milwaukee in 1924, the following resolution was passed:

"That ascetical theology should be systematically studied with a suitable text, and that the curriculum should be so ordered as to provide for such courses."

ticularly those who have been *canonized* or those, who although not canonized, have *lived saintly lives*.

a) As a matter of fact, it is by coming into contact with these that the *heart* glows, that the *mind*, enlightened by faith, sees more clearly and relishes better the great principles of the spiritual life. It is at their touch that the will, sustained by grace, is drawn to the practice of the virtues so vividly described by those who have lived them in the highest degree. By the perusal of *the lives of the Saints* one will understand even better why and how one must imitate them. The irresistible influence of their examples will add new strength to their teaching: "*Verba movent, exempla trahunt.*"

(b) This study, begun at the Seminary, ought to be *continued* and *perfected* in the *ministry*. The direction of souls will render it more practical. Just as a good physician is never through advancing in knowledge by practice and study, just so a good spiritual adviser will complement theory by actual contact with souls and by further studies, according to the needs of the souls entrusted to his care.

41. c) *The practice of Christian and Priestly virtues*, under the care of a wise director: To understand well the various stages of perfection, the best means is to go through them oneself, just as the best mountain-guide is the one that is familiar on first-hand information with the trails. Once one has been wisely guided, one is more competent to direct others for the simple reason that it is experience itself that shows us how to apply the rules to particular cases.

If these three elements are combined the study of Ascetical Theology will prove most fruitful both to self and to others.

42. **Solution of some difficulties.** A) A reproach often directed against Asceticism is that it produces a false conscience, by going so far beyond Moral Theology in its exactions, and by demanding of souls a perfection that is well-nigh beyond realization. This reproach would be indeed well grounded if Asceticism would not make a distinction between *commandment* and *counsel*, between souls called to high perfection and those not so called. This is not so, for while it does urge chosen souls toward heights that are out of the reach of ordinary Christians, it does not lose sight of the difference between commandment and counsel, between the conditions that are essential for salvation and those that are necessary to perfection. It keeps in view on the other hand, that the observance of certain counsels is indispensable to the keeping of the commandments.

43. B) Asceticism is also attacked on the ground that it fosters egotism since it puts personal sanctification above all else. But Our Lord Himself teaches us that our chief concern must be the salvation of our souls: "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"¹ In this there is not the least egotism, for one of the essentials for salvation is love of the neighbor. This love is manifested by works both corporal and spiritual, and perfection precisely demands that we love our neighbor to the point of sacrifice as Christ loved us. Should this be *egotism*, we must acknowledge that we have little to fear from it. We have only to read the lives of the Saints to see that they were the most unselfish and the most charitable of men.

C) The further objection is made that Asceticism, by impelling souls towards *contemplation*, turns them from a life of action. To state that contemplation is detrimental to an active life is to pass over historical facts. "Real mystics," says *M. de Montmorand*,² an unbeliever, "are practical men of action not given to mere thought and theory. They possess the gift and the knack of organization as well as talent for administration showing themselves well equipped for the handling of affairs. The works instituted by them are both feasible and lasting. In the conception and conduct of their undertakings they have given proof of prudence and enterprise and full evidence of that exact appreciation of possibilities which characterizes common sense. In fact, good sense seemed to be their outstanding quality, — good sense undisturbed either by an unwholesome exaltation, or a disordered imagination, but rather, possessed of an uncommon and powerful keenness of judgment."

Have we not seen in Church History that most of those Saints who have written on the spiritual life were at the same time men both of learning and action? Consider Clement of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Anselm, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, Gerson, St. Theresa, St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, Cardinal de Bérulle, M. Accarie, and numberless others. Contemplation far from hampering action, enlightens and directs it.

There is therefore nothing worthier, or more important, or more useful than Ascetical Theology rightly understood.

§ V. Division of Mystical and Ascetical Theology

I. THE VARIOUS PLANS FOLLOWED BY AUTHORS

We shall first enumerate the various plans generally followed and then present the one which seems best suited to our purpose. Different points of view may be taken when making a logical division of the science of spirituality.

44. 1^o Some look at it chiefly as a *practical science*. They leave aside all the speculative truths that form its

basis and limit themselves to coördinate as methodically as possible the rules of Christian perfection. So did Cassian, in his *Conferences*, and St. John Climacus, in the *Mystic Ladder*. Rodriguez in modern times did the same in his *Practice of Christian Perfection*. The advantage this plan offers is it takes up at once the study of the practical means that lead to perfection. Its drawback is to leave out the *incentives* given by the consideration of what God and Jesus Christ have done and still do for us, and not to base the practice of virtue upon those *deep* and all-embracing convictions that are formed by reflecting on the truths of dogma.

45. 2^o Likewise the most illustrious among the Fathers both Greek and Latin, to wit, St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, St. Augustine and St. Hilary have taken care to base their teachings regarding the spiritual life upon the truths of faith and to build on them the virtues, the nature and degrees of which they explained. The same is true of the great theologians of the Middle Ages, Richard of St. Victor, Blessed Albert the Great, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure. This is exactly what was done by the French School of the XVII century, through such men as Bérulle, Condren, Olier, St. J. Eudes.¹ Its great merit lies in the fact that it makes for the enlightenment of the mind and the strengthening of convictions so as to render more easy to men the practice of those austere virtues it proposes. It is accused at times of being given too much to speculation while touching little on practice. To unite these two plans would be the ideal. Several have attempted it and with success.²

46. 3^o Of those who strive to combine these two essential elements, some adopt the *ontological* order treating successively of the various virtues; others follow the *psychological* order of development of the said virtues throughout the course of the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways.

A) Among the former we find St. Thomas. In the *Summa* he treats successively of the theological and moral virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which correspond to each virtue. He has been followed by the principal

¹ H. BREMOND, *Hist. litt. du sentiment religieux*, III, L'Ecole française, 1921.

² This has been very well done, among others, by St. Jean Eudes in his writings; by L. TROMSON in particular Examsens, in which making use of the works of J. J. OLIER, he has aptly condensed the asceticism of the latter.

¹ *Matth.*, XVI, 26.

² M. DE MONTMORAND, *Psychologie des Mystiques*, 1920, p. 20-21.

authors belonging to French School of the XVII century and by other writers.¹

B) Among the latter are all those whose principal aim was to form directors of souls. They describe the progress of the soul through the three ways; at the head of their treatises they simply give a short introduction on the nature of the spiritual life. Such are Thomas of Vallgornera, O. P., *Mystica Theologia Dvni Thomae*, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, O. C. D., *Summa theologiae mysticae*, Schram, O. S. B., *Institutiones theologiae mysticae*, Scaramelli, S. J., *Directorio Ascetico*, and today, A. Saudreau, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Fr. Aurelianus a SS. Sacramento, O. C. D., *Cursus Asceticus*.

47. 4° Others, like Alvarez de Paz, S. J. and P. Le Gaudier, S. J., have combined both methods: they treat at length, from the point of view of dogma, whatever appertains to the nature of the spiritual life and the chief means of perfection; then they make application of these general principles to the three ways. It seems to us that to attain the end we have in view, that is, to form *spiritual directors*, the last is the best plan to follow. No doubt, with such a scheme, one is bound to repeat and to parcel out, yet any division of the subject would necessarily offer like inconveniences. For these one can make up by proper references to subjects already dealt with or to be unfolded later on.

II. OUR PLAN.

48. We divide our Treatise of Ascetic Theology into two parts. The first is above all doctrinal. We entitle it *Principles*. In it we explain the *origin and nature* of the Christian life and its *perfection*, the *obligation* of striving after it and the *general means* of attaining it.

We designate the second part as *the Application of principles* to the different categories of souls. In it we follow the gradual rise of the soul that, desirous of perfection, goes successively through three ways, *purgative, illuminative, and unitive*. Although resting on dogma this latter part is chiefly *psychological*.

The first part is designed to *throw light* on our path by showing us the divine plan of sanctification. It should

inspire us with courage in our efforts, for it reminds us of God's generosity toward us. It traces for us as in a foreground the great lines we are to follow in order to correspond to this bounty of God Almighty by the complete giving of self. The second part is meant to *guide* us in the detailed exposition of these successive stages, which, God helping, must be traversed to reach the goal. This plan, we hope, will unite the advantages of the various other divisions.



¹ In our day by MGR. GAY, *De la vie et des vertus chrétiennes*; CH. DE SMET, S. J., *Notre vie surnaturelle*.

In the *fourth*, the obligation of tending to perfection is determined and the extent to which the faithful, religious, and priests are respectively bound.

A *fifth* chapter is devoted to specifying the general means that help us to advance in perfection, means common indeed to all, yet susceptible of degrees. These degrees will be treated in the second part when speaking of the three ways.

CHAPTER I.

Origin of the spiritual life

51. This chapter is intended to give us a better knowledge of the excellence of the supernatural life in as much as it is a free gift; and of the nobility as well as the weakness of man, upon whom it has been bestowed. To help us understand it better we shall see :

- I. What the *natural* life of man is.
- II. Man's *elevation* to the supernatural state.
- III. His fall.
- IV. His *restoration* by a Divine Redeemer.

ART. I. THE NATURAL LIFE OF MAN

52. Here we must describe man's condition as it would have been in the purely natural state, such as it is described by Philosophers. It is important to recall to mind, though briefly, what right reason teaches us on this point, because our spiritual life, while preserving and perfecting our natural life, is grafted on it.¹

53. 1° Man is a mysterious compound of *body* and *soul*. In him *spirit* and *matter* closely unite to form but one nature and one person. Man is, so to speak, the nexus, the point of contact between spiritual and bodily substances — an abstract of all the marvels of creation. He is a little world gathering in itself all other worlds, a *microcosm*, showing forth the wisdom of God who united in this fashion two things so far apart.

This little world is full of life : according to St. Gregory, one finds there three sorts of life, *vegetative, animal* and

¹ Besides Philosophical Treatises, of CH. DE SMEDT, *Notre Vie surnaturelle*, 1922, Introduction p. 1-37; J. SCHRYVERS, *Les Principes de la Vie spirituelle*, 1922, p. 31.

FIRST PART

Principles

PURPOSE AND DIVISION OF THE FIRST PART.

49. The aim of this first part is to call briefly to mind the principal dogmas upon which our spiritual life rests, to show the nature and perfection of this life, and the general means by which perfection is reached. Here we follow the *ontological* order, assigning to the second part the task of describing the *psychological* order normally followed by souls in the use they make of the various means of perfection.

C. I. *Origin* of the supernatural life : the raising of man to the supernatural state, his fall, and redemption.

C. II. *Nature* of the Christian life : God's part and the soul's part.

C. III. *Perfection* of this life : the love of God and of the neighbor carried to the point of sacrifice.

C. IV. Obligation for *laymen, religious* and *priests* to strive after this perfection.

C. V. *General means*, interior and exterior, of attaining perfection.

50. The reason for such a division is easily perceived. The *first* chapter, by taking us back to the source itself of the supernatural life, helps us to a better grasp of its *nature* and *its excellence*.

The *second* chapter reveals the *nature* of the *Christian* life in regenerated man; the part God takes therein by *giving Himself to us* through His Son; and by assisting us through the agency of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. It likewise explains the *rôle* man plays in *giving* himself to God by a constant and generous coöperation with grace.

The *third* chapter shows that perfection in this life essentially consists in the love of God and of the neighbor for God's sake. It shows further, however, that this love here on earth cannot be exercised without generous sacrifices.

*intellectual.*¹ Like *plants* man takes food, *grows*, and *reproduces* himself. Like *animals*, he is aware of sensible objects, towards which he is drawn by sensitive appetite, emotions and passions, and like animals he moves spontaneously from within. Like *angels*, though in a different manner and in a lesser degree, he knows intellectually suprasensible being and truth, while his will is freely drawn towards rational good.

54. 2° These three kinds of life are not superimposed one on the other, but they blend and arrange themselves in due relation in order to converge towards the same end — the perfection of the whole man. It is both a rational and a biological law that in a composite being life cannot subsist and develop save on condition of harmonizing and bringing its various elements under the control of the highest of them. The former must be mastered before they can be made to minister. In man, then, the lower faculties, vegetative and sensitive, must needs be subject to reason and will. This condition is essential. Whenever it fails, life languishes or vanishes. Whenever this subordination ceases altogether, disintegration of the elements sets in; this means decay of the system and, finally, death.²

55. 3° Life is, therefore, a struggle. Our lower faculties tend lustily toward pleasure, whilst the higher ones are drawn towards moral good. Often conflict goes on between these; what pleases us, is not always morally good, and, to establish order, reason must fight hostile tendencies and actually conquer. This is the *fight of the spirit* against *the flesh*, of the *will* against *passion*. This struggle is at times hard and painful. Just as in the springtime of the year the sap rises up within plants, so at times violent impulses towards pleasure rise in the sensitive part of our soul.

56. These impulses, nevertheless, are not *irresistible*. The will helped by the intellect exercises over these movements of passion a fourfold control. 1) The power of *foresight* which consists in *foreseeing* and *forestalling* a great many dangerous fancies, impressions and emotions, by a constant and intelligent vigilance. 2) The power of *inhibition* and *moderation*, by means of which we either check or at least allay the violent passions which arise in the soul.

Thus we are able to prevent our eyes from lighting upon dangerous objects, our imagination from dwelling upon unwholesome pictures; should a fit of anger stir, we are able to stem it. 3) The power of *stimulation*, which through the will stirs and gives *impetus* to the movements of the passions. 4) The power of *direction*, which allows us to direct those movements towards good and thereby to divert them from evil.

57. Besides this inward strife, there may be other conflicts *between the soul and its Maker*. Although it is evident that our plain duty is that of entire submission to Our Sovereign Master, yet for this subjection we must pay the price. A lust for freedom and independence ever inclines us to swerve from Divine Authority. The cause lurks in our pride, which cannot be trampled upon, except by the humble admission of our unworthiness and our littleness in the face of those absolute rights the Creator has upon a creature. Thus it is that even in this purely natural state we would still have a fight to wage against the threefold concupiscence.

58. 4° If far from yielding to these evil inclinations we would have done our duty, we could have justly expect a reward. For our immortal soul, this reward would have consisted, first, in a deeper and a greater knowledge of God and of truth — a knowledge, of course, analytical and discursive; then, in a love, also purer and more enduring. If, on the contrary we would have voluntarily violated the law in grave matter and remained unrepentant, we should have failed of our end, meriting as punishment the privation of God and such torments as would fit the gravity of our faults.

This would have been our condition had we been constituted in a merely natural state. This state has not, as a matter of fact, ever existed, for according to St. Thomas, man was raised to the supernatural state at the very moment of creation, or immediately after, as St. Bonaventure says.

God in His infinite goodness, was not satisfied with conferring upon man natural gifts. He willed to elevate him to a higher state by granting him still others of a preternatural and supernatural character.

¹ He says (*Homil. 20 in Evangelia*): « Homo habet vivere cum plantis, sentire cum animalibus, intelligere cum angelis ».

² A. EYMIEU, *Le Gouvernement de soi-même*, t. III, *La Loi de la Vie*, book III, p. 138.

ART. II. THE ELEVATION OF MAN TO THE SUPERNATURAL STATE¹

I. *Notion of the Supernatural*

59. Let us call to mind that Theology distinguishes between what is absolutely and what is relatively supernatural.

¹° An *absolutely* supernatural gift is one which in its very essence (*quoad substantiam*) transcends nature altogether, so that it cannot be due to nor be merited by any creature whatsoever. It surpasses therefore not only all the active powers of nature, but even all its rights, all its exigencies.

Because it is given to a creature it is something *finite*; but since only what is divine can surpass the exigencies of all creation, it is also something *divine*. It is the communication of a divine thing, yet, it is shared in a finite way. We therefore keep clear of pantheism. Actually, there are only two instances of the *absolute-supernatural*: the *Incar-nation* and *Sanctifying Grace*.

A) In the first instance, God, in the person of the Word, united Himself to man in such wise that the human nature of Jesus belonged absolutely to the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. Thus Jesus is, on account of His human nature, true man, whilst as regards His person He is very God. This is a *substantial* union. It does not blend the two natures in one, but whilst preserving their integrity, unites them in one and the same person — that of the Eternal Word. It constitutes, then, a personal or *hypostatic* union. This is the absolute supernatural at its highest.

B) The other *absolute* supernatural — a lesser degree — is exemplified in *sanctifying grace*.

Grace does not change the person of man. It does not make him God. It does indeed modify his nature and powers, but only accidentally. He becomes similar to God — God-like, *divinae consors naturae*, — capable of possessing God directly through the Beatific Vision, and of contemplating Him face to face even as He beholds Himself when grace will finally be transformed into glory. Evidently this privilege of knowing and loving God as the

Father, Son and Holy Ghost know and love one another surpasses all the exigencies of even the most perfect creature, since it actually *makes* us share in God's intellectual life and in His nature.

60. ²° What is called the *relative* supernatural, is in itself something that would not be beyond the capacity or the exigencies of all creatures, but simply beyond the powers and actual needs of a certain particular nature, for example, infused knowledge, which is beyond the capacity of man but not of angels. If then it is granted to man, it is supernatural *relatively*, that is with regard to man, but not in itself, in its very substance, since it is natural to angels; hence it is called also *preternatural*.

God gave man the supernatural in these two forms. In fact, He bestowed upon our first parents *the gift of preternatural integrity*, which, whilst completing their nature, fitted it for *grace* itself. The sum total of these two endowments constitutes what is called *original justice*.

II. *Preternatural gifts conferred on Adam*

61. The *gift of integrity* perfect nature without raising it to the level of the divine. This is, indeed, a *gratuitous* gift, *preternatural*, above the wants and capacity of man, yet not absolutely *supernatural*. This gift comprises three great privileges, which without altering human nature in its essence, gave man a perfection to which he had no title. These are *infused knowledge*, *control of the passions* or the absence of concupiscence, and *immortality of the body*.

62. A) **Infused science.** Our nature does not require it, since it is the privilege of angels. Man left to his own resources can acquire knowledge only gradually and painfully and in subjection to certain psychological laws. In order to fit Adam for his rôle of first educator of the human race God granted him infused knowledge of all the truths he needed to know, and a facility for the acquisition of experimental knowledge. In this sense man approached the likeness of angels.

63. B) **The control of the passions**, that is, exemption from the sway of concupiscence which renders so difficult the practice of virtue. We have already remarked that, owing to his very constitution, there takes place in man a terrible struggle between the sincere desire for what is good, on one side, and a reckless lust for pleasure and sensible

¹ St. THOMAS, I, q. 93-102; J. BAINVEL, S. J., *Nature et surnaturel*; ABBÉ DE BROGLIE, *Confér. sur la vie surnaturelle*, t. II, p. 3-80; L. LABAUCHE, *God and Man*, vol. II, p. II, c. I-II; R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O. P., ch. II, art. II.

goods on the other, to say nothing of a marked proneness to pride. This is really what we call the threefold concupisence. To counteract this natural drawback God endowed our first parents with a certain *control of the passions* which, without rendering them impeccable, made easy for them the practise of virtue. That *tyranny of concupisence* that so vigorously pushes on to evil did not exist in Adam; there was simply a certain tendency toward pleasure but in due subordination to reason. Because his will was subject to God, his lower faculties were in turn subservient to reason and his body to his soul. This was order — perfect rectitude.

64. C) The immortality of the body. By nature man is subject to sickness and to death. In order that his soul could attend unencumbered to higher duties, a special disposition of Providence preserved him from this double infirmity. These three privileges were designed to fit man better for the reception and the use of a gift still more precious, a gift absolutely supernatural — *sanctifying grace*.

III. *The supernatural privileges conferred on Adam*

65. A) By nature man is the *servant* of God, His property. — In His infinite goodness God willed to incorporate us into His family. He made man His heir-apparent when He reserved for him a place in His kingdom. For this bounty man will never be able to thank God adequately.

In order that this adoption might not remain a mere formality, He gave him a share in His divine life. This communication of God's life to man is, indeed, a created quality but none the less real. It enables man here on earth to enjoy the light of faith (a light greater by far than that of reason), and in heaven, to possess God by the Beatific Vision and with a love corresponding to the clearness of that vision.

66. B) This was habitual grace. It perfected and deified, so to speak, the very substance of Adam's soul. To it were added the *infused virtues* and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*, which in turn deified his faculties. Lastly, *actual grace* came to set in motion all this supernatural organism enabling man to elicit supernatural acts, — God-like acts, meriting eternal life.

This grace is in substance the same as is granted to us by justification. We shall not explain it in detail now,

but later when in the second chapter we speak of regenerated man.

All these prerogatives, with the exception of infused knowledge, were given to Adam, not as a personal gift, but as a family possession — a patrimony to be handed down to his heirs should he abide faithful to God.

ART. III. THE FALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES¹

I. *The fall*

67. In spite of these privileges man remained *free*, and in order to merit heaven he was put to a *test*. This test consisted in the fulfilment of the divine law. It consisted in particular in the carrying out of a *positive command* added to the natural law. Genesis expresses it in the form of a prohibition which forbade eating the fruit of the tree of *knowledge of good and evil*. Holy Writ narrates how the devil in the guise of a serpent came to tempt our first parents by raising a doubt in their minds as to the legitimacy of this ban. He tried to persuade them that if they ate the forbidden fruit, far from dying, they would become like gods, since they would know for themselves what was good and what evil, without need of recourse to the law of God: "*You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.*"² This was a temptation to pride, to revolt against God. Man fell and committed a formal act of *disobedience*, as St. Paul remarks,³ but an act inspired by *pride* and soon followed by further delinquencies. It was a refusal to submit to God's authority, therefore, a grievous fault. The prohibition being an instrument to test the fidelity of the first man, this refusal amounted to a negation of God's wisdom and of His sovereign dominion. The violation was all the more grave since our first parents had full knowledge of God's liberality towards them, of His inalienable rights, of the importance of a precept carrying such a sanction, and since they were in no wise swept away by passion, having had ample time to weigh the frightful consequences of their act.

68. The question even suggests itself: how could they sin at all, since they were not under the sway of concupisence. This we understand if we recall that no creature

¹ St. THOM., II^a II^e q. 163-165; *de Malo*, q. 4; BAINVEL, *Nature et Supernatural*, ch. VI-VII; A. DE BROGLIE, *op. cit.*, p. 133-134; L. LABAUCHE, *op. cit.*, Part II, ch. I-V; AD. TANQUEREY, *Syn. theol. dogm.* t. II, n. 882-886 ed. 1926.
² *Gen.*, III, 5.
³ *Rom.*, V.

having a will of its own is impeccable. Free-will gives it the power of turning away from real good towards what is but apparent good. It implies the power of holding to the latter, preferring it to the former. This very choice is what constitutes sin. As St. Thomas says, impeccability can only be found where free will identifies itself with the moral law. This is God's privilege.

II. *The consequences of the fall*

69. Punishment followed quickly for our first parents and for their posterity.

A) The personal sanction visited upon them is described in Genesis. Here again God's goodness is to the fore. He could have on the spot punished them with death. His mercy halted Him. He merely left them shorn of those special privileges with which He had vested them, that is, stripped of the gifts of integrity and of habitual grace. He did not touch their nature or the prerogatives flowing therefrom. Doubtless, man's will is weakened compared with the strength it possessed when integrity was his. However, there is no conclusive evidence that it is actually feebler than it would have been in a purely natural state, at any rate it remains free in choosing good or evil. God even condescended to leave our first parents in possession of faith and hope and gave their forlorn souls the hopeful assurance of a redeemer, — their own offspring, who would one day vanquish the devil and reinstate fallen humanity. By His actual grace, at the same time, He invited them to repentance, and as soon as they repented, He granted them pardon of their sin.

70. B) But what will be the condition of their descendants? The answer is that mankind will be likewise deprived of *original justice*, that is to say, of *sanctifying grace* and the *gift of integrity*. Those endowments, free gifts in every sense, a patrimony, so to speak, were to be handed to his heirs should Adam prove faithful. This condition unfulfilled, man comes into the world deprived of original justice. When through penance our first parents regained grace, it was no longer as a heritage for their posterity, but solely as a personal possession, a grant to a private individual. To the new Adam, Christ Jesus, who would in time become the head of mankind, was reserved the expiation of our faults and the institution of a sacrament of *regeneration* to transmit to each of the baptized the grace forfeited in Paradise.

71. Thus it is that the children of Adam are born into this world without *original justice*, that is, without sanctifying grace and the gift of integrity. The lack of this grace is called *original sin*, sin only in the broad sense of the term, for it implies no guilty act on our part, but simply a fallen condition. It constitutes, considering the supernatural destiny to which we are called, a privation of a quality that should be ours, — a blemish, a moral taint that places us out of the pale of God's kingdom.

72. Moreover, on account of the forfeited *gift of integrity*, concupiscence rages in us and unless courageously withstood, it drags us into actual sin. With regard, then, to our primeval state we are as it were *withered* and *wounded*, subject to ignorance, prone to evil, weak against temptation.

Experience indeed shows that the force of concupiscence is not equally strong in all men. Each differs in temperament and character and therefore passions also vary in ardor and violence. Once the controlling check of original justice was lifted, explains St. Thomas, the passions regained full sway and prove more unruly in some, more subdued in others.

73. Must we go further and admit, with the Augustinian school, a positive, *intrinsic*, impairment of our *natural* energies and faculties? It is quite unnecessary. There is nothing to prove it. Should we admit, though, with some of the Thomists an *extrinsic* impairment of our powers? It consists, they say, in the fact that we have *more obstacles* to surmount, specially, the tyranny the devil wields over the vanquished, and the withdrawal of certain natural helps God would have granted us in a purely natural state. This is possible, nay, rather probable. But, in justice, we must add, that such hindrances find compensation in actual grace given us by God in virtue of the merits of His Son, and also in the protection accorded to us by His angels, particularly, our guardian angels.

74. **Conclusion.** This much we can safely say: owing to the Fall, man has lost the right balance he had as he came from the hands of God; in comparison with his primeval state, he is now injured, *unbalanced*, as the actual plight of his faculties plainly shows.

A) This unbalanced condition becomes evident first of all with regard to our sensitive faculties. a) Our *exterior*

senses, our eyes, for instance, eagerly light on what our curiosity craves, our ears are ever ready to catch every novelty, our flesh is alive to every sensation of pleasure, heedless the while of the moral law. b) The same is true of our *interior senses*. With each flight of fancy our imagination represents to us all sorts of images more or less sensible or sensuous good, and utterly ignoring all moral good, endeavor to wrest compliance from the will. True indeed, such tendencies are not irresistible, for our lower faculties remain, in a measure, under the control of the will, yet, their submission, once they revolt, demands much strategy and effort.

75. B) The *intellectual* faculties, intellect and will, also have been injured by original sin.

There is no doubt that our intellect remains capable of knowing truth, and that with patient labor, even without the aid of revelation, it can obtain knowledge of certain fundamental truths in the natural order. The failures, however, in this regard, are most humiliating. The preoccupations of the present blind the mind to the realities of eternity. a) Instead of seeking God and the things that are God's, instead of rising spontaneously from the creature to the Creator, as it would have done in the primeval state, man's intellect gravitates earthward. The study of creatures frequently absorbs it and prevents its ascent to their Maker. 1) Its power of attention, drawn by curiosity, centres round its own whims to the neglect of the realities that lead man to his end. 2) It *falls most readily into error*. Innumerable prejudices to which we are victims and the passions that agitate our spirit drop a thick veil between our souls and the truth. Alas! only too often we lose our bearings upon the most vital questions, on which the course and direction of our moral life depend.

b) Our will, instead of paying homage to God, has, on the contrary, the most daring and pretentious aspirations to *independence*. It finds it bitter and painful to submit to God or to yield to His representatives on earth. When the issue is to conquer those difficulties that oppose themselves to the realization of good, its efforts are weak and inconstant. How frequently does it not allow sentiment and passion to carry it away! Saint Paul describes such weakness in striking terms: "For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. For

I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, by Jesus Christ Our Lord."¹ On the testimony of the Apostle the remedy for this wretched condition is the *grace of redemption*.

ART. IV. REDEMPTION AND ITS EFFECTS²

76. Redemption is a wondrous work — God's masterpiece. By it, man disfigured by sin is *remade*. He is, in a sense, placed above his primordial state before the fall, so much so, that the Church in her liturgy does not hesitate to bless the fault that secured for us such a Redeemer as the God-man: "O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer!"

I. The nature of Redemption

77. God who from all eternity had foreseen man's fall, willed likewise from all eternity to provide a Redeemer for men, in the person of His Son. He determined to become man so that becoming the head of mankind He could in full measure expiate our sin and give us back, together with grace, all our rights to heaven. Thus He drew good out of evil and harmonized the rights of *justice* with those of His *goodness*.

He was not indeed bound to demand full justice. He could have pardoned man and contented Himself with the meagre and imperfect reparation that the latter could have proffered. But He regarded it more worthy of His glory and more salutary for man to enable him to offer full reparation for his fault.

78. A) Full justice required an *adequate reparation, in proportion to the offense*, and offered by a *lawful representative* of mankind. God brought this about by the Incarnation and the Redemption.

a) The Son of God takes flesh and thus becomes the chief of humanity, the head of a mystical body whose members

¹ Rom., VII, 19-25.

² St. THOM., III, q. 46-49; HUGON, O. P., *Le Mystère de la Rédemption*; BAINVEL, *op. cit.*, ch. VIII; J. RIVIÈRE, *The Atonement*; AD. TANQUERAY, *Synopsis theol. dogmat.*, t. II, n. 1124-1216; L. LABAUCHE, *God and Man*, vol. I, P. III.

we are. By this very fact, the Son can of right act and make atonement in our name.

b) This atonement is a satisfaction not only equal to the offense, but above it by far. If the moral value of any action proceeds first and foremost from the worth, the dignity of the person performing it, this reparation made by the God-Man has a *moral worth* that is *infinite*. A single act of the Son of God would have sufficed to make adequate reparation for all the sins of the human race. Now, as a matter of fact, Jesus, moved by the purest love, did make such acts of reparation without number. He filled the measure and crowned it with the greatest, the most sublime and heroic of actions, — the total immolation of self on Calvary. He has, indeed, made abundant and superabundant satisfactions: "*Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.*"¹

c) The atonement is the same in kind as the offense. Adam's sin was *disobedience* and *pride*. Jesus makes reparation by *humble* obedience, inspired by *love*, — an obedience unto death, even to the death of the cross. "*becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.*"² Again, just as a woman was instrumental in Adam's fall, so a woman intervenes in man's redemption with her power of intercession and her merits. Although in a secondary rôle Mary, the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the Saviour, coöperates with Him in the work of reparation."³

Thus God's *justice* is fully satisfied, and His *goodness* even more.

79. B) Holy Scripture, in fact, attributes the work of our redemption to the infinite mercy of God and His exceeding great love for us. In the words of St. Paul: "*God, who is rich in mercy for his exceeding charity whereby He loved us,.... hath quickened us together in Christ.*"⁴ The three divine persons vie one with the other in this work, each moved by a love which, in truth, would seem to be excessive.

a) The Father has an only-begotten Son, equal to Him, whom He loves like another self, and by whom He is loved with the same infinite love. It is this very Son whom He gives and sacrifices for us that we may rise again to life

from the death of sin: "*For God so loved the world, as to give His Only-Begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.*"¹ Could His generous love give more? In giving us His Son, has He not given us all other things? "*He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, how hath He not also, with Him given us all things.*"²

80. b) The Son joyously and generously accepted the mission entrusted to Him. From the first instant of His Incarnation, He offered Himself to the Father as the victim that replaced all the sacrifices of the Old Law. His entire life was a long sacrifice completed by His immolation on Calvary — a sacrifice born of the love He bore us: "*Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.*"³

81. c) In order to finish His work He sent us the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit, who is none other than the substantial love of the Father and the Son, was not satisfied with instilling grace into our souls together with the infused virtues, especially divine charity, but gave Himself to us in order that we might not only enjoy His presence and possess His gifts, but even His very person: "*The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.*"⁴

Redemption is therefore, the masterpiece of divine love: this fact enables us to forecast its effects.

II. The Effects of Redemption

82. Jesus did not stop short once He had offered reparation to God for our offense and reconciled us to Him. He merited for us all the graces lost to us by sin, and many more.

First of all, He gave us back all the *supernatural goods* we had lost by sin:

a) *Habitual grace* with all the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost; then, to adapt Himself better to our human nature He instituted the *Sacraments*, sensible signs that confer grace upon us in every important circumstance of our life and thus furnish us with greater security and greater confidence. b) He secured for us *actual graces* in a full measure, and according to the word of St. Paul,

¹ Rom., V, 5.

² Philip., II, 1.

³ Here it is a question of the merit called *de congruo*, which we shall explain later on.

⁴ Ephes., II, 4.

¹ John, III, 16. — ² Rom., VIII, 32. — ³ Ephes., V, 2. — ⁴ Rom., V, 5.

we are justified in judging them even more abundant than those we should have received in the state of innocence: "*Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.*"¹

83. c) It is true that the *gift of integrity* was not given back to us immediately, but it is given us *gradually*. The grace of regeneration leaves us still exposed to the attacks of the threefold concupiscence and subject to the burden of life's sufferings, but it gives us the needed strength to surmount them, rendering us more humble, more vigilant, more active in warding off and conquering temptation. Thus it grounds us in virtue and gives us the opportunity of increasing our merit. The example of Jesus, who so courageously carried His cross and ours, gives us new energy and sustains our efforts in the fight. The *actual graces*, which He has merited for us, and which He bestows with a lavishness truly divine make effort and victory easier. In proportion as we struggle under the leadership and protection of the Master, concupiscence weakens, our power of resistance grows, and a time comes when privileged souls are so grounded in virtue, that ever free as they remain to do evil, they never commit any fully deliberate venial sin. The final victory will come only with our entrance into heaven, but it will be all the more glorious having been bought at a greater price. Can we not also repeat: *O happy fault!*

84. d) To such interior helps our Lord has joined external ones, particularly that of the *Visible Church*, founded and designed by Him to enlighten our minds by her teaching, to stay our wills by the warrant of her laws and judgments, to sanctify our souls by sacraments, sacramentals and indulgences. In her we have an immense treasure-house of help for which we must thank God: *O felix culpa! O happy fault!*

85. e) Lastly, it is not certain that the Word of God would have taken flesh had the fall of our first parents not occurred. Now the Incarnation is such a priceless boon that it alone would suffice to explain and justify the cry of the Church: *O happy fault!*

Instead of having for the head of the race a man richly endowed, indeed, but liable to error and to sin, we have one who is none other than the Eternal Son of God. The head of mankind is the Word, clothed in our nature, true man as

well as true God. He is the *ideal mediator*, a mediator for worship as well as for redemption, who adores His Father not merely in His own name but in the name of the entire human race, nay more, in the name of the angels, for it is through Him that the heavenly hosts praise and glorify their Creator: "through Whom the angels praise."¹ He is the *perfect priest* who, while having free access to God on account of His divine nature, stoops down to His fellow-men, His brethren, to deal them kindness and indulgence while He knows their weakness: "*Who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because He Himself also is encompassed with infirmity.*"²

With Him and through Him we can render to God the infinite homage to which He is entitled. With Him and through Him we can obtain all the graces we need both for ourselves and for others. When we adore, it is He that adores in us and through us; when we ask for help, it is He that supports our requests; and for this reason, whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name shall be graciously given us.

We must, therefore, rejoice in the possession of such a Redeemer, such a Mediator, and have a trust in Him that knows no limits.

CONCLUSION

86. This brief historical survey brings out most strikingly the supreme *worth* of the supernatural life and the *grandeur* and *weakness* of man on whom it is bestowed.

1° This life is, indeed, excellent since:

a) It is born of a *loving thought of God*, who has loved us from all eternity and has willed to unite us to Himself in the sweetest and closest intimacy: "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore I have drawn thee to myself.*"³

b) It is a *real participation*, even if finite, *in the nature and in the life of God*, enabling us to know and to love God even as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost know and love one another: "partakers of the divine nature." (See n. 106)

c) It has such worth in God's eyes that, to give it to us, the Father sacrifices His Only-Begotten Son, the Son makes a complete immolation of self, and the Holy Ghost comes to impart this life to our souls.

Indeed, it is the pearl of great price: "By whom he hath

¹ Preface of the Mass. — ² *Hebr.*, V. 2. — ³ *Ier.*, XXXI., 3.

given us most great and precious promises,"¹ which we must hold dearer than all else and keep and cherish with jealous care: *its worth is that of God Himself!*

87. 2^o Still, we carry this treasure in earthen vessels. If our first parents, endowed with the gift of integrity and enriched with all sorts of privileges, had the misfortune of forfeiting it both for themselves and their posterity, should we entertain no fear? We, who in spite of our spiritual regeneration, carry within us the threefold concupiscence?

No doubt, there are within us *generous* and *noble* impulses born of what is good in our nature. There are, besides, the supernatural forces which come to us through Christ's merits and through our incorporation into Him. However, we remain *weak* and *inconstant*, unless we lean upon Him who is our strength as well as our head. The secret of our power does not rest with us, but with God and Christ Jesus our Lord. The history of our First Parents and their lamentable fall shows us that the great evil in the world, the only evil, is *sin*. It shows us that we must be ever on our guard to repel at once and with all our might every attack that the enemy may make against us, be it from without or from within. We are nevertheless well protected and fully armed against his onslaughts, as our second chapter, dealing with the nature of the Christian life, will prove.

CHAPTER II

The Nature of the Christian Life

88. The supernatural life which, by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, is a participation in God's life, is often called *the life of God in us or the life of Jesus in us*. Such expressions are correct provided one takes care to explain them, so as to avoid anything savoring of pantheism. We have not a life *identical* with that of God or our Lord; we only have a life *similar* to theirs, a finite participation, yet most real.

We may define it thus: *a share in the divine life given us by the Holy Ghost who dwells in us, because of the merits of Jesus Christ; a life which we must protect against all destructive tendencies.*

89. We see, then, that as regards our supernatural life God plays the principal rôle, we a secondary one. It is the Triune God that comes Himself to confer it upon us, for He alone can make us share in His own life. He communicates it to us in virtue of the merits of Christ (n. 78), who is the meritorious, exemplary and vital cause of our sanctification. It is perfectly true that *God lives in us*, that *Jesus lives in us*; yet, our spiritual life *is not identical* with that of God or of our Lord. It is distinct from but similar to the one and the other. *Our rôle* consists in making use of the divine gifts in order to live with God and for God, in order to live in union with Jesus and to imitate Him. But we cannot live this supernatural life without a continual struggle against the threefold concupiscence which still remains in us (n. 83). And moreover, since God has endowed us with a supernatural organism, it is our duty to make that life increase in us by meritorious acts and the fervent reception of the sacraments.

This is the meaning of the definition we have given, and this whole chapter is but its explanation and development. From it we shall draw practical conclusions concerning devotion to the Most Holy Trinity, devotion to and union with the Incarnate Word, and even concerning devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, since all these devotions flow from their relations with the Word of God-made-Flesh.

Although the action of God and that of the soul have parallel developments in the Christian life, we shall for the sake of clearness treat of them in two successive articles, one on the *rôle of God* and the other on the *rôle of man*.

1. By Himself { He dwells in us : hence devo-
tion to the Blessed Trinity.
He endows us with a super-
natural organism.

2. Through His Word { Meritorious cause } of our life.
Incar- { Exemplary cause }
nate, { Vital cause }
who is primarily { Hence devotion to the Incar-
nate Word.

God acts
in us

3. Through Mary who is secondarily { Meritorious cause } of our life.
{ Exemplary cause }
{ Distributive cause of grace.
Hence devotion to Mary.

4. Through the Saints and Angels { Living images of God : hence
venerate them.
Intercessors : Invoke them.
Models : Imitate them.

1. By fighting against { concupiscence.
the world.
the devil.

We live
and act
for God

2. By sanctifying our actions { Their threefold value.
Conditions for merit.
Way of rendering our acts
more meritorious.

3. By receiving the Sacraments worthily { Sacramental grace.
Special } of Penance.
grace } of the Eucharist.

ART. I. THE RÔLE OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

God acts in us either directly, by *Himself*, or through the *Incar-
nate Word*, or through the mediation of the Blessed
Virgin, the Angels and the Saints.

§ I. The Rôle of the Blessed Trinity

90. The first cause, the primary, efficient cause and
the exemplary cause of the supernatural life in us is no
other than the Blessed Trinity, or by appropriation, the

Holy Ghost. True, the life of grace is a work common to
the Three Divine Persons, for it is a work *ad extra*, yet,
because it is a work of love, it is attributed especially to the
Holy Ghost.

Now the Most Adorable Trinity contributes to our sanc-
tification in two ways : the Three Divine Persons come to
dwell in our souls ; there they create a supernatural organ-
ism which transforms and elevates them, thus enabling
them to perform Godlike acts.

I. The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Soul¹

91. Since the Christian life is a participation in God's
own life, it is evident that none but God Himself can confer
it upon us. This He does by coming to dwell in our souls
and by giving Himself wholly to us in order that we may
first of all render Him our homage, enjoy His presence and
allow ourselves to be led with docility to the practice of
Christ's virtues and into the dispositions of His holy
soul.² Theologians call this *uncreated grace*. Let us then
examine first how the Three Divine Persons live in us, and
next, what our attitude must be toward Them.

1° HOW THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS DWELL WITHIN US

92. God, says St. Thomas,³ is in all creatures in a
threefold manner : by His *power*, inasmuch as all creatures
are subject to His dominion ; by His *presence*, because He
sees all, even the most secret thoughts of the soul, "*All
things are naked and open to his eyes*;"⁴ by His *essence*,
since He acts everywhere and since everywhere He is the
plenitude of being itself and the first cause of whatever is
real in creation, giving continually to creatures not only
life and movement, but their very being : "*In Him we live
and move and are*,"⁵

Yet, His presence within us by *grace* is of a much higher
and intimate nature. It is no longer the presence of the
Creator and Preserver who sustains the beings He created ;

¹ St. THOM., I, q. 43, a. 3; FROGET, *Indwelling of the H. Ghost*; R. PLUS,
God within Us; MANNING, *Int. Mission*, I; DEVINE, *Ascet. Theol.*, p. 80;
TANQUERAY, *Syn. Theol. Dog.*, III, 180-185.

² It is upon this truth that Father OLLIER bases his spiritual system. See *Cate-
chism for an Interior Life*, P. I, C. III : "Who deserves the name of Christian?
He who is possessed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ... that makes us live both inter-
iorly and exteriorly like Jesus Christ." — "He (the Holy Ghost) is there with the
Father and the Son, and there infuses, as we have said, the same dispositions, the
same sentiments and the same virtues of Jesus Christ."
³ *Syn. theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 3.
⁴ *Heb.*, IV, 13. — ⁵ *Acts*, XVII, 28.

it is the presence of the Most Holy Trinity revealed to us by faith. The *Father* comes to us and continues to beget His Word within us. With the *Father* we receive the *Son* equal in all things to the *Father*, His loving and substantial image, who never ceases to love His *Father* with the same infinite love wherewith the *Father* loves Him. Out of this mutual love proceeds the *Holy Spirit*, a person equal to the *Father* and the *Son* and a mutual bond between *Father* and *Son*. The *Three* are without distinct one from the other. These wonders go on continually within the soul in the state of grace. The presence of the *Three Divine Persons*, at once *physical* and *moral*, establishes the *most intimate* and *most sanctifying* relations between *God* and the soul. Gathering all that is found here and there in the *Scriptures*, we can say that *God* through *grace* is present within us as a *father*, as a *friend*, as a *helper*, as a *sanctifier*, and that in this way He is truly the very source of our interior life, its *efficient* and *exemplary* cause.

93. A) By *nature* He is simply in us to give us natural endowments; by *grace* He gives Himself to us that we may enjoy His friendship and thus have a foretaste of the happiness of heaven. In the *order of nature* *God* is in us as the *Creator* and the *sovereign Master*; we are but His *servants*, His *property*. In the *order of grace* it is different; here He gives Himself to us as our *Father*; we are now His *adopted children*; an unspeakable privilege and the basis of our supernatural life. St. Paul and St. John repeat it again and again: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." ¹ *God*, therefore, adopts us as His children and in a way more thorough and more complete than men are adopted in law. By legal adoption men are, indeed, able to transmit to others their name and their possessions, but they cannot transmit to them their blood and their life. "Legal adoption," says Cardinal Mercier, ² "is a fiction." The adopted child is considered by its foster parents just as if it were their child and receives from them the heritage to which their offspring would have had a right. Society recognizes this fiction and sanctions its effects. Withal, the object of such fiction is in no wise changed. But the grace of divine adoption is by no means a fiction.... it is a

reality. *God* gives divine sonship to those who have faith in His Word, as St. John says: "He gave them power to be made the sons of *God*, to them that believed in his name." ¹ This sonship is not such merely in name, but in very truth: "that we should be called and should be the sons of *God*." ² By it we come into the possession of the divine nature, "partakers of the divine nature." ³

94. No doubt, this divine life in us is only a participation, a sharing, "consortes," a similitude, an assimilation which does not make us gods, but only *Godlike*. None the less, it constitutes no fiction, but a *reality*, a *new life*, a life not, indeed, equal but similar to *God's* and which, on the testimony of Holy Writ, presupposes a new birth, a regeneration: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost... he hath regenerated us unto a lively hope... of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth." ⁴ All these expressions show us that our adoption is not merely nominal, but *true* and *real*, although distinct and different from the sonship of the Word-made-Flesh. By it we become heirs, by full right, to the kingdom of heaven and coheirs of Him who is the eldest-born among our brethren: "heirs indeed of *God* and joint heirs with *Christ*... that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren." ⁵ Is it not, therefore, most fitting to repeat the touching words of St. John: "Behold what manner of charity the *Father* hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of *God*!" ⁶

God has for us then the tenderness and devotedness of a father. Does He not compare Himself to a mother that can never forget the child of her womb? "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." ⁷ He has most assuredly given proof of this, since in order to save His fallen children He hesitated not to give and sacrifice His only-begotten Son: "For *God* so loved the world, as to give his only Begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." ⁸ The same love prompts Him likewise to give Himself wholly, and from now on, in a permanent manner to His children, by dwelling in their hearts: "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my *Father* will love him, and we will

¹ John, I, 12. — ² I John, III, 1. — ³ II Peter, I, 4.

⁴ John, III, 5; Tit., III, 5; I Peter, I, 3; James, I, 18.

⁵ Rom., VIII, 17, 29. — ⁶ I John, III, 1. — ⁷ Isa., XLIX, 15. — ⁸ John, III, 16.

come to him, and will make our abode with him." ¹ He lives in us as a most loving and most devoted Father.

95. B) He gives Himself also as a friend. Friendship adds to the relations between father and son a sort of equality: "*amicitia aequales accipit aut facit.*" It adds a kind of familiarity, a reciprocity whence flows the sweetest intercourse. It is precisely such relations that grace establishes between us and God. Of course, when it is question of God on one side and man on the other, there can be no real equality, but rather a certain similarity sufficient to engender true intimacy. In fact, God confides to us His secrets. He speaks to us not only through His Church, but also interiorly through His Spirit: "*He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you.*" ² At the Last Supper Jesus declared to His Apostles that from that time on they would not be His servants, but His friends, because He would no longer keep any secrets from them: "*I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you.*" ³ A sweet familiarity will from now on pervade their intercourse, the same that exists between friends when they meet and speak heart to heart: "*Behold that I stand at the gate and knock; if any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come into him and I will sup with him; and he with me.*" ⁴ What an unspeakable familiarity is this! Never would man have dared dream of it or aspire to it had not the Friend Divine taken the initiative! This very intimacy has been and is an everyday fact not only between Almighty God and His Saints, but between Him and every man who by leading an interior life consents to throw open the gates of his soul to the Divine Guest. To this the author of the "Imitation" bears witness when he describes the oft-repeated visits of the Holy Spirit to interior souls, the sweet converse He holds with them, the consolations and the caresses He imparts to them, the peace He infuses, the astounding familiarity of His dealings with them: "*Many are His visits to the man of interior life, and sweet the conversation that He holdeth with him; plenteous His consolation, His peace and His familiarity.*" ⁵ The life of contemporary mystics, of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, of Elizabeth of the Blessed

Trinity, of Gemma Galgani and of so many others, gives proof that the words of the Imitation are daily realized. There is no doubt that God does live in us as the most intimate of friends.

96. C) Nor is He idle there. He acts as our most powerful ally, our most efficient helper. Knowing but too well that of ourselves we can not foster the life He has engendered in us, He supplies for our deficiencies by working with us through actual grace. Are we in need of *light* to perceive the truths of faith which shall from now on guide our steps? The Father of Lights will be the one to enlighten our intellect pointing out clearly our last end and the means to reach it. He will suggest to us the godly thoughts that inspire godly actions. Again, do we want *strength* to give our life its orientation, to direct it towards its last end, the one great object of all our strivings, of all our efforts? The same God and Father will bring to us the supernatural help that gives the power to will and to do: "*for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.*" ¹ When it comes to combatting and controlling our passions or overcoming the temptations that at times assail us, once more it is none other than God who gives us the power to resist them and even to draw profit from them: "*God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.*" ² If weary of well-doing and if discouraged we begin to falter, He draws close to sustain us and to secure our perseverance: "*He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.*" ³ No, we are never alone. Even when devoid of all consolations we think ourselves abandoned, God's grace is ever close at hand as we are willing to cooperate with it: "*And his grace in me hath not been void: but I have labored more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me.*" ⁴ Leaning on this all-powerful Helper we become invincible: "*I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.*" ⁵

97. D) This divine Helper is at the same time our Sanctifier. Coming to live in our soul He transforms it into a sacred temple enriched with all manner of virtues: "*the temple*

¹ Philippi., II, 13.

² I Cor., X, 13.

³ Philippi., I, 6.

⁴ I Cor., XV, 10.

⁵ Philippi., IV, 13.

¹ John, XIV, 23. — ² John, XIV, 26. — ³ John, XV, 15.

⁴ Apoc., III, 26. — ⁵ Imitation, II, c. I, v. 1.

of God is holy, which you are." ¹ The God that lives in us is not merely the God of nature, but the Living God, the Blessed Trinity, the infinite source of divine life, whose only longing is to make us share in His holiness. Often this indwelling of God in the soul is attributed or assigned to the Holy Ghost by appropriation, since it is a work of love; but being a work *ad extra* it is *common* to the Three Divine Persons. This is why St. Paul calls us alike the temples of God and the temples of the Holy Ghost: "*Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*" ²

Our soul, therefore, is made the *temple* of the Living God, a sanctuary reserved to the Most High, a Holy of Holies, a throne of mercy where He is pleased to be lavish with His heavenly favors and which He enriches with every virtue. It follows that the presence within us of a Thrice Holy God, as just described, cannot but *sanctify* us. The Most Adorable Trinity living and acting within us must, indeed, be the principle of our sanctification, the source of our interior life. This holy presence constitutes likewise its exemplary cause, for being sons of God by adoption we are bound to imitate our Father. This we shall understand better when we examine what our attitude should be towards these Three Divine Guests.

2° OUR DUTIES TOWARDS THE MOST HOLY TRINITY LIVING WITHIN US ³

98. Possessing such a treasure as the Most Holy Trinity, we ought to make it the object of frequent meditation — "*to walk inwardly with God.*" Such a thought awakes in us chiefly three sentiments: adoration, love and imitation.

99. A) The very first impulse of the heart is that of adoration: "*Glorify and bear God in your body.*" ⁴ How could we do otherwise than glorify, bless and thank that Divine Guest who transforms our soul into a sanctuary? From the time Mary received the Incarnate Word in her virginal womb her life was but one perpetual act of adoration and thanksgiving: "*My soul doth magnify the Lord... He who is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name.*" ⁵ Such are, even if lesser in degree and intensity, the sentiments that lay hold of the Christian on becoming

aware of the Holy Ghost's presence within him. He understands that being God's dwelling he ought to offer himself constantly as a *sacrifice of praise* unto the glory of the Triune God. a) He begins his actions by making the Sign of the Cross, *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*, and thus consecrates them all to the Three Divine Persons; he ends them by acknowledging that whatever good he has done must be attributed to Them: *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.* b) He loves to repeat the liturgical prayers that proclaim Their praises: the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, which so well expresses all the religious sentiments towards the Most Holy Trinity, especially towards the Incarnate Word; the *Sanctus*, proclaiming the awful holiness of the Godhead; the *Te Deum*, the song of thanksgiving. c) This Divine Guest the Christian recognizes as his first beginning and last end. He realizes his inability to praise Him adequately and unites Himself to the Spirit of Jesus who alone can render to God that glory which by right is His: "*The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for, we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.*" ¹

100. B) After having adored God and proclaimed his own nothingness, the Christian gives vent to sentiments of the most confiding love. Infinite as He is, God nevertheless stoops down to us like a loving father toward his child, asking us to love Him and to give Him our heart: "*My son, give me thy heart.*" ² He has a strict right to demand this love, yet He prefers to entreat us with the sweetness of affection so that our return may be, so to speak, more spontaneous, and our recourse to Him more confident and childlike. Could we refuse our trustful love to such thoughtful advances, to a solicitude so truly maternal?

Our love should be a *repentant* love, a love that expiates infidelities past and present; a *grateful* love that renders thanks to our great Benefactor, the devoted Co-worker who labors without stint and without rest. Above all, it should be the love of *friend for friend* holding sweet converse with the most faithful, the most generous of friends, whose part we should take, whose glory we should make known, whose name we should forever bless. This love then should not be a mere feeling, but a generous, daring love, forgetful of

¹ 1 Cor., III, 17. — ² 1 Cor., III, 16.

³ All these sentiments are wonderfully expressed in the beautiful morning prayer composed by Father OLRIER, cf. *Manual of Piety*.

⁴ 1 Cor., VI, 10. — ⁵ Luke, I, 46, 49.

self to the point of sacrifice and the renunciation of our own wills, by a willing submission to the precepts and counsels of God.

101. C) Such love will lead us to *imitate* the Most Adorable Trinity in the measure in which this is compatible with human weakness. Adopted children of an all-holy Father, living temples of the Holy Ghost, we can better appreciate the reason why we must be holy in body and soul. This was the lesson learned by the Apostle and repeated by him to his followers: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are."¹ Experience is witness to the fact that with generous souls this is the most powerful motive to turn them away from sin and incite them to the practice of virtue. Temples wherein the thrice Holy One resides can never be too rich in beauty, too glorious in sanctity. It is remarkable that when our Lord wished to propose to us an ideal, a model of perfection, He pointed to God Himself: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."² At first sight this ideal does seem too high. But when we recall that we are the adopted children of God and that He lives in us in order to impress upon us His image and to collaborate in our salvation, then we realize that a high rank imposes obligations, *noblesse oblige*, and that it is no more than our plain duty to approach ever nearer the divine perfections. It is chiefly in view of the fulfilment of the precept of *fraternal charity*, the love of our fellows, that Jesus Christ demands of us to keep before our eyes this perfect model, the indivisible oneness of the Three Divine Persons: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father in me and I in thee; that they also be one in us."³ What a tender prayer! St. Paul echoes it later on begging his dear disciples not to forget that since they are but one body and but one spirit, and since they have but one Father who lives in all just souls, they should preserve the unity of spirit in the bond of peace.⁴

To sum up, we may say that the Christian life consists above all in an intimate, affectionate and sanctifying union with the Three Divine Persons who sustain us in the spirit of religion, love and sacrifice.

¹ *1 Cor.*, III, 16-17. — ² *Matth.*, V, 48. — ³ *John*, XVII, 21. — ⁴ *Eph.*, IV, 3-6.

II. The Organism of the Christian Life ¹

102. The three Divine Persons inhabit the sanctuary of our soul, taking their delight in enriching it with supernatural gifts and in communicating to us a Godlike life, similar to theirs, called the life of grace.

All life, however, implies a threefold element: a *vital principle* that is, so to speak, the source of life itself; *faculties* which give the power to elicit vital acts; and lastly, the *acts* themselves which are but its development and which minister to its growth. In the supernatural order, God living within us produces the same elements. a) He first communicates to us *habitual grace* which plays the part of a *vital, supernatural principle*.² This principle deifies, as it were, the very substance of the soul and makes it capable, though in a remote way, of enjoying the Beatific Vision and of performing the acts that lead to it.

103. b) Out of this grace spring the *infused virtues*³ and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost* which perfect our faculties and endow us with the immediate power of performing Godlike, supernatural, meritorious acts.

c) In order to stir these faculties into action, He gives us *actual graces* which enlighten our mind, strengthen our will, and aid us both to act supernaturally and to increase the measure of habitual grace that has been granted to us.

104. Although this life of grace is entirely distinct from our natural life it is not merely superimposed on the latter; it *penetrates it through and through*, transforms it and makes it divine. It assimilates whatever is good in our nature, our education and our habits. It perfects and supernaturalizes all these various elements, directing them toward the last end, that is toward the possession of God through the Beatific Vision and its resultant love.

In virtue of the general principle explained above, n. 54, that inferior beings are subordinated to their superiors,⁴ it is the part of the supernatural life to direct and control our

¹ St. THOM., I^a II^æ, q. 110; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, *De vita spiritali ejusque perfectione*, 1602, t. I, II, c. 1; TERRIEN, *La Grâce et la Gloire*, t. I, p. 75 sq.; BELLAMY, *La vie surnaturelle*.

² "Gratia presupponitur virtutibus infusis, sicut earum principium et finis." (*Sum. theol.*, I^a II^æ, q. 110, a. 3).

³ "Sicut ab essentia anime effluunt ejus potentie, que sunt operum principia, ita etiam ab ipsa gratia effluunt virtutes in potentias anime, per quas potentie moventur ad actum." (*Ibid.*, a. 4)

⁴ EYMIEU, *op. cit.*, p. 150-151.

natural life. The former cannot develop nor endure unless it *reigns supreme* and keeps under its sway the acts of the mind, of the will and of the other faculties. This dominion in no way dwarfs or destroys our nature, but rather it elevates and completes it. We shall show this in the subsequent study of these three elements.

1° HABITUAL GRACE¹

105. God out of His infinite goodness wills to lift us up to Himself in the measure that our weak nature allows, and for this purpose gives us a principle of supernatural life; a Godlike, vital principle, which is habitual grace. It is also called created grace² in contradistinction to uncreated grace, which is the indwelling itself of the Holy Ghost within us. Created grace makes us *like unto God* and unites us to Him in the closest manner: "*This deification consists, in so far as is possible, in a certain resemblance to God and union with Him.*"³ These two points of view we shall explain presently by giving the *traditional definition* and by determining precisely the nature of the union that grace produces between God and the soul.

A) Definition

106. Sanctifying or habitual grace is commonly defined as a *supernatural quality inherent in the soul, which makes us partakers of the divine nature and of the divine life in a real and formal, but accidental manner.*

a) Grace is a reality of the supernatural order, but not a substance, for no created substance could be supernatural. It is but a *mode of being*, a *state of soul*, a *quality inherent* in the soul's substance that transforms it and raises it above all natural beings, even the most perfect. It is a *permanent* quality remaining in the soul as long as we do not forfeit it by mortal sin. "It is," as Cardinal Mercier says, ⁴ on the authority of Bossuet, "a spiritual quality infused into our

souls by Jesus Christ, which penetrates our inmost being, instils itself into the very marrow of the soul and goes forth (through the virtues) to all its faculties. The soul that possesses it is made pure and pleasing in the eyes of God. He makes such a soul His sanctuary, His temple, His tabernacle, His paradise."

107. b) This quality, according to the forceful expression of St. Peter, makes us "*partakers of the divine nature.*"¹ According to St. Paul, it causes us to enter into communion with the Holy Ghost, "*the communication of the Holy Ghost,*"² and St. John adds that it establishes a sort of fellowship between us and the Father and the Son: "*our fellowship... with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*"³ It does not make us the equals of God, but it changes us into *Godlike beings*, makes us like unto God. Nor does it give us the life of the Godhead itself which is incommunicable, but it imparts to us a life similar to God's. Our task is to explain this, so far as the human mind is able to comprehend it.

108. 1) God's own life consists in *direct self-contemplation* and love of Himself. No creature whatever, no matter how perfect, could of itself contemplate the essence of the Godhead, "who dwells in light inaccessible;"⁴ but God, by a privilege, gratuitous in every sense of the word, calls man to contemplate this divine essence in heaven. As man is utterly incapable of this, God lifts him up, makes his intelligence transcend its natural capacities, and confers on him this power through the *light of glory*. Then, says St. John, we shall be like unto God because we shall see Him as He sees Himself, that is to say, exactly as He is in Himself: "*We shall be like him: because we shall see him as he is.*"⁵ We shall see, adds St. Paul, no longer through the mirror of creatures, but face to face with luminous clearness: "*We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face.*"⁶ Since we shall know and love God as He knows and loves Himself, we shall also share in God's own life, even if it be in a finite way. Theologians explain this by saying that the divine essence will come and unite itself with the soul's inmost being, so as to allow us to contemplate the Divinity directly, with the aid of no image or of any created intermediary.

¹ See St. THOM., 1^a 11^æ, q. 110; *Syn. Theol. Dog.*, III, n. 186-191; FROGET, *op. cit.*, IV^e P.; FERRIEN, *La Grâce et la Gloire*, p. 75 ss.; BELLAMY, *La vie surnaturelle*, 1895; SCHEEBEN, *The Glories of Divine Grace*; MANY, *La vraie vie*, 1922, p. 1-79.

² This expression is not altogether exact, since grace within us is not a *substance*, but an *accident*, an accidental modification of the soul. But because it is something *finite* and can originate only in God, not being merited by us, this name of *created or con-created* is given to it, to show that it is derived from the power of the soul as a created thing has of becoming whatever the Creator wills it to become.

³ "Est autem hæc deificatio, Deo quædam, quoad fieri potest, assimilatio unioque." Ps.-DIONYS, *De eccl. hierarchia*, c. I, n. 3. F. G., III, 373.

⁴ *La Vie intérieure*, p. 401.

¹ *I I Peter*, I, 4.—² *II Cor.*, XIII, 13.—³ *I John*, I, 3.

⁴ *I Tim.*, VI, 16.—⁵ *I John*, III, 2.—⁶ *I Cor.*, XIII, 12-13.

109. 2) Habitual grace is already a preparation for the Beatific Vision and a foretaste, as it were, of that unspeakable boon; it is the bud that needs but to open to show forth the flower. Habitual grace and the Beatific Vision are, then, one in kind and one in nature.

A comparison, no matter how inadequate, will not be out of place. We can know an artist in three different ways: by studying his works, through friends, or by personal intercourse with him. The first is the kind of knowledge we get of God through His works, by the contemplation of His creatures. This is an inductive, imperfect knowledge; for though creation reveals His wisdom and His power, it tells us nothing of His personal, interior life. The knowledge we derive from faith illustrates the second manner in which we come to know God. On the authority of the sacred writers and, above all, on the testimony of the Son of God we believe what it has pleased Him to disclose to us, not only concerning His works and His attributes, but concerning His personal, interior life. Thus, we believe that from all eternity He begets the Word, His Son, that there exists a mutual love between Them, and that out of this reciprocal love proceeds the Holy Ghost. We do not, indeed, understand, nor do we in any way see, but we believe with invincible certainty. This faith makes us share in the knowledge that God has of Himself. But this is a veiled knowledge, rather obscure, though none the less real. Only eventually through the Beatific Vision shall we acquire direct knowledge of Him. Still, this second mode of knowledge, as can be readily seen, is at bottom of the same nature as the first, and assuredly far superior to mere rational or reasoned knowledge.

110. c) This participation in the divine life is *formal*; it is not simply virtual. Virtual participation means that we share a quality in a *different way* from that in which it is possessed by the principal where it is found. Thus, reason is simply a virtual participation in the divine intellect, because reason gives us a knowledge of truth, but vastly different from that knowledge of truth which God possesses. Mindful then of disparity and distinction, we can say that such is not the case between the Beatific Vision and faith. Both cause us to know God as He is, not in the same degree, it is true, but the knowledge acquired through either of them is the same in kind.

111. d) The participation we have in God's life is *accidental*, not *substantial*. It is thus distinct from the generation of the Word, who receives the whole substance of the Father. It is likewise distinct from the hypostatic union, which is a substantial union of the divine and human natures in the person of the Word. In our union with God we keep our personality, and therefore, this union is not substantial. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas: "Grace, being altogether above human nature, can neither be a substance nor the soul's substantial form. It can only be its accidental

form."¹ Explaining his thought he adds that what exists in God substantially is given us accidentally, and makes us partake of the divine goodness.

With such restrictions we steer clear of pantheism and still conceive a very exalted idea of the nature of grace. It reveals itself to us as a *likeness of God* stamped by Him on our souls: "*Let us make man according to our image and likeness.*"²

112. In order to help us to understand this divine resemblance the Fathers have employed various comparisons. 1) Our soul, they say, is like to a living image of the Most Blessed Trinity, for the Holy Ghost Himself impresses His features on us as a seal does on molten wax, stamping and leaving there the divine likeness.³ They conclude that the soul in the state of grace possesses an entrancing beauty since the author of that image is none other than God Himself who is infinitely perfect: "Behold thy likeness, O man; see thy likeness beautiful, made by thy God, the Great Artist, the Master-Painter."⁴ They rightly reason that, far from disfiguring or destroying such resemblance, we must perfect it more and more. At times they compare the soul to those transparent bodies that receiving the sun's rays become all aglow and reflect in turn a marvellous light all around.⁵

113. 2) To show further that this divine resemblance is not merely on the surface, they have recourse to the analogy of iron in the fire. As a bar of iron, they say, plunged into a glowing fire soon acquires the brightness, the heat and the pliancy of fire, so the soul in the fire of divine love is rid of impurities, burns, glows and becomes docile to God's inspirations.

114. 3) To express the idea that grace is a new life, the Fathers and spiritual writers liken it to a divine branch ingrafted into the wild stock of our nature, there combining with it to form a new, vital principle and, therefore, a life far superior in kind. Yet, in the same way that the branch does not give its life to the stock in all its essence and particulars but only such or such of its vital properties, so sanctifying grace does not give to us God's entire essence but simply *something of His life*, which is for us a new life.

¹ Sum. Theol., Ia II^e, q. 110, a. 2. — ² Gen. I, 26.

³ Homil. Paschal., X, 2, P. G., LXXXVII, 617.

⁴ St. AMBROSE, In Hexaem., I, VI, c. 8, P. L., XIV, 260.

⁵ St. BASIL, De Spir. S., IX, 23, P. G., XXXII, 109.

We share then in the life of the Godhead, but by no means possess It in Its fulness. This resemblance of the soul to the Divinity evidently prepares it for a most intimate union with the Most Holy Trinity that dwells in it.

B) *Union of God and the Soul*

115. From what we have said concerning the indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity in the soul (n. 92) it follows that there is the closest and most sanctifying union between our souls and the Divine Guest. But is this all? Is there not something *physical* besides this moral union?

116. a) The comparisons the Fathers employ would seem to imply so.

1) A great many of them tell us that the union of God with the soul is like that of the soul and the body. There are in us two lives, says St. Augustine, the life of the body and the life of the soul; the life of the body is the soul, the life of the soul is God.¹ Evidently, these are only analogies; let us try to bring out the truth they contain.

The union of body and soul is a *substantial* union, so much so, that they form but one nature and only one person. The union between God and the soul is different. We retain always our own nature and our own personality and thus remain essentially distinct from the Godhead. However, just, as the soul gives the body its life, so God (without becoming the form of the soul, as the soul is of the body) gives the soul supernatural life, a life not equal to His, but *truly and formally* like unto His, producing a union that is *most real* between the soul and God. This implies a concrete reality which God communicates to us and which constitutes the bond of union between Him and us. Assuredly this new relation adds nothing to God, but it perfects the soul and makes it Godlike. Thus the Holy Ghost is not the formal cause, but the efficient and exemplary cause of our sanctification.

117. 2) The very same truth flows from the other comparison made by other authors.² They liken the union of the soul with God to the *hypostatic union*. Again, there is an essential difference. The hypostatic union is *substantial* and *personal*, for though the human and the divine natures

are absolutely different, yet, they constitute but one and the same person in Jesus Christ. The union of God with the soul through grace, on the contrary, leaves us our own personality, essentially distinct from that of God, and unites us to God in a merely *accidental* manner. "It is brought about in fact through the medium of sanctifying grace, an accident superadded to the soul's substance. Accidental union is the name given by the Scholastics to the union of an accident with a substance."¹

None the less it is true that the union of the soul and God is a union of *substance with substance*,² that man and God are in contact as closely as the incandescent iron is with the fire which permeates it, as closely as the glowing crystal is with the light that penetrates it. We can sum it up briefly in these few words: the hypostatic union makes a God-man, the union of grace makes deified men. In the same way as the actions of Christ are both divine and human, theandric actions, so those of the just man are Godlike, performed at once by God and by man. They are thus meritorious, worthy of eternal life, which is nothing else but direct union with Divinity. We can say with Father de Smedt³ that "the hypostatic union is the type, the model, of our union with God by grace and that the latter is the most perfect imitation of the former that can be found among creatures."

We conclude with this same writer that the union of God and the soul by grace is not a mere moral union, but rather one which contains a physical element and which justifies the name of physico-moral union: "The divine nature is truly and properly united to the substance of the soul by a special bond and in such a way that the soul really possesses the divine nature as if it were personally its own. As a consequence, the soul possesses a divine character, a divine perfection and a divine beauty which is infinitely superior to all possible natural perfection wherever found and in whatsoever creature, whether actually existing or capable of existing."⁴

¹ CARDINAL MERCIER, *La Vie intérieure*, ed. 1919, p. 392.

² This is perhaps the thought of Cardinal Mercier when he adds (*l. c.*): "In a sense, however, this union is a *substantial* one. On the one hand, it takes place between substance and substance without the interference of any natural accident. On the other, it places the soul in direct contact with the divine substance; it places the latter within the immediate reach of the former after the manner of a gift which the soul has the power both to possess and enjoy."

³ In this way are explained the expressions of the *Mystics* who with St. John of the Cross speak of the divine contact "that takes place between the substance of the soul and the Divine substance in the course of intimate and loving friendship."

⁴ Father Poulain in "Graces of Interior Prayer," C. VI, has gathered a great many texts from the *Contemplatives* on this point.

⁵ *Notre Vie intérieure*, D. 51. — 4 *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹ "Sicut vita corporis anima, sic vita anime Deus." (*Enarrat. in psal. 70*, sermo 2, n. 3. P. L. XXXVI, 893.)

² BELLAMY, *La Vie surnaturelle*, p. 184-191.

118. b) If we leave comparisons aside and look for the exact theological doctrine on the question, we arrive at precisely the same conclusion. 1) In heaven the Elect see God face to face without the aid of any intermediary. It is the divine essence itself that acts as the principle of knowledge or *species impressa* as it is called.¹ This means that there exists between God and the Elect a true and real union that can be called physical, since God can not be seen and possessed unless He be present to them by His essence, nor can He be loved unless He be actually united to their wills as the object of their love. But grace is nothing less than the beginning, the inception, the seed of glory.² Hence the union between the soul and God begun here on earth by grace is in fact of the same kind as that in heaven; it is real and, in a certain sense, physical, like the latter. The following is the conclusion of Father Froget in his beautiful work, "The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost." Supported by numerous texts from St. Thomas he says: "God is then truly, physically and substantially present in the Christian in the state of grace; this is no mere presence, but a real possession with the initial enjoyment thereto attached."

2) We draw the same conclusion from the *analysis of grace itself*. According to the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, based on the very texts of Holy Scripture we have quoted, habitual grace is given us in order that we may enjoy the possession not only of divine gifts but also of the Divine Persons.³ But to enjoy anything whatever, adds a disciple of St. Bonaventure, the presence of the said thing or object is absolutely necessary, and therefore, in order to enjoy the Holy Spirit, His presence is necessary as well as the presence of the created gift which unites us to Him.⁴ If the presence of the created gift is *real* and *physical*, should not that of the Holy Ghost be likewise real and physical?

Therefore, our deductions from Dogma as well as the comparisons employed by the Fathers authorize us to say that the union of the soul with God is not merely moral, nor on the other hand substantial, in the strict sense of the term,

¹ *In visione qua Deus per essentiam videtur, ipsa divina essentia erit quasi forma intellectus quo intelligit.* St. THOMAS, *Sum. Theol.*, Suppl., q. 92, a. 1.

² "Gratia nihil est quam inchoatio gloriæ in nobis." *Sum. theol.*, 1^a 11^æ, q. 24, a. 3. — This is likewise the thought of Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical, *Divinum illud munus*: "Hæc autem mira conjunctio, quæ suo nomine inhabitatio dicitur, conditione tantum seu statu ab ea discrepat quæ cælestes Deus beando completitur." CAVALLERA, *Thesaurus doctrinæ cathol.*, n. 546.

³ "Per donum gratiæ gratum facientis perficitur creatura rationalis ad hoc quod libere non solum ipso dono creato utatur, sed ut ipsa divina persona fruatur." St. THOMAS, *Sum. Theol.*, 1, q. 43, a. 3.

⁴ P. S. BONAVENTURE, *Compend. Theol. veritatis*, l. 1, c. 9.

but that it is so real that it may be justly called a *physico-moral* union. However, it remains veiled and obscure; its growth is gradual, its effects are perceived more and more clearly in proportion as we make efforts to cultivate faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Fervent souls who long for this divine union are ever possessed of an urgent desire to advance further each day in the practice of virtue and the use of these gifts.

2° THE VIRTUES AND THE GIFTS

A) *Existence and Nature*

119. In order to act and develop, the supernatural life ingrafted into our souls by habitual grace demands faculties likewise of a supernatural character. These the bounty and liberality of God have given us in the form of *infused virtues* and *gifts of the Holy Ghost*. As Leo XIII tells us: "The just man living the life of grace and acting through the virtues that fulfil the function of faculties, stands also in need of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost."¹ In fact, it is only meet that our natural faculties, which of themselves can produce but natural acts, should be perfected and deified by infused habits to place them on a supernatural plane and enable them to act supernaturally. Because God's liberality knows no bounds, He has granted us a twofold boon: first, the *virtues* which, directed by prudence, enable us to act supernaturally with the help of actual grace; then, the gifts making us so docile to the influence of the Holy Ghost that we are, so to speak, moved and directed by that divine Spirit, guided by a sort of divine instinct. Here it must be noted that these gifts, conferred as they are together with the virtues and habitual grace, do not exert a frequent or an intensive action except in mortified souls who have by a prolonged practice of the moral and theological virtues acquired that supernatural docility and ease that render them completely obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

120. The essential difference between the virtues and the gifts consists in their *different mode* of action within us. In the practice of *virtue* grace lets us act under the influence of prudence. In the use of the *gifts*, once they have reached their full development, grace demands docility rather than activity. We shall go deeper into this question when treat-

¹ "Homini justo vitam scilicet viventem divine gratiæ et per congruas virtutes tamquam facultates agentis, opus plane est septem illis quæ proprie dicuntur Spiritus Sancti donis." LEO XIII, *Encyc. Divinum illud munus*. See the English translation in *The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII*, p. 422-440.

ing of the unitive way. In the meantime, a comparison will help us to understand it : when a mother teaches her child to walk, she at times simply leads him supporting him at the same time so that he may not fall; at other times she takes him in her arms to help him over some hindrance in the way or to let him rest a while. The first instance illustrates the influence of the *virtues*, the latter that of the *gifts*.

From this it follows that normally the acts performed under the influence of the gifts are *more perfect* than those accomplished under the sole influence of the virtues precisely because in the former case the operation of the Holy Ghost is more active and also more fruitful.

B) The Infused Virtues

121. It is *certain* from the Council of Trent that at the very moment of justification we receive the infused virtues of faith, hope and charity.¹ The *common doctrine*, confirmed by the Catechism of the Council of Trent,² is that the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance are likewise communicated to us at that same moment. We must remember that these virtues endow us, not with a facility, but with a *supernatural, proximate power* of eliciting supernatural acts. In order to acquire that facility of action which acquired habits give, we need to perform repeated acts of such virtues.

Let us now see how these virtues *supernaturalize* our faculties.

a) Some of these virtues are *theological*, because their material object is God, their formal object some divine attribute. Faith, for instance, unites us to God, the Supreme Truth, and aids us to see all, to view all things by His divine light. Hope unites us to God, the source of our happiness, who is ever ready to pour forth upon us all His favors so that our transformation may be perfected, and to tender us His all-powerful help to enable us to elicit acts of absolute trust in Him. Charity takes us up to God, infinitely good in Himself. Under the influence of this love, we delight in the perfections of God even more than if they were our own; we desire to make them known and have them praised; we form with Him a holy friendship and a sweet intimacy. Thus we become more and more like unto Him.

¹ "In ipsa justificatione... hæc omnia simul infusa accipit homo, fidem, spem et caritatem. (*Tritid.*, sess. VI, c. 7). — ² P. II, de Baptismo, n. 42.

122. b) These three *theological* virtues unite us directly to God; the *moral* virtues remove the obstacles to that union and thus prepare for and perpetuate it. The object proper of these moral virtues is a moral good distinct from God. Our actions are so regulated by them that, in spite of obstacles from within or without, they are kept in steady course towards God. Thus, *prudence* makes us choose those means best adapted to the pursuance of our supernatural end. *Justice*, by having us render to others what is due them, sanctifies our relations with them, so as to bring us close to God and to make us more like Him. *Fortitude* equips our soul for trials and struggles. It makes us endure suffering with patience and causes us to undertake with holy ardor and daring the most painful and laborious tasks for the glory of God. Lastly, since guilty pleasure would lead us astray, *temperance* controls our thirst for pleasure and brings it under subjection to the law of duty. All these virtues have their part to play either in removing obstacles or in supplying positive means to press onward towards God.¹

C) The Gifts of the Holy Ghost

123. Here we shall not describe the gifts in detail, but simply show how they correspond to the virtues.

First, the gifts are in no way superior to the theological virtues. This becomes evident if we but think of divine charity. Their function, however, is that of *perfecting the exercise* of the virtues. By the gift of *understanding* we can penetrate farther into the truths of faith to discover the hidden treasures and discern the mysterious harmony therein contained. The gift of *knowledge* makes us look upon creatures from the point of view of their relation to their Maker. The gift of *fear*, by weaning us from the false goods of earth that might allure us into sin, fortifies the virtue of hope and intensifies the desire for the happiness of heaven. *Wisdom* makes us relish divine things thus increasing our love of God. The gift of *counsel* crowns the virtue of prudence by showing us in exceptional or difficult cases what it behooves us to do or not to do. *Piety* perfects the virtue of religion, making us recognize in God a Father whom we delight in glorifying by love. The gift of *fortitude* completes the virtue which bears the same name by urging us on to what is more heroic in endurance and in daring.

¹ In the second part of this work where we shall treat of the illuminative way, we shall explain these virtues in detail. The explanation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost we shall join to the treatment of the unitive way.

The gift of *fear*, besides rendering easy the practice of hope, perfects temperance by begetting in us a dread of the penalty and of the ills issuing from the illicit love of pleasure.

In this fashion the virtues and the gifts receive their harmonious development in our souls under the influence of actual grace, of which we must now briefly speak.

3° ACTUAL GRACE :

In the order of nature we can do nothing to bring power into action without the concurrence of God. The same is true in the supernatural order; without actual grace we cannot set our faculties into operation.

124. We shall explain: 1° the notion of actual grace, 2° its mode of action, 3° its necessity.

A) Notion. Actual grace is a supernatural, transient help given us by our Lord to enlighten our mind and strengthen our will in the performance of supernatural acts.

a) Its action on our spiritual faculties is *direct*. Now, grace acts on the mind and the will not simply to raise them to the supernatural order, but to set them in motion and cause them to elicit supernatural acts. For instance, *before* justification, that is, before the infusion into the soul of habitual grace, actual grace makes us see the malice and frightful consequences of sin in order to have us loathe it. *After* justification actual grace shows us by the light of faith God's infinite beauty and His loving kindness, in order to have us love Him with all our heart.

b) Besides these *interior* helps, there are others called *exterior* graces. These latter act directly on our *senses* and our *sensitive faculties*. They, therefore, indirectly reach the spiritual faculties, especially since they are often attended by real, interior helps. To this category of exterior graces belong, for instance, the reading of Holy Scripture or the perusal of some spiritual work, the hearing of a sermon or a piece of religious music, a pious conversation, etc. These do not of themselves strengthen the will, but they produce in us favorable *impressions* which by quickening the mind and rousing the will predispose them towards the supernatural good. Besides, God often gives in addition *inward promptings* which by enlightening the mind and giving strength to the will, move us on to amendment, conversion

¹ Cf. S. THOMAS, 1^a II^a, q. 109-113; TANQUEREY, *Syn. Theol. Dog.*, III, n. 122-123. Besides Latin works see WAFELAERT, *Méditations théol.*, I, p. 606-650; DE BROGLIE, *Confér. sur la vie surnaturelle*, I, p. 249; LABAUCHE, *God and Man*, III^e P., C. 1; VAN DER MEERSCH, in the *Dict. de théol.*: "Grâce".

or advancement in the way of perfection. This is what we draw from the Book of the Acts where the Holy Ghost is spoken of as opening the heart of a woman named Lydia "to attend to those things which were said by Paul."¹ As for the rest, God who knows that it is through things sensible that we rise to things spiritual, adapts Himself to our weakness and makes use of the visible things of this world to bring us to the practice of virtue.

125. **B) Its mode of action.** a) Actual grace exerts its influence upon us both in a *moral* and a *physical* manner. In a *moral* way, by means of *persuasion* and *attraction*, just as a mother might in teaching her child to walk, call him to herself with a promise of something good. It influences us *physically*² by adding new forces to our faculties, too weak to act of themselves, as a mother not only coaxes her child to try to walk, but actually takes him by the arms and helps him to take a few steps. All schools admit that operating grace acts physically by producing in our souls indeliberate impulses. As to co-operating grace various schools of theology hold different opinions; these differences, however, have but little importance in practice. We shall not discuss them here since we do not wish to base the doctrine of the spiritual life upon questions that are matter for controversy.

b) From another point of view, grace either *goes before* the free assent of the will or *accompanies* it in the performance of an act. Thus, for example, the thought of making an act of love of God suggests itself to us without any effort on our part. This is a *preventing* grace, a good thought that God gives us. If we acquiesce in it and make an effort to perform the act of love, we then accomplish this through the help of a grace called *concomitant*. Another distinction analogous to this is the one between *operating* and *co-operating* grace: through the former God acts in us without us; through the latter God acts in and together with us, that is with the free co-operation of our will.

126. **C) Its necessity.**³ The general principle is that actual grace is necessary for the performance of every *supernatural* act, since there must be a proportion between an effect and its cause.

¹ *Acts*, XVI, 14.

² This is at least the Thomist teaching thus summarized by Father Hugon, *Tract. Dog.*, II, p. 297: "Gratia actualis... est etiam realitas supernaturalis nobis intrinseca, non quidem per modum qualitatis, sed per modum motionis transeuntis".

³ Cf. *Syn. Theol. Dog.*, III, n. 34-91. There we also examine how far grace is needed for the performance of natural acts.

a) Thus, when it is question of *conversion*, that is, of the passing from mortal sin to the state of grace, supernatural grace is needed to perform the preliminary acts of faith, hope, sorrow and love; nay, such a grace is needed even for that devout desire of believing which is the first step, the very starting point of faith. b) Our steadfastness in good, our *perseverance* unto the hour of death, is likewise the work of actual grace. In fact, in order to persevere one must resist temptations which assail even the justified soul so persistently and tenaciously at times, that without God's help one could not withstand their onslaught. This is why the Savior warns His Apostles immediately after the Last Supper to watch and pray, that is to say, to rely upon grace rather upon their efforts and good will, lest they fall victims to temptation.¹ Beside the resisting of temptations, perseverance also implies the accomplishment of one's duty. The constant and strenuous efforts we must put forth in order to fulfil it will not be made without the power of grace. He alone who has begun in us the good work of perfection can bring it to a happy close.² Only He who has called us unto His eternal glory can perfect and confirm and establish us.³

127. This holds true especially of *final perseverance*, a singular and priceless gift.⁴ We cannot merit it strictly speaking. To die in the state of grace in spite of all the temptations that assail us at the last hour, to escape these by a sudden or tranquil death — falling asleep in the Lord — this is truly in the language of Councils the grace of graces. We cannot ask for it insistently enough. Prayer and faithful co-operation with grace can obtain it for us.⁵

c) We truly have to rely upon the divine favor. Think what this means, if one wishes not merely to persevere in grace, but to grow in holiness each day, to avoid deliberate venial faults and reduce as much as in our power lies even our faults of frailty. To pretend that we could for long escape all the faults that hinder our spiritual progress is to contradict the experience of the choicest souls, souls that sorrowed bitterly over their lapses; it would be to contradict St. John who declares that whoever imagines himself free from sin labors under a delusion;⁶ in fine, it is to contradict the Council of Trent which condemns those who maintain that justified man can, without a special privi-

¹ *Matth.*, XXVI, 41. — ² *Philipp.*, I, 6. — ³ *I Peter*, V, 10.

⁴ *Trid.*, sess. VI, Can. 16, 22, 23.

⁵ S. AUGUST., *De dono persev.*, VI, 10. P. L. XLV, 999.

⁶ *I Joan.*, I, 8.

lege from God, avoid all venial sin during the whole course of his life.¹

128. Actual grace is, therefore, needed even after justification. We obtain it of the divine mercy by prayer; hence, the stress laid in Holy Writ upon the necessity of prayer. We can also obtain it through our meritorious acts, in other words, by our co-operation with grace; for the more faithful we are in availing ourselves of the actual graces received, the more will the Almighty be moved to grant us new and greater ones.

CONCLUSIONS

129. 1° We must hold in greatest esteem the life of grace, for it is a new life which unites and assimilates us to God. It is a life much higher and richer than our own natural life. As the life of the mind, our intellectual life, is superior to vegetative or sensitive life, so the supernatural life infinitely surpasses mere rational life. This latter in fact is due to man the moment God determines to create him, whilst the former is above the activities and the merit of even the most perfect creature. What created being could ever claim the right of becoming the adopted child of God? Of being made the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost? Of seeing, contemplating God face to face as He sees and contemplates Himself? The Christian life is, therefore, the *hidden treasure* which we must hold dearer than all created things.

130. 2° Once this treasure is ours, we must be ready to sacrifice all things rather than run the risk of losing it. This is the conclusion arrived at by Pope St. Leo: "Understand, O Christian, what dignity is yours! Made a partaker of the divine nature, do not by an unworthy life return to your former wretchedness."² No one should be possessed of a greater *reverence for self* than the Christian, not indeed on account of any merits of his own, but because of that divine life in which he shares, because of the Holy Ghost whose living temple he is. The holiness of this temple must not be violated nor its beauty tarnished: "Holiness becomes Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days."³

131. 3° Our plain duty is to make use of, to develop this supernatural organism which constitutes our greatest

¹ Sess. VI, Cap. 23. — ² *Sermones*, XXI, 3. P. L., LIV, 195. — ³ *Pi.* XCII, 5.

possession. If on the one hand it has pleased the divine goodness to raise us to a superior rank, to endow us with virtues and gifts that perfect our natural powers; if at every moment God gives us His aid that we may live and act through those powers, it would be the blackest ingratitude to scorn and despise such gifts and to live a merely natural life without looking for fruits worthy of eternal glory. The more generous the giver, the more active and fruitful the co-operation expected. We shall understand this better still after we have studied the place of Christ in the life of the Christian.

§ II. Rôle of Jesus in the Christian Life ¹

132. The Three Divine Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity confer upon us that participation in the life of God described above. It is granted, however, because of the merits and satisfactions of Jesus Christ. On this account He plays a signal part in our supernatural life which is, therefore, called the *Christian life*.

According to the teaching of St. Paul, Jesus Christ is the head of regenerated humanity, just as Adam was the head of the human race; but, in a far more perfect manner. By His merits Christ regained for us our rights to grace and glory, and by His example He shows us how we are to live in order to sanctify ourselves and merit heaven. More than this, He is the *head* of a mystical body of which we are the members. Thus, He is the meritorious, exemplary, and vital cause of our sanctification.

I. *Jesus, the Meritorious Cause of our Spiritual Life*

133. When we say that Jesus Christ is the *meritorious cause* of our sanctification, we take the term in its broader sense as implying both satisfaction and merit. "Because of the exceeding great charity wherewith He loved us, by His holy passion on the cross, He merited for us justification and made satisfaction for us" ². *Logically*, satisfaction precedes merit. The offense done to God must first of all be atoned for to obtain the pardon of sin, before grace can be merited. In reality, however, all the free acts of our Savior

were at once satisfactory and meritorious; all had an infinite moral value, as we said above, n. 78. From this truth a few conclusions follow.

A) No sin is unpardonable provided that contrite and humbled we meekly ask for forgiveness. This is what we do in the tribunal of penance where the power of the Blood of Christ is applied to us by His minister. The same is effected in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There Jesus offers Himself incessantly for us by the hands of His priests as a sacrifice of propitiation, which repairing the injury done to God by sin, inclines Him to forgive us and at the same time obtains for us graces which excite in our souls sentiments of sincere contrition. Christ thus obtains for us the full pardon of our sins and remission of the temporal punishment due to them. We may add that all the acts of our Christian life, when united to those of Jesus Christ, have a satisfactory value both for ourselves and for those for whom we offer them.

134. B) Christ likewise merited for us all the grace we need to attain our supernatural end and to develop in us the supernatural life: "Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ." ¹ He merited for us the grace of conversion, the grace of steadfastness in good, the helps to resist temptation, the aids to profit by trial, the grace of comfort in the midst of tribulations, the grace of renewal of spirit and of final perseverance. He merited all things for us. We have the solemn word that anything we ask the Father in His name, that is, through His own merits, will be granted to us. ² Then in order to inspire us with greater confidence, He instituted the sacraments, visible signs, which confer His grace in all the important events of life and which give us a right to actual graces in time of need.

135. C) He has gone further still. In His desire to associate us with Himself in the work of our own sanctification, He has given us the power of satisfying and meriting, thus making us the secondary causes, the agents of our own sanctification. He has, as a matter of fact, made this co-operation a law and an essential condition of our spiritual life. If He has carried His cross, it is that we may follow Him bearing ours: "If any many will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and

¹ ST. THOM., III, qq. 8, 25, 26, 40, 46-49, 57 and elsewhere; BÉRULLE, *Œuvres*, éd. 1857, p. 522-530; 665-666; 680; OLLIER, *Pensées choisies*; PRAT, *Theology of St. Paul*, I, I, III, c. 3; II, I, III, IV; MARMION, *Christ, Life of the Soul*; DUPERRAY, *Le Christ dans la vie chrétienne*; PLUS, *In Christ Jesus*.
² Co. of Trent, sess. VI, c. 7.

¹ Eph., I, 3. — ² John, XVI, 23.

follow me." ¹ It was thus understood by the Apostles. If we would share in His glory, says St. Paul, we must share in His sufferings: "Yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." ² St. Peter adds that if Christ suffered for us it is that we may follow in His footsteps. ³ Moreover, self-sacrificing souls are urged, after the manner of the Apostle of the Gentiles, to undergo suffering joyfully in union with Christ for the sake of the Church, His mystical body: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church." ⁴ In this wise these souls share in the redeeming power of Christ's passion and become secondary agents of the salvation of their brethren. How true, how sublime, how consoling is this doctrine! Compare it with the incredible affirmation of certain Protestants who assert, that since Christ suffered to the full for us, there remains for us only to enjoy the fruits of His plentiful redemption without drinking of His chalice. They thus pretend to pay homage to the fulness of Christ's merits. Does not our Christ-given power to merit show forth better the fulness of the redemption by Christ? Does it not do more honor to Christ to manifest the power of His satisfaction by enabling us to join in His work of atonement and co-operate with Him even though in a secondary manner?

II. *Jesus, the Exemplary Cause of our Spiritual Life*

136. Jesus was not content to merit for us; He willed to be the *exemplary cause*, the model of our supernatural life.

In order to develop a life that is no less than a participation in the life of God, we must strive as far as it is possible, to live a divine life. Hence, the need we had of a divine model. As St. Augustine remarks, men whom we see were too imperfect to serve us as a pattern and God, who is holiness itself, was too far beyond our gaze. Then, the eternal Son of God, His living image, became man and showed us by His example how man could here on earth approach the perfection of God. Son of God and son of man, He lived a Godlike life and could say: "Who seeth me seeth the Father." ⁵ Having revealed the holiness of God in His actions, He can present to us as practical the imitation of the divine perfections: "Be you therefore

perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect." ¹ Therefore, the Eternal Father proposes Him to us as our model. At His baptism and His transfiguration He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ² Because He is well pleased in Him, the Eternal Father wills that we imitate His only-begotten Son. Thus with perfect assurance our Lord tells us: "I am the way... no man cometh to the Father but by me... learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart... I have given you an example that as I have done to you so you do also." ³ At bottom the Gospel is no more than a relation of the deeds and traits of our Lord's sacred person proposed to us as a model for our imitation: "Jesus began to do and to teach." ⁴ Christianity in turn is nothing more than the imitation of Christ. St. Paul gave this as the sum-total of all our duties: "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." ⁵

137. a) The following are the qualities of the model given us. Jesus is a *perfect* model. On the admitted testimony of even those who do not believe in His divinity, He is the highest type of virtue ever seen among men. He practised all virtues to the degree of heroism. His motives were the most perfect: religion towards God, love of His fellow-men, utter self-effacement and horror of sin and its approaches. ⁶ And yet, this model is withal capable of imitation; it is universal, magnetic, powerful.

138. b) All men *can imitate* Him. Indeed, He willed to bear all our weaknesses and miseries and even our temptations; He willed to be like us in all things, sin excepted. "For we have not a high-priest who can not have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like we are, without sin." ⁷ During thirty years He lived an ordinary life, hidden and obscure; He was subject to Mary and Joseph, working as an apprentice, a wage-earner, a toiler, "the carpenter's son." ⁸ This has made Him the perfect model for the great mass of men who have but lowly duties to perform and who must work out their sanctification amid humble occupations. His public life was one of zeal. This He exercised, now by training His Apostles, His chosen ones, now by evangelizing the multitudes. He underwent hunger

¹ *Matth.*, V. 48. — ² *Matth.*, III, 17; XVII, 5.

³ *John*, XIV, 6; *Matth.*, XI, 29; *John*, XIII, 15. — ⁴ *Acts*, I, 1.

⁵ *I Cor.*, IV, 16; *XI*, 1; *Eph.*, V, 1.

⁶ This is very well explained by Father Olier, "Catechism for an Interior Life", Part I, C. I. — ⁷ *Heb.*, IV, 15. — ⁸ *Matth.*, XIII, 55.

¹ *Matth.*, XVI, 24. — ² *Rom.*, VIII, 17. — ³ *I Peter*, II, 21.

⁴ *Coloss.*, I, 24. — ⁵ *John*, XIV, 9.

all His other virtues, we are drawn to imitate Him, not merely by the persuasive force of His example, but by the impelling power, the efficaciousness of the graces which He merited for us by practising such virtues.

141. There are especially certain actions of our divine Savior that transcend all others. To these we must unite ourselves since they are the source of greater grace; they are His *mysteries*. At His incarnation our Lord offered us all with Himself to the Eternal Father to consecrate us to Him. This mystery then merited for us the grace of self-renunciation and of union with God. The mystery of His crucifixion gained for us the grace of crucifying our flesh and its concupiscences. The mystery of His death obtained for us the grace of dying to sin and to the causes of sin.¹ The truth of this will be better realized by considering how Jesus is the head of a mystical body of which we are the members.

III. *Jesus the Head of a Mystical Body or the Source of our Spiritual Life*²

142. The doctrine of the mystical body is contained in substance in the words of our Lord: ³ "I am the vine and you the branches." Here He asserts that we draw our life from Him as the branches do from the stalk. This comparison brings out the notion of our participation in the life of Christ. It is easy to pass thence to the conception of the mystical body in which Jesus, the Head, communicates His life to the members. St. Paul is most insistent on this teaching so fruitful in its consequences. A body must have a head, a soul and its members. These three elements we shall now describe, following the doctrine of the Apostle.

143. ¹⁰ The head plays a threefold rôle in the human body: it is center of all its most prominent and *preëminent* part, its center of unity, holding together, controlling and directing all the members; it is the source of a vital influx, for life and movement proceed from it. This threefold function is exercised by Christ in the Church and in the souls of men. a) He is without question the most prominent and preëminent among men. As God-man He is the first-born of all creatures, the object of the divine complacency, the exemplar

¹ OLIER, *Catechism for an Interior Life*, P. I, C. XX-XXV.

² *Sum. Theol.*, III, q. 8; PRAT, *op. cit.*, I, ed. 1920, p. 358-369; DUPERRAY, *op. cit.*, C. I-II; MARMION, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, p. 79-92; PLUS, *op. cit.*, *3 John*, XV, 5.

and fatigue, enjoyed the friendship of a few, and had to bear the ingratitude and even the enmity of others. He had His successes and reverses, His joys and His sorrows. In a word, He passed through the vicissitudes of the man who lives close to his friends and in daily contact with the people. The sufferings of His passion have given us the example of heroic patience in the midst of physical and moral torture, endured not only without complaint but with a prayer for His persecutors. And we must not reason that because He was God He suffered less. He was also man, a man possessed of the most perfect, and therefore the most delicate sensibility. So, He felt and felt more keenly, more vividly than we ever could, the ingratitude of men, the defection of His friends, the treason of Judas. He tasted weariness and grief and terror to the full, so that He could not stay the groaning of His heart, He could not halt the prayer that if possible the bitter chalice might pass from Him. Lastly, on the cross He let escape that woeful cry of utter dereliction, torn from the recesses of His soul, and revealing abysmal depths of interior sorrow: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"¹

139. e) A universal model is also a *magnetic* one. Speaking of the manner of His death, He foretold that once He be lifted up from the earth He would draw all things to Himself: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."² The prophecy has come true. Gazing upon what Jesus has done and suffered for them, generous souls are smitten with love for Him and for His Cross.³ In spite of the abhorrence of nature they bravely carry their interior or exterior crosses to become more like their Lord and Master, to give Him a proof of their love by suffering with Him and for Him, to share more richly in the fruits of His redemption, to join Him in working for the sanctification of men. This is revealed in the lives of the Saints who seek after crosses more eagerly than worldlings do after pleasure.

140. d) This attraction is all the stronger since He adds thereto all the power of His grace. All the actions of Christ before His death were meritorious; they merited for us the grace of performing actions similar to His own. When we observe His humility, His poverty, His mortification and

¹ *Matth.*, XXVII, 46; *Mk.*, XV, 34.

² *John*, XII, 32.

³ This is the meaning of the prayer of the Apostle St. Andrew who, crucified for His Master, lovingly greeted the Cross, saying: "O bona crux".

145. Nor can this twofold action of the Holy Ghost and of Christ work at variance. On the contrary, one completes the other. The Holy Ghost comes to us through Christ. When Jesus was on earth His holy soul possessed the Spirit in all its fulness, and by His actions and above all by His sufferings and death He merited for us the communication of this same Spirit. It is, therefore, because of Him that the Holy Ghost comes now to impart to us Christ's life and virtues and to make us like unto Him. Thus we see how on the one hand Jesus being man could alone be the head of a mystical body composed of men, since the head and the members must be one in nature; and we see on the other hand how as man He could not of Himself bestow the grace required for the life of His members. This the Holy Ghost does, but He does it in virtue of Christ's merits. Hence, we can say that this vital influx takes its origin in Christ in order to reach His members.

146. 3° Who are the members of this mystical body? All those who have been baptized. It is baptism that incorporates us into Christ. St. Paul says: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized unto one body."¹ For this reason he adds that we have been baptized in Christ, that in baptism we put on Christ,² that is to say, we participate in the interior dispositions of Christ. This the Decree to the Armenians explains, saying that by baptism we become members of Christ and of the body of the Church.³ From this it follows that all the baptized are Christ's members, but in various degrees. The *just* are united to Him by habitual grace and the privileges that come with it; *sinners*, by faith and hope; the *blessed*, by the beatific vision. As regards *infidels*, they are not actually members of Christ's mystical body, although as long as they live upon earth they are called to become such. Only the *damned* are irrevocably excluded from this wonderful privilege.

147. 4° The Consequences of this Doctrine. A) This incorporation forms the basis of the doctrine of the communion of Saints. The just upon earth, the souls in purgatory and the blessed in heaven are all integral parts of Christ's mystical body. As such they all share in His life, come under His influence, and are obliged to love and help one another. St. Paul tells us: "If one member suffer anything,

of all virtues, the meritorious cause, the source of our sanctification, who on account of His merits was exalted above His brethren and before whom every knee must bend in heaven and on earth.

b) He is the *center of unity* in the Church. Two things are essential to any complete organism: variety of organs and the functions they fulfil, and a single, common principle. Without these we should have a mass or a motley gathering of living beings with no tie to bind them together. After having given diversity of members to the Church by the establishment of a hierarchy, Jesus Christ still remains its center of unity; for it is He who as the invisible but real Head of the Church gives impetus and direction to its rulers.

c) He is likewise the *vital influx*, the principle of life that quickens all the members. Even as man He received grace in all its fulness to communicate it to us: "We saw him full of grace and truth... from whose fulness we have all received and grace for grace."¹ He is in fact the meritorious cause of all the graces bestowed upon us by the Holy Ghost. The Council of Trent does not hesitate to affirm the reality of this influx, this vital action of Jesus upon the just: "For the same Christ... does infuse virtue into those that are justified... as the head unto the members."²

144. 2° A living body must have not only a head but also a soul. The Holy Ghost is the soul of that mystical body whose head is Christ. This Holy Spirit infuses charity into the souls of men and also the graces Christ merited for us: "The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."³ This is why He is called the *Vivifier*; "I believe in the Holy Ghost... the *Vivifier*". This is what St. Augustine had in mind when he said that the Holy Ghost is to the body of the Church what the soul is to the human body: "What our soul is to the body, the Holy Ghost is to the body of Christ, which is the Church."⁴ These words have been adopted by Leo XIII in his encyclical on the Holy Ghost. This same Spirit dispenses the sundry spiritual gifts, the diversity of graces — charisms — "To one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another divers kinds of tongues... but another prophecy, to another the same Spirit worketh, dividing all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will."⁵

¹ I Cor., XII, 13.

² Rom., VI, 3; Gal., III, 25; Rom., XIII, 17.

³ DENZINGER-BANN., n. 696.

⁴ John, I, 14, 16. — ⁵ Sess. VI, c. 8. — ³ Rom., V, 5.

⁴ Sermo 187, De Tempore. — ⁵ Cor., XII, 6-11.

all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." ¹

148. B) This is what makes all Christians brothers. From now on there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither free-man nor slave; we are all one in Christ Jesus.² We are all in closest fellowship so that what is profitable unto one is profitable unto all others. No matter how great the variety of gifts, or how great the diversity of offices, the whole body derives gain from whatever good there is in each member, and each member in turn shares in the common good of the body. This doctrine reveals to us the reasons why our Lord could say that whatever we do to the least of His little ones we do unto Him; ³ for the head is one with the members.

149. C) From St. Paul's teaching it follows that Christians are Christ's complement. God has in fact "made him head over all the Church, which is his body and the fulness of him who is filled all in all."⁴ The fact is that Jesus, Himself perfect, needs an increment in order to form His mystical body. From this point of view He is not sufficient unto Himself; in order to exercise all His vital functions He requires members. Father Olier concludes: "Let us yield our souls to the Spirit of Jesus Christ so that Jesus may have an increase in us. Whenever He finds apt followers, He expands, grows and diffuses Himself within their hearts, filling them with the same spiritual fragrance wherein He abounds."⁵ This is how we are able and are called to fulfil those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, our Savior, for His body, which is the Church,⁶ suffering even as He did, that His passion, so full in itself, be likewise fulfilled in His members through time and space. There is no doctrine more rich, more fruitful, than this doctrine of Christ's mystical body.

CONCLUSION: DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD ⁷

150. From all that has been said concerning the rôle Jesus Christ plays in our spiritual life, it follows that in order to foster this life an intimate, affectionate and habitual union with Him is demanded of us, that is, devotion to the Incarnate Word. "He who abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."⁸ The Church brings this

¹ *I Cor.*, XII, 26. — ² *Rom.*, X, 12; *I Cor.* XII, 13. — ³ *Matth.*, XXV, 34-40.

⁴ *Eph.*, I, 23. — ⁵ *Pensées*, p. 15-16. — ⁶ *Coloss.*, I, 24.

⁷ BÉRULLE (called the Apostle of the Incarnate Word), *Discours de l'Etat des Grandeurs de Jésus*. — ⁸ *John*, XV, 5.

home to us when at the end of the Canon of the Mass she reminds us that through Him we receive all spiritual blessings, that through Him we are sanctified, quickened, blessed; that through Him, with Him and in Him is given to the Father Almighty in union with the Holy Ghost all honor and glory. A whole system of spiritual doctrine is here contained: having received from God all things through Christ, through the same Christ we must give God glory, through the same Christ we must ask further graces, with Christ and in Christ we must perform all our acts.

151. ^{1°} Jesus is the only perfect adorer of His Father. In the words of Father Olier, He is the perfect worshipper of God, the only one that can offer Him infinite homage. It is clear, therefore, that in order to pay our debts to the Most Blessed Trinity, we can do nothing better than unite our every act of religion with the perfect worship of Jesus Christ. Nor is this difficult. Jesus being the head of a mystical body whose members we are, adores His Father not merely in His own name, but in the name of all those that are incorporated into Him. He puts into our hands, He places at our disposal the homages He pays to God Almighty; He allows us to make them our own and to offer them to the Blessed Trinity.

152. ^{2°} With Him and in Him can we best make our petitions for new graces efficacious. He is the High-priest, "always living to make intercession for us."¹ Even when we have had the misfortune of offending God, He pleads for us and takes our part all the more eloquently as with His prayers He offers also the Blood He shed for our redemption. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just."² More, He endows our prayers with such worth that if we pray in His name, that is, trusting to His infinite merits and uniting our poor prayers with His perfect prayers, we are certain of having our petitions granted. "Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you."³ The fact is that the value of His merits is imparted to His members, and God can not refuse anything to His Son. "He was heard for his reverence."⁴

153. ^{3°} Lastly, it is in union with Jesus Christ that we must perform all our acts, by keeping, as Father Olier so aptly puts it, Jesus before our eyes, in our heart and in our

¹ *Heb.*, VII, 25. — ² *I John*, II, 1. — ³ *John*, XVI, 23. — ⁴ *Heb.*, V, 7.

hands.¹ Now, we keep Jesus before our eyes when we think of Him as the ideal, the model, we are to imitate; when like St. Vincent de Paul we ask ourselves: "What would Jesus Christ do were He in my place?" We keep Jesus in our heart by drawing into our soul the dispositions of His own heart, His purity of intention, His fervor, in order to perform our actions in the spirit in which He performed His. We have Jesus in our hands when we carry into action with generosity, determination and constancy the inspirations which He suggests to us. Then, our life is, indeed, transformed and we live Christ's own life. "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."²

§ III. The Part of the Blessed Virgin, the Saints and the Angels in the Christian Life

154. Assuredly there is but one God and one principal mediator, Jesus Christ: "For there is one God: and one mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus."³ However, it has pleased the Divine Wisdom as well as the Divine Goodness to grant us protectors, intercessors and models that are, or at least appear to be, closer still to us. Such are the Saints, members of Christ's mystical body, who having reproduced in their own lives the divine perfections and the virtues of Christ, are concerned in the welfare of their fellow-members, their brethren. By honoring them we honor none other than God Himself, since they reflect the divine perfections. In asking them to intercede for us before the Almighty, it is none other than God whom we really invoke. Lastly, since their own sanctity depends solely upon their imitation of the divine Model, upon the virtues, when we imitate them we do nothing else but imitate Jesus Christ Himself. Far from detracting, then, from the worship due to God and to the Incarnate Word, devotion to the Saints confirms it and carries it out in all its fullness. And since the Blessed Mother of Jesus occupies a unique place among the Saints, we shall first explain the place she holds in the Christian Life.

I. The Part Mary Holds in the Christian Life. 4

155. 1° Its foundation. This rests upon the fact of Mary's intimate union with Jesus, in other words, upon the

dogma of her divine Motherhood. Corollaries deduced from this doctrine are her dignity and her office as the mother of men.

A) At the moment of the Incarnation Mary became the mother of Jesus, mother of the God-man, mother of God. If we consider the dialogue between Mary and the Angel, we discover that the Blessed Virgin is the mother of Jesus not simply inasmuch as He is a private individual, but inasmuch as He is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. "The Angel does not speak merely of the personal grandeur of Jesus. He tenders Mary a call to become the Mother of the Savior, of the expected Messiah, the Eternal King of regenerated mankind. The whole work of redemption hinges on Mary's "*fiat*". She is aware of what God proffers her; she accedes without restriction or condition to what God asks of her. Her "*fiat*" embraces the whole import of that divine invitation, it extends to the entire work of redemption."¹ The Fathers, following St. Irenaeus, remark that Mary is, therefore, the Mother of the Redeemer and that, being associated as such with His work of Redemption, she has in our spiritual restoration a part similar to that of Eve in our spiritual ruin.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has the most intimate relations with the Three Divine Persons. She is the *well-beloved Daughter of the Father* and His collaborator in the work of the Incarnation. She is the *Mother of the Son* with a real title to respect from Him, to His love and, upon earth, even to His obedience. By giving Him His body and blood, the instruments of our redemption, and by sharing in His mysteries, she was the secondary but true agent, the co-worker with her Son in effecting the sanctification and salvation of men. She is the *living temple*, the *privileged sanctuary of the Holy Ghost*, and, in an analogical sense, His Spouse; for with Him and under Him she has an active part in bringing forth souls to God.

156. B) At the Incarnation Mary became likewise the Mother of men. As we have already stated, n. 142, Jesus is

I-XXIII; BOSSUET, *Sermons sur la Ste Vierge*; TERRIEN, *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes*, III; GARRIGUET, *La Vierge Marie*; *Dict. d'Apol. (d'Als.)*, "Marie"; HUGON, *Marie, pleine de grâce*; BAINVEL, *Marie, mère de grâce*; *Syn. Theol. dog.*, II, n. 1226-1253.

¹ BAINVEL, *op. cit.*, p. 73, 75. — The thesis can well be based on the words of the Angel: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus (i. e. *Savior*); He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever." *Luce*, I, 31, 32.

⁴ *Introd. à la vie et aux vertus chréti.*, c. IV, p. 47.

³ *Gal.*, II, 20. — ³ *1 Tim.*, II, 5.

⁴ St. THOMAS, *In Salut. Angel. Expositio*; SUAREZ, *De Mystertis Christi*, disp.

her soul loved even more than herself while the cruel iron pierced her heart, fulfilling the prophecy of Simeon: "Thine own soul a sword shall pierce."¹ For many of the Jews present on Calvary the death of Jesus was the execution of a criminal; for a few it was the murder of an innocent man; but for His Mother it was a sacrifice for the salvation of the world. She saw in the Cross an altar, in Her Son a priest, and in His blood the price of our redemption. She suffered in her soul what Jesus suffered in His body, and in union with Him she offered herself as a victim for our sins. What merits did not her perfect immolation gain!

Even after the ascension of Her Son into heaven she continued to acquire merits. The privation of the joy of His presence was a slow martyrdom. Though she ardently longed for the moment when she would be forever united to Him, yet, because it was God's will and for the sake of the infant Church, she lovingly accepted this ordeal and thus secured for us merits without number. Furthermore, her acts possessed the greater merit because born of a perfect purity of intention, "My soul doth magnify the Lord,"² because they were elicited with such fervor that they fully realized God's will: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done unto me according to thy word;"³ and lastly, because they were performed in a most intimate union with Jesus Christ, the very source of all merit.

No doubt, all these merits were first and foremost for herself, increasing her own treasure of grace and her titles to glory; but because of the part she took in the work of our redemption, she was also found worthy of meriting in our behalf; as St. Bernard says, she who was full of grace poured forth her overflow of grace upon us.⁴

159. 3^o Mary, an exemplary cause. Next to Jesus, Mary is the most beautiful model offered for our imitation. The Holy Ghost who in virtue of her Son's merits lived in her, made her a living image of Christ. Never was she guilty of the least fault, never did she offer the least resistance to grace; on the contrary, she carried out her words to the letter: "Be it done to me according to thy word." The Fathers, therefore, particularly St. Ambrose and Pope St. Liberius, represent her as the finished model of all virtues; "charitable and full of consideration for all who surrounded her, ever ready to serve them, never uttering a

¹ Luke, II, 35. — ² Luke, I, 46. — ³ Luke, I, 48. — ⁴ In *Assumpt.*, sermo II, 2.

the head of regenerated mankind, the head of a mystical body whose members we are. As such did Mary conceive Him. She likewise conceived His members, all those who form part of Him, those who have been born again and those who are called to incorporation with Him. When she became the Mother of Jesus according to the flesh she became the mother of men according to the spirit. The scene on Calvary only confirms this truth. At the very moment that our redemption is to be completed by the death of the Savior, Jesus says to Mary: "Behold thy son!" Then to St. John himself He says: "Behold thy mother!" This, according to a tradition that goes back as far as Origen, was a declaration that all Christians are the spiritual children of Mary. This double title of Mother of God and Mother of men is the foundation of the office which Mary fills in our spiritual life.

157. 2^o Mary, a meritorious cause of grace. We have seen, n. 133, that Jesus is in the strictest sense the chief meritorious cause of all the graces we receive. Mary, however, associated with Him in the work of our sanctification, merited these graces, not in the same manner as Christ, but secondarily and "de congruo,"¹ that is, under Christ and because of Him, in other words, because He conferred upon her the power of meriting for us.

She merited these graces first of all at the moment of the Incarnation when she uttered her "fiat"; for the Incarnation is already the beginning of Redemption. To cooperate then in the Incarnation is to cooperate in the Redemption and in all the graces resulting therefrom, and hence in our sanctification and salvation.

158. Besides, Mary whose will was ever in accord with God's will and with the will of her divine Son, associated herself during her whole life in the work of redemption. She brought up Jesus, she nourished and made ready the Victim of Calvary. Associated with Him in His joys as well as in His trials, in His lowly labors at the house of Nazareth as well as in His virtues, she also united herself to her Son with tender and generous compassion in His sufferings and death. At the foot of the Cross she again uttered her "fiat", acquiescing in the death of Him whom

¹ This expression has been ratified by Pope Pius X in his encyclical, "*Ad diem illud*", Feb. 2, 1904, wherein he declares that Mary has merited for us "*de congruo*" all the graces that Jesus had merited for us "*de condigno*".

word or doing the least that could give pain, she was all-loving and beloved of all." ¹

It will suffice to note the virtues mentioned in the Gospel: 1) Her deep *faith*. She unhesitatingly believed the marvels the Angel announced to her from God. For this faith she was praised by St. Elizabeth under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "Blessed art thou because thou hast believed." ² 2) Her *virginity* is revealed in her answer to the Angel: "How shall this be done for I know not man?" ³ 3) Her *humility* is evidenced by the confusion she experienced at hearing her praises on the lips of the Angel, and by her expressed determination of ever remaining the handmaid of the Lord at that very moment when she was proclaimed Mother of God. It further betrays itself in that ecstatic prayer, the Magnificat, as well as in her love of a hidden life, while as Mother of God she had a right to be honored above all creatures. 4) Her *interior recollection* whereby she pondered in silence all that concerned her divine Son: "But Mary kept all these words in her heart." ⁴ 5) Her *love for God and men* which caused her to accept willingly all the trials of a long life, especially the immolation of her Son on Calvary and the painful separation from Him from the time of His ascension to the moment of her death.

160. This perfect model is also *wonderfully attractive*. First, Mary is a mere creature as we are, a sister, a mother whom we are drawn to imitate that we may show her our gratitude, our veneration and our love. Then, she is a model *easy* of imitation in this way that she sanctified herself in the ordinary, everyday life common to most of us, by fulfilling those lowly household duties of a young woman and a mother, leading a hidden, retired life both in joy and in sorrow, in the heights of exaltation and in the deepest humiliations. We are on firm ground when we imitate the Blessed Virgin. It is the best way of imitating Jesus and of obtaining Mary's all-powerful intercession.

161. ^{4o} **Mary, universal mediatrix of grace.** Long ago St. Bernard formulated this doctrine in the well-known text: "It is God's will that we should receive all graces through Mary." ⁵ It is important to determine the precise meaning of these words. It is certain that when Mary gave us Jesus, the Author and Meritorious Cause of grace,

she thereby gave us all graces. But we can go further. According to a teaching which, as time goes on, is becoming unanimous, ¹ men do not receive a single grace which does not come to them immediately through Mary, that is, through her intercession. It is question, therefore, of an immediate and universal mediation, subordinated, however, to that of Jesus.

162. In order to explain more exactly this doctrine we shall quote Father de la Broise: ² "The actual disposition of the divine decrees ordains that any supernatural favor accorded to men be granted them by the common concord of three wills and in no other way. First of all, by the *will of God*, the Giver of all graces; then, by the *will of Christ*, the Mediator who by right of justice has merited and obtained grace; and lastly, by the *will of Mary*, a secondary mediator who through Jesus Christ has in all equity (*de congruo*) merited and acquired graces." This mediation is *immediate* in the sense that for each grace granted to men Mary interposes the good offices of her past merits and of her actual intercession. This by no means implies that the recipient of a grace must of necessity demand it of Mary. She can intervene unasked in our behalf. Her mediation is also *universal*, that is, it covers all the graces given to men since the fall of Adam. However, it remains always subordinated to the mediation of Jesus; for if Mary can merit and obtain graces, it is solely through the mediation of her divine Son. Thus, Mary's mediation simply emphasizes the import and richness of Christ's own mediation.

This doctrine has been confirmed by an Office and Mass in honor of *Mary Mediatrix*, which Pope Benedict XV granted to the dioceses of Belgium and to all the dioceses of the Christian world that should request it. ³ The teaching is therefore safe and we can make practical use of it. It can not but inspire us with an immense confidence in Mary. ⁴

¹ The proofs for this assertion will be found in Terrien, *op. cit.*, III.

² *Mairie, mère de grâces*, p. 23-24.

³ Cardinal Mercier by letter of January 23, 1921 makes the fact known to his flock in the following terms: "For years past the Belgian episcopate, the Faculty of Theology of the University of Louvain, all the Religious Orders of the nation, have been addressing their requests to the Sovereign Pontiff to have the title of the Blessed Virgin, "*Mediatrix of All Graces*", authentically recognized. His Holiness, Benedict XV, has just granted to the churches of Belgium and to all those of the Christian world that will so request, a proper Office and Mass for the thirty-first day of May in honor of Mary Mediatrix."

⁴ On this subject see: BIRREMEUX, *De Mediatione Marice*; O'CONNOR, *Our Lady Mediatrix of Graces*; HUSSLEIN, *All Graces through Mary*; and many articles in Catholic Reviews of recent years.

¹ BAINVEL, *Le Saint Cœur de Marie*, p. 313. — ² Luke, I, 45.
³ Luke, I, 34. — ⁴ Luke, II, 19. — ⁵ *Sermo de aqueductu*, n. 7.

CONCLUSION : DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

163. Since Mary plays such an important part in our spiritual life, we must entertain a great devotion to her. Devotion means *devotedness*, and devotedness means the gift of self. We shall be devoted to Mary, then, if we give ourselves entirely to her and through her to God. In so doing we simply imitate God who gives Himself and His Son to us through Mary. We shall give her our *intellect* by holding her in most profound reverence, our *will* by an absolute confidence in her, our *heart* by the gift of a tender and childlike love; in fine, our *whole being* by copying as far as possible all her virtues.

164. A) Profound veneration. Veneration for Mary has its foundation in her dignity as Mother of God and in the consequences of this dignity. We can never adequately honor and esteem the one whom the Word-made-Flesh reveres as His Mother, the well-beloved daughter whom the Eternal Father contemplates with loving eye, and whom the Holy Ghost regards as His chosen sanctuary. The *Father* wishing to associate her so intimately in the work of the Incarnation shows her the utmost respect; He sends her an Angel who hails her full of grace and who awaits her "Fiat". The *Son* reveres, loves and obeys her as His Mother. The *Holy Ghost* comes and takes His delight in her. When, therefore, we venerate the Blessed Virgin we join with the Three Divine Persons in esteeming what They Themselves esteem.

No doubt, we must not exaggerate or indulge in any excess as regards this devotion to Mary. We must especially avoid anything that might suggest equality of Mary with Almighty God such as making her the source of grace. As long, however, as we see in her but a creature possessed of no grandeur, no holiness, no power save such as her Creator bestowed upon her, there can be no danger of sinning by excess. It is then God Himself whom we honor and venerate in her.

Our veneration for Mary must, moreover, surpass that which we give to the Angels and the Saints, for her dignity as Mother of God, her office of Mediatrix and her exalted holiness place her above all other creatures. Thus the devotion we accord her, although ever remaining what is technically called "cultus dulcis" (veneration), that is, the cult that we pay to created beings as distinct from the worship (adoration) which we pay to God alone (cultus

latræ), is nevertheless called by theologians "cultus hyperdulciæ" to show that it transcends the homage we pay to the Angels and the Saints.

165. B) Absolute confidence. This confidence is founded on two facts: the *power* and the *goodness* of Mary. a) Her power consists in an efficacious intercession with God, who will not turn a deaf ear to her whom He honors and loves above all creatures. And there is nothing more fitting than this. Mary gave to Jesus His very flesh, that human nature which made it possible for Him to acquire merit; she co-operated with Him by her acts and sufferings in the work of redemption. Is it not, therefore, most fitting that she should have a share in the distribution of the fruits of redemption? Jesus will, indeed, never refuse her requests, and we can say in all truth that Mary is all-powerful in her supplication, *omnipotentia supplex*. b) Her goodness is that of a mother who has for us, the members of Christ, the same affection she bears her own Son; that of a mother who having brought us forth in pain and labor during the anguish of Calvary will measure her love for us only by the price of her sacrifice. Hence our trust, our confidence in her must be firm and universal.

1) It must be *firm* in spite of our miseries and our sins, for Mary is the Mother of mercy, whose business is not justice, but compassion, kindness, condescension. Knowing as she does that we are ever exposed to the attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil, she takes pity on us who remain her children even when we have sinned. Thus, no sooner do we give the least intimation of good-will, of desire of returning to God, than she accords us a tender welcome; nay, often her thoughtfulness anticipates our prayer and obtains for us those very graces which produce in our souls the first desire of conversion. The Church, well aware of this, has instituted a feast for some dioceses under the title of the *Immaculate Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners*, a title at first strange to our ears, but fully justified in fact, for it is precisely because she is without blemish, because she has never been tainted with the least sin, that she overflows with compassion for her unfortunate children who, unlike her, have not been exempted from the bane of concupiscence.

2) Our confidence in Mary must also be *universal*; it must extend to all the graces we need for conversion, for spiritual growth, for final perseverance, for preservation amidst dangers, trials and difficulties. St. Bernard is never

weary of recommending this trust in the Mother of God: ¹ "When the storm of temptation arises, when you are midst the reefs and shoals of tribulation, fix thy gaze upon the Star of the Sea, call upon Mary. If tossed by the rising tide of pride and ambition, if lost upon the troubled waters of scandal and contention, look then at the Star, invoke her name. Do the billows of anger, of avarice, of lust batter against thy soul, cast thine eyes upon Mary. Does the greatness of thy crime fill thy soul with terror, does thy wretched conscience beat thee down in shame and the fear of judgment paralyze thy heart, then, when about to sink to the depths of despondency, to plunge headlong into despair, then think of Mary. In perils and in sorrows and in fears think of her, call upon her name. Let her name be ever on thy lips and the thought of her be ever in thy heart. Follow her that the power of her intercession may attend thee; imitate her, for in her footsteps thou canst not go astray; call upon her and thou canst not despair; think of her and thou canst not fail. If she holds thee by the hand how canst thou fall! Under her protection thou shalt know no fear; under her guidance thou shalt not falter; under her patronage thou shalt surely reach the goal." Because we ever stand in need of grace to make progress and to conquer our enemies we must time and again have recourse to her who is so fittingly called *Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Mother of Divine Grace*.

166. C) Our confidence in Mary must be accompanied by *filial love*, a love like the child's, true, frank and tender. Destined by the Almighty to be the Mother of His Son, and therefore favored with whatever is lovable and endearing, she is the most loving of mothers, thoughtful, kind and devoted. Was not her heart created expressly for the one purpose of loving the God-man, her Son, and for loving Him in the most perfect way? Now, this very love she had for her Son she bears also towards us who are His living members, parts of His mystical body. She reveals this love in the mystery of the Visitation where she hastens to bring to her cousin, Elizabeth, Him whom she holds in her womb and whose very presence sanctifies the home of Zachary. Again, she shows her tender love for men at the marriage-feast of Cana, where her delicate thoughtfulness pleads with her Son to spare her hosts the shame of humiliation. On Calvary she consents to sacrifice her dearest

¹ *Homil. II, de Laudibus Virg. Matris, 17.*

Possession for our salvation. In the Upper Room where the disciples prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit, she intercedes in behalf of the Apostles to draw down upon them in a larger measure the precious gifts of the Holy Ghost.

167. The most lovable as well as the most loving of mothers, she should be also the *best loved mother*. This is one of her most glorious prerogatives. Wherever Jesus is known and loved, there Mary is also known and loved. Although aware of the vast difference between them, we love them both, but in different degrees. Jesus we love with the love that is due the Godhead; Mary we love under God as His Mother, with a tender, generous and devoted love.

We love her with a love of *complacency*, delighting in her greatness, her virtues and her privileges; meditating frequently on them, admiring them, rejoicing in them, and congratulating her on her exalted perfections. We love her with a love of *benevolence*; we sincerely long that she be better known and better loved; we pray that her influence over souls be widespread, and to our prayer we join the force of word and action. We love her with a *filial* love, with tenderness and without reserve, with all the abandon, with all the unreasoned, whole-hearted devotedness, with that sweet familiarity and respectful intimacy of a child with its mother. We strive to conform our wills in all things to the will of Mary and thereby to the will of God. In fact, this union of wills is the genuine mark of friendship.

168. D) *Imitation* of Mary is the most pleasing homage we can render her. In this way we proclaim by our deeds, by our life, and not merely by our words that we actually regard her as a perfect model for imitation. We have noted above (n. 159) how Mary, a living picture of her Son, is for us an example of all virtues. If to resemble her is to resemble Jesus, could we do better than to study her virtues, to ponder them and strive to imitate them in our own lives? There is no better way to accomplish this than to perform each of our actions *through Mary, with Mary and in Mary*.¹ *Through* Mary, asking through her intercession the graces we need in order to imitate her, going through her to Jesus. *With Mary*, that is to say, consid-

¹ This was the practice of Father Olier, popularized by Blessed Grignon de Montfort in "*True devotion to the Blessed Virgin*".

ering her as a *model* and *helper*, asking ourselves often what Mary would do were she in our place, and humbly begging her to help us to perform our actions according to her will. *In Mary*, in entire dependence upon our good Mother, taking her point of view, entering into her plans, doing all things as she did them, for God's honor and glory: "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

169. These are the dispositions we must entertain in offering up our prayers in honor of Mary: in reciting the *Hail Mary* and the *Angelus* which bring back to mind the scene of the Annunciation and recall her august title of Mother of God; in saying the *Sub tuum presidium*, an act of confidence in her who shields us from harm, and the *O Domina mea*, a full surrender into Mary's hands by which we give her our entire being; in the recitation of the *Rosary*, whereby we unite ourselves to her in her joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries which render so easy the sanctification of our joys and sorrows in union with her and with Jesus; and lastly, in the recitation of the *Little Office of the Blessed Virgin*, which will often remind those who are privileged to say it of the grandeur, the holiness and the sanctifying mission of this good Mother.

THE ACT OF ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO MARY¹

170. **Nature and extent of this act.** This is an act of devotion which in itself embodies all the others. As explained by Blessed Grignon de Montfort it consists in the entire gift of self to Jesus through Mary. It comprises two elements: first, an *act* of consecration which is to be renewed from time to time, and then an *habitual* attitude by which we live and act in entire dependence on Mary. "The act of consecration," says Blessed Grignon de Montfort, "consists in giving oneself wholly to Mary and through her to Jesus as her slave." Let no one be shocked at the word, "slave," which today seems so repugnant to us, but which has no such evil meaning as explained by this servant of God. A mere servant, says he, receives his wages, is ever free to quit his master's service. He gives his labor only, not his person, not his rights, not his goods. A slave, however, freely agrees to work without wages and, trusting to the master that gives him food and shelter, hands himself over to him forever, with all that he is and has, in

¹ GRIGNON DE MONTFORT, *op. cit.*: A. L'HOUÏEUF, *La Vie spirituelle à l'école du B. Grig. de Montfort*, 1920, p. 240-427.

order to live in entire dependence on the master in the spirit of love.

171. Carrying the application of the simile to things spiritual, the perfect servant of Mary gives himself over to her, and through her to Jesus:

a) *His body* with all its senses, keeping only the use thereof and pledging himself not to employ them except in accordance with the good pleasure of the Blessed Virgin or her Son. Moreover, he accepts beforehand the dispositions of Divine Providence as regards sickness and health, life and death.

b) *All worldly possessions*, using them solely in dependence on Mary, for her honor and the glory of God.

c) *His soul with all its faculties*, dedicating them under Mary's guidance to the service of God and the good of souls, and renouncing at the same time whatever might compromise his sanctification or imperil his salvation.

d) *All his interior and spiritual treasures*, his merits, the value of his satisfactory acts as well as the impetratory power his good actions may possess. All these are placed in the hands of Mary to the extent in which they can be given over to another. Let us explain this last point:

1) Our merits properly so called (i. e., de condigno) by which we procure for ourselves an increase of grace and glory cannot be given away. When, then, we make a gift of them to Mary it is not in order to apply them to others, but that she might hold them in trust for us and give them increase. It is quite otherwise with the merits called *de congruo*, which can be offered for others, and these we leave entirely to Mary's free disposition.

2) In the same manner we allow her¹ to dispose of and to apply freely the satisfactory value of our acts and the indulgences we may gain, since these can be given to others.

3) In virtue of our consecration to Mary we cede to her even the *impetratory* value of our acts, that is to say, of our prayers and our good actions, in so far as they are endowed with such efficacy.

172. Once we have made this act of consecration, we can no longer without her permission dispose of the goods we have made over to her. However, we *may* and at times we *should* beg her to favor according to her good pleasure

¹ St. THOMAS, *Supplément*, q. 13, a. 2.

those to whom we are bound by special ties and to whom we are under special obligation. The best way, therefore, of harmonizing our gift of self to Mary and our duties to others is to offer up to her all those who are near and dear to us: "I am all Thine, all mine are Thine." Thus the Blessed Virgin will draw on what we have given her, but more still on the treasury of her own merits and those of her Son in order to help those we have committed to her care. Our friends, therefore, will lose nothing.

173. Excellence of this act of consecration. It is an act of holy abandonment, of self-surrender, excellent in itself and containing, moreover, acts of the highest virtues: religion, humility and confiding love.

1) It is an act of *religion* toward God, the Word-made-Flesh, and Mary, the Mother of God. By it we acknowledge God's sovereign dominion and our own nothingness, and proclaim with heart and soul those rights over us which God has given Mary.

2) It is an act of *humility*, for by it we acknowledge our nothingness and our helplessness. We divest ourselves of everything that we have received from God and restore all to the Giver through the hands of her from whom, under Him and through Him, we have obtained every good gift.

3) It is an act of *confiding love*, for love consists in the gift of self; and to give oneself entirely and unreservedly presupposes absolute trust and living faith.

It may be said that this consecration if rightly made, and frequently and earnestly renewed, is even of greater worth than the *heroic act* by which we give up but the satisfactory value of our acts and the indulgences we may gain.

174. Fruits of this act of consecration. They come from its very nature. 1) By this act we *glorify God and Mary* in an unparalleled manner: we give ourselves to God forever, with all that we are and all that we have, without measure or stint, and we do so after the manner of Divine Wisdom, that is, returning to God in the very way He chose to come to us, and hence, in the way that is most pleasing to Him.

175. 2) We thereby also insure our *individual sanctification*. Mary cannot but minister unto the sanctification of those who, having disposed of their persons and goods in her behalf, are, so to say, her own property. She will most assuredly secure for us choice graces to safeguard our little

spiritual treasure, to make it grow and have it bring forth fruit in season until the hour of death. She will help us through her superabundant merits and satisfactions and through her powerful intercession with God.

3) A third fruit of this consecration to Mary is the *sanctification of our neighbor*. This is true especially of the souls entrusted to us. They are certain to gain by our gift. We can be sure that when we leave the apportioning of our merits to Mary's good-pleasure, everything will be done with greater wisdom. She is by far more prudent than we are, more thoughtful and more devoted. Consequently our friends and relatives can only be the gainers.

176. It may be objected that by such an act we alienate all our spiritual goods, above all, our satisfactions and the indulgences and prayers that would be offered up for us, thus rendering our purgatory all the longer. *In itself* this is true; however, it resolves itself into a question of *trust*. Do we rely more on Mary than on ourselves or our friends? If we do, let us have no misgivings, for she will care for our souls and further our interests far better than we could ever do ourselves. If we do not, then let us refrain from making this act of complete consecration for we might regret it before long. In any event one should not make this act of consecration without reflection and advice.

II. *The Share of the Saints in the Christian Life*

177. By their powerful intercession and by their noble example, the Saints in their blessed possession of God minister to our sanctification and help us to progress in the practice of the Christian virtues. Hence, we should venerate, invoke and imitate them.

178. 1^o We should *venerate* them. All the good they possess is the work of God and His Divine Son. As mere *natural* beings they are so many reflections of the divine perfections. Their *supernatural* qualities are the work of that divine grace which Jesus merited for them. Even their meritorious acts, while being their own in the sense that their free will co-operated with Almighty God, are none the less the precious gift of the Divine Goodness who is ever their first and efficacious cause: "Thou dost but crown Thy gifts when Thou crownest our merits."¹ When, there-

¹ "Coronando merita coronas et dona tua". St. Augustine.

God!"¹ Their *goodness* and their *power* must inspire us with full confidence in them.

We are to invoke them especially on their feast-days. Thus we shall enter into the spirit of the liturgy of the Church, and share in the particular virtues practised by the different Saints.

180. ³ Lastly and above all, we should *imitate* the virtues of the Saints. Each one of them strove to reproduce the divine model and each one can address us in the words of St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ."² In most cases, however, the Saints have cultivated a special virtue which is, so to speak, their characteristic trait. Some have directed their efforts chiefly toward the cultivation of the spirit of faith, hope or charity; others have centered them round the spirit of sacrifice, humility or poverty; others, again, have excelled in the exercise of prudence, fortitude or chastity. We can beg of them their distinctive virtues with the assurance that they have a special power to obtain them for us.

181. This is the reason why we should be specially devoted to those Saints who lived in conditions similar to our own, who discharged the same duties that we must perform and who practised the virtues that we need most.

We should also have a special devotion to our *patron Saints*, seeing in the choice made of them on our behalf a providential arrangement. Still, if for special reasons the movements of grace draw us to some other Saints whose virtues correspond better to the needs of our souls, there can be no objection to our cultivating devotion to them.

182. Thus understood, devotion to the Saints is most useful to us. The example of men with the same passions as we have, who, tried by the same temptations, have won the victory with the help of the same graces that are accorded us, is a powerful incentive to make us ashamed of our faintheartedness and to strengthen in us the determination to put forth the efforts constantly required for the accomplishment of our resolutions. We thus naturally apply to ourselves the words of St. Augustine: "Canst thou not do what these have done?"³

fore, we pay the Saints the homage of our veneration it is God and His Son, Jesus, whom we really honor and revere in them.

We venerate these Blessed Ones as: **a)** the living *sanc-tuaries* of the *Triune God* who has deigned to dwell in them, to adorn their souls with virtues and with gifts, to prompt their faculties to action and cause them to elicit meritorious acts, and to grant them at last the crowning grace of perseverance to the end. **b)** We honor them as the *adopted* and well-beloved children of the Father, who surrounded by His paternal care knew how to respond to His love and to grow more like Him in holiness and perfection. **c)** We hail them as the *brethren of Christ*, the faithful members of His mystical body, who drew from Him their spiritual life and cultivated it in abiding love. **d)** We revere them as *temples* of the Holy Ghost, as His docile servants, who allowed His inspirations to be their guide rather than blindly follow the bent of a corrupted nature. Father Olier aptly expresses these thoughts: "You will be able to adore with the most profound veneration this life of God communicated to His Saints; you will honor Jesus Christ who animates them all and who through His divine Spirit makes them all one in Himself. It is Jesus Christ Himself who proclaims in them the glory of God; it is He who puts upon their lips their canticles of praise; it is He through whom the sainted glorify God now and through all eternity."¹

179. ² We could *invoke* the Saints in order to obtain through their powerful intercession the graces we need. True, the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is necessary and all-sufficient in itself; however, because of the very fact that the Saints are members of the risen Christ, their prayers are united to His. Thus, the whole mystical body of the Savior prays, and with its entreaties it does sweet violence to the heart of God. When, therefore, we pray in union with the Saints we join our petitions to those of Christ's mystical body and thereby insure their efficacy. Moreover, the Saints are glad to intercede in our behalf: "They love us as brothers born of the same Father and they have compassion for us. Seeing our plight and remembering that it once was theirs, they behold in us souls who like themselves ought to contribute to Christ's glory. What joy must they not experience in finding souls to join them in glorifying

¹ FATHER OLIER, *Pensées choisies*, p. 176.

² *I Cor.*, IV, 16.

³ "Tu non poteris quod isti, quod istice?" *Confessions*, VIII, c. 11.

¹ *Pensées choisies*, by G. LETOURNEAU, p. 181-182.

III. *The Share of the Angels in the Christian Life*

The part of the Angels in the Christian life has its origin in the relations they have with God and with Jesus Christ.

183. 1° First of all, the Angels show forth God's greatness and perfection. "Each symbolizes individually some attribute or other of that infinite Being. In some we see His power, in others His love, in others His strength. Each is a reproduction of some beauty of the divine Original; each adores Him and glorifies Him in the perfection it portrays." 1 It is God, then, whom we honor in the Angels. They are like mirrors reflecting the perfections of their infinite Creator. 2 Raised to the supernatural order, they share in the life of God; and victorious in trial, they enjoy the Beatific Vision: "Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." 3

184. 2° If we consider their relations with Jesus Christ, it may not appear absolutely certain that they hold their grace from Him; but this much does appear with certainty, that in heaven they unite themselves with Him, the Mediator of all religion, in order to adore, praise and glorify the Majesty of the Most High. It is their bliss to add in this wise a greater worth to their worship: "Through whom the Angels praise, the Dominations adore and the Powers hold in awe Thy Majesty." 4 Hence, when we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ to adore God we join at the same time with the Angels and Saints in a heavenly harmony which renders the praise of the Godhead still more perfect. We can well make our own the words of Father Olier: "May all the Angelic Host, the mighty Powers that move the spheres of heaven, forever pour forth in Jesus Christ whatever be wanting to our song of praise. May they forever thank Thee, Lord, for all those gifts both of nature and of grace which from the goodness of Thy hand we all receive." 5

185. 3° From this twofold consideration it follows that they have at heart our sanctification. Since we share with them in the divine life, and since we are like them the religious of God in Christ Jesus, they long for our salvation that we may join them in glorifying God and in enjoying the Beatific Vision. a) Thus it is with joy that they accept those God-given missions to minister to our sanctification.

1 Olier, *Pensées choisies*, p. 158. — 2 *Ibid.*, p. 154. — 3 *Matth.*, XVIII, 10.

4 *Preface*, Roman Missal. — 5 *Pensées choisies*, p. 169.

The Psalmist says that God has entrusted the just man to their care that they may guard him in his way: "For he hath given his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." 1 St. Paul adds that the Angels are in God's service as servants to minister unto the welfare of the heirs of salvation: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" 2 In fact, they burn with the desire of rallying elect souls to fill the vacant thrones of fallen angels, and to glorify and adore the Almighty in their stead. Victors over demons, they ask but to shield us from the perfidious enemies of our souls. It is our part to ask their timely assistance in order to repel the assaults of Satan. b) They present our prayers to the Most High 3 by joining their own supplications to our requests. It is, therefore, to our advantage to call upon them, especially in the hour of trial, and above all, at the hour of death, that they may defend us from the attacks of our enemies and conduct our souls to Paradise. 4

186. **The Guardian Angels.** Some among the Angels are commissioned with the care of individual souls: these are the Guardian Angels. This is the traditional doctrine of the Fathers, based upon scriptural texts and supported by solid reasons. It has been confirmed by the Church in the institution of a feast in honor of the Guardian Angels. The reasons that support this doctrine flow from our relationship to God, for we are His children, members of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost. "Because we are His children," says Father Olier, 5 "He appoints to us as tutors the princes of His realm, who hold it an honor to have us in their charge. Because we are His members, He wills that those very spirits that minister unto Him be also at our side to render us their services. Because we are His temples in which He Himself dwells, He wills that Angels hover about us as they do about our churches, so that bowed down in worship before Him they may offer a perpetual homage to His glory, supplying for our neglect and making reparation for our irreverence." Father Olier goes on to say that God wishes to unite intimately through the agency of His Angels the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant: "He sends this mysterious host of Angels in order that they may by uniting themselves to us and bind-

1 Ps. XC, 11-12. — 2 *Heb.*, I, 14. — 3 *Job.*, XII, 12.

4 That the Angels conduct our souls to heaven is a traditional doctrine, as is shown by DOM LECLERCQ, *Dict. d'Archéol.*, *Les Anges psychagognes*, I, col. 2122.

5 *Pensées*, p. 171-172.

ing us to themselves form one body of the Church of heaven and the Church of earth."

187. Our Guardian Angel keeps us in constant touch with heaven. To derive full profit from his guardianship we can do no better than direct our thoughts frequently to our Guardian Angel, making him the object of our *veneration*, our *confidence* and our *love*. **a)** We *venerate* him by hailing him as one of those privileged beings who ever see the face of God and who are to us the representatives of our Heavenly Father. Therefore, we should do nothing that could displease or sadden our Angel; on the contrary, we must strive to give him proof of our respect by emulating his fidelity and loyalty in God's service. This is, indeed, the most touching way in which can attest our esteem for him. **b)** We show him our *confidence*, by bearing in mind the mighty protection he furnishes us and his unflinching goodness towards us, his God-given charges. Since he is a master in foiling the wiles of the devil, we should invoke him especially when we are assailed by this treacherous foe and in all dangerous occasions in which his foresight and his adroitness will be of great help. We should likewise call for his assistance when determining our vocation, for he better than any other will know the providential designs of God in our regard. Finally, in all important affairs with others it is well to address ourselves to their Guardian Angels that these persons may be well-disposed towards the mission we are about to discharge in their behalf. **c)** We manifest to our Guardian Angel our *love* by reflecting that he has ever been and is still our devoted friend, ever ready to render us services the extent and import of which we shall realize only in heaven. By faith, however, we can even now understand, though only imperfectly, something of his good offices toward us, and this suffices to call forth our gratitude and our love. When loneliness weighs heavily upon us, let us remember that we are not alone, that near us hovers a friend, devoted and generous, upon whom we can lean and with whom we can hold familiar converse. Let us bear in mind that honoring our Guardian Angel we honor God Himself whom our Angel represents here below, and let us often unite ourselves to him in order to give greater glory to God.

SUMMARY

188. God, then, has a vast share in the work of our sanctification. He comes to dwell in our souls in order to

give Himself to us and to sanctify us. To impart to us the power to rise up to Him, He endows us with a supernatural organism composed of *habitual grace*, the *virtues* and the *gifts*. Habitual grace penetrates the very substance of the soul, thus transforming it and making it Godlike. The virtues and the gifts perfect our faculties and enable them with the help of actual grace to elicit supernatural acts that merit eternal life.

189. God's love does not stop here. He also sends His *Only-Begotten Son*, who, becoming one of us, becomes likewise the *perfect exemplar*, our guide in the practice of those virtues that lead to perfection and ultimately to heaven. The Son of God *merits* for us the grace necessary to follow in His footsteps in spite of the difficulties that we find within ourselves and all about us. In order to win us over to Himself He *incorporates* us into Himself, imparting to us through His Divine Spirit that life which is His in all its fullness. Through this incorporation He gives to the least of our actions an immeasurable value, for, we being made one with Him, our actions share in the value of His own actions. With Him, then, and through Him we can give adequate glory to God Almighty, obtain new graces, and become more and more like our Heavenly Father by reproducing in ourselves His divine perfections.

Mary, being the Mother of Jesus and His co-worker, though in a secondary manner, in the work of the Redemption, co-operates in the distribution of the graces Christ merited for us. Through her we go to Him and through her we ask for grace. We venerate and love her as a Mother and strive to imitate her virtues.

Lastly, Jesus, being the Head not only of mankind, but also of the Angels and the Saints, places at our service their powerful assistance as a protection against the attacks of the Evil One and as a safeguard against the weaknesses of our own nature. Their example and their intercession are for us a tower of strength.

What more could God actually do for us? If He has given Himself to us so prodigally, to what lengths should we not go to return His love? to what extent should we not be ready to spend ourselves to promote the growth of that divine life which He has so generously shared with us?

ART. II. THE SHARE OF MAN IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

190. It is clear that, if God has done so much to have us share in His own life, we must in turn respond to His

advances, gratefully accept His gift, cherish and foster it in our souls and thus prepare ourselves for that eternal bliss which will crown the efforts we shall have made on earth. This is for us a *duty of gratitude*. Indeed, the most telling way in which we can show our appreciation of a gift is to use it for the purpose for which it was given. Our *spiritual welfare* itself demands that we make such a return, for Almighty God will reward us according to our merits, and our glory in heaven will correspond to the degree of grace we shall have acquired by good works: "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his labor."¹ On the other hand, God owes it to Himself to punish with due severity those who willfully scorn His divine gifts and abuse His grace. The Apostle tells us: "For the earth, that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briers, is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt."² God made us free beings and He respects our freedom; He will not sanctify us in spite of ourselves. But He never wearies of urging us to make the right use of the graces He has so liberally dispensed to us: "And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain."³

191. In order to correspond with this grace we must first of all practise the great devotions of which we have spoken in the preceding article: devotion to the Most Blessed Trinity, to the Incarnate Word, to the Blessed Virgin, the Saints and the Angels. Herein we shall find the most powerful *motives* for giving ourselves entirely to God, doing so in union with Jesus and under the protection of our mighty intercessors. In these devotions we shall also find *models of sanctity* to point out the way for us; nay more, we shall find *supernatural forces* that will enable us to realize more fully day by day the ideal of perfection proposed for our imitation.

In explaining these devotions we have followed the ontological order, arranging them according to their intrinsic excellence. In practice, however, it is seldom that we begin with devotion to the Most Blessed Trinity, but rather we generally begin with devotion to our Blessed Lord and our Blessed Lady and then gradually rise to the Holy Trinity itself.

192. But we must do more than this. We must *make use of the supernatural organism* wherewith we are endowed, and develop it notwithstanding the obstacles to its growth encountered within our own selves and all about us. ¹⁰ First of all, since the *threefold concupiscence* is an ever-abiding foe, which spurred on by the world and the devil, inclines us perpetually towards evil, we must relentlessly combat it and its lusty allies. ²⁰ We are to *multiply our merits*, since the supernatural organism of which we have spoken is given us for the purpose of producing Godlike acts, acts worthy of eternal life. ³⁰ Because it has pleased Divine Goodness to institute *sacraments* productive of grace in proportion to our co-operation, we should approach them with the most perfect dispositions. In this manner we shall preserve in us the life of grace; nay, we shall make it grow more and more.

§ I. The Fight against Our Spiritual Enemies

These enemies are *concupiscence, the world and the devil*. Concupiscence is the foe we carry within us. The world and the devil are the foes from without that feed the fires of concupiscence and fan its flames.

I. The Fight against Concupiscence¹

Saint John describes concupiscence in his well-known text: "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life."²

1° THE CONCUPISCENCE OF THE FLESH

193. The *concupiscence of the flesh* is the *inordinate love of sensual pleasures*.

A) The evil of concupiscence. Pleasure in itself is not evil. God allows it when directed toward a higher end, that is, toward moral good. If He has attached pleasure to certain good acts, it is in order to facilitate their accomplishment and to draw us on to the fulfilment of duty. The moderate enjoyment of pleasure, if referred to its end — moral and supernatural good — is not an evil. In fact, it is a good act, for it tends towards a good end which is ultimately God Himself. But to will pleasure without any reference to the end that makes it lawful, that is, to will

¹ Read the short, but admirable treatise of BOSSUET on *Concupiscence*.

² *1 John*, II, 16.

¹ *1 Cor.*, III, 8. — ² *Hebr.*, VI, 7-8. — ³ *II Cor.*, VI, 1.

pleasure as an end in itself and as an ultimate end, is a moral disorder, for it is going counter to the wisdom of a God-established order. Such disorder leads to further evil, because when one's sole motive of action is pleasure, one is exposed to love pleasure to excess; one is no longer guided by an end which raises its barriers against that immoderate thirst for enjoyment which exists in all of us.

194. Thus, God in His wisdom willed to attach a certain enjoyment to the act of eating, to offer us an incentive towards sustaining our bodily forces. But, as *Bossuet* remarks, "Ungrateful and sensual men use this enjoyment rather to serve their own bodies than to serve Almighty God... The pleasure of eating enslaves them, and instead of eating in order to live they live rather in order to eat. Even those who know how to curb their desires and who are guided in taking their meals by the needs of the body, are often deceived by pleasure and taken in by its allurements; they soon go beyond due measure; they gradually come to indulge their appetite and do not consider their needs satisfied, so long as food and drink gratify their palate." ¹ Hence, excesses in eating and drinking. What shall we say of the still more dangerous pleasures of lust, "of that deep-rooted and unsightly sore of human nature, of that concupiscence that binds the soul to the body with ties at once so tender, so strong, so difficult to break; of that lust which brings down upon the human race such frightful disorders?" ²

195. Sensual pleasure is all the more *dangerous* as the entire body is inclined to it. Our sight is infected by it, for is it not through the eyes that one begins to drink in the poison of sensual love? Our ears are a prey to the contagion; a suggestive word, a lascivious song enkindles the fire, fans the flames of an impure love and excites our hidden tendencies to sensual joys. The same is true of the other senses. And what heightens the danger is that these sensual pleasures act as stimulants one to the other. Even those enjoyments which we fancy the most innocent, will, unless we are ever on the alert, lead on to guilty pleasures. The body itself labors under a softening languor, a delicate and responsive sensitiveness that craves relaxation through the senses, quickens them and whets the keenness of their ardor. Man so cherishes his body that he forgets his soul. Over-solicitous for his health, he is led to

pamper the body at every turn. All these sensual cravings are but the branches of the same tree, the concupiscence of the flesh. ¹

196. B) **The remedy** for this great evil is found in the mortification of the senses. As St. Paul tells us, "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." ² But to crucify the flesh, according to Father Olier, "is to fetter, to smother all the impure and inordinate desires we feel in our flesh." ³ To crucify the flesh is likewise to mortify our *exterior senses*, those channels that put us in contact with things about us and stir within us dangerous desires. The motive, at bottom, giving rise to the obligation of practising this mortification, is none other than our *baptismal vow*.

197. *Baptism*, by which we die to sin and are made one body with Christ, obliges us to mortify in ourselves all sensual pleasure. "According to St. Paul, we are no longer debtors to the flesh that we should live according to the flesh, but we are bound to live according to the spirit. If we live by the spirit let us walk according to the law of the Cross and which has written in our hearts the law of the Cross and has given us the strength to carry it." ⁴

The symbolism of baptism by immersion (the more common way of administering baptism in Apostolic times and in the early centuries) teaches us the truth of this doctrine. The catechumen is plunged into the water and there he dies to sin and the causes of sin. Coming out he shares in a new life, the life of the Risen Christ. This is St. Paul's teaching: "We that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know you not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in the newness of life." ⁵ Thus, the baptismal immersion represents death to sin and to the concupiscence which leads to sin. The coming out of the baptismal waters typifies that newness of life through which we are made sharers in the risen life of the Savior. ⁶

¹ In this paragraph we merely give a summary of the fifth chapter of Bossuet's *Treatise on Concupiscence*.

² *Gal.*, V., 24.

³ *Cat. for an Int. Life*, Part. I., lesson 5. — ⁴ *Ibid.*, lesson 5.

⁵ *Rom.*, VI., 2-4.

⁶ "It does not alter the thought of the Apostle to express it in the following theological language: The Sacraments are efficacious signs which produce *ex opere operato* the effects which they signify. Now, baptism represents sacramentally the

Hence, our baptism obliges us to mortify the concupiscence that remains in us and to imitate our Lord who by the crucifixion of His flesh merited for us the grace of crucifying our own. The nails wherewith we crucify it are the various acts of mortification we perform.

This obligation of mortifying our love for pleasure so imposes itself upon us that our spiritual life and our salvation depend upon it. "For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."¹

198. In order to obtain a complete victory, it does not suffice to renounce *evil* pleasures (this we are strictly bound to do), but we must, in order to be on the safe side, sacrifice to all *dangerous* ones, for these almost invariably lead us to sin: "He who loves danger shall perish in it."² Besides, we must deprive ourselves of some lawful pleasures in order to strengthen our wills against the lure of forbidden ones. In fact, whoever indulges without restraint in all lawful pleasures, is in proximate danger of falling into those that are sinful.

2° THE CONCUPISCENCE OF THE EYES (CURIOSITY AND AVARICE)

199. A) The evil. The concupiscence of the eyes comprises two things: all unwholesome curiosity and inordinate love of the goods of this world.

a) The *curiosity* of which we speak consists in an excessive desire to see, to hear, to know what goes on in the world, the secret intrigues that are woven there; not in order to derive any spiritual profit therefrom, but to indulge our craving for frivolous knowledge. Nor is this curiosity confined to present-day happenings; it may cover the events of past centuries, as when we delve into the history of bygone days to seek not what will be a wholesome inspiration but what may please our fancy. A special object of this curiosity is the pseudo-science of divination whereby men make bold to peer into things hidden and into events to come, the knowledge of which God has reserved to Himself. This phase of curiosity "constitutes an aggression upon the rights of God Almighty and an attempt to wreck the confidence and trust wherewith man should abandon himself

death and the life of Christ. It follows that it causes in us a death, mystical in its essence, but real in its effects; a death to sin, to the flesh, to the old Adam; and a life in agreement with that of the Risen Christ". (Cf. PRAT, *The Theology of St. Paul*, II, Book 5, C. 2).

¹ Rom., VIII, 13. — ² Eccli., III, 27.

to his Providence."¹ Furthermore, this curiosity extends to true and useful science when men give themselves over to its pursuit without moderation or to the detriment of higher duties. Such is the case of those who read indiscriminately every kind of novel, play or poetry, "for all this is nothing less than an excess, a morbid disposition of the soul, the shrivelling up of the heart, a miserable bondage allowing us no leisure to turn our thoughts upon ourselves, and a source of error."²

200. b) The second form of the concupiscence of the eyes is the inordinate love of money, regarded either as a means for the acquisition of other goods such as honors or pleasure, or considered as an object of attachment in itself, an object which we delight to see and finger and in which we find a certain sense of security for the future. The latter is avarice properly so-called. Both expose us to the commission of numberless sins, for cupidity is the prolific source of all kinds of fraud and injustice.

201. B) The remedy. a) To combat *vain curiosity* we must recall to mind that whatever is not eternal is not worthy of winning and captivating the thought of immortal beings such as we are. "The fashion of this world passeth away";³ but one thing abideth, God and the possession of God, which is heaven. We must, therefore, heed only what is eternal, "for whatever is not eternal is as nothing." No doubt, present-day events as well as those of the past may and ought to engage our interest, yet only in so far as they contribute to the glory of God and the salvation of men. When God created this world and all that exists He had but one end in view, to communicate His divine life to those creatures He had endowed with intelligence — angels and men — and to recruit His Elect. All else is secondary and should not be made the subject of our study, save as a means of leading us to God.

202. b) As regards *inordinate love of the goods* of this world, we must bear in mind that wealth is not an end in itself, but the means given by Providence to minister to our needs. God ever retains the supreme dominion over all things, and we are but stewards who shall have to render an account of the use we have made of our temporal possessions: "Give an account of thy stewardship."⁴ It is

¹ BOSSUET, *l. c.*, C. 8. — ² BOSSUET, *l. c.*
³ *1 Cor.*, VII, 31. — ⁴ *Luke*, XVI, 2.

wise, then, to give a large portion of what is over and above our needs in almsgiving and other good works. This is in truth to enter into the designs of God who wills that the rich be, so to speak, the treasurers of the poor; it is to make in the bank of heaven a deposit which will be returned to us with a hundredfold interest upon our entrance into eternity. "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through or steal."¹ This is the way to detach our hearts from earthly goods so as to raise them to God; for as our Lord adds: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."² Let us then seek first the kingdom of God, holiness, and all other things shall be added unto us.

If we would be perfect we must go further and practise *evangelical poverty*. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."³ This may be achieved in three ways according to our attractions and opportunities: 1) by selling all our goods and giving the proceeds to the poor. "Sell what you possess and give alms."⁴ 2) By having all things in common, as is done in religious communities. 3) By renouncing the right of using the capital which we retain, refraining, for instance, from making any outlay not sanctioned by a prudent spiritual director.⁵

203. Whichever way is adopted, the heart must be freed from its attachment to riches if it would take its flight towards God. This is what Bossuet urges: "Happy they who in the lowly seclusion of God's house delight in the bareness of their narrow cells, in the beggarly appointments that satisfy their wants in this earthly existence — a shadow of death — there to gaze solely upon their weakness and the heavy, oppressing yoke of sin. Happy those consecrated Virgins who no longer seek to appear before the world and who would fain hide themselves from their own eyes beneath the sacred veil that shrouds their form! Blessed that sweet restraint wherewith we guard our eyes lest they light upon vain things, the while we say with David: "Turn away mine eyes, that they may not behold vanity."⁶ Happy those who, living in the world according to their state of life, remain undefiled and unfettered.... those who can say with Queen Esther: "Thou

knowest, O Lord, how I scorn this emblem of pride (her crown); how I abhor the glory of the wicked and ungodly; how thy handmaid hath never rejoiced save in thee, O Lord God of Israel."¹

3° THE PRIDE OF LIFE

204. A) The evil. "Pride," says Bossuet, "is a profound depravity; it is the worship of self; man becomes his own god through excessive self-love."² Forgetful that God is his first beginning and his last end, he overrates himself; he considers himself the sovereign lord and master of those qualities, real or imaginary, which he possesses, without referring them to God. From this arises that spirit of *independence*, of self-sufficiency, that finally brings man to renounce allegiance to God and His representatives on earth. Hence, also, that *egotism* which prompts him to do everything for self as though he were himself his last end; that vain *complacency* in his own excellence as though God were not its source; that conceit in his good works as though they were not above all the result of God's action on the soul. Hence, again, the tendency to exaggerate the good qualities he possesses, and to attribute to himself others that he lacks. Hence, too, the disposition to prefer self to others and at times, like the Pharisee, to despise others.

205. This pride is accompanied by *vanity*, which seeks inordinately the esteem, the approbation, the praise of men. It is called *vainglory*, for, as Bossuet points out, "if it be but an empty or undeserved applause, what an absurdity to delight in it! If it be genuine, why the further folly of rejoicing less at truth itself than at the tribute paid to it?"³ A paradox, indeed, that one should be more solicitous for the esteem of men than for virtue itself, that man should find cause for greater humiliation in a blunder committed in the sight of all than in a real fault committed in secret! This failing once yielded to is not slow in bringing others in its wake. It gives rise to *boasting*, to speaking of self and one's achievements; to *ostentation* which courts the public eye with finery and display; to *hypocrisy* which makes a show of virtue while careless about its practice.

206. The *effects* of pride are deplorable. This vice is the arch-enemy of perfection. 1) It robs God of the glory

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 20. — ² *Matth.*, VI, 21. — ³ *Matth.*, V, 3.

⁴ *Luke*, XII, 23, XVIII, 22, *Matth.*, XIX, 21.

⁵ OULIER, *Introd.*, C. XI; *Chevrier*, *Le véritable disciple*, p. 248-267.

⁶ *Ps.*, CXIII, 37.

¹ *Eccl.*, XIV, 15-18. — ² *L. c.*, C. X, XXIII.

³ *Tr. de la Concupiscence*, C. XVII.

due Him and thereby deprives us of many graces and merits, since God can not allow Himself to be made an accomplice in our pride : " God resisteth the proud." ¹ 2) It is the source of many sins, such as sins of *presumption* which are punished by lamentable falls and enslavement to shameful vices; sins of *discouragement* at seeing oneself fallen so low; sins of *dissimulation* because of the hardship of confessing certain sins; sins of *resistance* to *superiors*, of *envy* and *jealousy* towards the neighbor, etc.

207. B) The remedy consists : a) in referring all to God, recognizing that He is the author of all good and that, being the first principle of all our actions, He must be likewise their last end. This is what St. Paul means when he asks : " What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" ² From this he concludes that all our actions must tend to the glory of God : " Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." ³ In order to give these actions greater value, let us be mindful of doing them in the name and through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ : " All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." ⁴

208. b) Since, however, our nature inclines us to self-seeking, we must, in order to react against this tendency, remember that of ourselves we are but nothingness and sin. No doubt, there are in us good qualities, natural and supernatural, which we are to hold in high regard and which we must cultivate; but coming as they do from God, is it not to Him that the glory is due? When an artist creates a masterpiece, it is he and not the canvass that is to be praised.

Of ourselves we are mere nothingness. " This is," says Father Olier, " what we have been from all eternity; the being wherewith God has clothed us is of His creation and not of ours; and whatsoever He has given us remains His own property by which He wills to be honored." ⁵

Again, of ourselves we are but sin in the sense that by concupiscence we tend to sin; so much so that, according to St. Augustine, if we do not fall into certain sins we owe it to the grace of God. " To Thy grace it is due that some evil I left undone. For what might I not have done, seeing

that I loved even fruitless misdoing." ¹ Father Olier thus explains this doctrine : " This I can say about it : there is no conceivable sin, no imperfection or disorder, no blight of error, no confusion with which our flesh is not teeming. Likewise, there is no fickleness, no folly, no stupidity of which mortal flesh is not capable at any moment." ² Assuredly, our nature is not totally corrupt, as Luther affirmed. With God's concurrence, natural and supernatural, ³ it is capable of some good, even of a great deal of good, as is evident in the case of the Saints. But since God is ever the first and principal cause of this good, it is to Him that thanks must be given.

209. We conclude with Bossuet : " Trust not overmuch in thyself, for this is the beginning of sin. Covet not the glory of men, for having received thy reward only torments shall await thee. Glory not in thine own self, for whatsoever of thy good works thou dost attribute to thyself, thou takest away from God, its author, and thou placest thyself in His stead. Shake not off the yoke of God's law; say not to thyself with the haughtiness of the proud : I shall not serve; for if thou servest not unto justice, thou shalt be the slave of sin and the child of death. Say not : I am not unclean, and reckon not that God has forgotten thy sins because thou thyself rememberest them no more, for the Lord shall rouse thee saying : See, look at thy paths in that vale obscure. I have followed thee along thy ways. I have counted thy steps. Resist not the counsel of the wise and be not angry at correction; for this is the consummation of pride, to rebel against the truth itself when it reproves thee, to kick against the goad." ⁴ If we follow this advice we shall be stronger in our fight against the world, the second of our spiritual enemies.

II. The Fight against the World

210. The world we speak of here is not the total aggregate of men upon the earth, among whom are found both choice souls and irreligious men; but the sum-total of those who oppose Jesus Christ and are the slaves of the threefold concupiscence. These are : 1) *unbelievers*, hostile to religion,

¹ Confessions, II, C. 7. — ² Catechism, P. I, lesson 17.

³ Theology teaches (Syn. theol. dog., III, n. 72-91) that fallen man can do some good in the natural order with the mere natural concurrence of God; but that in order to observe the whole of the natural law and repulse all grievous temptations, a supernatural or supernatural help is needed.

⁴ Tr. de la Concup., C. XXXI.

⁵ Meyer, The World in Which We Live.

¹ James, IV, 6. — ² I. Cor., IV, 7. — ³ I. Cor., X, 31. — ⁴ Colos., III, 17.

⁵ Cat. for an Int. Life, Part I., lesson 15.

precisely because it condemns their pride, their love of pleasure, their lust for riches; 2) *the indifferent*, who do not want a religion that would stir them out of their apathy; 3) *hardened sinners*, who love sin because they love pleasure and are loath to part with it; 4) *worldlings*, who believe and even practise their religion, yet, combine with it the love of pleasure, of luxury and of ease, and who not unfrequently scandalize their neighbor by giving them occasion to say that religion has but little influence on morals. This is the world which Jesus cursed because of its scandals: "Woe to the world because of scandals!"¹ Of this world St. John says: "The whole world is seated in wickedness."²

211. 1° The dangers of the world. The world which through visits, letters and worldly literature worms its way into the heart of Christian families, even into religious communities, constitutes a great obstacle to the attainment of salvation and perfection. It stirs up and feeds the fire of concupiscence; it seduces and terrorizes us.

212. A) It seduces us with its maxims, with the show of its vanities and with its perverse examples.

a) It holds up *maxims* directly opposed to those of the Gospel. It actually extols the happiness of the wealthy, of the powerful, of the ruthless, of the upstart, of the ambitious, of all those who know how to enjoy life. On the lips of worldlings is ever the cry: "Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither."³ Must not youth have its day, must not each live his life to the full? Many others do this and Almighty God can not damn all mankind. One has to make a living, and were one to be scrupulous in business one could never become wealthy.

b) The world seduces us with the *show of its vanities and pleasures*. Most worldly gatherings cater to curiosity, to sensuality, and even to lust. Vice is made attractive by being concealed beneath the guise of what are called "innocent fashions and amusements," but which are none the less fraught with danger. Such are, for instance, immodest dress and immodest dances, especially such as seem to have no other purpose than to occasion wanton looks and gestures. What must be said of most theatrical performances, of public entertainments, of the lewd literature that one encounters at every turn?

c) The world seduces us with its *evil examples*. At the sight of so many youths living solely for pleasure, of so many men and women who make light of their marriage-vows, of so many business-men who do not scruple to enrich themselves by questionable means, the temptation to follow suit is, indeed, very strong. Moreover, the world is so tolerant of human weaknesses that it actually seems to encourage them. A home-breaker is considered a sportsman; the financier, the business-man who amasses his wealth dishonestly is called a clever fellow; the free-thinker is considered a broad-minded man who follows the light of his conscience. How many men are thus encouraged to lead a life of sin!

213. B) When the world fails to seduce us it attempts to terrorize us.

a) At times this takes the form of an actual, organized *persecution* against the faithful. Those that make public profession of their faith or send their children to the Catholic school are denied promotion in certain departments of business or of civic life.

b) At other times, the world turns timid souls from the discharge of their religious duties by mockery and jest. It refers to them as hypocrites and dupes believing still in antiquated dogmas. It holds up to ridicule parents whose daughters are modestly dressed, asking them if it is thus that they hope to make a match for them. Many souls are in this manner, in spite of the protests of conscience, driven to conform through human respect to fashions and customs that offend against Christian modesty.

c) Sometimes the world resorts to threats. Individuals are served notice that their religious affiliations disqualify them for certain positions, or they are made to understand that their prudishness will make them unwelcome guests at entertainments; or again, they are told that if their conscience stands in the way of business they must either do as every one else does — deceive the public and make more money — or be ready to lose their positions.

It is but too easy to let ourselves be won over or terrorized, for the world has its accomplice within our own hearts, in our natural desire for high places, for dignity and for wealth.

214. 2° The remedy. ¹ To resist successfully this dangerous trend one must have the courage to look upon

¹ *Matth.*, XVIII, 7. — ² *I John*, V, 19. — ³ *Wisdom*, II, 8.

⁴ TRONSON. *Examenis partit.*, XCIV-XCVI.

life from the point of view of eternity, and regard the world in the light of faith. Then the world will appear to us in its true colors, as the *enemy of Jesus Christ*, to be fought against with all our might in order that we may save our souls; it will appear to us as the *scene of action for our zeal* whither we must carry the maxims of the Gospel.

215. A) Since the world is the enemy of Jesus Christ, we must accept as our standard of life that which is opposed to the maxims and examples of the world. We must repeat to ourselves the dilemma proposed by St. Bernard: "Either Christ blunders, or the world is astray; but it is impossible for Divine Wisdom to blunder."¹ Since there exists a manifest opposition between Christ and the world, a choice on our part is absolutely necessary, for no one can serve two masters. But Jesus is infallible Wisdom itself. Hence, He has the words of eternal life, and it is the world that blunders. Our choice, therefore, will be quickly made, for as St. Paul says, "We have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God."² To wish to please the world, he adds, is to displease Jesus Christ: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ."³ St. James says: "Whosoever, therefore, will be the friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God."⁴ Hence, the following practical resolutions.

a) Let us read and reread the *Gospel*, reflecting that it is the Eternal Truth that speaks to us, and praying its Divine Author to make us understand, relish and live its maxims. It is thus that we become true Christians and such is the price we must pay if we would become real disciples of Christ. Whenever we hear or read maxims that go counter to those of the Gospel let us courageously say to ourselves: This is *false*, since it is opposed to infallible Truth itself.

b) Let us likewise avoid *dangerous occasions* so numerous in this world. No doubt, those that live outside the cloister must of necessity mingle more or less in the world; yet, they must keep themselves free from its spirit by living in the world as those that were not of it; for Jesus asked His Father not to take His disciples out of the world, but to keep them from evil: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil."⁵ And St. Paul wants us to make use of this world as though we did not use it.⁶

e) This attitude towards the world is incumbent above all upon ecclesiastics. They should be able to say with St. Paul: "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world."¹ The world, ruled as it is by concupiscence, can have no charms for us. Just as we are to it an object of repulsion, for by our character and even by our garb we stand as a condemnation of its vices; so the world in turn can not but inspire us with a like antipathy. Hence, we must dispense with social visits *purely worldly* in character, in which we should be out of place. No doubt, we shall have to make and receive such visits as courtesy, business, and above all, zeal for souls impose; but they shall be brief. We shall not forget what is said of our Lord after His resurrection, that He came among His disciples but rarely, and only in order to complete their training and to speak to them of the kingdom of God.²

216. B) We shall not, then, venture into the world except to exercise there our zeal either directly or indirectly, that is to say, to carry there the maxims and examples of the Gospel. **a)** We must not forget that we are "the light of the world."³ Without turning our conversation into a sort of sermon (which would be out of place) we shall judge everything, persons and things, by the light of the Gospel. Thus, instead of proclaiming the rich and the powerful the happy ones of this world, we shall note in all sincerity that there are sources of happiness other than those of wealth and success; that virtue does not go without its reward even in this world; that the pure joys of home and hearth are the sweetest; that the consciousness of duty done is a source of satisfaction and comfort to many unfortunate souls; that the peace of a good conscience is worth infinitely more than the intoxication of pleasure. A few examples will bring home these remarks. But it is chiefly by his *own example* that a priest is a source of edification in conversation. A profound impression is created upon those who listen to him if he is in every sense of the word a man among men, a Christian gentleman utterly devoted to the service of souls; if his whole bearing, as well as his words, reflects candor, good-fellowship, cheerfulness, charity, in a word, true sanctity. No one can help admiring those who live according to their convictions; and a religion which knows how to promote solid virtue is held in high regard. Let us, therefore, carry into practice the saying of

¹ *Sermo III, de Nativitate, n. 1.* — ² *I Cor., II, 12.* — ³ *Gal., I, 10.*
⁴ *James, IV, 4.* — ⁵ *John, XVII, 15.* — ⁶ *I Cor., VII, 31.*

¹ *Gal., VI, 14.* — ² *Acts, I, 3.* — ³ *Matth., V, 14.*

our Lord: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."¹ The exercise of this apostolate is not limited to priests. Men of conviction among the laity can practise it with real success, as persons are less on their guard against their influence.

217. b) It is for such select souls and for priests to infuse into the more timid Christians the courage to fight the tyranny of human respect, of fashion and of legalized persecution. The best means of effecting this is to band together into societies those influential laymen who have the courage of their convictions, and who fear neither to speak nor to act accordingly. It is in this manner that the Saints brought about in their times the reformation of morals. It is also in this manner that in our great centers of learning, the universities, solid groups have been formed that know how to make their religious practices respected and how to steady the weaker brethren. On the day when such groups shall have been, considerably multiplied not in cities alone but in the country-districts as well, the death-knell of human respect shall not be long in sounding, and true piety, if not universally practised, shall at least be held in real esteem.

218. We must make *no compromise with the world*. We must make no concessions either to please it or to seek its esteem. As St. Francis de Sales rightly says, "No matter what we do, the world shall ever war against us... Let us turn a deaf ear to this blind world; let it cry as long as it pleases, like an owl to disturb the birds of the day. Let us be constant in our designs and invariable in our resolutions. Our perseverance will demonstrate whether we have in good earnest sacrificed ourselves to God and dedicated ourselves to a devout life."²

III. *The Fight against the Devil*³

219. ¹⁰ **The existence of and reasons for diabolical temptation.** We have seen, n. 67, how the devil, jealous of the blessedness of our first parents, incited them to sin, and how well he succeeded. Therefore, the Book of Wisdom declares that it was "by the envy of the devil that death

came into the world."¹ Ever since, he has not ceased to attack the children of Adam or to lay snares for them. And even though, since our Lord's advent into the world and His triumph over Satan, the latter's power has been greatly curbed, it is none the less true that we have to battle not only against flesh and blood, but also against the powers of darkness, against the spirits of evil. This is exactly what St. Paul teaches: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness."² St. Peter compares the devil to a roaring lion prowling about, seeking to destroy us: "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."³

220. If divine Providence allows these attacks, it is in virtue of the general principle that God governs men not only directly, but also through the agency of secondary causes, leaving to creatures a certain freedom of action. On the other hand, He warns us to be on our guard, and sends His Angels, particularly our Guardian Angels, to help and protect us (n. 186 sq), to say nothing of the assistance that He gives us directly, or through His Son. By availing ourselves of such helps we triumph over the enemy of our salvation, grow in virtue and lay up to ourselves treasures of merit in heaven. These wonderful ways of Providence show us all the more clearly the great importance we must attach to the affair of our salvation and sanctification, an affair in which both heaven and hell so concern themselves that around the soul, at times within the soul itself, fierce combats rage between the powers of heaven and those of hell, — and it is the eternal life of the soul that is at stake. In order to obtain the victory, let us see how the devil proceeds.

221. ²⁰ **The devil's strategy.** A) The Evil One can not act *directly* on our higher faculties, the intellect and the will. God has kept these as a sanctuary for Himself, and He alone can enter there and touch the mainspring of the will without doing violence to it. The devil, however, can act directly on the body, on our exterior and interior senses, and particularly on the imagination and the memory as well as on the passions which reside in the sensitive appetite. Thus, the devil acts *indirectly* on the will, soliciting its consent through the various movements of the sen-

¹ *Matth.*, V, 16. — ² *Intrud.* to a *Dev.* Life, P. IV, C. I.
³ *St. Thom.*, I, q. 114; *St. Theresia, Life by Herself*, C. XXX-XXXI; RIBET, *L'Ascétique chrét.*, C. XVI.

¹ *Wisdom*, II, 24. — ² *Eph.*, VI, 12. — ³ *1 Peter*, V, 8-9.

sitive appetite. The will, however, as St. Thomas remarks, remains ever free to give or refuse consent.¹

B) No matter how extensive the power of the devil over our faculties, there are nevertheless limits set to it by God Himself, who will not allow him to tempt us beyond our strength. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue."² Whoever leans upon the Almighty in humble trust can be sure of victory.

222. C) We must not believe, says St. Thomas,³ that all the temptations we experience are the works of the demon. Concupiscence stirred up by habits formed in the past and by imprudences committed in the present, is sufficient to account for a great number of them. "Every one is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured."⁴ On the other hand, it would be rash to assert, and contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture and Tradition, that there is no diabolical influence in any of our temptations. The envy the devil bears mankind and his desire to bring men into subjection adequately explain his intervention.⁵

How then will diabolical temptation be recognized? This is no easy matter, for our concupiscence itself may sufficiently account for the violence of temptation. It may be said, however, that when a temptation is sudden, violent, and protracted beyond measure, the devil is largely responsible for it. One can especially suspect his influence if the temptation casts the soul into deep and prolonged turmoil; if it excites a desire for the spectacular, for strange and conspicuous mortifications, and particularly if it induces a strong inclination to be silent about the whole affair with our spiritual director and to distrust our superiors.⁶

223. ³ **The remedies against diabolical temptation.** The Saints, and particularly St. Theresa,⁷ point out the following remedies.

A) The first is humble and confident prayer to secure the help of God and His holy Angels. If God is for us who will be against us?⁸ For, "who is like unto God?" Our prayer must be *humble*, for there is nothing that so quickly

¹ *Sum. theol.*, I, q. III, a. 2. — ² *I Cor.*, X, 13.
³ *Sum. theol.*, I, q. II, a. 3. — ⁴ *James*, I, 14. — ⁵ *Sum. theol.*, I, q. II, a. 1.
⁶ See the rules for the discernment of spirits in the first and second weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.
⁷ *Life by Herself*, C. XXX. XXXI. — ⁸ *Rom.*, VIII, 31.

puts to flight this rebellious spirit, who, having revolted through pride, never knew the virtue of humility. To humble ourselves before God, to acknowledge our inability to conquer without His help, defeats the schemes of the prince of pride. Our prayer must also be *full of confidence*. God's own glory is bound up with our triumph and we may, therefore, fully trust in the power of His grace. It is likewise a good practice to invoke the intercession of St. Michael, who, having once obtained a signal victory over Satan, will gladly complete his triumph in us and through us in the day of our struggle. He will have a powerful ally in our Guardian Angel provided we place our trust in him. But above all, we must not forget to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin. Her foot did crush the serpent's head and she is more terrible to the demon than a whole army in battle array.

224. B) The second means consists in making use in all confidence of the *sacraments* and the *sacramentals*. Confession being an act of humility routs the devil; the absolution which follows applies to us the merits of Jesus Christ and renders us invulnerable to the thrusts of the enemy. Holy Communion brings into our hearts Christ who triumphed over Satan and who now fills him with terror. Even the sacramentals, the sign of the Cross, or the prayers of the Liturgy, said in the spirit of faith in union with the Church, are a precious help. St. Theresa recommends in a special way the use of holy water,¹ perhaps because of the humiliation Satan must suffer at seeing himself baffled by such a simple device.

225. C) The last means against diabolical temptation is an *utter contempt of the devil*. It is once more St. Theresa who assures us of this. "These cursed spirits torment me quite frequently, but they do not frighten me in the least, for I am convinced that they cannot stir except by God's leave. Let this be known well, that every time we make them the object of our contempt, they lose their strength, and the soul acquires over them greater ascendancy. They have no power except against cowardly souls who surrender their weapons. Against such they do show their power."² It must be, indeed, a bitter humiliation to those proud spirits to be contemned by weaker beings such as men are. As we have said, if we humbly lean on the strong arm of God, it is our right as well as

¹ *Life by Herself*, C. XXXI. — ² *Ibid.*

our duty to despise them. "If God is for us who will be against us?" The evil spirits can bark; they cannot harm us unless through lack of prudence or through pride we put ourselves into their power. Thus it is that the fight that we must wage against the devil, the world and the flesh strengthens us in the supernatural life and enables us to make spiritual progress.

CONCLUSION

226. ¹⁰ We have just seen that the Christian life is a *warfare*, a harassing warfare that entails a lifelong and intricate manoeuvring ending only with death, a warfare of supreme importance since it is our eternal life that is at stake. As St. Paul teaches, there are within us *two men*: **a)** the *regenerated* man, the new man, with tendencies which are noble, supernatural, divine. These the Holy Ghost produces in us through the merits of Christ and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. We strive to correspond to the higher tendencies by making use, under the influence of actual grace, of the supernatural organism wherewith God has endowed us. **b)** But there is also in us the *natural* or *carnal* man, the Old Adam, with all the evil inclinations which remain even after Baptism, with the threefold concupiscence inherited from our first parents. This concupiscence is stirred up and intensified by the world and the devil; it is an abiding tendency inclining us toward an inordinate love of sensual pleasure, of our own excellence, and of the goods of this world. These two men necessarily engage in conflict. The Old Adam, the *flesh*, seeks pleasure without regard to the moral law. The *spirit* in turn reminds the flesh that there are forbidden pleasures and dangerous pleasures which must be sacrificed to duty, that is to say, to the will of God. The flesh, however, is persistent in its desires; it must, therefore, with the help of grace be mortified and, if need be, crucified. The Christian, then, is a *soldier*, an *athlete*, who fights unto death for an immortal crown. ¹

227. ²⁰ This warfare is *constant*, for in spite of all our efforts we can never fully divest ourselves of the *Old Adam*. We can but weaken him, bind him, while at the same time we fortify the New Man against his attacks. At the outset the fight is keener, more obstinate, and the counter-attacks of the enemy more numerous and more violent; but as we

¹ *II. Tim.*, II, 1-7. St. Paul describes the Christian's armor in *Eph.* VI, 1-18.

by earnest and persevering efforts gain one victory and then another, our enemy weakens, passions subside and, except for certain moments of trial willed by God to lead us to a higher degree of perfection, we enjoy a relative calm, a pledge and a foretaste of final victory. All success we owe to the grace of God. We must not forget that the grace given us is the grace for struggle and not the grace for peace; that we are warriors, athletes, ascetics; that like St. Paul we must fight on to the end if we would merit the crown. "I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day." ¹ This is the means of perfecting in us the Christian life and of acquiring many merits.

§ II. The growth of the spiritual life by merit.

228. We progress, indeed, by the fight we wage against our enemies, but more still by the meritorious acts which we perform day by day. Every good act freely done by a soul in the state of grace and with a supernatural intention, possesses a threefold value for our spiritual growth, inasmuch as it is *meritorious*, *satisfactory* and *impetratory*.

a) The *meritorious value* means an increase of sanctifying grace and a corresponding right to a higher degree of glory in heaven.

b) The *satisfactory value* contains a threefold element: 1) *propitiation*, by which with a contrite and humble heart we turn God auspiciously towards us and incline Him to forgive our trespasses; 2) *expiation*, that is to say, the effacement of guilt by the infusion of grace; 3) *satisfaction*, which in view of the element of suffering accompanying our good works, cancels wholly or in part the punishment due to sin. This happy result is not merely the outcome of good works properly so-called, but also, as the Council of Trent teaches, of the willing acceptance of the ills and sufferings of this life. ³ What is more consoling than to be able to turn all manner of adversity into gain for the purification of the soul and closer union with God?

¹ *II. Tim.*, IV, 7-8.

² St. THOMAS, I-II q. 114; TERRIEN, *La Grâce et la Gloire*, II, p. 15 foll.; LABAUCHE, *Man.*, P. III, C. III; HUGON in *La vie spirituelle*, II (1920), p. 28, 273, 353; TANQUERAY, *Syn. theol. dog.*, III, n. 210-235; REMLER, *Supernatural Merit*; WIRTH, *Divine Grace*, C. VIII; SCHEEBEN, *Glories of Divine Grace*.

³ Sess. XIV, De Sacramento poenit., Cap. 9.

e) Lastly, these same acts, when they embody a request to the Divine Mercy for new graces, possess also an *impe- tratory value*. As St. Thomas justly remarks, we pray not only when we explicitly make a request to Almighty God, but whenever we turn our hearts to Him or direct any act of ours towards Him; so much so, indeed, that our life becomes a continual prayer when our activities are constantly directed towards God. "Man prays whenever he so acts in thought, word and deed as to tend towards God; hence, life is a constant prayer if wholly directed towards God."¹ Is not this elevation of the heart to God a prayer? Is not this an effectual means of obtaining from Him for ourselves and for others whatever we desire?

For the end we have in view it will suffice to explain: 1) the *nature* of merit; 2) the conditions that *increase the merit* of our good works.

I. Nature of Merit

Two points must be made clear: 1° What we mean by merit; 2° What makes our actions meritorious.

1° WHAT IS MEANT BY MERIT

229. A) Merit in general is a right to a reward. Hence, supernatural merit of which we speak here is a right to a supernatural reward, a right to a share in God's life, a right to grace and glory. Since, however, God is in no way obliged to make us share in His life, there must exist a promise on His part that confers upon us an actual title to such supernatural reward. Merit, then, may be defined: *a right to a supernatural reward arising both from a supernatural work done freely for God's sake, and from a divine promise to give such a reward.*

230. B) There are two kinds of merit: a) merit properly so called (*de condigno*) to which a recompense is due in justice, because there exists a sort of equality, a real proportion, between the work and the reward. b) The other kind of merit, called *de congruo*, is not based upon strict justice; its claims are simply those of a certain fitness, since the reward outweighs by far the work done. The following example gives an approximate notion of this distinction. A soldier acquitting himself bravely on the battlefield has a strict right to his pay, but he can lay only a claim of fitness to a citation or a decoration.

¹ *In Rom.*, C. I. 9-10.

C) The Council of Trent teaches that the works of the justified man truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and, should he die in this state, the attainment of glory.

231. D) Let us recall briefly the general conditions for merit. a) A work to be meritorious must be *free*. If man acts through constraint or necessity, he is not actually responsible. b) The work must be *supernaturally good* in order to be in proportion with the reward. c) When it is questioned of merit properly so-called, the work must be performed in the *state of grace*, for it is this grace that causes Christ to dwell in our souls and makes us share in His merits. d) The work must be performed during our *life on earth*, for God has wisely decreed that after a period of trial wherein we can merit or demerit, we should reach the end where we shall forever remain fixed in the state in which we die. These are the conditions on the part of man. To them is added on the part of God the *promise* which gives us a real right to eternal life. As St. James says: "The just receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him."¹

2° WHAT MAKES OUR ACTS MERITORIOUS

232. At first sight it seems difficult to understand how very simple, ordinary and transitory acts can merit eternal life. This would be an insuperable difficulty if these acts were produced by us alone. But as a matter of fact they are the result of the co-operation of God and the human will. This explains their efficacy. God whilst crowning our merits, crowns His own gifts, for our merits are largely His work. To enable us to understand better the efficacy of our meritorious acts let us explain the share of God and the share of man.

A) God is the *first and principal* cause of our merits: "Not I, but the grace of God with me."² In fact, it is God who has created our faculties; God who has perfected them, raised them to a supernatural state by the virtues and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost; God who by His actual grace calls us to perform good works and assists us in doing them. He is, therefore, the first cause exciting the will to action and giving it new energies that enable it to act supernaturally.

233. B) Our free will, responding to God's solicitations, acts under the influence of grace and the virtues and thus

¹ *James*, I, 12. — ² *I Cor.*, XV, 10.

becomes a *secondary*, but real and efficacious cause of our meritorious acts, since it truly co-operates with God. Without this free consent there can be no merit. In heaven we can no longer merit, for there we cannot help loving that God whom we clearly see to be Infinite Goodness and the Source of our beatitude. Besides, our co-operation itself is supernatural. By habitual grace the very substance of our being is deified; by the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost our faculties are likewise deified, and by actual grace even our acts are made Godlike. Once our actions are deified there exists a real proportion between our works and grace, which latter is itself a Godlike life, as well as between our acts and glory, which is the full development of that life. No doubt, the acts themselves are transitory, while glory is eternal; yet, as in our natural existence transient acts produce states of soul that endure, it is but just that the same should hold good in the supernatural order, and that virtuous acts producing an abiding disposition to love God be rewarded by a lasting recompense. Lastly, since our soul is immortal it is *fitting* that such recompense should endure forever.

234. C) It might be objected that in spite of this proportion between act and reward, God is in no manner constrained to bestow a recompense so great and so enduring as grace and glory. We fully grant this, and we acknowledge that God in His infinite goodness rewards us above our deserts. Hence, He would not be bound to have us enjoy the Beatific Vision through all eternity had He not promised it. But He has promised it by the very fact that He has destined us for a supernatural end. His promise recurs repeatedly in Holy Writ wherein eternal life is represented as the reward *promised* to the just, and as a crown of justice: "The crown which God hath promised to them that love Him... a crown of justice which the just judge shall render unto me."¹ Therefore, the Council of Trent declares that eternal life is at once a *grace* mercifully *promised* by Jesus Christ, and a *recompense* which in virtue of this promise is faithfully awarded to good works and to merit.²

235. From the fact that merit is based on this promise of God, we can infer that merit is something *personal*. It is for *ourselves* and not for others that we merit grace and life everlasting, for the divine promise goes no further. It

is different with our Lord Jesus Christ, who having been made the moral head of the human race, has merited for each of His members, and this in the strict sense of the word. We can, indeed, merit for others, but by no title of justice, simply *de congruo*, that is, by a title of mere fitness. This fact is in itself most consoling, because this merit is joined to the one we gain for ourselves and thus it enables us to co-operate in the sanctification of our brethren whilst working at our own.

II. Conditions for Increasing Merit

236. These conditions evidently proceed from the different causes that concur in the production of meritorious acts, hence, from God and from ourselves. We can always count upon God's liberality, for He is always munificent in His gifts, and therefore, we must center our attention principally upon our dispositions. Let us see what can improve these dispositions either on the part of the one who merits or on the part of the meritorious act itself.

1° CONDITIONS ON THE PART OF THE ONE WHO MERITS

237. There are four principal conditions: the degree of habitual grace or charity, our union with our Lord, our purity of intention, our fervor.

a) *The degree of sanctifying grace.* To merit in the proper sense of the word, the state of grace is required. Hence, all things being equal, the more habitual grace we possess, the greater is our power for meriting. This, no doubt, is denied by some theologians on the ground that the amount of habitual grace does not always influence our acts so as to render them better, and that at times holy souls act negligently and imperfectly. But the doctrine we maintain is the common teaching, based on the following reasons.

1) The value of an act even in human affairs depends largely upon the *dignity* of the person that performs it, and upon the degree of *esteem* in which he is held by the rewarder. Now, what constitutes the dignity of the Christian and what makes him dear to the heart of God is the degree of grace, that is, of divine life to which he has been raised. This is why the Saints in heaven or the saints on earth have such great power of intercession. Hence, if we possess a higher degree of grace we are worth more in the eyes of God than those who have less; we please Him more,

¹ James, I, 12; II Tim., IV, 8. — ² Sess. VI, Cap. 16.

and on this account our actions are nobler, more agreeable to God, and therefore, more meritorious.

2) Besides, this degree of grace will *ordinarily* exercise a happy influence on our acts. Living more fully a supernatural life, loving God more perfectly, we are led to improve the quality of our acts, to put into them more charity, to be more generous in our sacrifices. Now, every one grants that such dispositions increase our merits. Let no one say that at times the contrary happens. This is the exception, not the rule. We had that in mind when we said: all other things being equal.

How consoling is this doctrine! By multiplying our meritorious acts we daily increase our stock of grace. This store of grace enables us to put more love into our works and thus further the growth of our supernatural life: "He that is just, let him be justified still." ¹

238. b) Our degree of union with our Lord. The source of our merit is Jesus Christ, the Author of our sanctification, the chief meritorious cause of all supernatural good, the Head of the mystical body whose members we are. The closer we are to the source, the more we receive of its fullness; the closer we approach to the Author of all Holiness, the more grace we receive; the closer we are to the Head, the more life and activity it imparts to us. Does not our Lord Himself tell us this in the beautiful allegory of the vine? "I am the vine and you the branches... he who abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth the stem and, therefore, the closer our union, habitual and actual, with Him, the more we receive of His vital influence. This is why all fervent souls, all that wish to become fervent, have ever sought a more and more intimate union with our Lord. This is why the Church herself asks us to perform our actions through Him, with Him and in Him. *Through Him*, for: "No one cometh to the Father but by me;" ³ *with Him*, by acting in union with Him, since He consents to be our co-worker; *in Him*, in the virtue, in the power that is His very own, and above all, with His intentions. In the words of Father Faber: "To do our actions by Christ is to do them in dependence upon Him, as He did everything in dependence upon His Father and by the movements of His Spirit. To do our actions with Christ is to practise the same virtues as our Lord, to clothe

ourselves with the same dispositions, and to act from the same intentions, all according to the measure of the lowliness of our possibilities. To do our actions in Christ is to unite ours with His, and to offer them to God along with His, so that for the sake of His they may be accepted on high." ¹

If we thus perform our actions in union with our Lord, He lives in us, inspires our thoughts, our desires and all our acts in such a way that we can say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." ² It is evident that acts performed under the influence of Christ's life-giving action and with the aid of His all-powerful coöperation, have a far greater value than those done by ourselves even with the help of ordinary grace and with only habitual union with Christ by sanctifying grace. In practice, then, we should unite ourselves frequently with our Lord, especially at the beginning of our actions; we should make our own His perfect intentions, fully conscious of our inability to do anything good of ourselves and confident that He is able to overcome our weakness. Thus we strive to carry out the advice of St. Paul: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." ³

239. c) Purity of intention or perfection of the motive under which we act. For our actions to be meritorious it is enough, according to many theologians, that they be inspired by any supernatural motive: fear, hope or love. It is true that St. Thomas requires that our actions be at least virtually under the influence of charity through a preceding act of love the influence of which still endures. He adds, however, that this condition is fulfilled in all those that perform any lawful action whilst in the state of grace: "For those in the state of grace every act is meritorious or demeritorious." ⁴ In fact, every good act springs from some virtue; but all virtues converge into charity which is the Queen of virtues just as the will is the Queen of faculties. And charity ever active directs all our good acts towards God and gives life to all our virtues. If, however, we want our acts to be as meritorious as possible, we need a more perfect, a more actual intention. The intention is the principal element in our actions; it is the *eye* that sheds its light upon them and directs them towards their end; it

¹ *Growth in Holiness*, p. 467. — ² *Gal.*, II, 20. — ³ *Colos.*, III, 17.

⁴ *Quæst. disp.*, de Malo. q. 2, a. 5, ad 7. Hence, it appears that what St. Thomas calls *virtual* intention, modern theologians call *habitual*.

is the *soul* that animates them and gives them their worth in God's sight: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome."¹ Now, there are three elements that bestow special value upon our intentions.

240. 1) Since charity is the Queen and the soul of all virtues, every act inspired by it will have by far more merit than acts inspired by fear or by hope. It is important, then, that all our actions be done out of love of God and the neighbor. In this way even the most ordinary actions, like meals and recreations, become acts of charity and share in the merits of that virtue. To eat in order to restore our strength is lawful and, in a Christian, it is meritorious; but to do this in order to work for God and for souls is to act from a motive of love which ennobles our action and bestows on it greater meritorious value.

241. 2) Since acts of virtue animated by charity lose none of their own value, it follows that an act done from more than one motive will thereby be more meritorious. Thus, an act of obedience to Superiors prompted both by respect for their authority and by the love of God whom we see in their persons, will possess the twofold merit of obedience and of charity. In this way one and the same act may have a threefold or a fourfold value; for instance, when I detest my sins because they offend God, I can also have the intention of practising penance and humility. Thus, I make this one act thrice meritorious. It is, therefore, useful in performing our actions to propose to ourselves several supernatural motives. We must, however, avoid all excess and preoccupation in seeking to multiply intentions, for this would disturb the soul. The prudent way is to make use of the intentions that suggest themselves more or less spontaneously and to subordinate them to that of divine charity. In this manner we shall increase our merits without losing our peace of soul.

242. 3) Since our will is fickle, we must form and renew frequently our supernatural intention. Otherwise, it might come to pass that an action begun for God would be continued from curiosity, sensuality or self-love, and thus lose in part its worth. We say: in part, for since these secondary motives do not utterly destroy the first, the act does not cease to be supernatural and meritorious. When a steamer leaves Cherbourg for New York, it is not enough

to direct it once and for all towards her destination. The tides, gales and ocean-currents tend now and again to change her course, and it is necessary that the pilot be constantly at the helm to keep her in her path. It is the same with the will. It is not enough to direct it towards God once for all or even once a day. Human passions and external influences will soon throw it out of course; we must, therefore, by explicit acts bring it back frequently in the direction of God and of charity. We should be careful to realize and to mean what we say when we recite the morning-offering: "I offer up to Thee, O my God, my thoughts, words, acts and sufferings of this day; grant that they may all tend to Thy glory and my salvation." We should renew this offering before every important action of the day. If we are faithful to this practice, God will gradually give us the facility to renew the offering even in the course of our actions, without depriving us of the requisite attention to do our work well.

243. d) *Fervor or intensity* of our actions. Even in the accomplishment of good works, it is possible for us to be careless and remiss; or, on the other hand, we may act with vigor, with all the energy at our command, making use of all the actual graces placed at our disposal. Evidently, the result in either case will be very different. If we act half-heartedly we acquire but little merit and at times become guilty of venial sins, which do not, however, entirely destroy our merit. If, on the contrary, we pray and labor and sacrifice ourselves whole-heartedly, each of our actions merits a goodly share of sanctifying grace. Without entering here into debatable questions, we can say with certainty that, since God renders a hundredfold for what is done for Him, a fervent soul acquires daily a great increase of grace and becomes perfect in a short time, according to the words of Wisdom: "Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time."¹ What a mighty incentive to fervor! In truth, it is well worth the while to renew our efforts unceasingly and resolutely.

2° CONDITIONS ON THE PART OF THE ACT ITSELF

244. Subjective dispositions are not the only conditions that increase merit; there are also objective circumstances that contribute to render our actions more perfect. These are chiefly four:

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 22.

¹ *Wisdom*, IV, 13.

a) *The excellence of the object* or of the act itself. There is a hierarchy among the virtues; the theological excel the moral. Hence, the acts of faith, hope and charity have greater worth than those of prudence, justice, temperance, etc. But, as we have said, the latter can, through the intention of the subject, become also acts of charity and thus share in the special worth that attaches to this virtue. In like manner acts of religion which of themselves have God's glory directly in view, are more perfect than those that look directly to our sanctification.

b) As regards certain actions, *quantity* may have some influence on merit. All other things being the same, a gift of a thousand dollars will be more meritorious than a gift of a hundred. But in this matter quantity is often a relative thing. The mite of the widow who deprives herself of much of her substance has a greater moral value than the princely gift of the rich man who simply gives a portion of his superfluous goods.

c) The *duration* of an act likewise may render it more meritorious. To pray or to suffer for an hour is worth more than to pray or to suffer for five minutes; for protracted prayer or suffering call forth more effort and more love.

245. d) The *difficulty* inherent to the performance of the act also increases merit, not precisely inasmuch as it is a difficulty, but inasmuch as it demands greater love and a more strenuous and sustained effort. For instance, to resist a violent temptation is more meritorious than to resist a light one; to practise meekness with a choleric temperament and in spite of frequent provocations from others is more difficult and more meritorious than to do so with a nature that is gentle and mild or when others are kind and considerate. We must not conclude, however, that the ease acquired by the repetition of virtuous acts necessarily diminishes our merit. Such facility, when used to sustain and to strengthen the supernatural effort, contributes to the intensity or fervor of the act, and in this way it rather increases our merit, as we have already explained above. Just as an efficient worker in the measure that he becomes proficient in his work avoids all waste of time, material and energy, and thus realizes larger gains with less labor, so the Christian who has learned to make better use of the means of sanctification saves time and effort, and thus with less trouble to himself gains greater merit. Because the Saints through the practice of virtue make acts of humility, obedience, religion, with greater facility, they are not therefore

entitled to less merit; just the contrary, since they make acts of love of God with greater ease and frequency. Moreover, they continue their efforts to make sacrifices whenever necessary. In short, difficulty increases merit, not inasmuch it is an obstacle to be overcome but inasmuch as it calls for more energy and more love.¹

We must add that these *objective* conditions have a real influence on merit only inasmuch as they are freely accepted by us, and thus react on our interior dispositions.

CONCLUSION

246. The logical conclusion of all this is the necessity of sanctifying all our actions, even the most ordinary. We have already said it: all our actions can become a source of merit if done with a supernatural end in view and in union with our Lord, who even in the workshop at Nazareth never ceased to merit for us. What progress can we not thus make in a single day! From the moment we awake until we retire at night the meritorious acts which we can perform, if we are recollected and generous, may be numbered by the hundreds. Indeed, there is a growth of the Godlike life of grace in our souls not only through every act of the day, but through every effort to make each action more perfect; through every effort to dispel distractions at prayer, to apply our minds to our tasks, to keep back an unkind word, to render a service to others. Likewise, every word inspired by charity, every good thought turned to good account, in short, all the movements of the soul directed by our free-will towards good are so many means of increasing merit.

247. It may be said in all truth that there is no means of sanctification more *efficacious*, more *practical*, than the supernaturalizing of our ordinary actions, — and this means is *within the reach of every one*. It is of itself sufficient to raise a soul within a short time to a high degree of holiness. Every act becomes a seed of grace and glory, since it gives us an increase of sanctifying grace and a right to a higher degree of heavenly bliss.

248. The *practical way* of thus converting our acts into merits is to recollect ourselves for a moment before we begin them, to renounce positively all evil or inordinate intentions, to unite ourselves to our Lord, our model and

¹ EYMIEU, *Le Gouvernement de soi-même*, I, Introd., p. 7-9.

our Mediator, with a keen sense of our own weakness, and to offer through Him every act for God's glory and the good of souls. Thus understood the oft-renewed offering of our actions to God is an act of self-renunciation, of humility, of love of our Lord, of love of God, of love of the neighbor. It is, indeed, a short-cut to perfection.¹

§ III. Growth of the christian Life through the Sacraments²

249. We grow in grace and perfection not only by means of meritorious acts, but also by the reception of the Sacraments. Sensible signs instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, they *symbolize* and *confer* grace. God, knowing how easily man is drawn to external things, willed in His infinite goodness to attach His grace to material objects and visible actions. It is a matter of faith that our sacraments *contain* the grace they symbolize and that they *confer* it on all those who place no obstacle in the way;³ and this not solely in virtue of the recipient's dispositions, but *ex opere operato*, that is, in virtue of the sacramental rite itself. The sacraments are *instrumental causes* of grace, God ever being the *principal cause*, and our Lord the *meritorious cause*.

250. Besides habitual grace, each sacrament produces a special grace which is called *sacramental grace*. This does not differ specifically from sanctifying grace, but, according to St. Thomas and his school, it adds to it a special energy calculated to produce effects in harmony with the purpose of each sacrament. Be this as it may, all agree that it gives a right to *special graces* at the opportune moment for the more easy performance of those obligations which the reception of the various sacraments imposes. The Sacrament of Confirmation, for example, gives us the right to special actual graces of strength for combating human respect and for confessing our faith in the face of all.

There are four things we should dwell on: 1° *sacramental grace*, proper to each sacrament; 2° the *dispositions necessary*

¹ All spiritual writers recommend this practice in some form or other. See RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, P. I, tr. 2, 3; OLIER, *Introd.*, C. XV; TRONSON, *Examen*, XXVI-XXIX; FABER, *All for Jesus*; "Minting Money"; Growth in Holiness, p. 463-468.

² ST. THOM., III, q. 60-62; SUAREZ, disp. VIII; DE BROGLIE, *Conf. sur la vie sacram.*, III; BELLEVEUE, *De la grâce sacramentelle*; TANQUERAY, *Syn.*, III, n. 298-323; MARMION, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, p. 65 and foll.

³ *Council of Trent*, Sess. VII, Can. 6.

for the fruitful reception of the sacraments; 3° the *special dispositions* required for the sacrament of *Penance*; 4° those required for the reception of *Holy Communion*.

I. Sacramental Grace

The Sacraments confer special graces which correspond to the different stages of life.

251. a) In *Baptism* a grace of spiritual regeneration is given by which we are purified from the stain of original sin, are born to the life of grace. A *new man* is thus created within us, the regenerated man that lives the life of Christ. According to the beautiful teaching of St. Paul, "We are buried together with Him (Christ) by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead, so we also may walk in newness of life."¹ Hence, the special or sacramental grace given us is: 1) a grace of *death to sin*, of *spiritual crucifixion* which enables us to oppose and to curb the evil tendencies of the Old Adam; 2) a grace of *regeneration* that makes us one with Christ, causes us to share in His life, renders us capable of living in harmony with His sentiments and examples and thus makes us perfect Christians. Hence, the duty for us of combatting sin and its causes, of adhering to Jesus Christ and imitating His virtues.

252. b) *Confirmation* makes of us soldiers of Christ. To the grace of Baptism it adds a special grace of *strength* that we may with generosity profess our faith in face of all enemies, in spite of human respect that keeps so many from the practice of their religious duties. This is why the gifts of the Holy Ghost already given us in Baptism are conferred again in Confirmation, for the special purpose of enlightening our faith, of rendering it more vivid, more discerning, and of strengthening our will against sin. Hence, the duty of cultivating the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially those that make for militant Christianity.

253. c) The *Eucharist nourishes* our souls, which like our bodies need food for sustenance and strength. None but a Divine Food can nourish a Divine Life. The Body and Blood of Christ, His Soul and His Divinity transform us into other Christs, infusing into us His spirit, His sentiments and His virtues. This will be developed further, (p. 283).

¹ *Romans*, VI, 3-6.

254. d) Should we have the misfortune of losing the life of grace by mortal sin, the Sacrament of *Penance washes away our sins* in the Blood of Jesus Christ poured upon us by absolution (cf. n. 262).

255. e) As death approaches we need to be fortified in the midst of the anxiety and the fear inspired by the memory of past sins, by our present failings, and by the thought of God's judgment. By the anointing of our senses with the Holy Oils the Sacrament of *Extreme Unction* infuses into our souls a grace of comfort and spiritual solace that frees us from the remains of sin, revives our trust, and arms us against the last assaults of the enemy, making us share the sentiments of St. Paul who, after having fought the good fight, rejoiced at the thought of the crown prepared for him. It is important, then, to ask in good time for this Sacrament, that is, as soon as we become seriously ill, in order that we may receive all its effects, in particular, restoration to health should this be God's will. It amounts to cruelty on the part of those attending the sick to hide from them the seriousness of their condition and to put off to the last moment the reception of a sacrament from which flow such abundant consolations. These five sacraments suffice to sanctify the *individual*. There are two others instituted to sanctify man in his *relations to society*, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The former gives the Church worthy ministers, the latter sanctifies the family.

256. f) Holy Orders bestow upon the ministers of the Church not only the *marvellous powers of consecrating* the Body and Blood of Christ, administering the Sacraments and preaching the word of God, but also the *grace of exercising* these powers in a *holy manner*. This Sacrament gives them in particular an ardent love for the Blessed Eucharist and for the souls of men, together with a firm determination of spending and sacrificing themselves entirely. We shall speak later on of the high degree of sanctity at which God's ministers should aim.

257. g) In order to sanctify the family, the cradle of society, the Sacrament of Matrimony gives to husbands and wives the graces they so urgently need: the grace of an absolute and abiding fidelity so difficult to the human heart; the grace of reverence for the sanctity of the marriage-bed; the grace of devoted and steadfast consecration to the Christian education of their children.

258. At all the important stages of life, for every duty, individual or social, we receive through some Sacrament a wonderful grant of *sanctifying grace*. That such a grace may be turned to account, we receive likewise through each Sacrament a right to *actual graces* that urge us and help us to practice the virtues to which we are bound. It is our task then to correspond to these graces by bringing to the Sacraments the best possible dispositions.

II. Necessary Dispositions for the Fruitful Reception of the Sacraments

The amount of grace produced by the Sacraments depends both on God and on us.¹ Let us see how this grace can be increased.

259. A) No doubt, God is free in the distribution of His gifts. He may, therefore, grant more or less grace through the Sacraments, according to the designs of His Wisdom and His Goodness. But there are laws which God Himself has laid down and by which He wills to abide. Thus, He declares again and again that He cannot turn a deaf ear to prayer well said: "Ask and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you."² This holds good especially if our prayer is supported by the merits of Christ: "Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you."³ If, therefore, when we receive a Sacrament, we pray with humility and fervor and in union with our Lord for a greater measure of grace, we shall obtain it.

260. B) On our part two dispositions contribute to the reception of an increase of sacramental grace, namely, *holy desires* before approaching the Sacraments, and *fervor* in receiving them.

a) The *ardent desire* of receiving a Sacrament with all its fruits opens and dilates the soul. This is an application of the principle laid down by our Lord: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill."⁴ Now, to hunger and thirst for the Holy Eucharist or for Absolution is to open wide our hearts to the divine communications. Then will God replenish our famished souls: "He hath filled the hungry with good things."⁵

¹ Thus the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, Ch. 7: "The Holy Spirit distributes to each according as He wills, and according to each one's disposition and cooperation."

² *Matth.*, VII, 7. — ³ *John*, XVI, 23. — ⁴ *Matth.*, V, 6. — ⁵ *Luke*, I, 53.

Let us then be like Daniel, men of desire, and let us long after the fountains of living water, the Sacraments.

b) *Fervor* in the actual reception of the Sacraments will make the soul still more receptive; for fervor is that generous attitude of refusing Almighty God nothing, of allowing Him to act in all the fulness of His power and of co-operating with Him with all our energies. Such a disposition expands the soul, renders it more apt for the effusions of grace, more responsive to the action of the Holy Spirit. From this co-operation of God and the soul spring forth abundant fruits of sanctification.

261. We may add here that all the conditions rendering our actions more meritorious (cf. n. 237), perfect at the same time the dispositions we must bring to the reception of the Sacraments, and consequently increase the measure of grace conferred upon us. We shall understand this better when we apply this principle to the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

III. *The Dispositions Required to Profit Well by the Sacrament of Penance*¹

The Sacrament of Penance purifies our souls in the Blood of Jesus Christ, provided that we are well disposed, that our confession is sincere, and that our contrition is true and genuine.

1° CONFESSION

262. A) **A word concerning grave sins.** We speak but incidentally of the accusation of *grave faults*. This we have treated at length in our Moral Theology.² Should one that is tending toward perfection have the misfortune, in a moment of weakness, of committing any mortal sins, he should confess them clearly and sincerely, mentioning them at the very beginning of his confession and not half-concealing them midst a multitude of venial sins. He should state in all sincerity and humility the *number* and *species* of these sins, and the *causes* that brought them about, and ask

his confessor most earnestly for the *remedies* that will work a cure. He must, above all, have a *deep sorrow* for sin together with a *firm purpose* of avoiding in the future, not only these sins themselves, but also their *occasions* and *causes*.

Once these sins have been forgiven, he must keep within his soul an *abiding* and a *lively sense of sorrow*, and a sincere desire to *repair* the evil done, by an austere and mortified life, by an ardent and self-sacrificing love. An isolated fault immediately repaired, even though grave, is not for long an obstacle to our spiritual progress.

263. B) **Deliberate Venial Faults.**¹ Venial faults are of two kinds: those that are deliberate, that is, committed with full knowledge that one is about to displease God and with a deliberate selfish preference for a created good to the divine will. The others are such as are committed through *surprise, fickleness, frailty, lack of vigilance or courage*, and regretted on the spot, with the firm purpose of committing them no more.

Sins of the first category are a very serious obstacle to perfection, specially if the sins recur frequently and the heart is attached to them, for example, wilfully keeping petty *grudges*, habitually forming *rash judgments*, speaking ill of others, yielding to the *attraction* of inordinate, natural affections, stubbornly holding to one's own judgment, to one's own will. These are cords that bind us to earth and prevent us from taking our flight toward God. When one wilfully refuses Almighty God the sacrifice of one's tastes, of one's way, one can hardly expect of Him those choice graces which alone can lead to perfection. Such faults should be corrected at any cost. The better to achieve this task, we must take up successively the different *species* or categories of faults, for example, faults against charity, then those against humility, against the virtue of religion, etc. We must make a full avowal of them in confession, chiefly of those more humiliating to us, as well as of the *causes* that make us fall into such sins. Lastly, we must make firm resolutions to avoid these causes entirely. In this manner, each confession will be a step forward in the way of perfection.

264. C) **Sins of Frailty.** Having once overcome deliberate faults, we set upon those proceeding from *frailty*, not indeed to avoid them altogether — this is impossible —

¹ Besides consulting treatises of Theology, see: BEAUDENOM, *Spiritual Progress*; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, P. I, C. 19; P. II, C. 19; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XIX, XX; MANNING, *Sin and its Consequences*; *The Love of Jesus for Penitent Sinners*; TISSOT, *Profiting by Our Faults*; MOTHER MARY LOYOLA, *First Confession*; MARMION, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, P. I., C. IV.

² *Syn. theol. moral.*, De *Penitentia*, n. 242 and foll.

but gradually to diminish their number. Here again, we must have recourse to the same expedient of *dividing the task*. We may, no doubt, accuse all the venial sins we remember; but this we do rapidly and then we stress some particular faults; for instance, distractions in prayer, failings against purity of intention, lack of charity.

In the examination of conscience and in confession we shall not content ourselves with saying: "I have been distracted in my prayers" — which tells the confessor absolutely nothing — but we shall rather put things thus: "I have been distracted or careless during such or such a spiritual exercise, the reason being, that I failed to recollect myself properly before beginning it," or "because I had not the courage to repel at once and with determination the first vagaries of my mind," or again "because after having repelled distractions for a while I did not persevere and remain steadfast in the effort."

At other times we shall accuse ourselves of having been long distracted on account of an attachment to study or to a friend, or owing to some petty grievance.

The accusation of the causes of our sins will suggest the *remedy* and the *resolution* to be taken.

265. In order to insure the *effectiveness of the confession*, whether it be question of deliberate faults or not, we shall end the accusation by formulating the *resolution* for the coming week or fortnight of "combatting in earnest this source of distraction, that attachment, such preoccupation." In the next confession we shall be careful to render an account of our efforts, for instance: "I had taken such resolution, I kept it so many days, or kept it only in this regard, but I failed in this or that point."

Evidently, confession practiced in this manner, will not be a matter of routine but will on the contrary, mark a step forward. The grace of absolution will confirm the resolution taken and not only will it increase habitual grace within us, but it will also multiply our energies, causing us to avoid in the future a certain number of venial faults and to grow in virtue with a greater measure of success.

2° CONTRITION

266. In frequent confessions stress must be laid on *contrition* and on the *purpose of amendment* which necessarily goes with it. We must ask for it with earnestness and excite it in ourselves by the consideration of supernatural motives. These are always substantially the same, even if

they vary with different souls and with the different faults accused. The general motives for contrition have their source in *God* and in the *soul*. We shall briefly indicate them.

267. A *As regards God*, sin, no matter how trivial, is an offense against Him; it is resistance to His will; it constitutes an act of ingratitude toward the most loving and most lovable of fathers and benefactors — ingratitude that is all the more hurtful because we are His privileged friends. Hence God says to us: "For if my enemy had reviled me, I would have borne with it...; but thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with me, in the house of God we walked with consent."¹ Let us lend a willing ear to His well-merited reproaches, and hide our face in shame and humiliation. Let us hearken also to the voice of Jesus, telling us that because of our transgressions His Chalice on the Mount of Olives was made more bitter and His agony more terrible. Then out of the depths of our misery let us humbly ask for pardon: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy... Wash me yet more from my iniquity..."²

268. B *As regards the soul*, venial sin does not indeed of itself lessen sanctifying grace, but it does affect the existing intimacy of the soul with God. What a loss this is! It brings to a standstill or, at least, it hampers our spiritual activity, clogging, as it were, the fine mechanism of the spiritual life. It weakens the *soul's power* for good by intensifying the love of pleasure. Above all, if it be deliberate, it *predisposes to mortal sin*, for in many matters, especially in what concerns purity, the line of demarcation between venial and mortal sin is so narrow, and the charm of forbidden pleasure so alluring, that the borders of mortal sin are easily crossed. Every sin committed means a yielding to and therefore a strengthening of some impulse of our lower nature; it means likewise a weakening of our wills and a lesser grant of grace. When this is repeated, it is easy to understand how the way is prepared for mortal sin.

When we ponder over these consequences of venial sin, it is not difficult to conceive a sincere regret for our negligences and a desire to avoid them in the future.³ In order

¹ Ps. LIV, 13-15.

² Ps. L, Meditation on this psalm is a splendid preparation for confession.

³ BEAUDENOM, *op. cit.*, t. II, ch. II.

to have this good purpose take an actual, definite form, it is well to make it bear upon the means that should be taken to reduce the chances of subsequent falls, according to the method we have indicated above (N. 265).

269. In order to insure still further the presence of contrition, it is a good practice to accuse one of the more serious faults of the past for which we are surely sorry, especially a fault that is of the same species as the venial sins we deplore. Here we must be on our guard against two defects: *routine* and *negligence*. The first would make of this accusation a mere empty formula devoid of any real sentiment of sorrow; the other would render us unmindful of any actual regret for the venial sins presently accused.

The practice of confession carried out in this manner, the advice of the confessor, and above all, the *cleansing power of absolution* will be effectual means of disentangling ourselves from the meshes of sin and of advancing in virtue.

IV. Dispositions Required to Profit Well by the Sacrament of the Eucharist ¹

270. The Holy Eucharist is both a *sacrament* and a *sacrifice*. These two elements are most closely united; for the Sacrifice of the Mass makes present the Victim which we receive in Holy Communion. Communion is not, according to the common teaching, an *essential* part of the sacrifice; it is, however, an *integral* part since it is by virtue of communion that we partake in the sentiments of the victim and share in the fruits of the sacrifice.

The essential difference between the one and the other is that the sacrifice refers *directly to the glory of God* whilst the sacrament's *immediate end is the sanctification of our souls*. These two objects are but one in reality, for to know and love God is to glorify Him. Each, therefore, contributes to our spiritual progress.

¹ THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS AS A MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION ²

271. A) Its Effects. a) The Sacrifice of the Mass first of all glorifies God and glorifies Him in a perfect manner,

for here Jesus Christ, through the ministry of the priest offers again to His Father all the acts of adoration, gratitude and love which He once offered on Calvary, — acts which have an infinite moral value. In offering Himself as victim, He proclaims in a manner most significant God's sovereign domain over all things — this is *adoration*; in giving Himself to God in acknowledgement of His benefits, Christ offers to Him a praise equal to His gifts — this is thanksgiving, and it constitutes the eucharistic worship. Nothing can prevent this effect from taking place, not even the unworthiness of the minister, ¹ for the worth of the sacrifice does not depend essentially upon the one through whose ministry it is offered, but on the worth of the victim and on the dignity of the chief priest — no other than Jesus Christ Himself.

This is what the Council of Trent teaches in declaring that this unspotted offering cannot be stained by the unworthiness or malice of those who offer it; that in this divine sacrifice is contained and immolated, in an unbloody manner, the same Christ that offered Himself in a bloody manner upon the altar of the Cross. Hence, adds the Council, it is the same victim, the same sacrificing-priest who offers Himself now through the ministry of priests and who once offered Himself upon the Cross. There is no difference, save in the manner of offering. ² Thus when we assist at Mass, and all the more when we celebrate Mass, we render unto God Almighty all the homage due to Him and that in a manner most perfect, since we make our own the homage of Jesus, Priest and Victim.

Let no one say that this has nothing to do with our sanctification. The truth is, that when we glorify God, He is moved with love toward us, and the more we attend to His glory the more He attends to our spiritual concerns. By fulfilling our duties to Him in union with the Victim on the altar, we do a signal work for our own sanctification.

272. b) The Divine Sacrifice has besides a *propitiatory* effect by the very virtue of its celebration (*ex opere operato*, as theologians say). It means that this Sacrifice, by offering to the Almighty the homage due to Him together with an

S. S., *Du divin sacrifice*; E. VANDEUR, O. S. B., *The Holy Mass Explained*; CARD. VAUGHAN, *The Mass*; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, C. 24; *Retreat for Priests*, C. 13; *A Bishop and his Flock*, C. 10; DUNNEEY, *The Mass*; MARMION, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, P. II, C. VII.

¹ In other words, this effect is produced, *ex opere operato*, by the very virtue of the sacrifice.

² Sess. XXII, cap. I-II.

¹ ST. THOM., III, q. LXXIX; SUAREZ, disp. LXIII; DALGAIRNS, *Holy Communion*; HUGON, O. P., *La Sainte Eucharistie*; HEDLEY, *The Holy Eucharist*.

² Besides the works already cited, cf. BENEDICT XIV *De ss. Missæ Sacrificio*; BONA, *De Sacrificio Missæ*; LE GAUDIER, *op. cit.*, P. I, sect. 10^a; GIHR, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*; OLIER, *La Journée chrétienne*, Occupations intérieures pendant le saint sacrifice, p. 49-65; CHAIGNON, S. J., *The Holy Sacrifice*; BACUEZ,

adequate atonement for sin, inclines Him to bestow upon us, not sanctifying grace directly (this is the effect proper to the sacrament), but *actual grace*, which produces in us true repentance and contrition, thus securing for us the remission of even the greatest sins.¹

At the same time the Sacrifice of the Mass is *satisfactory* in the sense that it remits *without fail* to repentant sinners at least part of the *temporal punishment* due to sin. This is why the Holy Synod adds that Mass can be offered not only for the sins and satisfactions and needs of the living, but also for the relief of those that have died in the Lord without having sufficiently expiated their faults.²

We can easily see how this twofold effect of the Sacrifice, propitiatory and satisfactory, contributes to our progress in the Christian life. The great obstacle to union with God is sin. By obtaining pardon for it and by causing its last vestiges to vanish, a closer and more intimate union with God is prepared: "*Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.*"³

How comforting to poor sinners thus to see the wall of separation crumble down! — a wall that had kept them from the enjoyment of divine life!

273. c) Holy Mass produces also *ex opere operato* an *impetratory* effect and thus obtains for us all the graces we need for our sanctification.

Sacrifice is *prayer in action* and He Who with unspeakable groanings makes supplication for us at the altar is the same whose prayers are always heard: "He was heard because of His reverence."⁴ Thus the Church, the authoritative interpreter of the divine mind, prays there unceasingly, in union with Jesus, Priest and Victim, "*through Jesus Christ Our Lord,*" for all the graces which her members need, for health of body and soul, "*for their longed-for salvation and well-being,*"⁵ for their spiritual growth, asking for her faithful children, specially in the *Collect*, the particular grace proper to each feast. Whoever enters into this stream of liturgical prayer with the required dispositions is sure to obtain for himself and others the most abundant graces.

It is clear, then, that all the effects of the Holy Sacrifice concur to our sanctification — this all the more effectively,

since we do not pray alone therein, but in union with the whole Church and above all in union with its invisible Head, Jesus Christ, Priest and Victim, Who, renewing the offering of Calvary, demands in virtue of His Blood and His supplications that His merits and His satisfactions be applied to us.

274. B) Dispositions required to profit by the Holy Sacrifice.¹ What dispositions should we have in order to profit by such a powerful means of sanctification? The fundamental and all-inclusive disposition is that of humble and trusting union with the dispositions manifested by Christ on the Cross and renewed now on the Altar. We must strive to share His sentiments of religion and make them our own. In this way we can all carry out what the Pontifical demands of priests: "Realize what you do, and imitate the Victim you offer." And this is precisely what the Church through her Liturgy urges us to do.²

275. a) In the *Mass of the Catechumens* (as far as the Offertory, exclusive) she would have us form sentiments of penitence and contrition (the *Confiteor, Aufer a nobis, Oramus te, Kyrie eleison*); of adoration and gratitude (the *Gloria in excelsis*); of supplication (the *Collect*); and of sincere faith (the *Epistle, Gospel and Creed*).

b) The grand drama follows: 1) *The offering of the victim at the Offertory* for the salvation of the whole human race, "*For our salvation and that of the entire world*"; the offering of the Christian people together with the principal victim, "*We beg of Thee, O Lord, in humble spirit and with contrite hearts,*" followed by a prayer to the Most Holy Trinity to design to bless and receive the offering of the entire mystical body of Christ. 2) The *Preface* heralds the great action itself. At the *Canon* wherein the *mystic immolation* of the victim is to be renewed, the Church summons us to join with the Angels and Saints, but chiefly the Incarnate Word, in thanking God Almighty, in proclaiming His Holiness, in imploring His help for the Church, for its visible head, its bishops and faithful children, and particularly those assisting at the Sacrifice and those to whom we are bound by closer ties of love.

¹ The fruits of the Mass, described above, are obtained in various degrees according to the inscrutable decrees of God, first by the celebrant, then by those for whom the Holy Sacrifice is offered, by those whom the priest remembers at the altar, and finally by all those who assist at Mass. We speak here only of these last.

² Cf. E. VANDEUR, O. S. B., *The Holy Mass: The Following of Christ*, Bk. IV, C. 8-9.

¹ This is the teaching of the Council of Trent, sess. XXII, c. II.

² *Loc. cit.* — 3 *Matth.*, V, 8. — 4 *Hebr.*, V, 7. — 5 *Canon of Mass.*

Then the priest, uniting in fellowship with the Blessed Virgin, with the Holy Apostles, Martyrs, and all the Saints, moves in spirit to the Last Supper, becomes one with the Sovereign Priest, and with Him utters once more the words Jesus spoke in the Cenacle. Obedient to His voice, the Word-made-flesh descends upon the altar with His Body and Blood, silently adoring and praying in His own name and in ours. The Christian people bow in adoration of the Divine Victim; they unite with our Lord's own sentiments, His acts of adoration, His requests, and they strive to imitate themselves with Him by offering their own small sacrifices "through Him, and with Him and in Him."

e) *The Our Father* begins the preparation for *Communion*. Members of Christ's mystical body, we repeat the prayer He Himself taught us. We thus offer with Him our acts of religious homage and our entreaties, asking most of all, for that eucharistic bread that will deliver us from all evil, and will give us, together with the pardon of our sins, peace of soul and abiding union with Christ: "And never permit that I be ever separated from Thee." Then, like the Centurion, protesting their unworthiness and begging humble pardon, the priest and the faithful eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ. Priest and people are thus united most intimately to Jesus, to His inmost soul and through Him to the very Godhead, to the Most Blessed Trinity.

The mystery of union is completed. We are but one with Jesus, and since He is but one with the Father, the sacerdotal prayer of the Saviour at the Last Supper is realized: "I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one."¹

276. d) But one thing remains — to thank the Almighty for such a stupendous gift. This is done at the Post-communion and the prayers that follow. The blessing of the priest bestows on us the affluent riches of the Triune God. The last Gospel recalls to us the glory of the Incarnate Word, who has come once more to dwell among us, whom we carry within us full of grace and truth, that we may throughout the day draw life from life's Source, and live a life like unto His.

It is evident that to assist at Mass or to celebrate it with dispositions such as these is to sanctify ourselves and to nurture in the best possible manner that spiritual life that is within us.

2° HOLY COMMUNION AS A MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

277. A) *Its Effects*. The Holy Eucharist, as a sacrament, produces in us an increase of habitual grace, *ex opere operato*, by its own virtue. In fact, it has been instituted to be the food of our souls: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."² Its effects are, therefore, analogous to those of material food; it maintains, increases, and repairs our spiritual forces, causing at the same time a joy that, if not always sensible, is nevertheless real. Jesus Himself, whole and entire, is our food; His Body, His Blood, His Soul, His Divinity. He is united to us to transform us into Himself; this union is at once *real* and *moral*, a *transforming* union, and by nature *permanent*.

Such is Christ's doctrine as found in St. John's Gospel and summarized by Father Lebreton: ³ "The union of Christ and the Christian as well as the life-giving transformation resulting therefrom are consummated in the Eucharist. Here there is no longer a question of adhering to Christ merely by faith, nor of being incorporated into Him through Baptism. This is a new union that is at once *real* and most *spiritual* by which, it may be said, we are made not only one spirit but in a sense one flesh with Christ. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him."⁴

"This union is so intimate that Our Lord does not hesitate to say: "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me the same also shall live by me."⁵ No doubt, this is only an analogy; yet if the analogy is to hold, we must see here not merely a moral union based on a community of sentiments, but a real physical union which implies the mingling of two lives or rather the sharing by the Christian in the very life of Christ." This we shall try to explain.

278. a) This union is *real*. It is a matter of faith, according to the Council of Trent, that the Holy Eucharist contains truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, with His Soul and His Divinity — hence

¹ St. THOM., q. 79; TANQUEREY, *Syn. Theol. Dogm.*, t. III, p. 619-628; DAL-GAIRNS, *Holy Communion*, p. 154 and foll.; H. MOUREAU, *Dict. de Théol. (Mange-not)*, under the word, *Communion*; P. HUGON, *La Sainte Eucharistie*, p. 240 and foll.; MARRION, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, P. II, C. VIII.; LEJEUNE, *Holy Communion*; HEDLEY, *The Holy Eucharist*; MOTHER LOYOLA, *Welcome; Spiritual Combat*, c. 53-57; *Introit to a Devout Life*, P. II, C. XXI; THE FOLLOWING of CHRIST, B. IV; *Approved Prayer-Books*.

² John, VI, 55.

³ *Les Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, 1910, p. 403.

⁴ John, VI, 57. — ⁵ John, VI, 58.

Christ whole and entire.¹ Therefore, when we receive Holy Communion we receive veiled under the sacred species the real and physical Body and Blood of Christ, together with His Soul and His Divinity. We are, then, not only the tabernacles but the ciboriums wherein Christ lives, where the angels come and adore Him, and where we should join the heavenly Spirits in adoration. More, there exists between Jesus and ourselves a union similar to that existing between food and him who eats it — with this difference, however, that it is Jesus that transforms us into Himself, and not we who transform Him into our substance.² The superior being is the one to assimilate the inferior.³ It is a union that tends to subject our flesh more and more to the spirit and to make it more chaste — a union that sows in the flesh the seed of immortality: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."⁴

279. b) To this real union is added another union, *spiritual* in its nature, most intimate in its character, most *transforming* in its effects. 1) It is most *intimate*, most *sanctifying*. The soul of Christ, in fact, unites with ours to make us but *one heart and one mind with Him* — "*cor unum et anima una.*" His *imagination* and His *memory*, so *righteous* and so *holy*, unite themselves to our own imagination and our own memory to discipline them and turn them toward God and the things of God, by bringing their activities to bear on the remembrance of His benefactions, on His rapturous beauty, on His inexhaustible goodness. His *intelligence*, true light of the soul, enlightens our minds with the radiance of faith; it causes us to see and value all things as God sees and values them. It is then that we realize the vanity of worldly goods and the folly of worldly standards; it is then that we relish the Gospel truths, so obscure before because opposed to our natural instincts. His *will* so strong, so constant, so generous, comes to correct our weakness, our inconstancy, our egotism, by communicating to our wills its own Divine energy, so that we can say with St. Paul: "*I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*"⁴ We feel now that effort will become easy, that

¹ Sess. XIII, can. I.

² This is the remark made by St. AUGUSTINE (*Confessions*, lib. VII, c. 10, n. 16, P. L., XXXII, 742). He puts these words on the lips of the Lord: "I am the food of great souls, grow and you shall be able to eat of me; but you shall not change me into yourself like you do material food, it will be you that shall be changed into me."

³ John, VI, 35. — ⁴ Philip., IV, 13.

temptation will find us immovable, that steadfastness will no longer be above our strength, since we are not alone, but cling to Christ like the ivy to the oak, and thus *share* in His power. His heart, aglow with love for God and for souls, comes to enkindle our own, so cold toward God, so tender toward creatures. Like the disciples of Emmaus we say to ourselves: "*Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke to us in the way?*"¹ It is then that under the action of this divine fire we become conscious at times of a well-nigh irresistible impulse toward good, at others, of a sober yet firm *determination* to do all things, to undergo all sufferings for God and to refuse Him nothing.

280. 1) It is evident that a union such as this is truly *transforming*. Little by little our thoughts, our ideas, our convictions, and our judgments undergo a change. Instead of weighing the worth of things with the world's standards, we make the thoughts and the views of Jesus Christ our own; we lovingly accept the maxims of the Gospel; we continually ask ourselves the question: What would Jesus do if He were in my place?²

2) The same is true of our *desires*, of our *choices*. Realizing that both *self* and the world are in the wrong, that the truth abides only in Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom, we no longer desire anything but what He desires, that is, God's glory, our own salvation and that of our brethren; we will only what He wills, "*not my will, but thine be done;*" and even when this holy will nails us to the Cross, we accept it with all our heart, certain that it bids fair for our spiritual welfare and that of our fellows.

3) Our *heart* in like manner gradually frees itself from its more or less conscious egotism, from its lower natural affections and attachments, that it may love God and souls in God, more ardently, more generously, more passionately. Now we love no longer divine consolations, be they ever so sweet, but God Himself; no longer the comfort of finding ourselves midst those we love, but rather the good we can do them. We live now, but we live a more intense life,

¹ Luke, XXIV, 32.

² "We become one with Jesus. That is, we have the same "will" as He has. What He loves, we love; what He desires, we desire; what He says ought to be done, we long to do and do; His judgments are ours; His behaviour under every kind of condition, under all circumstances of persons and occurrences, is the behaviour we are always striving to reproduce in our own life and action. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that in the Holy Communion, Jesus Christ gives us His own Heart, taking our heart away. His Heart is the Heart of charity, of purity, of sacrifice." BISHOP HEDLEY, *Retreat*, p. 279.

a life more supernatural, more divine than we did in the past. It is no longer *self*, the *old Adam*, that lives, thinks and acts, but Jesus Himself, His spirit, that lives within us and vivifies our own: "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"¹

281. c) This *spiritual* union can be as *lasting* as we wish, as Our Lord Himself testifies: "*He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him.*"² He desires to tarry with us eternally. It rests with us, His grace helping, ever to remain united to Him.

How is this union maintained? Some authors have thought with *Schram*³ that Christ's soul folds itself, as it were, in the center of our own soul there to remain constantly. — This would be a miracle most extraordinary, for Christ's soul is ever united to His body and this latter disappears with the sacramental species. We cannot, therefore, accept this opinion, since God does not multiply miracles without necessity.

If, however, His soul does depart from us together with His body, His *divinity* remains with us as long as we are in the state of grace. More, His *sacred humanity* united to His divinity maintains with the soul a special union. This can be explained theologically as follows: The Spirit of Jesus, in other words, the *Holy Ghost*, dwelling within the *human soul of Christ*, remains in us in virtue of the special relationship we have entered into with Jesus Christ by sacramental Communion, and produces therein interior dispositions similar to those of the Holy Soul of Christ. At the request of Jesus, Whose prayers for us are unceasing, the Holy Ghost grants us more abundant and more efficacious actual graces. With a special care, He preserves us from temptations; He causes in us movements of grace, directs our soul and its faculties, speaks to our heart, strengthens our will, rekindles our love, and thus perpetuates within our soul the effects of sacramental Communion. To enjoy these privileges, however, one must evidently practice interior recollection, hearken attentively to the voice of God, and be ready to comply with His least desire. Thus Sacramental Communion is complemented by a *spiritual Communion* which renders its effects more lasting.

282. d) This communion brings about a *special union* with the *Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity*.⁴ In virtue of the indwelling of each Divine Person within the

other — circumincession — the Eternal Word does not come alone into the soul; He comes with the Father forever generating His Son; He comes with the Holy Ghost forever proceeding from the mutual embrace of the Father and the Son: "If any one love me, my Father will love him and we will come to him and we will make our abode with him."¹ No doubt, the Three Divine Persons are already in us by grace, but at the moment of Communion they are present within us because of another, a special title: as we are then physically united to the Incarnate Word, the Three Divine Persons also are, through Him and by Him, united to us, and They love us now as They love the Word-made-Flesh, Whose members we are. Bearing Jesus in our hearts, with Him we bear the Father and the Holy Ghost. Holy Communion, then, is an anticipation of Heaven, and, if we are possessed of a lively faith, we shall realize the truth contained in the words of the Imitation, that "*to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise.*"²

283. B) Dispositions to profit well by the reception of the Eucharist.³ Since the object of the Eucharist is to effect an intimate, transforming, and permanent union with Christ and God, whatever in our *preparation* and *thanksgiving* fosters that union will increase the effects of Holy Communion. **a)** The *preparation* will have the form of an *anticipated union* with Our Lord. We take for granted the union of the soul with God by sanctifying grace as already existing; without it, Communion would constitute a sacrilege.⁴

1) There is first the more perfect accomplishment of all our duties of state in union with Jesus and in order to please Him. This is the best means of drawing unto us Him Whose whole life was a continual act of filial obedience to the Father. "*For I do always the things that please Him.*"⁵ This practice we explained in N. 229.

2) The second disposition should be a *sincere humility*, based, on the one hand, on the exalted sanctity of Jesus Christ and, on the other, upon our lowliness and our unworthiness: "*Lord, I am not worthy...*" This humility creates, so to speak, a void within the soul, emptying it of its

¹ John, XIV, 23. — ² *The Imitation of Christ*, Bk. II, C. 8.

³ Mother M. Loyola, *Welcome; Lejeune, Holy Communion; Approved Prayer-books*.

⁴ Hence, were one conscious of mortal sin, it would be imperative, first of all, to confess it with contrition and humility of heart, not being content with an act of contrition no matter how perfect. Cf. AD. TANQUERAY, *Syn. theol. Dogm.*, I, III, N. 652-654.

⁵ John, VIII, 29.

¹ Galat., II, 20. — ² John, VI, 56. — ³ *Instit. theol. Mystice*, § 153.
⁴ Cf. BERNADOR, *De l'Eucharistie à la Trinité*.

egotism, its pride, its presumption. Now, the more we empty ourselves of self, the more ready we make the soul to let itself be inhabited and possessed by God.

3) To this humility must be added an *ardent desire* to be united to God in the Eucharist. Realizing our helplessness and our poverty, we should long for Him Who alone can give strength to our weakness, enrich us with His treasures and fill the void within our hearts. Such a desire will, by dilating the soul, throw it wide open to Him Who in turn desires to give Himself to us: "*With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you.*"¹

284. b) The best *thanksgiving* will be to prolong our union with Jesus.

1) It should begin by an act of silent *adoration*,² of self-abasement and *complete surrender* of ourselves to Him Who being God, gives Himself all to us: "*O Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee... To Thee my heart I bow with bended knee.*"³ In union with Mary, the most perfect adorer of Jesus Christ, we shall abase ourselves before the majesty of the Godhead to bless it, praise it, thank it, first, in the Word-made-Flesh, and then with Him and through Him, in the Most Blessed Trinity. "*My soul doth magnify the Lord... He Who is mighty hath done great things unto me, and holy is His name.*"⁴ Nothing so enables Jesus to take complete possession of the soul, to penetrate its very depths, as this act of self-abasement. This is the manner in which we poor creatures can give ourselves to Him Who is All. We shall give Him whatever of good is in us since all this good proceeds from Him and has never ceased to be His. We shall further offer Him our miseries that He may consume them with the fire of His love and place in their stead His perfect dispositions. What a wondrous exchange!

285. 2) Then take place sweet colloquies between the soul and the Divine Guest: "*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth... Give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies... Incline my heart unto the words of thy mouth...*" This is the acceptable time to listen attentively to Our Master and Our Friend, to speak to Him with

¹ Luke XXII, 15.

² Many, forgetting this first act, begin at once to ask for favors without considering the fact that our requests will be all the better received, if first of all, we render our homage to Him Who honors us with His presence.

³ Hymn of St. THOMAS. — 4 Luke, I, 46 and foll.

reverence, with candor, with love. This is the moment in which Jesus instils into us His dispositions and His virtues. We must lay our soul open to the divine communications and not only receive them, but also relish them and assimilate them. That this communion may not degenerate into a mere form, it will be good to vary, if not daily at least from time to time, the subject of our colloquies. This can be done by choosing now one virtue and then another, or by the loving consideration of some Gospel-texts, begging Our Lord for help to understand and relish them, and for grace to live by them.

286. 3) One must not fail to thank God for the lights and the loving sentiments He has vouchsafed to us, to thank Him, too, for the very darkness and weariness of soul in which He has at times allowed us to remain. Even these are profitable to us unto humility, unto the acknowledgment of our unworthiness to receive divine favors; profitable, because they enable us to adhere more frequently by will to Him Who even in the midst of our aridity, pours into us in a hidden and mysterious manner His life and His virtues. We ask Him to communicate to our souls His action and His life. "*O Jesus living in Mary, come and live in thy servants.*"¹ We beg Him to accept and transform the little good within us: "*Take, Lord, and accept my liberty.*"²

287. 4) We promise to make the *sacrifices* required to reform and transform our lives, especially in this or that particular point, and conscious of our weakness we beg earnestly for the courage of carrying this promise into effect.³ This point is of capital importance: each Communion should be received with this end in view, to advance in the practice of some particular virtue.

288. 5) This is likewise the moment to *pray* for all who are dear to us, for the vast interests of the Church, for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, for bishops and priests. Let us have no fear of making our prayer too universal: this rather gives assurance that we shall be heard.

Finally, we conclude by asking Our Lord to vouchsafe us the grace of abiding in Him as He does in us, the grace of performing all our actions in union with Him, in a spirit of thanksgiving. We entrust to the Blessed Virgin that same Jesus she guarded so well, in order that

¹ Prayer of *Father de Condren* completed by *Father Olier*.

² Prayer of *S. Ignatius* in the Contemplation on the love of God.

³ On the spirit of a victim cf. L. CAPELLE, S. J., *Les âmes généreuses*.

she may aid us in making Him grow in our hearts. Thus strengthened by prayer we pass on to action.

CONCLUSION

289. We have, then, at our disposal three great means of sustaining and expanding that Christian life God has so bountifully begotten within us — means of giving ourselves as whole-heartedly to God as He has given Himself to us :

1) *Fighting* relentlessly and fearlessly against our spiritual foes. With the help of God and the aid of all the heavenly protectors He has given us, certain victory and the further strengthening of our spiritual life are assured.

2) *Sanctifying* all our actions, even the most commonplace. Through the oft-repeated offering of them to God, we acquire numberless merits, add largely day by day to our stock of grace, and strengthen our title to heaven, the while we make reparation and atone for our faults.

3) The *sacraments*, received with right and fervent dispositions, add to our personal merits a rich bounty of grace which proceeds from Christ's own merits. Approaching so frequently the sacrament of Penance and communicating daily as we do, it is in our power, if we will, to become saints. Jesus Christ came and still comes to us to communicate with largess His life to us : "*I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.*"¹

Our task is but to lay our souls open to receive this divine life, to foster it and make it grow by our constant participation in the dispositions, the virtues, and the sacrifices of Jesus Christ. At last the moment will come when transformed into Him, having no other thoughts, no other sentiments, no other motives than His own, we shall be able to repeat the words of S. Paul : "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND CHAPTER

290. At the close of this chapter, the most important of this First Part, we can understand better the nature of the Christian life.

¹ It is a real *participation in God's life*, for God lives in us and we in Him. He *lives in us* really — in the Unity of

His nature and in the Trinity of His persons. Nor is He inactive there. He creates in the soul a complete supernatural organism that enables it to live a life, not indeed equal, but truly similar, to His, a Godlike life. More, it is He Who gives it movement by His actual grace, He Who helps us to make our acts meritorious, He Who rewards these acts by a further infusion of habitual grace. *We also live in Him* and for Him, for we are His co-workers. By the aid of His grace, we freely accept the divine impulse, co-operate with it and by it triumph over our enemies, acquire merit, and prepare ourselves for the rich effusion of grace given to us by the Sacraments. Withal, we must not forget that even our free consent itself is the work of His grace, and this is the reason why we refer to Him the merit attached to our good works, living *unto* Him, just as we live *by* Him and *in* Him.

291. ² This life is also a *participation in the life of Jesus*, for Christ lives in us and we live in Him. *He lives in us* not only as the Father lives in us — as God, but He also lives in us, as the God-man. He is, in fact, the *head of a mystical body* whose members we are, and from Him it is that we receive movement and life. He lives within us in a still more mysterious manner, for through His merits and prayers He causes the Holy Ghost to create within us dispositions like those which the same Divine Spirit produced in His own soul. He lives in us really and physically at the moment of Communion, and through His divine Spirit communicates to us His sentiments and His virtues. *We too live in Him.* We are incorporated into Him and we freely receive His divine impulse. It is likewise by the free action of our wills that we imitate His virtues, even though our success comes from the grace He merited for us. Lastly, it is freely that we adhere to Him *as* the branch to the vine and open our souls to receive that divine life He so liberally infuses into us. As we have all from Him, it is *by Him* and *unto Him* that we live, only too glad to give ourselves to Him as He gives Himself to us, our one regret being that the manner of our giving is so imperfect.

292. ³ This life is, in a certain measure, also a *participation in Mary's life*, or, as Father Olier says, a participation *in the life of Jesus living in Mary.* Desiring that His Holy Mother be a living image of Himself, Jesus through His merits and prayers communicates to her His divine Spirit, Who makes her share to a preëminent degree in His dispositions and His virtues. It

¹ *John*, X, 10.

is thus that He *lives in Mary*, and, since He wills that His Mother be also our Mother, He wills that she engender us in spirit. Giving us spiritual life (of course as a *secondary* cause), Mary not only makes us share in Jesus' life, but in her own as well. At the same time, then, that we participate in the life of Jesus, we participate in that of Mary — in other words, in the life of Jesus living in Mary. Such is the thought which the beautiful prayer of Father de Condren completed by Father Olier so well expresses: "*O Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in thy servants.*"

293. ⁴ Finally, this life is a *participation in the lives of the Saints of heaven and of those of earth*. As we have seen, the mystical body of Christ includes all those that have been incorporated into Him by Baptism and especially those enjoying the possession of grace and of heavenly glory. All the members of this mystical body share one common life, the life they receive from the Head, which is diffused in their souls by one and the same Spirit. We are then in all truth brethren, having our life from a common Father, a life spiritual, the plenitude whereof is in Christ Jesus, "*of whose fulness we have all received.*" Thus the Saints in heaven and those of earth have our spiritual welfare at heart and aid us in our struggle against the flesh, the world and the devil.

294. How consoling are these truths! Doubtless, the spiritual life here below is a warfare. Hell fights against us and finds allies in the world, and chiefly in our threefold concupiscence. But Heaven fights for us, and Heaven means not only the host of Angels and Saints, but Christ the victor over Satan, the Most Blessed Trinity living and reigning within the soul. We should, therefore, be full of confidence, being assured of victory, if only we distrust ourselves and rely upon God: "*I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me.*" ¹



CHAPTER III.

The Perfection of the Christian Life

295. All life must perfect itself. This is true, above all, of the Christian life. It is by its very nature a *progressive* life, its completion being achieved only in Heaven. We must examine, then, in what *its perfection* consists, in order that we direct our steps more surely along its way. Since there exist erroneous conceptions and more or less incomplete ideas on this fundamental point, we shall begin by eliminating the *false notions* of Christian perfection, and then explain its *true nature*. ¹

I. False notions held by

{	Unbelievers Worldlings Devout Souls
---	---

Consists in love

Presupposes sacrifice here on earth

II. The true notion

{	Blends harmoniously this twofold element Includes both the precepts and the counsels Has degrees and limits
---	---

ART. I. FALSE NOTIONS CONCERNING PERFECTION.

These false notions are met with among unbelievers, worldlings, and even among devout souls.

296. ¹° In the eyes of *unbelievers*, Christian perfection is no more than a *subjective phenomenon* without any corresponding reality.

A) Many of them study what they call mystical phenomena, only with malicious prejudices and without distinguishing the true from false mystics. Such are, *Max Nordau*, *J. H. Leuba*, *E. Muriſier*.² According to them, the so-called perfection of the mystics is nothing more than a morbid phenomenon, a species of psycho-neurosis, a sort of exaltation based on religious feeling or even a special form of sexual love. This, they say, is shown by the terms spouses, spiritual marriage, kisses, embraces and divine caresses so frequently found in the writings of mystics.

¹ *Introd. to a Devout Life*, P. I, C. I-II; *Spiritual Combat*, C. I; *Faber, Growth in Holiness*, C. XXII-XXV; *Meyer, Science of the Saints*, Vol. I, C. XIX.
² *MAX NORDAU, Dégénérescence*, t. I, p. 115; *J. H. LEUBA, Psychological Study of Religion*; *E. MURISIER, Les maladies du sentiment religieux*.

It is evident that these authors, hardly acquainted with any but sensual love, have not the slightest conception of divine love; they are among those to whom the words of Our Lord can be aptly applied: "*Neither cast ye your pearls before swine.*"¹ No wonder then that other psychologists, such as *William James*, have pointed out that sexual instinct has nothing to do with sanctity; that the true mystics have practiced heroic chastity, some having never experienced, or hardly so, the weaknesses of the flesh, others having overcome violent temptations by heroic means, for instance, throwing themselves among thorns. If they have, therefore, employed the language of human love, it is because every other falls short of terms to express the tenderness of divine love.² They have further shown by the whole tenor of their conduct, by the greatness of the works they have undertaken and brought to a successful end, that they were full of wisdom and poise and that at any rate we cannot but bless the neuroses that have given to the world an Aquinas and a Bonaventura, an Ignatius Loyola and a Xavier, a Teresa of Jesus and a John of the Cross, a Francis de Sales and a Jeanne de Chantal, a Vincent de Paul, a Mademoiselle Legras, a Berulle, an Olier, an Alphonsus Liguori, a Paul of the Cross.

297. B) Other unbelievers, such as William James and Maxime de Montmorand,³ whilst doing justice to our mystics, yet doubt the objective reality of the phenomena they described. They acknowledge the marvelous effects caused in souls by the religious sentiment, an indomitable impulse toward good, an absolute devotedness to others. They recognize their supposed egotism to be in reality charity of the highest social character and productive of the most wholesome influence; that their thirst for sufferings does not hinder them from enjoying unspeakable delights nor from radiating a measure of happiness to their surroundings. — Yet, they ask themselves the question: are not mystics the victims of auto-suggestion and hallucinations?

To this we answer that such salutary effects can only proceed from a proportionate cause; that no real and lasting good can come from aught but what is true; and that if Christian mystics have produced useful social works, it is because contemplation and the love of God, which have inspired such works, are not hallucinations but actual, living and working realities: "*By their fruits you shall know them.*"⁴

298. 2° Worldlings, even when they have the faith, often entertain very false ideas concerning perfection or, as they call it, *devotion*.

A) Some look upon *devout* souls as hypocrites, who under the cover of religion, hide odious vices or political designs and ambitions, such as the desire to lord it over consciences and thus to control the world. This is the fallacy that identifies the thing with its *abuse*. The course of the present study will show us that frankness, honesty and humility are the true characteristics of piety.

¹ *Matth.*, VII., 6.

² W. JAMES, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 9-12.

³ W. JAMES, *op. cit.*, M. DE MONTMORAND, *Psychologie des Mystiques*, 1920.

⁴ *Matth.*, VII., 20.

299. B) Others see in piety a sort of *exaltation of feeling* and imagination, a kind of vehemence of emotion good at best for women and children, but unworthy of men who want to be guided by reason and will. And, yet, how many men whose names appear in the catalogue of the Saints, have been distinguished by proverbial good sense, an uncommon degree of intelligence, an energetic and persevering will! Here again a caricature is mistaken for the portrait.

300. C) Lastly, there are those who maintain that perfection is a Utopia beyond realization and hence fraught with danger; that it suffices to keep the Commandments without wasting time in punctilious practices or in the quest of extraordinary virtues.

The perusal of the lives of the Saints suffices to rectify such an erroneous view: perfection has been realized here on earth, and the practice of the counsels, far from working to the detriment of the precepts, simply renders their observance all the easier.

301. 3° Even among *devout souls* there are those who err as to the true nature of perfection, and who describe it, each according to the caprice of his own bias and fancy.¹

A) Many, mistaking *devotions* for *devotion*, imagine perfection to consist in reciting a great number of prayers, in joining sundry religious societies, even if such practices entail the occasional neglect of their duties of state or of the charity due to the other members of the household. This is a substitution of non-essentials for the necessary, a sacrifice of the end to the means.

302. B) Others give themselves to *fastings and austerities* to the exhaustion of the body, and thus become unfit for the discharge of their duties of state and consider themselves dispensed therefore from the law of charity toward their neighbor. They dare not permit themselves any little dainties, yet they do not hesitate "to drench their lips with the life-blood of their fellow-men through calumny and slander."² Here again one forgets the essentials of perfection and neglects the fundamental duty of charity in favor of practices good indeed but far less important. — The like mistake is made by those who *give generously* to

¹ Thus remarks St. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, Part. I, C. I, which should be read in its entirety.

² *Devout Life*, ib.

charity, but refuse to forgive their enemies, or those who, whilst forgiving them, think not of paying their debts.

303. C) Some, taking *spiritual consolations* for fervor, think they have arrived at perfection if they are filled with joy and can pray with ease, and they consider themselves lukewarm when they are seized by aridity and distractions. Such persons forget that what counts before God is the *generous, oft-renewed effort* despite apparent failures.

304. D) Others, taken up by a life of action and external activities, neglect the interior life to give themselves more entirely to works of zeal. They forget that the life and *soul of all zeal* is habitual prayer which draws down the grace of God and gives fruitfulness to action.

305. E) Others, having read mystical works or the lives of the Saints in which ecstasies and visions are described, fancy perfection to consist in these extraordinary phenomena and strain their minds and imaginations to obtain them. They have never understood that such phenomena are, as the mystics themselves testify, but incidental; that they do not constitute the essence of sanctity and that it is foolhardy to covet them; that conformity to the will of God is by far the safer and more practical way.

Having thus cleared the ground, we shall be able to understand more easily in what perfection essentially consists.

ART. II. TRUE NOTION OF PERFECTION ¹

306. The State of the Question. 1^o Any being is perfect (*perfectum*) in the natural order when it is finished, completed, hence, when it has attained its end: "*Each is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its own end, which is the highest perfection of anything.*" ² This constitutes *absolute* perfection. However, there is also a *relative* and *progressive* perfection which consists in the approach toward that end by the development of all one's faculties and the carrying out in practice of all duties, in accordance with the dictates of the natural law as manifested by right reason.

¹ St. THOM., II^a II^m, q. 184, a. 1-3; *Opuscul. de perfectione vite spiritualis*, ALVAREZ DE PAZ, *op. cit.*, I. III; LE GAUDIER, *op. cit.*, P. 1^a; SCHRAM, *Instit. mystique*, § IX-XX; RIBET, *L'Ascétique chrétienne*, ch. IV-VI; IGHINA, *Cours de Théol. ascétique*, Introduction; GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, dans la *Vie spirit.*, oct. et nov. 1920.
² *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^m, q. 184, a. 1. See also works referred to above, n. 295.

307. 2^o The end of man, even in the natural order, is God: 1) Created by Him, we are of necessity created for Him since He is the fulness of Being. On the other hand, to create for an imperfect end would be unworthy of Him. 2) Besides, God being infinite perfection and thereby the origin of all perfection, man is the more perfect as he approaches closer to God and shares in His divine perfections. This is the reason why man cannot find in creatures anything that can fully satisfy his legitimate aspirations: "*The ultimate end of man is uncreated good, that is to say, God, Who alone is capable, by His infinite goodness, of satisfying completely the human will.*" ¹ All our actions then must be referred to God—to know, love and serve Him and thereby glorify Him, this is the end of life, the source of all perfection.

308. 3^o In the *supernatural* order this is so all the more. Raised by God to a state that surpasses all our needs and all our capabilities, destined one day to contemplate Him through the Beatific Vision, possessing Him even now through grace, and endowed as we are with a supernatural organism that we may unite with Him by the practice of the Christian virtues, we cannot evidently perfect ourselves unless we unceasingly draw closer to Him. This, however, we cannot effect except by uniting ourselves to Jesus — the One indispensable way to go to the Father. Hence, our perfection will consist in living for God in union with Jesus Christ: "*To live wholly unto God in Christ Jesus.*" ² This we do when we practice the Christian virtues, theological and moral. The end of all these is to unite us to God more or less directly by making us imitate our Lord Jesus Christ.

309. 4^o Here the question arises whether there is among these virtues any one which summarizes and embodies all the others, thus constituting the essence of perfection. Summing up the doctrine of Holy Writ and of the Fathers, St. Thomas answers that perfection essentially consists in the love of God and of the neighbor for God's sake: "*Essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, first and foremost in the love of God, then in the love of neighbor.*" ³ But in this life the love of God cannot be practiced without renouncing inordinate self-love, that is, the threefold concu-

¹ St. THOM., I^a II^m, q. III, a. 1. Cf. TANQUERAY, *Synopsis Theol. moralis*, Tr. de Ultimo fine, n. 2-18.

² FATHER OLIER, *Pietas Seminariorum*, n. 1.

³ *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^m, q. 184, a. 3; *Opusculum, De perfectione vite spiritualis*, cap. I, n. 56-7.

discence; therefore, in practice, sacrifice must be joined to love. This we are to explain by showing: 1) how the love of God and of the neighbor constitutes the essence of perfection; 2) why this love must go to the point of sacrifice; 3) how these two elements must be combined; 4) how perfection includes both precepts and counsels; 5) what are the degrees of perfection and how far perfection can be attained here on earth.

§ I. The Essence of Perfection consists in Charity

310. First of all we shall explain the *sense of this proposition*. The love of God and of neighbor here in question is *supernatural* by reason of its *object* as well as by reason of its *motive* and its *principle*.

The God we love is the God made known to us by revelation, the Triune God. We love Him because our faith shows Him to us *infinitely good* and *infinitely* loving. We love Him through *the will* perfected through the virtue of *charity* and aided by *actual grace*. This love then is not a mere sentiment. Man is indeed a composite being made up of body and soul and, doubtless, some feeling often enters into his affections even the noblest. At times, however, this sentiment which is wholly accidental, is utterly lacking. The essence of love itself is devotedness. It is a firm determination of the will to give itself up to God, and, if need be, to make the entire sacrifice of self to Him and His glory, preferring His good pleasure to that of self and others.

311. The same is to be said, with due proportion, of the love of neighbor. It is God Whom we love in him, a likeness, a reflection of God's perfections. The motive of this love is then the divine goodness as manifested, expressed and reflected in our neighbor. To speak more concretely, we see and love in our brethren a soul inhabited by the Holy Ghost, beautified by divine grace, redeemed at the price of Christ's blood. In loving him, we wish his supernatural perfection, his eternal salvation.

Thus there are not two distinct virtues of charity, the one towards God and the other towards the neighbor. There is but one, comprising at once God loved for His own sake, and the neighbor loved for God's sake.

With these notions in mind, we shall easily understand that perfection does really consist in this one virtue of charity. But what degree of charity is required for perfec-

tion? That the charity which necessarily accompanies the state of grace and which coexists with the habit of venial sin and unmortified passions cannot be sufficient for perfection, every one will agree. On the other hand, charity causing us to love God as much as He deserves to be loved, or charity causing us to avoid all venial sins and imperfections, is not required, for as will be seen further (N. 344-348), such charity is not within our power here on earth. Charity required for perfection may then be defined: Charity so well established in the soul as to make us strive earnestly and constantly to avoid even the smallest sin and to do God's holy will in all things out of love for Him.

Proofs of the Thesis

312. 1° Let us see what **Holy Writ** tells us. **A)** Both in the Old and the New Testaments, the dominating principle wherein the whole law is summed up is the Great Commandment of love — the love of God and the love of neighbor. Thus when a certain lawyer asked our Lord what was to be done in order to gain everlasting life, the divine Master made the simple reply: "What saith the law?" And the lawyer without hesitation recalled the sacred text in Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." Our Lord approved it, saying: "This do: *and thou shalt live*!" He adds elsewhere that in this twofold precept of the love of God and of the neighbor are contained all the Law and the Prophets.² St. Paul declares the same when after having enumerated the principal precepts of the Decalogue he adds: "*Love therefore is the fulfilling of the Law*."³ Thus the love of God and of the neighbor is at one and the same time both the summary and the plenitude of the Law. Now Christian perfection cannot be anything else but the perfect and complete fulfilment of the Law, for the Law is the will of God, than which there can be nothing more perfect.

313. **B)** Another proof is the one drawn from St. Paul's doctrine on charity in the thirteenth chapter of the first *Epistle to the Corinthians*. There, in lyric language, he describes the excellence of love, its primacy over the

¹ Luke, X, 25-29; cf. Deut. VI, 5-7.

² Matth., XXII, 39-40. — ³ Rom., XIII, 10.

charisms or freely given graces, and over the other theological virtues of faith and hope. He shows that it embodies and possesses all virtues in the highest degree; so much so, that love is itself the aggregate of all those virtues: "*Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil.*" He ends by affirming that the charismata shall pass, but that charity abideth eternally. This means not only that love is the queen and the soul of all the virtues, but that its worth is such that it suffices to make man perfect by imparting to him all the virtues.

314. C) St. John, the Apostle of divine love, gives us the fundamental reason for this doctrine. God, says he, is love. This is, so to speak, what characterizes Him. If we, therefore, wish to be like unto Him, to be perfect like Our Heavenly Father, we must love Him as He loves us, "*because He hath first loved us.*"¹ But since we cannot love Him if we love not our neighbor, we are to love our brethren even to the point of sacrifice: "*We also must lay down our lives for the brethren.*" "Dearly beloved, let us love one another: for charity is of God. And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is charity... In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another... God is charity and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."² It cannot be stated in clearer terms that all perfection consists in the love of God and of the neighbor for God's sake.

315. 2^o When we seek an answer to this question from reason enlightened by faith, we arrive at the same conclusion, whether we consider the nature of perfection or the nature of love.

A) We have said that the perfection of any being consists in attaining its end or in approaching it as closely as possible (N. 306). Now, man's end in the supernatural order is the eternal possession of God through the Beatific Vision and the love resulting therefrom. Here upon earth we approach the realization of this end by living already intimately united to the Most Blessed Trinity dwelling in us,

and to Jesus the indispensable Mediator with the Father. The more closely we are united to God, our last end and the source of our life, the more perfect we are.

316. Among the Christian virtues, the most unifying, the one which unites the whole soul to God is divine charity. The other virtues indeed prepare us for that union or initiate us into it, but cannot effect it. The moral virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice do not unite us directly to God, but limit themselves to removing or reducing the obstacles that estrange us from Him, and to bringing us closer to Him through conformity to His order. Thus temperance by restraining the immoderate use of pleasure, weakens one of the most potent obstacles to the love of God; humility by putting off pride and self-love predisposes us to the practice of divine charity. Besides, these virtues, by making us observe order or right measure, subordinate the will to that of God. As to the theological virtues other than charity, they do indeed unite us to God, but in an incomplete fashion. Faith unites us to God, infallible Truth, and makes us see all things in the divine light, yet it is compatible with mortal sin which separates us from God. Hope raises us to God inasmuch as He is good to us and makes us desire the joys of Heaven, but it can exist along with grave faults that turn us away from our end.

317. Love alone unites us fully to God. It presupposes faith and hope, but it surpasses them. It lays hold of our entire soul, intellect, heart, will, activity, and delivers all unreservedly to God. It excludes mortal sin, God's enemy, and makes us enjoy the divine friendship: "*If any one love me... my Father will love him.*"¹ Now, friendship is the union, the blending of two souls into one: "*One heart and one soul... the same likes and dislikes.*" (*Cor unum et anima una: unum velle, unum nolle.*) Thus our friendship with God is a perfect union of all our faculties with Him; a union of our mind that patterns our thoughts after those of God; a union of our will that causes us to embrace the divine will as our very own, a union of heart that prompts us to give ourselves to God as He has given Himself to us, "*My beloved to me and I to Him;*"² a union of activities, in virtue of which God places His divine power at the service of our weakness to enable us to carry out our good desires. Charity then unites us to God, our end, — to God,

¹ John, IV, 10.² I John, IV, 7-16. The whole Epistle should be read.³ John, XIV, 23. — ⁴ Cant., II, 16.

infinitely perfect, and thus constitutes the essential element of our perfection.

318. B) If we inquire into the *nature of charity* we arrive at the same conclusion. St. Francis de Sales shows that *charity* includes all the virtues and even lends them a perfection all its own.¹

a) *It comprises all the virtues.* Perfection evidently consists in the acquisition of virtues. If we possess all, not simply in an initial stage, but to a high degree, we are perfect. But whoever has the virtue of charity in the degree described in n. 311, has all other virtues and has them in all their perfection, without which it is impossible to know and love God's infinite loveliness; he has *hope*, which by inspiring trust leads to love; he has all the moral virtues, such as *prudence* without which charity could neither last nor grow, *fortitude* which triumphs over the obstacles impeding the practice of charity, *temperance* which curbs sensuality, that relentless enemy of divine love. Nay more, adds St. Francis de Sales, "the great Apostle does not simply say that charity bestows on us patience and kindness, and steadfastness and simplicity, but he says that charity is itself patient and kind, and steadfast," because it embodies the perfection of all virtues.

319. b) Charity, moreover, gives to other virtues a special perfection and worth. It is, according to St. Thomas,² the *form*, the soul, of all the virtues. "All the virtues when separated from charity fall very short of perfection, since they cannot in default of this virtue fulfil their own end, which is to render man happy. I do not say that, without it, they cannot be born and even develop; but they are dependent on charity for their perfection, for their completeness to draw therefrom the strength to will in God and to receive from His mercy the manna of true merit and of the sanctification of those hearts wherein they are found. Charity is among the virtues as the sun among the stars — it gives to all their brightness and their beauty. Faith, hope, fear, sorrow ordinarily precede charity into the soul, there to prepare its abode, but once love arrives they obey and minister to it like all other virtues; charity, by its presence, animates, beautifies and vivifies them all."³ In other words, charity by directing our soul immediately toward

God, the supreme perfection and the last end, gives the selfsame direction and hence the same worth to all the other virtues under its sway. Thus an act of obedience or of humility, besides having its own proper value, derives from love a far greater worth, when done in order to *please God*. It becomes then an act of charity, an act of the most perfect of all virtues. Let us add that such an act becomes *easier* and more *attractive*. To obey and to undergo humiliation is a bitter thing to our proud nature, but this becomes easier once we are conscious that by the performance of such acts we actually practice the love of God and procure His glory.

Thus charity is not only the synthesis but the very soul of all virtues, it unites us to God in a manner more perfect and more direct than any of the others. Hence it is love that constitutes the very essence of perfection.

CONCLUSION

320. Since the essence of perfection consists in the love of God, it follows that the short-cut thereto is to love with a great love, with a generous heart, with intensity and above all with a pure and disinterested love. Now we truly love God not only when we give expression with our lips to an act of charity, but even each time we do His will or perform the least duty with the intention of pleasing Him. Each of our actions then, however commonplace, can be transformed into an act of love and become a help to our advancement in perfection. Our progress will be all the more real and rapid as our love becomes more intense and generous and our effort accordingly more *strenuous* and *steadfast*, for that which has value in the eyes of God is the will, the effort, apart from all sensible emotion.

Lastly, because the supernatural love of the neighbor is likewise an act of the love of God, all the services we render our brethren, while seeing in them reflections of the divine perfection, or, what is the same, seeing Jesus Christ in them, become acts of love that make us advance toward sanctity.

§ II. Love on Earth Requires Sacrifice

321. In Heaven we shall love without any need of self-immolation. Here on earth it is quite otherwise. In our present state of fallen nature, it is *impossible* for us to

¹ *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book XI, C. 8.

² *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^m, q. 23, a. 8.

³ *St. Francis de Sales*, I, c. c. 9.

love God truly and effectively without sacrificing ourselves for Him.

This follows from what we have said above (n. 74-75) regarding the tendencies of fallen nature which remain in regenerated man. We cannot love God without fighting and curbing those tendencies. This is a struggle that begins with the dawn of reason and ends only with our last breath. Assuredly there are moments of respite when the struggle is not so intense, but even then, we cannot afford to rest upon our oars except at the risk of another sally on the part of the enemy. To this *Holy Writ bears witness*.

1^o Holy Writ clearly states the absolute necessity of sacrifice and self-renunciation in order to love God and the neighbor.

322. A) Our Lord addresses the following invitation to all His disciples: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*"¹ In order to follow and to love Jesus, there is an indispensable condition, that of renouncing self, that is to say, renouncing the evil inclinations of our nature: selfishness, pride, ambition, sensuality, lust, inordinate love of ease and riches. There is the condition of carrying one's cross, of accepting the sufferings, the privations, the humiliations, the evil turns of fortune, labor, sickness, in a word, those crosses with which the hand of God's Providence puts us to the test, strengthens our virtue and makes easy the expiation of our faults. Then, and only then, can one be Christ's disciple and walk the way of love and perfection.

Our Lord confirms this lesson by *His example*. Having come from Heaven with the express purpose of showing us the way of perfection, He followed no other way than that of the Cross: "*Christ's whole life was a Cross and a martyrdom.*"² From Bethlehem to Calvary His life is a long series of privations and humiliations, of fatigue and apostolic labors, all crowned by the anguish and the tortures of His bitter Passion. It is the most eloquent commentary on His words: "*If any man will come after me.*" Were there a surer road, He would have shown it to us. But He knew there was no other and He followed it to draw us after Him. "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.*"³ Thus it was understood by the Apostles who

repeat to us with St. Peter, that if Christ suffered for us it was that we might walk in his steps: "*Because Christ also suffered for us leaving you an example that you should follow His steps.*"¹

323. B) This is also the teaching of *St. Paul*. For him Christian perfection consists in divesting oneself of the old man to invest oneself with the new: "*Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds and putting on the new.*"² Now the old Adam is but the sum-total of the evil tendencies we have inherited from the first man. It is that threefold concupiscence we are to fight and to muzzle by the practice of mortification. "*They that are Christ's,*" says he, "*have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.*"³ This is the essential condition; so much so that St. Paul himself feels obliged to punish his body: "*But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.*"⁴

324. C) The Apostle of Love, *St. John*, is no less emphatic. He teaches that in order to love God we must keep the Commandments and fight the *threefold concupiscence* which holds the world under its sway. He adds that if one loves the world and the things that are in the world one cannot possess the love of God: "*If any man love the world, the clarity of the Father is not in him.*"⁵ But in order to hate the world and its allurements, it is clear that one must practice the spirit of sacrifice by foregoing dangerous and evil pleasures.

325.^{2^o} This need of sacrifice is a consequence of *the condition of our fallen nature* as described in n. 74, and of the *threefold concupiscence*, n. 193. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to love God and the neighbor without sacrificing whatever goes counter to that love. The threefold concupiscence, as we have shown, does go counter to the love of God and of the neighbor; hence, if we wish to advance in the way of charity, we must relentlessly fight against our bad tendencies.

326. Let us consider a few instances. Our *exterior senses* eagerly tend toward whatever flatters them, thus putting at hazard our virtue. What is to be done to avoid this danger? Our Lord tells us very forcibly: "*If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.* For it

¹ *Math.*, XVI, 24; *cf.* *Luke*, IX, 23. — Read the commentary of *Blessed Grignon de Montfort* in his *Circular letter to the friends of the Cross*.
² *Imitation*, Book II, C. XII, n. 7. — ³ *J. John*, XII, 32.

¹ *J. Peter*, II, 21. — ² *Coloss.*, III, 9. — ³ *Galat.*, V, 24.
⁴ *J. Cor.*, IX, 27. — ⁵ *J. John*, II, 15.

is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell." ¹ This means that we must learn by mortification to deprive our eyes, our ears, all our senses, of whatever constitutes for us an occasion of sin. Without this there is neither perfection nor salvation.

The same holds true of our *interior senses*, particularly, of our imagination and our memory. Who does not know from experience the risk we run, unless we repress their vagaries from the outset?

Even our higher faculties, *intellect* and *will*, are liable to go astray through curiosity, independence or pride. What efforts must be made, what combat sustained, in order to place them under the yoke of Faith, in humble submission to the will of God and to His representatives!

We must confess then, that if we want to love God and our neighbor for God's sake, we must learn to mortify our selfishness, our sensuality, our pride, our love for riches. Thus sacrifice is the essential condition of loving God in this life.

This seems to be the mind of St. Augustine when he says: "Two loves have built two cities: the love of self carried unto the contempt of God has built the city of this earth; the love of God carried unto the contempt of self has built the heavenly city." ² In other words, we cannot truly love God except through repression of our evil tendencies.

327. The conclusion that necessarily follows is that, in order to be perfect, we must not only multiply acts of love, but also *acts of sacrifice*, for in this life love cannot be without self-immolation. Of course, it can be truly said of all our good works that inasmuch as they detach us from self and from creatures they are acts of sacrifice, and, inasmuch as they unite us to God they are acts of love. It remains for us to see how love and sacrifice can be combined.

§ III. The Part of Love and the Part of Sacrifice in the Christian Life

328. Since both love and sacrifice must have a part in the Christian life, what shall be the rôle of each? On this subject there are points on which all agree, and there are others on which a difference of opinion is manifest. Practi-

cally, however, the present authors of the various schools arrive at conclusions that are nearly the same.

329. 1° All admit that objectively and in the order of *excellence*, love holds the first place. It is the *end* and the *essential element* of perfection, as we have proved in our first thesis, N. 312. It is love, then, that we must look to above all, it is love that we must seek without respite, it is love that calls for sacrifice and gives it its chief value. Hence, it is essential that even with beginners, the spiritual director should insist on the love of God; but he should make clear to them that while love renders sacrifice easier, it can never dispense with it.

330. 2° As regards the *chronological* order, all admit that both elements are inseparable and must be cultivated at one and the same time, nay more, that they must blend one with the other. This, because there is no true love here on earth without sacrifice, and because sacrifice made for God is one of the best signs of love.

The whole question resolves itself into this: Taking the chronological order, which of these two elements must be emphasized, love or sacrifice? Here we come upon two distinct schools and trends of thought.

331. A) St. Francis de Sales, resting upon the authority of many representatives of the Benedictine and the Dominican schools, and relying upon the resources which regenerated human nature has to offer, insists first on the love of God, in order the better to make us accept and practice sacrifice. But far from excluding the latter, he demands of Philothea much self-renunciation and self-sacrifice. If he does so with great caution and suavity of manner, it is to attain his purpose all the better. This becomes evident from the first chapter of the *Introduction to a Devout Life*: "True devotion presupposes not a partial, but a thorough love of God... As devotion then consists in a certain excellent degree of charity, it not only makes us active and diligent in the *observance in God's commandments*, but it also excites us to the performance of every good work with an affectionate alacrity, even though it be not of precept but only of counsel." But to keep the *commandments*, to follow the *counsels* and the inspirations of grace, is to practice mortification to a high degree. Besides, the Saint asks that Philothea begin by purifying herself not only from mortal

¹ *Matth.*, V, 29.

² *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28.

³ *St. Francis de Sales*, Introduction to a Devout Life, C. I.

sins, but also from venial faults and from the affection for vain and dangerous things, as well as from evil tendencies. When he deals with the virtues, he does not forget their austere side; although he is ever concerned that all be pervaded by the love of God and that of the neighbor.

332. B) On the other side, we have the school of St. Ignatius and the French School of the Seventeenth Century. Without forgetting that the love of God is the end to be attained and that it must vivify all our acts, they place to the fore, especially for beginners, renouement, the love of the Cross, the mortification of our passions, as the surest means of arriving at real effective love. The representatives of these schools seem to fear that unless this be insisted on at the beginning, many souls would fall victims to illusions, think themselves already far advanced in the love of God, whilst, in fact, their virtue is more sentimental and apparent than real. Hence those lamentable falls when grave temptations come or when spiritual dryness sets in. Besides, sacrifice courageously accepted for the love of God leads to a charity that is more generous and more constant, and the habitual practice of this charity gradually comes to complete the spiritual edifice.

333. Practical conclusion. Without any desire to settle this controversy, we shall simply propose some conclusions admitted by the most prudent of all schools.

A) There are two excesses to be avoided: **a)** that of wishing to lead souls prematurely into the so-called way of *love*, whilst failing to train them to the stern discipline of daily self-denial. It is in this way that illusions are fostered and at times the ground made ready for regrettable falls. How many souls experiencing those sensible consolations God dispenses to beginners, and thinking themselves well-grounded in virtue, expose themselves to occasions of sin and fall into grievous faults! A little more mortification, true humility, distrust of self, and a more determined fight against their passions, would have preserved them from such lapses.

b) The other excess is to speak constantly of renouement and mortification without making it clear that these are but means of arriving at the love of God, or manifestations of that love. Thus some persons possessed of good will, but as yet of little courage are disheartened. They would take more heart and be filled with greater strength, if they were shown how such sacrifices become so much

easier if done for the love of God: "*Where there is love, there is no labor.*"

334. B) Once these excesses are avoided, the spiritual director must know what path to point out to each penitent according to his character and the promptings of grace.

a) There are *affectionate* souls who have no taste for mortification until they have for some time practiced the love of God. It is true that this love is oftentimes imperfect, more sentimental than generous and lasting. However, if one takes advantage of these first flights to show that real love cannot endure without sacrifice, if one succeeds in inducing such souls to exercise themselves in some acts of penance for the love of God, in some acts of reparation, of mortification, such acts as are more indispensable to the avoidance of sin, then their will will be gradually strengthened, and the moment will come when they will understand that sacrifice and the love of God must go hand in hand.

b) On the other hand, if one has to deal with energetic characters, accustomed to act from a sense of duty, one may from the outset insist on renouement as the *touchstone* of charity, and cause them to exercise themselves in penance, humility and mortification, while infusing into these austere virtues the motive of the love of God or zeal for souls.

Thus love and sacrifice will ever be united, and it will become evident that these two elements blend and perfect each other.

§ IV. Does Perfection consist in the Commandments or in the Counsels?

335. 1° The State of the Question. We have seen that perfection consists essentially in the love of God and of the neighbor carried unto sacrifice. But the love of God and sacrifice include both *commandments* and *counsels*; commandments that oblige under pain of sin, *counsels* that invite us to do for God over and above what is demanded; failure in this case would not involve sin but wilful imperfection and resistance to grace. It is this distinction of precept and counsel that Our Lord alluded to when He declared to the rich young man: "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments... If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven.*"¹ Thus, to observe the laws of justice

¹ *Matth.*, XIX, 17-21.

and charity in what concerns ownership suffices for entrance into heaven, but if one would be *perfect*, one must sell his possessions, give their price to the poor and so practice voluntary poverty. St. Paul points out to us likewise that *virginity* is a *counsel* and not a commandment — that to marry is good, but that to be a virgin is better.¹

336. ²⁰ **The Solution.** Some authors have reached the conclusion that the Christian life consists in the *observance of the commandments*, and *perfection in that of the counsels*. This explanation is a little too simple, and if wrongly understood, would end in fatal results. In reality, *perfection* requires, in the first place, the *keeping of the commandments* and, in the second, the *observance of a certain number of counsels*.

This is the teaching of St. Thomas.² After proving that *perfection* is nothing else *but* the love of God and of the neighbor, he concludes that, in practice, it consists *essentially in the commandments*, the chief of which is that of love; secondarily, *in the counsels* all of which are directed toward charity, for they remove the obstacles that hinder its practice. We shall explain this doctrine.

337. **A)** Perfection demands peremptorily and in the first place the *keeping of the commandments*. It is important to impress this notion strongly upon certain persons, who, for example, in order to practice some devotions, forget their duties of state, or who under the pretext of almsgiving, defer indefinitely the payment of their debts; in a word, on all those who, aiming at a perfection of a higher order, neglect some precept of the Law of God. It is evident that the infraction of a grave precept, like that of the payment of debts, destroys charity in us, and that the pretext of giving alms cannot justify this violation of a commandment in light matter is a venial sin which, though not destroying charity in us, impedes to a greater or lesser extent its exercise, offends Almighty God, and interferes with our intimacy with Him. This is especially true of frequent deliberate venial sins which create in us attachments, and retard our advance towards perfection. To be perfect, therefore, we must, above all, observe the commandments.

338. **B)** To this, however, we must join the *observance of the counsels* — of a few at least — chiefly of those related

to our duties of state. **a)** Thus, religious, having bound themselves by vow to practice the three great evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, cannot evidently sanctify themselves without fidelity to their vows. Besides, this fidelity renders singularly easy the exercise of the love of God by detaching the soul from the chief obstacles which stand in the way of divine charity. *Poverty*, by uprooting disordered love for wealth, sets the heart free to reach out to God and heavenly things. *Chastity*, by spurning the pleasures of the flesh, even those the holy state of marriage would sanction, fosters an undivided love of God. *Obedience*, by fighting pride and the spirit of independence, subjects the will to that of God. This obedience is, in reality, a genuine act of love.

339. **b)** Those who are not bound by vows must, in order to be *perfect*, observe the spirit of these vows, each according to his condition in life, the inspirations of grace, and the guidance of a prudent spiritual adviser. Thus they will exercise themselves in *the spirit of poverty* by depriving themselves of many useless things, and so will spare money for almsgiving and for works of charity or zeal; in *the spirit of chastity*, even if they be married, by using with moderation or restraint the rights to the lawful pleasures of their state, and, above all, by scrupulously avoiding whatever is forbidden or dangerous; in *the spirit of obedience*, by submitting themselves with docility to their superiors in whom they will see the image of God, and by a like submission to the inspirations of grace, under the guidance of a wise spiritual director.

Hence to love God and the neighbor for God's sake, to know how to sacrifice oneself in order to fulfil the better this twofold commandment and the counsels related thereto, this is true perfection.

§ V. The different Degrees of Perfection

Perfection here on earth has degrees and limits. Hence two questions: ^{1°} What are the principal degrees of perfection? ^{2°} What are its limits here on earth?

I. The Different Degrees of Perfection ¹

340. The degrees by which one is raised to perfection are numerous. The question here is not to enumerate all

¹ I Cor., VII, 25-40.

² Sum. theol., II^a II^{ae}, q. 184, a. 3.

¹ St. THOMAS, Sum. theol., 2^a 2^{ae}, q. 183, a. 4; Catholic Encycl., States; Cursus Asceticus, I, p. 19-29.

of them, but only to note the chief stages. According to the common doctrine, explained by St. Thomas, there are three *principal stages* or, as they are commonly called, *three ways*: that of *beginners* — the purgative way, that of souls already *advanced* — the illuminative way, and that of the *perfect* — the unitive way.

341. a) The chief care of beginners is that of preserving charity. Their efforts, then, are directed toward the *avoidance of sin*, above all, *mortal sin*, and toward the conquest of evil inclinations, of the passions, and of all that could make them lose the love of God.¹ This is the *purgative way*, the end of which is the purification of the soul.

342. b) The chief concern of those already advanced, the *proficients*, is progress in the *positive exercise of the virtues* and growth in charity. The heart, already purified, is all the more open to divine light and to the love of God. The soul wishes to follow Jesus and to imitate His virtues, and since by following Him one walks in the Light, this is called the *illuminative way*.² Here the soul strives to avoid not only mortal, but even venial sin.

343. c) Perfect souls have but one concern — *to cling to God and to take their delight in Him*. Ever seeking to unite themselves to God, they are in the *unitive way*. Sin fills them with horror, for they fear to displease God and to offend Him. The virtues that most attract them are the theological virtues, which unite them to God. Hence, the earth seems to them an exile, and, like St. Paul, they long to die to be joined to Christ.³

These are only brief indications. Later on we shall resume them again and develop them in the Second Part of this work. There we shall take the soul from the first stage, that of the purification, to the transforming union that prepares it for the Beatific Vision.

II. The Limits of Perfection here on Earth

344. When reading the lives of the Saints, and especially those of the great contemplatives, one marvels at the sublime heights to which a soul can rise that refuses nothing to God. There are, however, limits to our perfection here on earth. Beyond these we must not wish to go lest we fall back into a lower degree, or even lapse into sin.

345. 1° It is certain that we cannot love God as *He deserves to be loved*. He is infinitely lovable, and, our hearts being finite, can never love Him, even in Heaven, except with a finite love. We can, therefore, always strive to love Him more. According to St. Bernard, the measure wherewith to love God is to love Him without measure. Let us not forget, however, that real love consists less in pious sentiments than in acts of the will, and that the best way to love God is to make the will conform to His. This we shall explain further on, when treating of conformity to the divine will.

346. 2° On earth one cannot love God uninterruptedly nor unfaithfully. One can, no doubt, with the aid of choice graces granted to souls of good-will, avoid all *deliberate venial sin*, but not all faults of *frailty*. No one ever becomes impeccable, as the Church has declared on many occasions.

A) In the Middle Ages, the *Beghards*¹ pretended "that man is capable in this present life of reaching such a degree of perfection that he becomes altogether impeccable and can no more grow in grace." They concluded from this that those who have attained this degree of perfection should neither fast nor pray, for in this state sensuality has been so completely subjected to the spirit and to reason, that a man may grant his body whatever he pleases; he is no longer obliged to observe the commandments of the Church nor to obey men, nor even to exercise himself in acts of the virtues, such things being only for the imperfect. These are dangerous doctrines leading to immorality. Once a person believes himself impeccable and no longer strives to practice virtue, he soon becomes a prey to the vilest passions. This happened to the Beghards, whom the Ecumenical Council of Vienne rightly condemned in 1311.

347. B) In the Seventeenth Century, *Molinos*² revived this error by teaching that "through acquired contemplation one arrives at such a degree of perfection that one no longer commits any sins, either mortal or venial." He showed only too well, by his example, that with maxims that seem so exalted, one is greatly exposed to fall into scandalous disorders. He was justly condemned by Innocent XI on November 19, 1687. Upon reading the propositions he had dared maintain, one is horrified at the frightful

¹ DENZ.-BANN., n. 471-478. Cf. P. POURRAT, *Christian Spirituality*, t. II; *Cath. Encyclop.*, BEGHARDS, Beguines. — ² *Catholic Encyclop.*, MOLINOS.

³ *Sum. theol.*, 2^a 2^{ae}, q. 24, a. 9. — ³ *L. cit.* — ³ *L. cit.*

consequences to which this pretension to impeccability could and did lead. ¹ Let us be more modest then and ever seek to correct our deliberate faults and to diminish the number of those of frailty.

348. ³⁰ Contrary to what Fenelon maintained, ² we cannot on earth love God with a *constant*, nor yet *habitual* love, which is at the same time perfectly pure and *disinterested*. No matter to what degree of perfection we may attain, we are obliged from time to time to make acts of hope. We, therefore, cannot remain altogether indifferent to our own salvation. It is true that there have been Saints, who, in the midst of *passive trials*, have momentarily acquiesced to their reprobation, but on the supposition that it were so willed by God, whilst at the same time firmly declaring their unwillingness, were this the case, to desist from loving Him. These are only suppositions that must be thrust aside since the fact is that God wills the salvation of all men.

From time to time, though, we can elicit acts of pure love with no thought of self whatever, and therefore without actually hoping or wishing for Heaven. Such is the following act of love of St. Theresa : ³ "If I love Thee, Lord, it is not because of Heaven which Thou hast promised me. If I fear to offend Thee, it is not because of Hell that threatens me. What draws me unto Thee, Lord, is Thyself alone — it is the sight of Thee, nailed to the Cross, Thy body bruised' mid the pangs of death. Thy love doth so hold my heart that were there no Heaven, I would love Thee still; were there no Hell, I would fear Thee yet. I need not thy gifts to make me love Thee, for although I should have no hope of all I do hope for, I would love Thee still with the selfsame love."

349. Ordinarily, our love of God is a *mixture of pure and interested love*; that is to say, we love God both for His own sake, because He is infinitely good, and also because He is the source of our happiness. These two motives are not exclusive of each other, since it is the will of God that we find our happiness in loving and glorifying Him. Let us not, therefore, be alarmed at this admixture of motives in our love of God. Let us simply say to ourselves when thinking of Heaven, that our happiness will consist in the possession and the vision of God, in loving

and glorifying Him. Then even when we are influenced by the desire and the hope of Heaven, the predominant motive in our actions will truly be the love of God.

CONCLUSION

350. Behold, then, the whole of Christian perfection : — *love and sacrifice*. Who cannot, with God's grace, fulfil this twofold condition? Is it, indeed, so difficult to love Him Who is infinitely lovable and infinitely loving? The love that He asks of us is nothing extraordinary; it is the devotedness of love — the gift of oneself — consisting chiefly in conformity to the divine will. To want to love is to love. To keep the commandments for God's sake is to love. To pray is to love. To fulfil our duties of state in view of pleasing God, this is likewise to love. Nay more, to recreate ourselves, to take our meals with the like intention is to love. To serve our neighbor for God's sake is to love. Nothing then is easier, God's grace helping, than the constant exercise of divine love and through this, steady advance toward perfection.

351. As for *sacrifice*, doubtless it seems hard. But we are not asked to love it for its own sake. It is enough if we love it for God's sake, or, in other words if we realize that here on earth one cannot love God without renouncing whatever is an obstacle to His love. Then sacrifice becomes first tolerable and soon even lovable. Does not a mother, passing long, sleepless nights at the bedside of her son joyously undergo fatigue when she entertains the hope and, more especially, when she has the certainty of thereby saving his life? Now, when we accept for the sake of God the sacrifices He demands, we have not only the hope, but the certainty itself, of pleasing Him, of giving Him glory and of working out the salvation of our own souls. In this, have we not for our encouragement the example and the help of the God-Man? Has He not suffered as much as and even more than we ourselves suffer, for the glory of His Father and the salvation of our souls? Shall we, His disciples, incorporated into Him in Baptism, nourished with His Body and Blood, shall we hesitate when we are to suffer together with Him, for His love and for His intention? Is it not true that in the Cross there is gain, especially for loving hearts? "In the Cross" says the author of the Imitation, ¹ "is salvation; in the Cross is life; in the

¹ DENZ-BANN, n. 1228-1288. — ² DENZ-BANN, n. 1327-1349.

³ *The Bollandists, History of St. Theresa*, vol. II, c. 31.

¹ *Imitation*, Bk. II, C. 12, v. 2.

Cross is protection from enemies. In the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness." We shall conclude with the words of Saint Augustine: "There are no labors too great for loving hearts. In fact, one finds pleasure therein, as we observe in the case of the fisherman fishing, the hunter at the chase, the merchant at the mart. For where there is love, there is no labor, or if there be labor, it is a labor of love."¹ Let us then hasten toward perfection by this path of love and sacrifice.

CHAPTER IV.

The Duty of Tending to Perfection²

352. Having already explained the *nature* of the Christian life and its *perfection*, we are now to examine whether there is for us a real *obligation* to advance in it or whether it suffices to keep it as we keep a treasure. To answer with greater exactness we shall examine this question with regard to three categories of persons: 1° the laity; 2° the religious; 3° the priests.

ART. I. THE DUTY INCUMBENT UPON ALL CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL TO TEND TOWARD PERFECTION

We shall explain: 1° The obligation itself. 2° The motives that make this duty more easy to perform.

§ I. The Obligation Itself

353. In a matter so delicate as the one now under consideration, we cannot be too precise. It is certain that one must die in the state of grace in order to be saved, and that this suffices. It would appear then that for the *faithful* in the world there is no other obligation than that of preserving the state of grace. However, the question is precisely whether they can preserve the state of grace for a long time without striving to grow in holiness. To this, *authority* and *reason* enlightened by *faith* answer that, in the state of fallen nature, one cannot for long remain in the state of grace without *striving* at the same time to make progress in the spiritual life and to exercise oneself *from time to time*

¹ St. AUGUST., *De bono Viduitatis*, c. 21, P. L. XL, 448.

² ALVAREZ DE PAZ., *op. cit.*, lib. IV-V; LE GAUDIER, P. III, sect. I, sec. VII-X; SCARANELLI, *Guide Ascétique*, Traité I, art. II; RIBET, *Ascétique*, ch. VII-IX; IGHINA, *op. cit.*, Introd., XX-XXX. *Cursus Asceticus*, Vol. I, n. 15.

in the practice of some of the evangelical counsels. It is only in this restricted sense that we maintain the obligation of perfection for ordinary christians.

I. The Argument from Authority

354. 1° *Holy Writ* does not deal with this question directly. It does indeed furnish us with the distinction between precept and counsel (cf. n. 335), but it does not as a rule tell us which of the exhortations of Our Lord are obligatory and which are not. However, Holy Scripture lays so much stress upon the holiness that becomes a Christian, it proposes such an ideal of perfection, it proclaims so emphatically to all Christians the necessity of renouement and of love — the essentials of perfection — that any impartial mind will draw the conclusion that in order to save our souls, we must, at least at times, do more than is strictly commanded and, therefore, strive after holiness.

355. A) It is evident that one who would merely aim at avoiding mortal sin would not be living according to the standard of moral conduct outlined in the Gospel. Our Lord proposes to us as the *ideal* of holiness the very *perfection* of Our Heavenly Father: "*Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*"¹ Hence, *all having God for their Father* must approach this divine perfection — which evidently cannot be accomplished without progress. At bottom, the whole Sermon on the Mount is nothing but a commentary on and the development of this ideal. The path to follow is the path of renunciation, the path of imitation of Christ and of the love of God: "*If any man come to me, and hate not*" (that is to say does not renounce) "*his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*"² We are bound, then, on certain occasions to choose God and His will rather than the love of parents, of wife, of children, of self, and to sacrifice all to follow Christ. This supposes *heroic* courage, which will be found wanting in the time of need, unless God in His mercy give a special grace and unless one be prepared by sacrifices that are not of strict obligation. True, this is a straight and narrow path and few there are that follow it, but Jesus Christ wills that we make *earnest efforts* to walk this path: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate."³ Does He not thereby ask us to strive after perfection?

¹ *Matth.*, V, 48. — ² *Luke*, XIV, 26, 27; cf. *Matth.*, X, 37, 38.

³ *Luke*, XIII, 24; cf. *Matth.*, VII, 13, 14.

356. B) The apostles speak the same language. St. Paul often reminds the faithful that they have been elected to be saints: "*That we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity.*"¹ This cannot be accomplished without putting off the Old Adam and putting on the New, that is to say, without mortifying the tendencies of fallen nature and striving to reproduce the virtues of Christ. But St. Paul adds that this cannot be done without endeavoring to reach "*unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.*"² This means that being made into one body with Christ, we are His complement and that it is we who are to effect His completeness and the fulness of His growth by our own progress in the reproduction of His virtues. St. Peter likewise wants all his disciples to be saints, like Him Who has called them unto salvation: "*According to Him that hath called you, Who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy.*"³ Could they be so, should they make no progress in the exercise of Christian virtues? St. John in the last chapter of the Apocalypse asks the just to cease not in the working of justice and invites the holy to become holier still: "*He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.*"⁴

357. C) The same doctrine follows from the nature of the Christian life. This life Our Lord and His disciples describe as a warfare, wherein watchfulness and prayer, mortification and positive exercise of the virtues are the necessary conditions for victory: "*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*"⁵ Having to struggle not only against flesh and blood, that is, the threefold concupiscence, but also against the evil spirits that excite our passions, we stand in need of arming ourselves spiritually and fighting fearlessly. But in a protracted struggle, if one remains always on the defensive, defeat is almost inevitable. Recourse, therefore, must be had to counter-attacks, to the positive practice of the virtues, watchfulness, mortification, and the spirit of faith and of trust. This is, in fact, the conclusion drawn by St. Paul after a description of the fight we are to sustain. He declares that we must be armed from head to foot after the fashion of the Roman soldier: "*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breast-plate of justice: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith... and take unto you the helmet of*

¹ Ephes. I, 4. — ² Ephes. IV, 13. Read the entire passage, v. 10-16.
³ 1 Peter, I, 15. — ⁴ Apoc., XXII, 11. — ⁵ Matth., XXVI, 41.

salvation and the sword of the Spirit..."¹ In this way St. Paul shows us that we must do more than is strictly commanded in order to triumph over our enemies.

358. 2° This doctrine is confirmed by *Tradition*. When the Fathers wish to insist upon the necessity of perfection for all, they assert that we cannot remain stationary on the way that leads to God and to salvation, that we must advance or fall back: "*In the way to God, not to advance is to retreat.*" Thus St. Augustine, noting that action is characteristic of charity, remarks that we must not halt on the way, precisely because to halt is to recede: "*He turns back who reverts whence he had once departed.*"² This principle is so evident that even Pelagius, his antagonist, admitted it. St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers, explains this doctrine in a most telling way: "Dost thou wish to advance? — No. — Then dost thou wish to turn back? — By no means. — What, then, wishest thou? — I wish to live in such a way as to remain where I have arrived... — This is impossible, for nothing in this world does remain in the same condition."³ In another place he adds that: "Of necessity one must rise or else fall: if one tries to stop, one falls of a certainty."⁴ No wonder then that Our Holy Father, Pius XI, in his Encyclical of January 26, 1923, on St. Francis de Sales, clearly states that all Christians without exception must tend toward sanctity.⁵

II. The Argument from Reason

The fundamental reason that obliges us to tend to perfection is the one given by the Fathers.

359. 1° Life is movement, hence it is essentially progressive; no sooner does it cease to grow than it begins to decline. The reason for this is that there are in all living beings disintegrating forces which, if not counteracted, end by causing disease and death. The same holds true of our spiritual life. Side by side with those tendencies that incline us toward good, there are other forces that incline us strongly toward evil. The one effective means of combating them is to strengthen within us the living forces of the love of God and the Christian virtues. Then the evil forces abate. If we stop trying to advance, our vices reawaken, gather strength, and assail us with added vigor and frequency; and unless we awake from our torpor, the moment

¹ Ephes., VI, 14-17. — ² Sermon, CLXIX, n. 18. — ³ *Epist.* CCLIV, n. 4.
⁴ *Epist.*, XCI, n. 3. — ⁵ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XV, 50.

will come when from surrender to surrender we fall into mortal sin.¹ Such is, alas! the story of many a soul, and the experience of spiritual directors is witness to it.

A comparison will make us understand this. To work out our salvation we have to go counter to the current, more or less violent, of our own disordered passions bearing us on toward evil. So long as we make the effort to go against the current, we advance or at least we hold our own. The moment we stop we are carried along and driven seaward, there to meet the ocean storms, that is, grave temptations and perhaps lamentable falls.

360. ²⁰ There are grave precepts that cannot at certain times be observed except by heroic acts. If we take into account psychological laws, we are not ordinarily capable of heroic acts, unless we have prepared for them in advance by sacrifice or, in other words, by the practice of mortification. A few examples will render this truth more concrete. Let us take, for instance, the precept of *chastity* and see the generous, at times heroic efforts required to keep it throughout life. Up to marriage (and many young men do not marry before their twenty-fifth or thirtieth year), this precept exacts *absolute continence* under the pain of mortal sin. Now, serious temptations make themselves felt in almost all of us at the age of puberty, at times even before. To resist them successfully, we must pray; we must avoid dangerous associations, readings, and shows; we must reproach ourselves with the slightest failings and profit by them in order to rise without delay and with added generosity, all this throughout a considerable part of life. Does not all this presuppose more than ordinary effort? Does it not demand at least some works of supererogation? Nor does marriage protect us against all grave temptations. There are periods when conjugal continence is imperative. To practice it, a heroic courage is required, a courage acquired only by habitual mortification of sensual pleasure and the unwearied practice of prayer.

361. Again, let us consider the laws of *justice* in financial, commercial and industrial transactions. Do we not at once think of the thousand and one ways there are of violating justice, of the difficulties of dealing with perfect honesty in an atmosphere where competition and greed cause prices to rise beyond just limits? We shall soon see that in order to remain simply honest, extraordinary efforts and self-denial are required. Will a man be ready for such

¹ This is the common teaching of theologians summarized by SUAREZ in *De Religione*, t. IV, l. 1, c. 4, n. 12.

efforts if he has been accustomed to observe only the precepts that bind under pain of mortal sin? In order to shun this danger one must do at least a little more that is strictly commanded, so that the will, schooled by acts of generosity, may have the strength to resist temptations to commit acts of grave injustice.

On all sides this moral law is verified — in order not to fall into sin, we must stave off the danger by the performance of generous acts which are not directly prescribed by law. To strike the target we must aim above it; not to lose grace, we must fortify our will against temptation by works of supererogation; in other words, we must aim at some measure of perfection.

§ II. Motives that Make This Duty Easier

The numerous motives that may draw the faithful on to perfection can be reduced to three principal ones: 1^o the welfare of our soul, 2^o the glory of God, 3^o the edification of the neighbor.

362. 1^o *The welfare of our soul* means security of salvation, increase of merit, and joy of a good conscience.

A) The great work we are to accomplish here on earth, truly the one thing necessary, is *the salvation of our soul*. If we save our soul, even should we lose all the goods of earth: parents, friends, good name, wealth, all is saved; we shall find again in Heaven all we have lost, increased one hundredfold and that for all eternity. The most effective means, however, of securing our salvation is to aim at perfection, each one according to his state of life. The higher we aim, with due discretion and with constancy, the greater is the distance we put between ourselves and mortal sin, which alone can prevent our salvation. It is evident that when one sincerely strives to grow in perfection one thereby removes the occasions of sin, strengthens the will against surprises, so that when the moment of temptation arrives, the will, disciplined by effort toward perfection, accustomed to pray in order to obtain the grace of God, repels with horror the very thought of grave sin: "*Rather die than be defiled.*" On the other hand, those who allow themselves whatever falls short of grave sin, run the risk of falling the moment a prolonged and violent temptation presents itself; for, accustomed to yielding to pleasure in lesser things, there is reason to fear that carried away by passion they will end by falling, just as the man who constantly walks on

the edge of the abyss finally falls into it. In order, then, to make sure that we shall not offend God grievously, the best means is to keep at a safe distance from evil by doing more than is strictly commanded and by striving to advance toward perfection; for the more we strive, with due prudence and humility, the surer we are of our eternal salvation.

363. B) In this way we likewise increase daily *habitual grace* and acquire a title to a higher degree of glory in heaven. We have seen that every supernatural act done for God by a soul in the state of grace results in an increase of merit. Whoever is unmindful of perfection and is more or less remiss in the performance of his duty, acquires but little merit, as we have said above, n. 243. On the contrary, he who tends to perfection and strives to make progress, secures merit in large measure; he augments daily his store of grace and glory; each of his efforts is rewarded by additional grace here on earth and of happiness in heaven: "An eternal weight of glory." ¹

364. C) If we desire to have *true happiness* on earth, there is no better way than to cultivate piety (godliness) which, as St. Paul says, "is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." ² Peace of soul, the joy of a good conscience, the happiness of union with God, of growing in His love, of effecting a closer intimacy with Christ, such are a few of the rewards which, along with the comforting hope of life eternal, God dispenses even now to His faithful servants in the midst of their trials.

365. 2° *The Glory of God.* There is nothing more noble than to procure the glory of God, nothing more just when we recall all that God has done and ever does for us. Now, a perfect man gives more glory to God than a thousand ordinary souls. For he multiplies day by day his acts of love, of gratitude, of reparation; he directs toward God his whole life by the oft-renewed offering of ordinary actions, thus giving glory to Him from morning until night.

366. 3° *The Edification of our Neighbor.* There is no better way to do good to others, to bring to God sinners or unbelievers and to strengthen the wavering, than the earnest effort to live a thoroughly Christian life. Just as a common-place life on the part of Christians invites the critical and the unbelieving to scoff at Christianity, so true

sanctity calls forth their admiration for a religion that produces such effects: "By their fruits you shall know them." ¹ The best *apologetics* are those of example coupled with the fulfilment of all our social duties. This is likewise the best stimulus to careless Christians who would remain in their spiritual indolence if the earnest efforts of fervent souls did not stir them up.

This motive appeals today to many a soul. This is an age of proselytism, and lay people realize better than ever the necessity of defending and spreading the faith by word and example. It devolves upon priests to further this movement by creating round about them a choice body of resolute Christian men and women determined to become daily more and more faithful to all their duties, civic and social, and above all religious. These will be valuable co-workers, who going into places inaccessible to the priest and the religious, will successfully second their efforts in the exercise of zeal.

ART. II. THE OBLIGATION INCUMBENT UPON RELIGIOUS OF TENDING TOWARD PERFECTION ²

367. There are among Christians those who, wishing to give themselves all the more perfectly to God and to insure more effectively the welfare of their souls, enter the religious state. This state is according to the *Code of Canon Law*, ³ "a permanent manner of living in community wherein the faithful, in addition to those things that are of precept, engage themselves by vow to observe the evangelical counsels of obedience, chastity and poverty."

All theologians agree that Religious are *bound to tend to perfection* in virtue of their state. The Code recalls this teaching when it declares that "each and every religious superior as well as subject is bound to tend toward the perfection of his state." ⁴ This obligation is so grave that St. Alphonsus does not hesitate to say: "If a religious takes the firm resolution of not tending toward perfection or of

¹ *Matth.*, VII, 20.

² *Code de Canon*, can. 487-672; St. THOM. II^a II^æ, q. 24, a. 9: q. 283, a. 1-4; p. 184-186; SUAREZ, *De Religione*, II, VII; S. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Spiritual Conferences*, Letters to Persons in Religion; S. ALPHONSUS, *The Religious State*; VERMEERSCH, *De Religiosis*; VALUY, *Les Vertus Religieuses*, 1914; GAUTRELET, *Traité de l'état religieux*; J. P. MOTHON, *Traité sur l'état religieux*, 1923; GAY, *Religious Life and Vows*; CARD. GASQUET, *Religio Religiosi*; HEDLEY, *Retreat, Retreat for Religious*; BUTLER, *Benedictine Monachism*; SCOTT, *Convent Life*; BUCKLER, *Spiritual Perfection*; LORD, *Our Nuns*; GRAUD-THURSTON, *The Spirit of Sacrifice in the Religious Life*; *Catholic Encyclop.*, *Religious Life*.

³ *Can.* 487. — ⁴ *Can.* 593.

giving no thought whatever to it, he commits a mortal sin."¹ Such a religious would fail seriously in his duty of state, which is precisely that of tending to perfection. On this account the religious state is called a *state of perfection*, that is to say, a permanent condition of life, officially recognized as such by Canon Law, wherein one binds oneself to strive after perfection. Hence, as St. Thomas teaches, it is not necessary to have attained perfection before entering the religious life, but one enters it precisely to acquire perfection.²

The obligation for religious of tending to perfection is based chiefly on a twofold reason: 1° *their vows*; 2° *their rules and constitutions*.

I. *The Obligation Based on the Vows*

368. When one becomes a religious it is for the purpose of giving, of consecrating oneself more perfectly to God. This is the reason for the three vows. These vows impose the obligation of performing acts of virtue which are not of precept; and these acts are all the more perfect as the vows add to their intrinsic worth the merit of the virtue of religion. Moreover, these vows remove, at least in part, some of the greatest obstacles to perfection. We shall understand this better when we examine these vows in detail.

369. 1° By the vow of *poverty* we renounce *external possessions* present or future. If the vow is *solemn*, we renounce the very right to ownership, so that all acts of ownership would be canonically void, as the Code has it, Canon 579. If the vow is *simple*, we do not renounce the right itself to ownership, but only the free exercise thereof; consequently the use of this right depends upon the will of Superiors and is confined within the limits set by them.

This vow is a help in overcoming one of the great obstacles to perfection, namely, the inordinate love of riches and the cares inherent to the administration of temporal goods. It is, therefore, a great means of spiritual progress. Moreover, this vow imposes painful *sacrifices*; one has not the security, the independence which the free use of one's own goods confers. At times, one has to suffer certain privations that community-life imposes: it is hard and humiliating to be obliged to have recourse to a Superior for everything one needs. Here we have acts of virtue imposed

by the vow of poverty which not only make us tend towards, but actually bring us nearer to perfection.

370. 2° The vow of *chastity* enables us to overcome a second obstacle to perfection, the concupiscence of the flesh, and frees us from the cares and worries of family-life. St. Paul calls attention to this when he says: "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord: how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world: how he may please his wife. And he is divided."¹ But the vow of chastity does not divest us of concupiscence; and the grace that is given to keep this vow is not meant to spare us pain and struggle. To observe life-long continence it is necessary to watch and pray, to mortify the exterior senses and curiosity, to check the sensitive appetite, to avoid idleness, to give the heart entirely to God by the practice of charity, to live in intimate and affectionate union with Our Lord, as we shall show when we speak of the virtue of chastity. Now, to do all this is evidently to tend to perfection. It is to renew constantly the effort to conquer self and control one of the most violent tendencies of fallen nature.

371. *Obedience* goes even further. It brings into submission not solely to God, but to Rules and to Superiors, that which we cling to most tenaciously, our own will. By this vow the Religious pledges himself to obey the commands of his lawful Superior in all that concerns the vows and constitutions. Here it is question of *formal commands*, and not of mere advice. Such a command is recognized by the formulas employed by the Superior, for instance, when he commands in the name of *holy obedience*, in the name of Our Lord, or when he uses any other equivalent expression making clear that he means to give a formal order. Of course this power of Superiors is limited. They are to command according to the rule, "not going beyond what is expressly or implicitly contained therein, that is, the constitutions, the statutes legally designed to ensure their observance, the penalties sanctioned to punish transgressions and prevent further infractions, and whatever relates to the fulfilment of the different duties and to an efficient and fair administration."²

In spite of these restrictions, it remains true that the vow

¹ *I Cor.*, VII, 32-33.

² VALUÿ, *Les Vertus Religieuses*, 19^e éd. p. 106. To be valid in the external forum, the command must be given in writing or before two witnesses (Code, C. 24).

¹ *Theol. moralis*, I, IV, n. 18.

² *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 186, a. 1, ad 3.

of obedience is one of those that come hardest to human nature, precisely because we are so much attached to our own will. To observe it we need humility, patience and meekness; we have to mortify that strong tendency of ours to criticise Superiors, to prefer our judgment to theirs, to follow our likes and at times our whims. To overcome these tendencies, to bend our will respectfully before that of Superiors and to see God in them is, without doubt, to tend to perfection, for it is to cultivate some of the most difficult virtues. Besides, since true obedience is the best proof of love, to practice it is to grow in the virtue of charity.

372. It is clear, then, that fidelity to the three vows entails not only the practice of the great virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience, but also of a great many others which are indispensable to their observance. To pledge oneself to keep them is certainly to oblige oneself to an uncommon degree of perfection.

II. *The Obligation Based on the Constitutions and the Rules*

373. Upon entering the religious state one assumes the obligation to observe the Constitutions and the Rules explained in the course of the novitiate, before profession. Now, no matter what Order or Congregation one may enter, there is not a single one that has not as its end the sanctification of its members and that does not determine, at times in great detail, the *virtues* they must practice and the *means* that facilitate their exercise. Hence, if one is sincere, one binds himself to keep at least in general those various rules, and by this very fact, to rise to a certain degree of perfection; for in keeping these rules, though it be only in a general way, one has plenty of opportunities to mortify oneself in things not of precept, and the effort one is forced to make in this direction is an effort toward perfection.

374. Here the question arises whether the infringement of the rules constitutes a *sin* or a mere imperfection. Many distinctions must be made to answer this question.

a) There are rules prescribing fidelity to those virtues that are of precept, or to the vows, and there are other rules determining the *means necessary* to the keeping of these virtues and vows, for instance, the rule of enclosure for cloistered communities. Such rules bind in conscience for the very reason that they simply *promulgate* an obligation flowing from the vows themselves, for when making these, one assumes the obligation of keeping them and taking the

means necessary for their observance. These rules bind under the pain of sin, mortal or venial according to the importance of the matter. They are, therefore, *preceptive* and, in certain Congregations they are clearly noted as such, either directly or indirectly, by the infliction of a grave sanction which supposes a proportionate fault.

375. b) There are, on the other hand, rules which explicitly or implicitly are considered as being *simply directive*. 1) To break them without reason is no doubt an imperfection, but such infraction is not *in itself* even a venial sin, for there is no violation either of a law or of a command. 2) St. Thomas, however, justly remarks that one may sin grievously against the rule, if one violates it *out of contempt* (contempt of the rule itself or contempt of Superiors).¹ One may sin lightly if the violation in question is due to voluntary negligence, passion, anger, sensuality or any other sinful motive. In this case it is the motive that constitutes the fault. We may add with St. Alphonsus that the fault may be grave if the infractions are frequent and deliberate, either because of the resulting scandal, which gradually leads to an appreciable weakening of discipline, or because the delinquent exposes himself to expulsion from the community to the great detriment of his soul.

376. Superiors, therefore, are obliged in virtue of their office to enforce the rules with care. The Superior who would neglect to check transgressions of the rule, even slight ones, when they tend to become frequent, may be guilty of a grave fault, because he thereby encourages a gradual relaxation, which in a community constitutes a grave disorder. Such is the teaching of de Lugo, St. Liguori, Schram² and many other theologians.

But the true religious does not enter into these distinctions. He observes the rule as perfectly as he can, knowing this to be the best way of pleasing God: "*Who lives by rule lives unto God.*" In like manner, he is not satisfied with keeping to the letter of the vows, but rather he lives by their spirit in striving daily to approach perfection according to the word of St. John: "He that is holy, let him be sanctified still."³ Then, are fulfilled in him the words of St. Paul: "And whosoever shall follow this rule, *peace on them and mercy.*"⁴

¹ *Sum. theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 186, a. 9, ad 1 et 3.

² SCHRAM, *Instit. Theol. Mystica*, § 655. Scholion.

³ *Apoc.*, XXII, 11. — ⁴ *Galat.*, VI, 16.

ART. III. THE OBLIGATION INCUMBENT UPON PRIESTS
OF TENDING TO PERFECTION ¹

377. Priests in virtue of their functions and of the mission which makes theirs the duty of sanctifying souls, are bound to a *higher interior holiness* than that of the simple religious not raised to the priesthood. This is the express teaching of *St. Thomas*,² confirmed by the most authoritative ecclesiastical pronouncements. The Councils, and particularly that of Trent,³ the Supreme Pontiffs, and especially Leo XIII⁴ and Pius X,⁵ so insist upon the necessity of *holiness* in the priest, that to deny our thesis is to stand in open contradiction to authorities that cannot be gainsaid. Let it suffice to recall the fact that Pius X, upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood, issued a letter addressed to the Catholic clergy, wherein he shows the *necessity of holiness* in the priest, and enumerates one by one the *means* necessary to attain it, those very means, by the way, which are insisted on in our Seminaries. After describing *interior holiness* (*vita morumque sanctimonia*), he declares that only this holiness makes us what our vocation requires us to be, "men who are crucified to the world, who have put on the new Adam, men whose thoughts are fixed on heavenly things and who strive by all possible means to lead others to heaven."

378. The New Code has confirmed the views of Pius X by emphasizing more than the old legislation did the necessity of holiness in the priest and the means of exercising himself therein. It declares in no obscure words that

¹ Besides the authors already quoted, see ARVISENET, *Memoriale vite sacerdotalis*; MOLINA LE CHARTREUX, *L'instruction des prêtres*, 2^e Traité; OLIER, *Traité des SS. Ordres*; TRONSON, *Particular Exams*; DUBOIS, *Le saint Prêtre*; CAUSSETTE, *Manière du Prêtre*; GIBBONS, *The Ambassador of Christ*; GRAUD, *Priest and Victim*; MANNING, *The Eternal Priesthood*; MGR. LELONG, *Le Prêtre*; CARD. MERCIER, *The Interior Life, Retreat to his Priests, Conférences to his Seminarists*; HEDLEY, *Lex Levitarum, Retreat for Priests*; CARD. VAUGHAN, *The Young Priest, Introduction to the Life of St. John B. de Rossi*; KEATINGE, *The Priest, His Character and Work*; MULLET-BYRNE, *Jesus Living in the Priest*; BRUNEAU, *Our Priesthood*; GRIMAL, *Priesthood and Sacrifice*; CARD. BOURNE, *Ecclesiastical Training*; *The Teaching of St. Thomas on Priestly Perfection*, Cath. Educ. Assoc., 1924.

² "By Holy Orders a man is deputed to the most dignified ministry, to serve Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. For this a greater interior sanctity is required than even the religious state demands." II-II^e, q. 184, a. 6, 8.

³ Sess. XXII, de Reform. c. 1.

⁴ Encyclical *Quod multum*, Aug. 22nd, 1886; Encyclical Letter *Deputis le jour*, Sept. 8, 1899.

⁵ *Exhortatio ad clerum catholicum*, Aug. 4th, 1908. The entire letter should be read. See BRUNEAU, *Our Priesthood*, Appendix.

"clerics must lead an interior and exterior life holier than that of the laity and give these the good example of virtue and good works." It adds that Bishops should see to it, "that all clerics receive frequently the Sacrament of Penance to be purified of their faults; that each day they apply themselves during a certain length of time to the exercise of mental prayer, visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, recite the beads in honor of the Blessed Mother of God, and make their examination of conscience. At least every three years diocesan priests must make a retreat. All clerics, but chiefly priests, are especially bound to respect and to obey their Bishop."¹

This doctrine, that the priest is obliged to tend to perfection, is proved: 1^o by the authority of *Our Lord* and of *St. Paul*,² by the *Pontifical*,³ by the very nature of the *priestly functions*.

I. *The Teaching of Our Lord and of St. Paul*

379. 1^o *Our Lord* eloquently teaches the necessity of holiness in the priest by His examples as well as by His words.

A) He gives the example. He Who from the beginning was "full of grace and truth" has willed to submit Himself to the law of progress: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men."² Nay, during thirty years He prepared for His public ministry by a hidden life and all that this implies: prayer, mortification, humility, obedience. Thirty years of the life of the Incarnate Word are summed up in these few words: "He was subject to them."³ To make His preaching of the Christian virtues more effective, He began by practicing them: "Jesus began to do and to teach,"⁴ so that He could have proposed Himself as a model of all virtues, as He did of the virtues of humility and meekness: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."⁵ At the close of His life He declared in all simplicity that He sanctifies and sacrifices Himself in order that His Apostles and His priests, their successors, be sanctified in all truth: "And for them do I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth."⁶ Now, the priest is the representative of Jesus Christ upon earth, another Christ: "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors."⁷ Hence, the priest, too, must be ever pursuing holiness of life.

¹ Can. 124-127. — ² Luke, II, 52. — ³ Luke, II, 51. — ⁴ Act., I, 1.

⁵ Matth., XI, 26. — ⁶ John, XVII, 19. — ⁷ II Cor., V, 20.

380. B) What Our Lord teaches by His example, He teaches also by His word. The great work of the three years of His public life was *the training of the Twelve*.¹ In this He employed the most of His time; it was His habitual occupation. Preaching to the crowds was merely secondary and was to serve as a model of what the preaching of His disciples should be. From this are drawn the following conclusions: **a)** The sublime teachings on godliness, inward holiness, self-denial, the love of God and the neighbor, humility, meekness and all the other virtues so frequently inculcated in the Gospel, are meant, no doubt, for all Christians aspiring to perfection, but they are first of all addressed to the *Apostles* and their successors. For it is they who are commissioned to teach the people of God these great duties by their example even more than by their word. The *Pontifical* recalls this to the deacons: "*Take heed that ye show forth the living works of the Gospel unto whom you proclaim it by word of mouth.*" Every one agrees that these doctrines embody a *code of perfection* that is very high. Hence, it is a duty of state for priests to strive after holiness.

381. b) The exhortations to higher perfection that we find in so many places in the Gospel are most particularly addressed to the *Apostles* and to *priests*: "*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.*"² This light is not only knowledge but rather and chiefly the beacon-light of example, which enlightens and attracts even more than knowledge: "*So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*"³ It is likewise to priests that are addressed in a special manner the *counsels* regarding *poverty* and *chastity*, for in virtue of their vocation they are obliged to follow Christ more closely.

382. c) Lastly, there is a whole series of teachings that *directly and explicitly* are meant for the *Apostles* and their *successors*: the instructions He gave to the Twelve and to the Seventy-two when He sent them to preach in Judea, and the discourse He pronounced at the Last Supper. These utterances embody a code of priestly holiness so high as to imply the duty of tending to perfection. Priests must live a life of complete *détachement*, be poor in spirit, and poor in fact, being satisfied with what they need; they must

¹ DELBREL, S. J., *Jésus, Éducateur des Apôtres*, ch. IV-VI.
² *Matth.*, V, 13 and 14. — ³ *Matth.*, V, 16.

exercise *zeal, charity, absolute devotedness, patience and humility* in the midst of persecutions, *courage* to confess Christ and preach His Gospel before all men and in spite of all men. They must be detached from the world and from their kin, learn to carry the Cross and live in total abnegation of self.¹

383. At the *Last Supper*² He gives unto them that new commandment, to love one another as He has loved them, that is to say, unto the complete immolation of self. He counsels them to have faith, a live faith and an absolute confidence in the prayer that is offered in His name. He urges on them the love of God, which is made manifest by keeping His commandments; peace of soul in order to receive and relish the teachings of the Holy Spirit; an intimate and abiding union with Himself as the essential condition for their sanctification and the discharge of their ministry. He exhorts them to patience amidst the persecutions of the world that shall hate them as it has hated their Master; to docility to the Holy Ghost, their Comforter in their tribulations; to steadfastness in the faith, to prayer in their trials. In a word, He recommends to them all those things which constitute the essential condition of what we call today the interior life or the life of perfection. He ends this discourse by that grand *sacerdotal prayer*, so full of tenderness, wherein He asks His Father to keep His chosen ones as He Himself has kept them during the course of His mortal life; to keep them from evil in the midst of the world which they must evangelize, and to *sanctify them in all truth*. He utters this prayer not only in behalf of His Apostles but for all those that through them would believe in Him, so that they may ever be one, even as the Three Divine Persons are one, that they may all be one with God and one with Christ: "*That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*"³ This is a charter of perfection drawn up for us by Our High-Priest, Whose representatives on earth we are, Whose priesthood we share. It must be an inspiration for us to think that He prayed that we might live according to this standard.

384. ²⁰ St. Paul, drawing his inspiration from this teaching of the Master, describes in his turn the apostolic virtues. Stating in the first place that priests are the dispensers of the mysteries of God, His ministers, the ambas-

¹ *Matth.*, X, XI; *Luke*, IX, X, etc.
² *John*, XIV-XVII. — ³ *John*, XVII, 27.

sadors of Christ, and the mediators between God and men, he then enumerates in the Pastoral Epistles the virtues wherewith deacons, priests and bishops must be adorned. For them, it is not enough to have once received the grace of ordination; they must make it live vigorously lest it wane: "*I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.*"¹ Deacons must be chaste and modest, sober, disinterested, discreet and faithful, knowing how to govern their houses with prudence and dignity. Even more perfect must priests and bishops be.² Their lives must be so pure as to be irreproachable. They must sedulously combat pride, anger, intemperance, avarice, and cultivate the virtues of humility, temperance, chastity, holiness, kindness, generosity, patience, meekness and above all godliness (which is profitable unto all things), faith and charity.³ They must be examples of these virtues and must therefore practice them to a high degree: "*In all things show thyself an example of good works.*"⁴ All these virtues presuppose a certain measure of perfection already acquired and a generous and constant effort to advance.

II. The Teaching of the Pontifical

385. It would be an easy task to show that the Fathers, commenting on the Epistles and Gospels, have unfolded these teachings and explained them in detail. We could even add that they have written *Letters* and entire *Treatises* upon the dignity and the holiness of the priesthood.⁵ In order to be brief, however, we shall confine ourselves to the teaching of the Pontifical, which is the *Priestly Code*, as it were, of the New Law, embodying the summary of what the Catholic Church requires of her ministers. This simple exposition will show the high degree of perfection demanded of the Ordinands and still more of priests in the ministry.⁶

¹ *II Tim.*, I, 6.

² For a bishop must be without crime, as the steward of God; not proud, not subject to anger, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, gentle, sober, just, holy, continent; embracing that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers." *Tit.*, I, 7-9.

³ "*Pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness.*" *I Tim.*, VI, 11, 4 *Tit.*, II, 7.

⁵ Most of these Treatises are to be found in a work entitled: "*Le Prêtre d'après les Pères*" by RAYNAUD, 12 in-8°, Paris, 1843. See likewise the numerous texts in L. TRONSON'S book, *Forma Cleri*.

⁶ For the explanation of the Pontifical, cf. OLIER, *op. cit.*; BACUÉZ, *Major Orders, Minor Orders, Vocation and Tonsure*; GIRAUD, *op. cit.*, t. II; GONTIER, *Explication du Pontifical*; BRUNEAU, *Our Priesthood*.

386. 1° The Church demands of the tonsured cleric a *universal detachment* from whatever is an obstacle to the love of God, and an *intimate union with Our Lord*, that he may wage war against the tendencies of the Old Adam and may put on the dispositions of the New. The *Dominus pars*, which he should utter every day, reminds him that *God, and God alone*, is his portion, his inheritance, and that whatever cannot be referred to Him should be trodden under foot. The *Induat me* shows him that life is a warfare, a struggle against the evil inclinations of nature, an effort to cultivate the supernatural virtues implanted in our souls on the day of our Baptism. Thus, from the outset, it is the *love of God* that is given him as the *end* to be reached, and *sacrifice* as the *means* thereto, with the obligation of fostering these two dispositions in his soul, if he is to be promoted to higher ranks in the clergy.

387. 2° Minor Orders confer upon the cleric a *twofold power*: one over Christ's Eucharistic Body, the other over His mystical body, that is, over souls. Besides detachment, he is to have a *twofold love*, the love of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and the *love of souls*. Both imply sacrifice.

As *porter*, he is separated from the occupations of the home and constituted the official custodian of the House of God. The *reader* rises above the interest of worldly studies to tarry in the consideration of the Sacred Text, to draw therefrom that doctrine which will work unto his own sanctification and that of others. The *exorcist* casts off sin and the remnants of sin, to evade all the more surely the power of Satan. The *acolyte* renounces the *pleasures of sense* to live in that state of purity which the service of the altar exacts. At the same time His love for God becomes stronger. He loves the God of the Eucharist, Whose guardian he is. He loves the Word, hidden beneath the sacred veil of Holy Writ. He loves Him at Whose commands the spirits of darkness tremble and obey. He loves the Victim of the Altar. This love blossoms forth in zeal: the cleric loves *souls*, whom with joyful heart he brings to God by word and example, whom he sanctifies by his participation in the Holy Sacrifice. Thus step by step he makes his way forward unto perfection.

388. 3° By his irrevocable consecration to God, the *subdeacon* immolates himself out of love for Him, a prelude to the Sacrifice he will one day offer upon the altar. He immolates his body by the vow of *chastity* and consecrates

his soul by dedicating it to the recitation of the divine office. Chastity implies mortification of the interior and exterior senses, of the mind, of the heart. The duty of the Divine Office supposes a spirit of recollection and of prayer, the sustained effort for a life of union with God. One cannot be faithful in these two duties of chastity and of prayer without an ardent love of God, which love alone can shelter the heart from the allurements of sensual love and lay the soul open to prayer and recollection. *Sacrifice and love*, then, is what the Church demands of the subdeacon, a sacrifice greater than any he had made up to the present; for the efforts demanded at times by a life-long chastity are nothing short of the heroic, and require an habitual spirit of watchfulness, humble mistrust of self, and mortification.¹ Furthermore, it is a sacrifice which is *irrevocable*: "But if you receive this Order, you will no longer be at liberty to recede from your resolution, but you will be obliged to serve God perpetually, to serve Whom is to reign."² That this sacrifice be possible and lasting it must be made with a great deal of love. An intense love of God and love for souls alone can shield us from profane love; it alone gives us the relish for the sweetness of perpetual prayer, by directing our thoughts and our affections toward Him Who alone can steady them. Therefore, the Pontiff invokes upon the ordinand the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost that he be made mighty unto the fulfilment of the stern duties laid upon him by the subdiaconate.

389. ⁴ Of deacons, who co-operate actively in the obligations of the Sacred Victim, who are "co-ministers and co-operators of the Body and Blood of the Lord," the Pontiff exacts even a more perfect purity: "Be clean, undefiled, pure, chaste." Because they have the power to preach the Gospel, they are asked to proclaim it even more by example than by word: "Take care that you may illustrate the gospel, by your living works, to those to whom you announce it with your lips." Their life must be a living exemplification of the Gospel and a constant imitation of the virtues of the Master. Thus, the Bishop praying that the Holy Spirit may descend upon them with all His gifts, chiefly that of

¹ "Celibacy is an heroic virtue, and for heroic virtue we need high sanctity. If I am asked what degree of perfection or holiness the Church demands of her priests, it is enough for me to answer that she demands of them perfect chastity and a life of celibacy. This obligation is so heavy, its extent is so broad, that it either presupposes or leads to a high degree of personal sanctity." KEATINGE, *The Priest, His Character and Work*, p. 101.

² Pontifical, ordination of Subdeacons.

fortitude, addresses to God this beautiful prayer: "Let the practice of every virtue abound in them, mild authority, constant modesty, the purity of innocence, and the observance of spiritual discipline." Is not this a petition in their behalf for the virtues that lead to sanctity? In his final prayer, in fact, the Pontiff asks that they be adorned with all the virtues: "Well-formed in all the virtues."

390. ⁵ The Pontifical demands even more of the priest. Because he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass he must be both priest and victim. This he shall be by the immolation of his passions: "Bear in mind what you do. Let your conduct be in conformity with the action you perform, so that celebrating the mystery of the Lord's death, you take heed to mortify your members from all vices and lusts." He shall become such a victim by his constant renewal in the spirit of holiness: "Renew in them, O God, the spirit of holiness." To attain this, the Law of God shall be the object of his thoughts by day and by night that he may teach it to others, that he may live by it himself and thus be an exemplar of all Christian virtues: "That meditating on Thy law, day and night, they may believe what they read, teach what they believe and practice what they teach. May they show forth in themselves justice, constancy, mercy, fortitude and all other virtues." As he is to be spent for souls, he shall practice brotherly love in the form of devotedness: "Receive the priestly vestment by which charity is signified," and, after the example of St. Paul, he shall spend himself entirely for the sake of souls: "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls."¹

391. Thus it is that at each step toward the priesthood, the Pontifical demands a greater measure of virtue, of love and of sacrifice. Coming finally to the priesthood, it requires sanctity in order, as St. Thomas² says, that the priest be made fit to offer worthily the august sacrifice and be enabled to sanctify the souls committed to his care. The Ordinand is free to go, on or not, but if he receives orders, he thereby evidently accepts the conditions so explicitly laid down by the Prelate, that is, the obligation of tending to perfection, an obligation which far from ceasing, becomes more urgent with the actual exercise of the sacred ministry.

¹ II Cor., XII, 15.

² St. THOMAS, *Suppl.*, q. 35, a. 1, ad 3. "For the worthy exercise of Holy Orders, ordinary virtue is not enough, but a high degree of sanctity is required."

III. *The Nature of the Priestly Functions Demands Holiness of Life*

392. On the testimony of the Apostle St. Paul, the priest is the mediator between God and man, between heaven and earth. Chosen from among men to be their representative, he must be acceptable to God, called by Him so as to have a right to appear before Him, and to offer the homages of men and to obtain His favors: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sin... Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was." ¹ His functions can be reduced to two principal ones: he is the "Religious of God," ² charged with glorifying Him in the name of the whole Christian people; he is also a Savior, a Sanctifier of souls, his mission being that of co-operating with Jesus Christ in the work of their sanctification and their salvation. He should be saintly on this twofold ground, ³ and should therefore ever tend toward perfection, since he will never fully attain to the plenitude of that holiness demanded by his office.

1° THE PRIEST, AS "THE RELIGIOUS OF GOD,"

SHOULD BE A SAINTLY MAN

393. In virtue of his mission, the priest must glorify God in the name of the Christian people. Truly, then, he is the *Religious of God*, and that by reason of the priesthood such as Our Lord instituted it. "He is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices." It is above all through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the recitation of the Divine Office that he acquires himself of this duty; yet all his actions, even the most ordinary, may contribute thereto, if they be done with a view to please God. This mission cannot be fulfilled in a seemingly manner except by a priest who is saintly or a least who is striving to become so.

394. A) What holiness is required in order to offer up the *Holy Sacrifice!* The priests of the Old Law had to be

¹ *Hebr.*, V, 1, 4.

² Religious in the sense that he is officially charged with fulfilling toward God the duties of religion, and not in the sense of a man entering a religious order and making the three vows.

³ ST. THOMAS says: "Those who handle the divine mysteries obtain a regal dignity and must be perfected in virtue." (*IV Sent.*, dist. 24, q. 2.)

holy, and this under pain of punishment, because they came near to God. (It is question here chiefly of legal holiness). "The priests also that come to the Lord, let them be sanctified; lest He strike them." ¹ They were bound to be holy in order to offer worthily incense and the bread destined for the altar: "For they offer the burnt offering of the Lord and the bread of their God: and therefore they shall be holy." ²

How much holier should they be, how much greater interior holiness should they have who offer no longer shadows and figures, but the Great Sacrifice itself, the All-holy Victim! All is holy in this Divine Sacrifice: the Victim and the chief Offerer, Jesus Himself, Who, says St. Paul, is "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." ³ The Church in whose name the priest offers Holy Mass is likewise holy, whom Jesus hath sanctified with His Blood: "Christ delivered Himself up for it... that it should be holy and without blemish." ⁴ The end for which such offering is made is holy, to glorify God and bring forth in souls the fruits of holiness. The prayers and ceremonies are holy, recalling the Sacrifice of Calvary and the effects it merited unto sanctification. Above all is the *Communion* holy that unites us to the very source of all sanctity.

The priest, who as the representative of Jesus Christ and of the Church offers up this august Sacrifice, must of necessity be also clothed in holiness. How could he worthily represent Christ, how could he be another Christ, if his life be but commonplace, void of any aspiration toward perfection? Could he be the minister of the Church, the spotless Spouse of Christ, if his soul, attached to venial sin, is neglectful of spiritual progress? Could he glorify God if his heart be void of love and sacrifice? How could he sanctify souls if he lacked the earnest desire of sanctifying himself?

395. How would he have the audacity to mount the altar uttering those prayers of the Mass which breathe the most pure sentiments of sorrow, faith, religion, love, self-denial, if his soul had no part in these? How could he venture to offer himself with the Divine Victim, "in a humble spirit and a contrite heart may we be received by Thee, O Lord," ⁵ if those sentiments were in contradiction with his life? How can any man whose life is all human,

¹ *Exod.*, XIX, 22. — ² *Levit.*, XXI, 6. — ³ *Hebr.*, VII, 26. — ⁴ *Ephes.*, V, 25-27.

⁵ Prayer of the Offertory.

demand a share in the divinity of Jesus Christ? How could such a one make his own this protestation of innocence: "But as for me, I have walked in my innocence,"¹ if he make no effort to shake off the dust of a thousand and one deliberate venial sins? How dare he utter the *Sanctus* wherein God's awful holiness is proclaimed? How make bold to identify himself with Jesus Christ at the *Consecration*, with the Author of all holiness, if he strive not to sanctify himself with Him and through Him? Could he utter the Lord's prayer and not think that we must be perfect as Our Father in heaven is perfect? Could he repeat the *Agnus Dei* without a humble and contrite heart? What of those tender prayers before Communion: "*Make me always adhere to Thy commandments, and suffer me never to be separated from Thee.*"² And yet the heart far from God, far from Jesus! To unite himself daily in Communion with an All-holy God without a sincere desire of sharing in His holiness, without striving daily to become more and more like Him, would not this be a flagrant contradiction, a lack of loyalty, an abuse of grace and a lack of fidelity to the priestly vocation? Let priests meditate on and take to heart the Fifth Chapter of the Fourth Book of the Following of Christ: ON THE DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT AND OF THE PRIESTLY STATE. "*If thou hadst the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, thou wouldst neither be worthy to receive nor to handle this Sacrament... Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound by a stricter bond of discipline, and art obliged to greater perfection of sanctity.*"³

396. B) What we have said of Holy Mass can be said in a certain sense also of the *Divine Office*. It is in the name of the *Church*, in union with *Jesus*, the great Religion of God, and for the whole Christian people, that seven times a day the priest appears before God to adore Him, to thank Him, and to obtain from Him the numberless graces souls need. If his prayer is but lip-service and not the tribute of his heart, will he not merit the reproach addressed by God to the Jews: "*This people honoreth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me.*"⁴ And will grace be granted abundantly if he asks for it in so unworthy a manner?

¹ Ps. XXV. — ² *Roman Missal*, Prayer before Communion.
³ *Imitation*, Bk. IV, c. V, n. 1.
⁴ *Matth.*, XV, 8; *Isaiah*, XXXIX, 13.

397. Furthermore, in order that our ordinary actions be transformed into acts of worship pleasing to the Lord, they ought to be accomplished with dispositions inspired by *love* and by the spirit of sacrifice (cf. n. 309).

Whithersoever we turn, the selfsame conclusion imposes itself: as The Religious of God, the priest must aim at holiness of life.

2° THE PRIEST CANNOT BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE WORK OF SAVING SOULS UNLESS HE AIMS AT PERSONAL HOLINESS ¹

398. A) The priest's duty of state is to sanctify and to save souls. When Our Lord chose His Apostles it was in order to make them "fishers of men";² in order that they should bring forth, in themselves and in others *abundant fruits of salvation*: "You have not chosen me: but I have chosen you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain."³ For this must they preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, give good example and pray in all earnestness.

It is of faith that what converts and sanctifies souls is the *grace of God*. We ourselves are but *instruments* that God deigns to use, that bring forth fruit only in the measure wherein they are one with the principal cause. This is the doctrine of St. Paul: "I have planted; Apollo watered: but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase."⁴ Now, it is certain that this grace is obtained in two ways, by *prayer* and by *merit*. In either case we obtain grace in proportion to our sanctity, to our fervor, to our degree of union with Our Lord (N. 237). If, then, our duty of state consists in the sanctification of souls, our first duty is to sanctify ourselves: "And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."⁵

399. B) We arrive at the same conclusion if we consider the principal *means of zeal*, namely, preaching, example and prayer.

a) Preaching produces no salutary effects unless we speak in the name and in the power of God: "God as it were exhorting by us."⁶ This is what the fervent priest does. Before preaching *he prays* in order that grace may

¹ Read on this subject the excellent book of DOM CHAUTARD, *L'âme de tout apostolat*. Eng. Tr., *The True Apostolate*.

² *Matth.*, IV, 19. — ³ *John*, XV, 16. — ⁴ *1 Cor.*, III, 6-7.

⁵ *John*, XVII, 19. — ⁶ *1 Cor.*, V, 20.

inspire his words: He humbly asks Our Lord to be "in his heart and on his lips," *Dominus sit in corde meo et in labiis meis*. Whilst preaching he seeks, not to please, but to instruct, to do good, to convince, to persuade; and because his heart is intimately united to that of Jesus, there is in him an emotion, a power of persuasion that moves his hearers. Because by *forgetting himself he attracts the Holy Spirit*, souls are moved by grace and either converted or sanctified. A lukewarm priest, on the contrary, preaches but with his lips and, because he seeks self, beats the air and often is but "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."¹

400. b) The priest cannot fulfil *his duty*² of giving good *example* to the faithful unless he concerns himself with his own spiritual progress. Then only can he repeat in all confidence the words of St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ."³ Witnesses of his piety, of his kindness, of his poverty and of his self-denial, the faithful realize that he *practices what he preaches*, that he is a *Saint*; they venerate him and are drawn to follow in his footsteps. The old saying is again verified, that "words touch the heart, but examples rule our lives." A mediocre priest may be esteemed as an honest man who works at his craft like any other, yet his ministry will bear little or no fruit.

401. c) *Prayer* is and will ever remain the most effective means of exercising zeal. What a contrast is offered in this regard between the saintly priest and the commonplace priest? The former prays *habitually* and constantly, for his very actions, done for God, constitute a real prayer. He does nothing, he does not even give a word of counsel without acknowledging his helplessness and begging God to make up for it by His grace. God, "Who giveth grace to the humble,"⁴ grants it to him in abundance and his ministry brings forth fruit. The imperfect priest prays little and prays poorly, and for this reason his ministry remains barren.

Therefore, whoever wishes to work successfully for souls, must make daily efforts to advance. Sanctity is *the soul of the true Apostolate*.

¹ I Cor., XIII, 1. — ² Cod., Can. 124.
³ I Cor., IV, 16. — ⁴ James, IV, 6.

CONCLUSION

402. From all that has been said it is clear that before entering the priesthood one must be already possessed of a measure of sanctity; and that, once a priest, one must continually strive to attain to a higher degree.

1° To enter the priesthood one must needs have acquired already a certain measure of perfection. This is brought out by all the texts of the *Pontifical* cited above. Even of the mere cleric is required detachment from the world and from self, and attachment to Jesus Christ. If the Church prescribes *regular intervals* between ordinations, it is with a view that the young ecclesiastic may have the time of acquiring one by one the various virtues proper to the different orders. The *Pontifical* gives clear expression to this in the following words: 1 "And thus let them advance from one Order to the other that as they grow in age, they may likewise grow in probity of life and in doctrine." Moreover, it demands *tried virtue*: "Let tried virtue be to them in the stead of old age."² But such virtue is not acquired except by the painstaking fulfilment of the duties of state, by the unwearied exercise of the virtues which the Prelate points out in every ordination. This virtue should be so *solid* that it resembles that of men advanced in years (*senectus sit*), who through long and arduous efforts have attained to the maturity and constancy becoming their age.

403. It is not any sort of virtue that is required for the right exercise of the sacred functions; it is a *superior* kind of virtue, says St. Thomas: "For the worthy exercise of Holy Orders ordinary goodness does not suffice, superior virtue is required."³ We have seen that the *Pontifical* requires of the Ordinand a solid and active faith, a great trust in God, a devoted love of God and of the neighbor, not to mention the moral virtues of prudence, justice, religion, humility, temperance, fortitude, constancy. The practice of these virtues must reach a high degree, since the Pontiff calls down upon the Ordinand the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which supplement the virtues and perfect their practice. Hence, it is not enough to be in the state of *beginners*, as yet exposed to relapse into serious faults. One must have undergone a purification from faults and inordinate attachments, be grounded in the

¹ De Ordinibus Conferendis. — ² *Loc. cit.* — ³ *Supplem.*, q. 35, a. 1, ad 3.

exercise of those virtues that belong to the *illuminative* way, and have for goal a closer and closer union with Almighty God.

404. ²⁰ Once a man has become a *priest*, he must not stop, but rather go on daily from virtue to virtue. This is the teaching of the Imitation: "*Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound by a stricter bond of discipline, and art obliged to greater perfection of sanctity.*"¹ Not to advance is to fall back. (N. 358, 359.) Moreover, such is the extent of our obligation to follow in Christ's footsteps and to edify our neighbor, that despite all efforts, we still fall short of the ideal proposed to us by the Gospel and by the *Pontifical*, as we proved when we spoke of the priestly functions (N. 392 and foll.). We must therefore say to ourselves each day that we have yet a great way to go before attaining the goal: "Thou hast yet a great way to go."²

405. This is all the more so, since we live in the midst of the world and its dangers, whilst religious are protected by their rules and all the helps of community life. If they are obliged to tend constantly toward perfection, are we not under the same obligation, and even a greater one? And if we have not for the protection of our virtue all the exterior helps that protect them, are we not bound to make up for these by greater interior strength? This strength, it stands to reason, cannot be acquired but by an ever-renewed effort toward a better life; for the world wherein we must mingle forever tends to lower our ideal, and we must therefore raise it, again and again, by constantly stirring up the spirit of the priesthood.

What makes this spiritual progress a more pressing duty still is the fact that on the degree of our own sanctity depend the welfare and the sanctification of the souls entrusted to our care. According to the ordinary laws of a supernatural Providence, the holier the priest, the greater the good wrought by him. This we have shown (N. 398 and foll.). Would it be in harmony with our mission as *sanctifiers of souls* to call a halt half-way or at the very outset on the road to perfection, when so many souls in imminent danger of being lost cry out on all sides, "Pass over... and help us."³ A worthy priest has but one answer to this cry of distress. It is Our Lord's own answer: "And

for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."¹

406. We shall not examine in this place the question of whether the priest, obliged as he is to an interior perfection greater than that of the religious who is not in Holy Orders, is or is not in the *state of perfection*. This is a question of Canon Law. It is commonly answered in the negative, for the priest's status, even if he be a pastor of souls, lacks that *stability* which is canonically required in order to constitute the *state of perfection*.

As regards the priest who is also a religious, he evidently has all the obligations imposed on him by his priesthood besides those imposed by his vows, finding in his rule additional helps to become holy. He must not forget, however, that his priesthood obliges him to a higher perfection than does his religious profession.

Thus the members of the clergy, secular and regular, far from falling into petty jealousies, should hold each other in mutual esteem and help each other, having but one and the same aim, to glorify God by gaining unto Him souls — as many as possible. They should find in the virtues and in the success of their brethren a stimulus to a noble emulation: "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works."²

CHAPTER V.

General Means of Perfection

407. Once we have formed deep convictions concerning the obligation of tending to perfection, it remains but to seek and use the *means* that lead thereto. It is question here of the *general* means, common to all souls desirous of spiritual progress. In the *second part* we shall treat of the *special* means proper to the different stages of the spiritual life.

These means are *interior* or *exterior*. The former are dispositions or acts of the soul itself that gradually raise it toward God. The latter comprise besides these acts, *exterior* helps which aid the soul in this elevation. It is important to give first a brief survey of these means.

408. I. Among the *interior* means there are four that must be considered here: 1^o *The desire of perfection* which

¹ Book IV, ch. 5. — ² *III Kings*, XIX, 7. — ³ *Acts* XVI, 9.

¹ *John*, XVII, 19. — ² *Hebr.*, X, 24.

is the first step forward, giving us the impulse needed to overcome obstacles.

^{2°} *The knowledge of God and of self.* Since it is question of uniting the soul to God, the better these two terms are known, the easier will be the task of effecting such union: *May I know Thee, O Lord, that I may love Thee, may I know myself that I may despise myself!*

^{3°} *Conformity to God's will.* To surrender our will to that of God is the most genuine token of love and the most effective means of uniting ourselves to the source of all perfection.

^{4°} *Prayer* viewed in its wider sense, as adoration and petition, mental or vocal, private or public, *any elevation of the soul to God.* It unites all our interior faculties to God, our memory and imagination, our mind and will, and even our outward actions inasmuch as they are an expression of our spirit of prayer.

II. The exterior means of perfection may likewise be reduced to four principal ones:

^{1°} *Direction.* Just as God has instituted a visible authority to govern His Church externally, so He has willed that souls be led by an experienced spiritual guide, who may help them to avoid danger, and further and direct their efforts.

^{2°} *A rule of life,* which approved by such a director further extends his influence over souls.

^{3°} *Conferences, exhortations, and spiritual reading.* Well chosen, these put us in contact with the teachings and the example of the Saints and lead us to follow in their footsteps.

^{4°} *The sanctification of our relations with others,* with parents, friends, or business-associates. This enables us to direct toward God not merely our pious exercises, but all our actions and our duties of state.

I	Desire of Perfection
Interior Means	{ Knowledge of God and of Self Conformity to the Divine Will Prayer
II	Direction
Exterior Means	{ A Rule of Life Spiritual Readings and Conferences Sanctification of Social Relations

ART. I. INTERIOR MEANS OF PERFECTION

§ I. The Desire of Perfection :

409. The first step toward perfection is the sincere, ardent and constant desire to attain it. We shall examine, ^{1°} its nature, ^{2°} its necessity and efficacy, ^{3°} its qualities, ^{4°} the means of fostering it.

I. The Nature of this Desire

410. ^{1°} Desire in general is a movement of the soul toward the good that is absent. It differs, therefore, from joy which is the satisfaction coming from the actual possession of a good. There are two kinds of desire: one is a feeling or passionate impulse toward a *sensible* good that is absent; and the other, the *rational desire*, is an act of the will tending toward some spiritual good. At times this rational desire reacts upon our sensibility and is thus mixed with feeling. In the supernatural order our good desires are influenced by divine grace, as we have said above.

411. ^{2°} The desire of perfection, then, may be defined as *an act of the will, which, under the influence of grace, ever seeks after spiritual progress.* It may be at times accompanied by pious sentiments that intensify it, ² but this element is not necessary.

412. ^{3°} This desire is born of the combined action of God's grace and the human will. From all eternity God loves us, and by that very fact, desires to unite Himself to us: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." ³ His unflinching love follows us, pursues us, as if His own happiness were incomplete without us. Then, when our own soul illumined by faith looks into itself, it finds an immense void that nothing but the Infinity of a God itself can fill: "Thou hast made us unto Thyself, O God, and our heart finds no rest until it rests in Thee." ⁴ Our soul, then, sighs after God, after His love, after perfection: "As the hart panteth after

¹ ST. FR. DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. I. C. I-III; *The Love of God*, Bk. XII. c. 2-3; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, *De vita spirit.*, t. I, l. V; RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, P. I, Tr. I, *On the Esteem of Perfection*; LE GAUDIER, *De perfect. vita spiritualis*, P. II, Sept. 1^a; J. ARINTERO, *Du désir de la perfection, Vie spirituelle*, Fevr. 1920, p. 296; SCARAMELLI-STOCKMAN, *Manual of Christ. Perfection* P. I, art. 2.

² See remark of ST. THOMAS, 1^a II^a, q. 30, a. 1, ad 1.

³ Jerem., XXXI, 3.

⁴ St. AUGUST., *Confessions*, Bk. I, n. 1.

the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O Lord... for Thee my soul hath thirsted." ¹ Since on earth this longing will never be satisfied, for here this divine union can never be complete, it follows that if we place no obstacle in the way this desire will constantly grow.

413. ^{4°} Unfortunately, obstacles abound that tend to stifle, or at least, to weaken this desire. Such are the threefold concupiscence (which we have described above, n. 193), the fear of the difficulties to be overcome and of the continued efforts required for co-operation with grace and for spiritual progress. Hence, we must thoroughly convince ourselves of the necessity of this desire and take the means to foster it.

II. *The Necessity and Efficacy of the Desire for Perfection*

414. ^{1°} **Its Necessity.** The desire for it is the *first step* toward perfection, the *indispensable* condition for attaining it. The road to perfection is *arduous* and implies constant and energetic efforts, for as we have remarked, no one can make progress in the path of God's love without sacrifice, without struggling against the threefold concupiscence and against the law of least resistance. No one ever enters upon any steep, rugged path unless he is possessed of an ardent desire of arriving at the goal; and were he to set out on such a path he would soon abandon it. Likewise, no one starts on the way to perfection or perseveres in it unless sustained by a strong desire to reach the end.

A) Hence, everything in the Sacred Scriptures tends to inspire in us this desire. The Gospels as well as the Epistles are a continual exhortation to perfection. This we have shown in treating of the obligation of tending to perfection; the object of the texts that establish this obligation is to stimulate the desire of pressing forward. What other purpose can they have? They present to us as the ideal the imitation of the divine perfections; they propose to us Jesus Christ Himself as our model; they recount His virtues; they urge us to follow His example. Does not all this inspire us with the desire of perfection?

415. **B)** The Church's Liturgy has the same aim. By setting forth in the course of the liturgical year the various phases of Our Lord's life, it makes us give expression to the *most ardent longings* for the coming of Christ's kingdom in

the souls of men during the season of Advent; for His growth in our hearts, at Christmastide and the Epiphany; for penitential exercises, through the Lenten period, as a preparation for Easter graces; for an intimate union with God, through the Pascal time, and for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, from Whit-Sunday till the end of the cycle. Thus, all through the year the Sacred Liturgy, in one form or another, quickens our desire for spiritual growth.

416. **C)** The *experience* gained from reading the lives of the Saints or from the actual direction of souls shows us that without the oft-renewed desire for perfection, there is no progress in the spiritual life. *St. Teresa* ¹ makes us well aware of this fact: "Let us not stifle our desires. This is highly important. Let us firmly believe that with the divine help and our own efforts we, too, can in the course of time obtain what so many Saints, aided by God, finally attained. Had they never conceived such desires, had they not little by little carried them into execution, they would never have risen so high... Oh! how important it is in the spiritual life to rouse oneself to great things!" The Saint herself offers us a striking example of this. As long as she was not determined to break all the bonds that interfered with her flight towards the heights of perfection, she painfully dragged along the way of mediocrity; from the day she resolved to give herself entirely to God, she advanced wondrously.

417. The *practise* of direction corroborates the teaching of the Saints. Generous souls possessed of a humble and persistent desire to advance in the way of perfection relish and employ the means we suggest to them. If, on the contrary, such desire is lacking, or exists but feebly, we readily observe that the most urgent exhortations produce but little effect. Spiritual nourishment, like food for the body, profits but those who hunger and thirst. God heaps His gifts upon those who crave them, but allots them with measured hand to those who do not prize them: "*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.*" ²

418. ^{2°} **Efficacy of the desire for perfection.** This desire is a real force that makes us grow in holiness.

a) *Psychology* demonstrates that an *idea* deeply impressed tends to elicit a corresponding *act*. This is the more true, when the thought is, accompanied by the *desire*, for the

¹ Ps. XLI, 2; LXII, 2.

² *Life by Herself*, C, XIII. — ³ *Luke*, I, 53.

latter already constitutes an act of the will which sets our faculties in motion. Hence, to desire perfection is to tend towards it, and to tend towards perfection is to begin to attain it. To desire to love God is already to love Him, since God sees the heart and takes into account all our intentions. Hence, Pascal's profound words: "Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst thou not found me". Now, to desire is to seek, and he who seeks finds: "*For every one that seeketh findeth.*"¹

419. b) Furthermore, in the supernatural order, desire constitutes a prayer, an elevation of the soul towards God, a sort of spiritual communion which lifts our soul towards Him and draws Him to us. Now, God delights in granting our prayers, especially when their object is our sanctification, — the most ardent desire of His Heart: "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*"² Thus God, in the Old Testament, urges us to seek after, to pursue wisdom, that is to say, *virtue*, making the most wondrous promises to those that hearken to his voice, and granting wisdom to those that earnestly desire it: "*Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the Spirit of wisdom came upon me.*"³ In the Gospels, Our Lord invites us to quench in Him our spiritual thirst: "*If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.*"⁴ The more ardent our desires, the more abundant the graces we receive, for the Source of living water is inexhaustible.

420. c) Lastly, desire *dilates* the soul and so renders it more apt for the reception of divine communications. There is in God such a fulness of goodness and of graces, that the measure of His bounty is to a great extent in proportion to our capacity to receive. The more we expand our soul by earnest and ardent desires, the more capable it becomes of receiving of the fulness of God: "*I opened my mouth and drew unto myself the Spirit... Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*"⁵

III. The Qualities Which the Desire for Perfection Should Possess

To attain such happy results, the desire for perfection must be *supernatural, predominant, persevering, and practical.*

¹ *Math.*, VII, 8. — ² *I Thess.*, IV, 3. — ³ *Wisdom*, VII, 7; cf. *Prov.* I, 20-23.
⁴ *John*, VIII, 37. As St. Thomas remarks (I, q. 12, a. 6), desire renders the soul more fit — better disposed — for the reception of the desired object.
⁵ *P. CXVIII*, 131; *LXXX*, 11.

421. 1° It must be supernatural in its *motive* as well as in its *principle*.

a) Supernatural in its *motive*, that is to say, based upon reasons furnished by faith, which reasons we have already explained: the nature and the excellence of the Christian life and of Christian perfection, the glory of God, the edification of the neighbor, the welfare of our soul, etc.

b) Supernatural in its *principle*, in the sense that it must be conceived under the influence of grace, which alone can impart to us the *light* that will make us understand and relish such motives, and the strength required to act in accordance with our convictions. Since grace is obtained through prayer, we must ask insistently of God that He increase in us this desire for perfection.

422. 2° It must be *predominant*: in other words, it must outdo in intensity any other desire. Since perfection is in reality the hidden treasure, that pearl of great price which must be bought at any cost, and since each degree of Christian perfection is attended by a corresponding degree of glory, of the Beatific Vision and of love, the same must be longed for and sought after in preference to any thing else whatsoever: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice.*"¹

423. 3° It must be *persevering*. To seek perfection is a long and arduous work calling for constant progress. Hence the desire to do better must be renewed frequently. Our Lord tells us, therefore, not to look backwards over the distance traversed, or to cast complacent eyes upon the results of past efforts: "*No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.*"² On the contrary we must look ahead, as St. Paul tells us, to see the way we must yet travel and redouble our effort, like the runner who stretches forth his arm the better to reach hold of the goal: "*Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernatural vocation.*"³ St. Augustine lays great stress upon this same truth; he says that to halt is to fall back, to tarry in the contemplation of the way we have traveled is to lose our vigor. The motto of perfection is to go ever forward, to aim ever higher: "*Linger not*

¹ *Math.*, VI, 33. — ² *Luke*, IX, 62. — ³ *Philipp.*, III, 13-14.

on the way, stray not from it... Always strive, always move, always advance." 1.

We must not consider the good we have achieved but the good that is yet to be accomplished; we must not look to those who do less than ourselves, but to those who do better, to the fervent, to the Saints, and above them all to Jesus Himself, our True Model. Then, the more we progress the further we seem from the goal, just because we realize the better how lofty that goal is.

However, there must be an entire absence of anything like over-eagerness, impatience, and, above all, anything like presumption in our desires. Violent efforts are of short duration, and the presumptuous soon lose heart after the first failures. What really makes for our progress is a calm and oft-renewed desire based on convictions and on the omnipotence of grace.

424. 4° Then, desire becomes *practical and efficacious*, because it is directed not towards an ideal that is impossible to realize, but towards the *means* that lie within our reach. There are souls possessed of magnificent, but purely speculative ideals, souls who aspire to high perfection the while they neglect the means that lead thereto. Herein lurks a twofold danger: we may fancy we have attained perfection, simply because we dream of it, and thus fall into pride; or we may come to a standstill and fail. We must, instead, bear in mind the saying that he who wills the end wills also the means. We must recall that it is *fidelity in little things* that ensures fidelity in greater things, and that our desire for perfection should bear on our present duties, however trifling they may be, since the faithful accomplishment of these will guarantee fidelity in those of greater moment. "*He who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater.*" 2 To pretend to desire perfection and then relegate to the morrow the efforts that should accompany such desire, to wish to sanctify oneself through the performance of great actions and then take no heed of ordinary ones, is to labor under a double illusion, which reveals either a lack of sincerity or an ignorance of psychology. *High ideals* are, no doubt, required, but so also is their immediate and progressive realization.

1 ST. AUGUSTINE, Sermon 169, n. 18.
2 *Luce* XVI, 10.

IV. Means to Stimulate this Desire for Perfection

425. 1° Based upon supernatural convictions, the desire for perfection takes root and grows chiefly through *meditation and prayer*. It is necessary then first of all to *reflect* on the great truths we have explained in the foregoing chapters, on the greatness of this life which God Himself communicates to us, on the beauty and the wealth of a soul that cultivates it, on the delights which God has in store for it in heaven. It is necessary to meditate on the lives of those Saints who grew the more in holiness as their longing for perfection gained daily in constancy and ardor. That such meditation may be made more fruitful, we must join to it *prayer* which, drawing God's grace upon the soul, makes our convictions concerning the need of perfection deeper and more vital.

426. 2° There are certain favorable *circumstances*, in which the action of grace is more keenly felt. A wise spiritual director will know how to profit by them in order to awaken in his penitents the desire for perfection.

a) From the first dawn of reason, God invites the child to give himself to Him. How important it is that parents and confessors avail themselves of these divine solicitations to stimulate and direct the impulses of young hearts! This is true of the time of First Communion, of the moment when the signs of vocation first appear or a choice of life is to be made; of the time when one enters college, seminary, or novitiate; or of the time when one receives the sacrament of matrimony. On all these occasions, God grants special graces to which it is important to correspond with a generous heart.

427. b) The same is true of the time of *retreat*. The prolonged periods of recollection, the instructions, the readings and the examinations of conscience, and the prayers offered, above all, the more abundant graces then received, contribute to the strengthening of our convictions, to a better knowledge of our state of conscience, to the more sincere abhorrence of our faults and their causes, whilst new, more practical and more generous resolutions are suggested, giving us a new impetus toward perfection. Thus it has come to pass in recent years that more frequent *retreats* 1 have formed among the clergy and

1 A. BOISSEI, *Retraites formées, pratique et théorie*.

the faithful choice men whose one ambition is that of advancing in the spiritual life. Spiritual directors in seminaries, likewise, know the wonderful effects produced in their students by the general retreats and the retreats for ordination. Then it is that generous desires for a better life are conceived, renewed or intensified. We must, then, profit by these opportunities to answer God's appeal and begin or perfect the reformation of our life.

428. c) *Providential trials*, physical or moral, such as illness, death, moral suffering, evil turns of fortune are often accompanied by interior graces that urge us on to a more perfect life. Provided we take advantage of these ordeals to turn to God, they wean us from earthly things, purify our soul through suffering, inspire us with a yearning for Heaven and for perfection which is the way to Heaven.

429. d) Lastly, there are times when the Holy Spirit produces *interior movements* in the soul, inclining it towards a life of greater perfection. He enlightens us on the vanity of human things, on the happiness flowing from a more complete gift of self to God, and urges us to greater efforts. We must profit by these interior graces to hasten our progress.

430. 3° There are *Spiritual Exercises* which by their very nature tend to awaken in us the desire for perfection. These are :

a) *The particular examen*, which obliges us each day to study ourselves in regard to some one special point, not only in order to ascertain our failings or successes, but above all to renew our determination to advance in the practice of such or such a virtue. (N. 468.)

b) *The systematic practice of Confession* with a view to correct such or such a fault (n. 262).

c) *The monthly and annual retreats* that come to renew our desire of doing better.

CONCLUSION

431. In making use of these various means we shall continually or at least habitually keep our wills fixed on the end to be attained, spiritual progress. Then, upheld by God's grace, we shall more easily triumph over obstacles. No doubt, there will be slight failings now and then, but

spurred on by the desire of advancing, we shall courageously resume our march, and our little setbacks, by exercising us in humility, will serve but to draw us nearer to God.

§ II. The Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Self

432. Since perfection consists in the union of the soul with God, it becomes evident that in order to effect this union, we must be acquainted with its two terms, God and the soul. The knowledge of God will lead us directly to love: *May I know Thee, that I may love Thee*. The knowledge of self, by making us realize the worth of all the good wherewith God has endowed us, will awaken in us a corresponding sense of gratitude; while the sight of our miseries and our faults, by making us conceive a just contempt of self, will engender in us true humility: *May I know myself, in order that I may despise myself*. Divine love will be the result, for it is on the ruins of self-love that the love of God is built.

I. The Knowledge of God¹

433. In order to love God it is necessary first of all to know Him.² The more profound our consideration of His perfections, the more ardent the love of our heart for Him; for, all is loveliness in Him. In Him is found the fulness of being, of beauty, of goodness and of love: *God is love*. This much is evident. It remains to determine: 1° What we must know of God in order to love Him, and 2° How to come to that affectionate knowledge of God.

1° WHAT WE MUST KNOW OF GOD

Concerning God, we must know whatever can render Him admirable and lovable. We must learn of His exis-

¹ FABER, *Creator and Creature, The Precious Blood, Bethlehem*; NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent and other works* (See word God in Index to the Works of CARD. NEWMAN by RICKABY, S. J.); BELLORD, *Méditations on Dogma*; BRANCHEREAU, *Méditations*, vol. I, Méd. I-VI; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, IV-V; HOGAN, *Clerical Studies*, C. IV, A. I; SCOTT, S. J., *God and Myself*; BOSSUET, *De la connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même; Elevations sur les mystères; Méditations sur l'Évangile*; L. BAILL, *Théologie affective, LÉSSUS, De perfectionibus moribus divinis*; P. D'ARGENTAN, *Les Grands de Dieu*; CONTENTSON, *Théologia mentis et cordis*; BEAUDENOM, *Les Sources de la Piété*; SAUVÉ, *Dieu intime, Jésus intime, L'homme intime*, etc.; P. SAUDREAU, O. P., *Les divines paroles*; M. D'HERBIGNY, *La Théologie du révéil*, ch. VIII-XI; P. R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Dieu, son existence, sa nature*, 1920.

² Contrary propositions of Molinos were condemned, DENZ.-BANN. 1226, 1329.

tence, His nature, His attributes, His works, above all, His inner life and His relations with us. Nothing that concerns the Godhead is foreign to devotion; the most abstract truths themselves have an affective aspect which is a very great aid to our piety. Let us see this with the help of a few instances taken from philosophy and theology.

434. A) Philosophical Truths. ¹ **a)** The metaphysical proofs of the existence of God seem abstract enough, and yet they are inexhaustible treasures of marvelous considerations leading to divine love: God, the Changeless *Prime Mover*, Pure Act, is the origin of all movement. Hence, we cannot move if not in Him and through Him. He must be, therefore, the first principle of all our actions. If He is our first principle, He shall be our last end: "*I am the beginning and the end.*" God is the *First Cause* of all beings, of whatever of good there is in us, of our faculties, of our acts. To Him alone, therefore, be all honor and glory! God is the *Necessary Being*, the Only Necessary Being. He is then the only good to be sought. All other things are contingent, accessory, transient, useful solely inasmuch as they lead us to this Only Necessary Being. God is *Infinite Perfection*: creatures are but the faint reflection of His beauty. He is then, *the Ideal* to pursue: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." ² We must set no limits to our perfection: "I am infinite," said Almighty God to St. Catherine of Sienna, "and I seek infinite works, that is, an infinite sense of love." ³

435. b) If we pass thence to the *divine nature*, even the little we know of it is sufficient to wean us from all created things and raise us up to God. He is the fulness of being: "*I am Who am.*" Hence, mine is but a borrowed existence, incapable of subsisting by itself, and I must acknowledge my utter dependence upon the Divine Being. This it was that God wished to teach St. Catherine of Sienna when He said to her: "Learn, my daughter, what you are and what I am... You are that which is not, and I am He Who is." ⁴ What a lesson in humility! What a lesson in love!

436. c) We learn the same lesson from the consideration of the *divine attributes*. There is not one that if well meditated upon does not act as a stimulus to our love in one

form or another. The *simplicity of the Godhead* moves us to the practice of singleness of purpose or purity of intention, which causes us to tend directly to God, to the exclusion of every inordinate thought of self. His *immensity*, which encompasses and pervades our being, is the foundation of that practice so dear and so profitable to pious souls, the exercise of the presence of God. His *eternity* detaches us from all things that pass away with time, by recalling that whatever is not eternal is nothing. His *unchangeableness* aids us in the midst of human vicissitudes to maintain that peace of mind so necessary to a close and abiding union with Him. His *perpetual activity* spurs us on to action, preventing us from lapsing into indifference or into a sort of dangerous apathy or quietism. His *omnipotence*, ministering to His *unbounded wisdom* and His *merciful goodness*, inspire us with a filial trust that becomes a singular aid to prayer and to a holy abandonment of ourselves to Him. His *holiness* makes us hate sin and cherish that purity of heart which leads to a familiar union with Him: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." The soundest foundation of our faith rests upon His *infallible truthfulness*. His *beauty*, His *goodness*, His *love*, captivate our heart, giving rise to outpourings of love and gratitude. Thus it is that saintly persons love to lose themselves in the contemplation of the divine attributes and by gazing adoringly upon God's perfections, to draw them in a measure into their own hearts.

437. B) Holy souls delight above all in the contemplation of **revealed truths**, all of which refer to the history of the *Divine Life*: its *source* in the Most Holy Trinity, its *first bestowal* by the creation and sanctification of man, its *restoration* through the Incarnation, its *actual diffusion* through the Church and the Sacraments, its final *consummation* in Heaven. Each of these mysteries enraptures and inflames souls with love for God, for Jesus Christ, for their brethren and for all things divine.

438. a) The *source* of divine life is the *Blessed Trinity*. God, the very plenitude of being and of love, eternally regards His Own Self. Out of this contemplation He brings forth His Word, the Word that is His Son, distinct from, yet in all things equal to Him, His own living and substantial image. He loves that Son and is in turn loved by Him; and from this mutual love proceeds the Holy Ghost, distinct from the Father and the Son yet equal in all things to Both. And this is the life wherein we share!

¹ See especially JOYCE, *Natural Theology*.

² *Math.*, V, 48; cfr. Commentary of IV Lateran Council. (*Denzinger*, 432).

³ *Dialog.*, I, p. 40.

⁴ *Vie*, by RAYMOND DE CAPOUVE, trad. Cartier, t. I, p. 71.

439. b) Because He is infinitely good, God wills to communicate Himself to other beings. This He does by creating and above all by sanctifying men. By creation we are God's servants, which already constitutes a high honor. Indeed, what a cause for wonder, for gratitude, for love, that God should have thought of me from all eternity, that He should have chosen me out of billions of possible beings in order to bring me into existence and bestow upon me life and intelligence! But what shall I say of His calling me to share in His own divine life? Of His having adopted me as a child, having destined me for the clear vision of His essence and for His undivided love? Is not this the consummation of charity? Is not this a great motive-power urging us to love Him without measure or stint?

440. c) Through the fault of our first parents we lost our right to this participation in the divine life, and of ourselves we had not the power to regain it. But behold! The Son of God sees our plight, becomes a *man* like ourselves and is thus constituted the Head of a mystical body whose members we are; He atones for our sins by His sorrowful Passion and His death on the Cross, reconciles us to God and makes that life He has drawn from the bosom of His Father flow once more into our souls. Can there be a stronger appeal to make us love the Word-made-Flesh, to urge us to unite ourselves to Him and through Him to the Father?

441. d) To facilitate this union, Jesus remains among us. He abides with us through His Church, that transmits and explains His teachings; through His *Sacraments*, mysterious channels of grace, giving the life divine. He dwells among us, above all, in the Holy Eucharist wherein He at once perpetuates His Presence, His merciful action, and His Sacrifice: His *Sacrifice* through the Holy Oblation of the Mass, wherein in a mysterious manner He renews His immolation; His *merciful action*, through Holy Communion, wherein He comes to us with all the treasures of grace to perfect our souls and impart to them His own virtues; His *abiding Presence*, willingly imprisoned day and night within the Tabernacle, where we can visit Him, converse with Him, glorify with Him the Most Blessed Trinity, find health for all our spiritual miseries, and consolation in sorrow and discouragement: "Come to me all you that labour and are burdened: and I will refresh you."¹

¹ *Matth.*, XI, 28.

442. e) This is but the dawn of the noonday light of eternity, wherein we shall see God face to face, as He sees Himself, and shall love Him with a perfect love. In Him we shall behold and love whatever is good, whatever is noble. We came from God by creation; we return to Him by glorification. In glorifying Him we find perfect happiness.

Dogma is, then, the true source of real devotion.

2° MEANS OF ARRIVING AT THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

443. Three principal means are at our disposal in order to acquire this affective knowledge of God: 1° the *devout study* of philosophy and theology; 2° *meditation* or mental prayer; 3° the habit of *seeing God* in all things.

A) *The Devout Study of Theology.*¹ One may study philosophy and theology in two ways: *merely with the mind*, as one would study mathematics or any other secular science, or with *mind and heart*. It is the latter that begets godliness. When St. Thomas plunged into the depths of the great philosophical and theological questions, he studied them not as a Greek sage would, but as a disciple and lover of Christ. According to his expression, theology treats of divine things and of acts inasmuch as they lead us to a perfect knowledge of God, in which eternal happiness consists.² This is why his piety was even more wonderful than his knowledge. The same was true of *St. Bonaventure* and other great theologians. Of course, the most of them have not gone into devout considerations concerning the great mysteries of our faith which they sought but to explain and prove, yet it is from these very truths that godliness springs. Whoever studies them in the *spirit of faith*, cannot but admire and love Him Whose grandeur and goodness theology reveals. This holds especially if we know how to avail ourselves of the *gifts of knowledge* and of *understanding*. The former lifts us up from creatures unto God, disclosing to us their relations with the Divinity; the latter

¹ The Church has condemned the assertion of Molinos that a theologian is not as well disposed for contemplation as an ignorant man (DENZ.-BANN., 1284). FATHER FABER writes: "Is not all doctrine practical? Is it not the first use of dogmatic theology to be the basis of sanctity...? He who separates dogmatics from ascetics seems to assert this proposition: 'The Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ was not meant primarily to make us holy...' (FABER *Spiritual Conferences*, Conf. on Death, 3, p. 137). (Theology) "is the best fuel of devotion, the best fuel of divine love... If a science tells of God, yet does not make the listener's heart burn within him, it must follow either that the science is no true theology, or that the heart which listens is stupid and depraved. In a simple and loving heart, theology burns like a sacred fire." (FABER, *The Precious Blood*, c. III). — ² *Stam. theol.* 1, q. 1, a. 4.

makes us penetrate to the very heart of revealed truths, to discern their marvelous harmony.

With the aid of these lights, the devout theologian will know how to rise from the contemplation of the most speculative truths to acts of adoration, of wonder, of gratitude and of love, which spring spontaneously from the study of Christian dogmas. These acts, far from paralyzing his intellectual activities, will but quicken and sharpen them; for one studies better, with more diligence and greater perseverance, whatever one loves. One discovers depths which the intellect alone could not sound, and draws inferences which broaden the field of theology, whilst nourishing piety.

444. B) Meditation must accompany study. We do not meditate sufficiently upon Christian dogmas, or we confine our consideration to their secondary aspects. We must not hesitate to take the very essence of these dogmas as the subject of our meditations. Then it is that the light of faith, under the influence of grace, reaches such heights and pierces such depths as the intellect alone could never discern. We find proof of this fact in the writings of unlettered persons, who having been raised to contemplation, have left us appreciations concerning God, Christ our Lord, His doctrines and Sacraments, that actually rival those of the most exalted theologians. And did not *St. Thomas* say that he had learned more from his Crucifix than from the works of Doctors? The reason for it is that God speaks more readily in the silent peacefulness of prayer; and that His Word, then better understood, enlightens the mind, enkindles the heart and sets the will in action. Then it is, likewise, that the Holy Spirit deigns to impart, over and above the gifts of knowledge and understanding, that of *wisdom*, which gives a relish for the truths of faith, causes us to love these truths and live by them, and thus establishes a very close union between God and the soul. This is well described by the author of the *Imitation* in the following words: "Happy is the soul that heareth the Lord speaking within her, and receiveth from His mouth the word of comfort."¹

The repeated and affectionate remembrance of God is but the prolongation of the happy effects of our mental prayer. The frequent thought of God increases our love for Him, and this love deepens and refines our knowledge.

¹ *Imit.* Bk. III, c. 1.

445. C) Then it is that we acquire the habit of rising more easily from the creature to the Creator, and of seeing God in all His works, in *things, persons and events*. The basis of this practice is "*the divine exemplarism*," taught by Plato, perfected by *St. Augustine* and *St. Thomas*, elucidated by the school of *St. Victor*, and taken up by the French school of the Seventeenth Century.¹ All beings have existed in the divine thought before their creation. God has begotten them in His mind before bringing them forth and He has willed that they reflect, in various degrees, His divine perfections. If, therefore, we regard created things, not only with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the soul, by the light of faith, we shall see there three things :

a) All creatures, according to their degree of perfection, are an image, a likeness of God; all proclaim God for their Maker and bid us join in praise of Him, since their own beings, all their beauty and goodness, is but a created and finite participation in the divine essence.

b) *Intelligent creatures* in particular, raised as they are to the supernatural order, are images, living likenesses of God, sharing, though in a finite way, in His intellectual life. Since all the baptized are Christ's members, it is Christ that we must see in them : *Christ in all*.

c) All *events*, propitious or adverse, are designed in the mind of God to perfect the supernatural life wherewith He has endowed us, and to facilitate the recruitment of the elect; so much so, that we can profit by everything unto sanctification.

We must add, however, that in the order of time, souls go first to Jesus Christ. It is through Him that they go to the Father, and once they have reached God, they never cease to hold themselves in the closest bonds of union with Jesus.

CONCLUSION : THE EXERCISE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD ²

446. The affective knowledge of God leads us to the holy exercise of the presence of God. We shall now note

¹ See especially *La Journée Chrétienne* of FATHER OLIER where this doctrine is wonderfully applied.

² S. THOMAS, I, q. 8, a. 3; LESSIUS, *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis*, lib. II; RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, Part I, Treatise VI; P. PINEY, O. P., *La Présence de Dieu*; P. PLUS, S. J., *God in us, Living with God, in Christ Jesus*; S. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introd. to a Devout Life*, P. II, c. II, XII, XIII; VAUBERT,

briefly the *foundation*, the *practice*, and the *advantages* of this exercise.

A) Its foundation is the doctrine of *God's omnipresence*. God is everywhere, not only by His all-contemplating vision and His all-pervading action, but likewise, by His substance. As St. Paul told the Athenians: "In Him we live, and move, and are."¹ This is true from both the natural and the supernatural point of view. As *Creator*, after having given us our being and our life, He preserves us and quickens our faculties by His concurrence. As *Father*, He begets us unto the supernatural life, which is a participation in His own, He co-operates with us as principal cause in its preservation and its growth, and He is thus intimately present in us, within the very center of our soul, yet without ceasing to be distinct from us. As we have said above (n. 92), it is the Triune God that lives in us: the *Father*, Who loves us as His children, the *Son* Who deals with us as His brethren, and the *Holy Ghost* Who gives us both His gifts and Himself.

B) *The Practice of This Exercise.* To find God, then, we need not seek Him in the heavens. **a)** We find Him close by *in the creatures* round about us. It is there that we look for Him at the outset. One and all suggest to us some divine perfection, but it is especially so of those creatures which, endowed with intellect, are the dwelling-places of the Living God (n. 92). These constitute for us the steps, as it were, of a ladder by which we ascend to Him. **b)** We know, moreover, that God is near those that confidently invoke Him: "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him,"² and our soul delights to call to Him now by ejaculatory prayers, now by long supplications. **c)** Above all we recall the fact that the Three Divine Persons dwell within us³ and that our heart is a living tabernacle, a Heaven, wherein They give Themselves to us even now. It is enough, then, simply to recollect ourselves, to enter within the inner Sanctuary of our soul, as St. Catherine of Sienna calls it, and contemplate with the eyes of faith the Divine Guest Who deigns to abide there. Then shall we live under His gaze, under His influence; then shall we adore Him and co-operate with Him in the sanctification of our souls.

¹ *How to Walk before God; Spiritual Combat*, c. 21-23; MATURIN, *Principles of the Spiritual Life*, p. 116-138; HAMON, *Medit.*, Vol. V, p. 95-125; CURSUS ASCETICUS, Vol. II, p. 308-317; HEDLEY, *Retreat for Priests*, II, 1. Acts, XVII, 28. — ² Ps. CXLIV, 18. — ³ See C. I, a. I.

447. C) It is easy to see the *advantages* of this exercise for our sanctification.

a) It makes us *carefully avoid sin*. Who shall dare offend the majesty of God while realizing that God actually dwells within him, with His infinite holiness that cannot endure the least blemish, with His infinite justice obliging Him to punish the slightest fault, with His power to punish the guilty, above all with His goodness, forever seeking our love and our fidelity!

b) It *stimulates our zeal* for perfection. If a soldier fighting under the eyes of his commander is inspired to multiply his feats of valor, should we not be ready to undergo the most strenuous labors, to make the greatest efforts when conscious that not only does the eye of God watch us in our struggle, but that His victorious arm ever sustains us? Could we lag, when encouraged by the immortal Crown He holds out to us, and above all, by the greater love He bestows on us as a reward?

c) What great *trust* does not this thought inspire in us! Whatever may be our trials, our temptations, our weariness and our weakness, are we not assured of final victory, when we recall that He, Who is All-powerful, Whom nothing can resist, dwells within us and invests us with His power? Doubtless, we may sustain partial reverses and experience excruciating anguish, yet we are certain that, supported by Him, we shall conquer, and that even our crosses will but make us grow in God's love and multiply our merits. **d)** Lastly, what a joy for us is the thought that He Who is the Joy of the Elect, and Whom we shall see one day face to face, is even now our portion, Whose presence and conversation we may enjoy all day long!

The knowledge and the habitual thought of God are, therefore, most sanctifying. The same is true of the knowledge of self.

II. *Self-knowledge* ¹

The knowledge of God leads us *directly* to love Him, since He is infinitely lovable. The knowledge of self helps us indirectly to love God by disclosing to us the absolute need we have of Him, in order to perfect the *qualities* with

¹ MATURIN, *Self-knowledge and Self-discipline*; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, P. I, tr. VII; S. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introd. to a Devout Life*, P. II, X, XI, P. V, III-VII; MEYER, *Science of the Saints*, Vol. I, Lessons I, XIII-XVI; FABER, *Spiritual Conferences, Self-deceit*; CLARE, *The Science of the Spiritual Life*; SCARAMELLI-STOCKMAN, *Manual of Christian Perfection*, P. I, a. X.

which He has endowed us and to heal our deep miseries. We shall explain : 1° the *necessity* of self-knowledge, 2° its *object*, 3° the *means* of obtaining it.

1° THE NECESSITY OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A few words will convince us of this.

448. A) If we lack self-knowledge, it is morally impossible to perfect ourselves. The reason is that we then entertain *illusions* concerning our state, and, according to our character or our changing moods, we fall either into a *presumptuous optimism* that makes us believe we are already perfect, or into discouragement that causes us to exaggerate our faults. In either case, the result is almost identical — inaction, lack of sustained effort, carelessness. Besides, how can we correct faults with which we are not acquainted or of which we have at best but an imperfect knowledge? How undertake the cultivation of virtues, of qualities of which we have but a vague and confused notion?

449. B) An honest and accurate knowledge of ourselves on the contrary, is an incentive to perfection. The good qualities we discover move us to thank God and to show our gratitude by generous co-operation with His grace. Our *defects* and the realization of our helplessness show us how much we have yet to accomplish, and how important it is to lose no opportunity of advancing. Then we profit by all occasions to uproot or, at least, to weaken, mortify, overcome our vices and to foster and further the growth of our good qualities. Conscious of our weakness, we humbly beg of God the grace of advancing each day; and, upheld by trust in Him, we cling to the desire and the promise of success. This is what excites and steadies our efforts.

2° THE OBJECT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

450. General Remarks. That this knowledge be more profitable, it should extend to *all that is ours*, qualities and defects, natural and supernatural endowments, likes and dislikes, our personal history, our faults, our efforts, our progress; all this to be studied, not in a pessimistic frame of mind, but with due impartiality, with a right conscience enlightened by faith.

a) We should then candidly, without any sort of false humility, ascertain what are the good *qualities* that Almighty God has dealt out to us, not, indeed, to glory

therein, but to thank the Giver and to cultivate His gifts. These are the talents He has entrusted to us and of which He will ask an account. The field to be explored, then, is vast indeed, comprising as it does all our *natural* and *supernatural* gifts : those things which we hold directly from God, and those we have received from our parents; those we owe to our Christian education and those that are the results of our own efforts sustained by grace.

451. b) We must, at the same time, face with courage the sight of our *miseries* and our faults. Drawn forth from nothing, thither forever we tend. We can neither subsist nor act, except by the ever-present concurrence of God. Drawn to evil by a threefold concupiscence (N. 193 and foll.), we have added new strength to our evil tendencies by our actual sins, and by the evil habits resulting from them. We must humbly acknowledge this fact and, without losing heart, set to work with the help of divine grace to heal these wounds by the practice of Christian virtue and thus approach the perfection of Our Heavenly Father.

452. Practical Applications. To guide ourselves in this study we may examine successively our *natural* and *supernatural* endowments, following a sort of *questionnaire* that will facilitate our task.

A) Our Natural Gifts. Regarding the **natural gifts**, we may ask ourselves, before God, what are our *outstanding tendencies*. In this we may adopt the following practical, if not strictly philosophical order.¹

453. a) As regards the sensitive appetites. Is feeling predominant with us, or is it reason and will? There is within all of us this mixture of the higher and the lower, but not in the same proportion. Is our love a matter of sentiment rather than of devotedness and will? Do we control our exterior senses, or are we under their sway? What power do we hold over our imagination and our memory? Are not these faculties excessively flighty and often engaged in empty day-dreaming? Are our passions properly directed and controlled? Is sensuality our ruling passion, or is it pride or vanity? Are we *apathetic*, soft, listless, sluggish? If we are slow by nature, do we, at least, persevere in our efforts?

454. b) As regards the mind. What sort of mind do we possess? Is it quick and clear but superficial, or slow but deep? Do we belong to the intellectual, reflective type, or do we belong to the class of practical men, who study in order to love and to act? How do we set about the work of cultivating our mind? Do we do so with earnestness

¹ In an Appendix will be found a brief study on character that will aid us in this study of self. Cf. DosDA. *L'Union avec Dieu*, t. I, II^e p., ch. XXI.

or with unconcern; steadily, or by fits and starts? What results do we obtain? What are our methods of study? Could we improve upon them? Are our judgments *biased* by our feelings? Are we *obstinate* in our opinions? Can we listen with an open mind to those who hold views different from ours?

455. e) **As regards the will.** Is our will weak and inconstant, or is it strong and persevering? What do we do to train it? The will should *reign supreme* over the other faculties, but it cannot do so unless we use great tact and make great efforts. What do we do to assure the control of the will over our exterior and interior senses, over the activities of our mind? What do we do to strengthen, to steady the will? Have we strong convictions? Do we renew these frequently? Do we strengthen our will power by fidelity in little things, and by the small sacrifices of daily life?

456. d) **As regards character.** *Our character* is of capital importance in what concerns our relations with the neighbor. A *good disposition*, the gift of getting along with others, is a powerful asset to zeal, and a *bad disposition* one of the greatest obstacles. A *man of character* is one who, having the courage of his convictions, strives resolutely and perseveringly to live up to them. A good character is that harmonious combination of kindness and firmness, of meekness and strength, of frankness and tact that elicits the esteem and the love of those with whom it comes in contact. A *bad character* is one which is lacking in frankness, in kindness, in tact or in firmness, or which, by allowing egoism to hold sway, is rude in its manner and makes itself repulsive, at times hateful to others. Here then, we have an important element for study.

457. e) **As regards habits.** Habits result from a repetition of the same acts, and they make the repetition of these acts easy and pleasant. It is important to study such habits as we have already acquired, in order to strengthen them, if they are good, to uproot them, if they are bad. What we shall say in the second part of this treatise about the capital sins and the virtues, will be of help to us in this inquiry.

458. B) **Our supernatural gifts.** Pénétrated as our faculties are by the supernatural, we would not gain a complete knowledge of ourselves if we did not take account of the supernatural gifts God has imparted to us. These we have described above (n. 119 and foll.). God's grace however takes sundry forms in its way of working,¹ and it is important that we study its special action upon our soul.

a) We must examine the *attraction* grace makes us feel for such or such a virtue. Our sanctification, in fact, depends on the docility wherewith we follow these motions of grace.

1) There are *decisive moments* in life when God speaks in clearer and more urgent tones. To hearken to His Voice and follow His inspirations is of the utmost importance.

2) We should ask ourselves whether there be among the attractions we feel, one that is predominant, stronger than the others, oft-recurring, drawing us toward a particular kind of life, toward a certain kind of prayer, toward some determined virtue. We shall thus find the *special way* wherein God wishes us to walk. It is important that we enter it, for it is there that we shall receive the fullness of grace.

459. b) Besides discovering our attractions, we must also take cognizance of the *resistance* we offer to *grace*, of our *failings*, of our *sins*, in order to regret them with all sincerity, make amends and avoid them in the future. This is a painful, humiliating study, especially if carried out honestly and minutely, but it is a most profitable one; for, on the one hand, it is a great aid in the practice of humility, and on the other, it throws us with perfect trust on the merciful love of God, Who alone has the power to heal our weaknesses.

3° THE MEANS OF OBTAINING SELF-KNOWLEDGE

460. Self-knowledge is *difficult* to attain. a) Attracted as we are by *outward things*, we hardly care to enter into ourselves to scrutinize that unseen miniature world; we care even less, *proud* as we are, about discovering our faults.

b) *Our interior* acts are *extremely complex*. There is within us, as St. Paul says, the lower life of the flesh and the higher life of the spirit and often turbulent conflict ensues between them. In order to sift what proceeds from nature, what from grace, what is wilful, and what is not, a great deal of attention is required, a great deal of insight, of honesty, of courage, of perseverance. The light comes but gradually — a bit of knowledge leads to more, and this prepares the way for deeper insight.

461. Since it is through *examinations of conscience* that we come to know ourselves, we shall give, in order to facilitate this exercise, some *general rules*, offer a *method*, and suggest the *dispositions* with which these examinations should be made.

462. A) **General Rules.** a) In order to perform this examination well, we must first of all invoke the *light of the Holy Ghost*, Who "searcheth the reins and the hearts" of men, and beg Him to show us the inmost recesses of our soul by bestowing upon us the gift of knowledge, one of whose functions is to help us know ourselves and thus to lead us to God.

b) Next, we must bring before us the perfect Exemplar, *Jesus*, Whom we must resemble more and more every day, and we must adore and admire not only His exterior acts, but above all, His interior dispositions. By the light which the contrast between ourselves and our Divine Model will give, our faults and imperfections will be the more clearly discerned. Nor shall we be disheartened at the sight, for *Jesus* is also the Healer of souls Whose one anxiety is to dress our wounds and heal them. To make our confession to Him, so to speak, and humbly ask His forgiveness is an excellent practice.

463. c) Then comes the moment to enter into our inmost soul. From *outward* actions we pass on to the hidden causes from which they spring, our interior dispositions. Thus, if we have failed in charity, we shall ask ourselves whether it was through thoughtlessness, envy, jealousy, talkativeness, or from a desire to be witty.

Then to estimate the morality of the act, and to determine our responsibility, we must ask ourselves whether it was *actually* wilful, or wilful in *cause*; performed with *full* consciousness of its malice, or with only a half-advertence; with full consent of the will, or with a half-consent. At the outset, all this is rather obscure, but it gradually becomes clear.

To be even more impartial in our judgments, it is good to place ourselves in the presence of the Sovereign Judge, and to hear Him say to us, kindly, indeed, but with supreme authority: "*Render an account of thy stewardship.*" Then we shall endeavor to answer as frankly as on the last day we shall wish to have done.

464. At times, it is useful, especially for *beginners*, to make this examination in writing, so as to concentrate attention better and to be able to compare the results obtained each day and each week. Should anyone do so, however, care must be taken to avoid anything that savors of self-seeking, any studied elegance of style, and the danger of having such memoranda fall under the eyes of others. If we use a record with conventional signs, we must be on our guard against routine or shallowness. At all events, a time generally arrives when the better course is to discard such means and candidly examine ourselves under the eye of God immediately after the performance of the principal actions of the day, and make a general review of these in the evening.

465. In this, as in all else, we shall follow the counsel of a wise spiritual director, and ask him to help us to come to a better knowledge of ourselves. Experienced and impartial observer, he generally sees better than we do

ourselves the depths of our conscience, and thus is more competent to judge the true character of our acts.

466. B) **Methods for the examination of conscience.** Every one acknowledges that these have been greatly perfected by *St. Ignatius*. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, he carefully differentiates between the *general* and the *particular* examination. The former bears upon all the actions of the day, the latter upon one *special point*, a fault to be corrected, a virtue to be cultivated. Both may, however, be made together. In this case, one will limit the general examination to a summary glance over the day's actions in order to discover the chief faults, passing directly on to the particular examination which is far more important.

467. a) The general examination, which every good Christian should make in order to know and to improve himself, comprises five points, says *St. Ignatius*:¹

- 1) "The first point is to *return thanks to God* Our Lord for the benefits received." This is an excellent exercise, at once consoling and sanctifying, for it brings into relief our ingratitude, thus preparing the way for contrition, and at the same time it sustains our confidence in God.²
- 2) "The second is to ask grace to know the sins and cast them out." If we want to know ourselves it is in order to reform ourselves, but we accomplish neither without the helping grace of God.
- 3) "The third, to demand of the soul an account from the hour of rising to the present examen, taking hour by hour or period by period; and first of thought, then of word, and afterwards of deed, in the same order that has been mentioned for the Particular Examen."
- 4) "The fourth is to ask pardon of God Our Lord for the faults." In fact, we must not lose sight of this, that *sorrow* is the *principal* element of the examination and that this sorrow is mainly the work of grace.
- 5) "The fifth is to purpose amendment with His grace." This resolution, to be practical, should bear upon the *means* of reform. He who wills the end, wills also the means.

¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 1st week. The words within the quotation marks belong to *St. Ignatius' own text*; translation is by Father RICKABY, S. J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.

² Here the *method of St. Ignatius*. *Sulpice* adds the adoration, that is to say all those acts by which we adore, praise, bless, love and express our gratitude to God; we place ourselves then in the presence of Jesus Christ, our model and our Judge, as has been explained above, n. 462.

The recitation of the Our Father is a fitting conclusion for this examination, bringing before our eyes the glory of God which we must seek, and uniting us to Jesus Christ in our supplication for the pardon of our sins and for the grace of avoiding them in the future.

468. b) The particular examination, ¹ in the judgment of St. Ignatius, is of greater moment than the general one, and of even more importance than meditation itself, because it enables us to run down, one by one, our defects and thus overcome them the more easily. Besides, if we examine ourselves thoroughly on some important virtue, we not only acquire that virtue, but all the others related thereto. Thus, whilst we advance in the practice of obedience, we perform at the same time acts of humility, of mortification, and we exercise ourselves in the spirit of faith. Likewise, to acquire the virtue of humility means that we are perfecting ourselves in the practice of obedience, of the love of God, of charity, since pride is the chief obstacle to the exercise of these virtues. There are, however, rules for the *choice of the subject* of examination, and for the manner of performing it

469. The choice of a subject. 1) In general we must attack our *predominant fault* by striving to practice the contrary virtue. This fault is, as a matter of fact, the great stumbling block, the great leader of the opposing forces. If it is conquered, the entire host is routed.

2) Once the subject is determined upon, we must attack first the *outward* manifestations of the particular fault so as to do away with whatever offends or scandalizes the neighbor. Thus, if charity be the subject chosen, we must begin by suppressing words and actions contrary to this virtue.

3) Then, we must without great delay pass to the subject of the *hidden cause of our faults*. This may be, for instance, feelings of envy, a desire to be brilliant in our conversation, etc...

4) It is important not to limit our efforts to this negative side, that is, to the struggle against faults, but we must carefully cultivate the *opposite virtue*. Here, to suppress means to replace.

5) Lastly, in order to make more certain of our progress, we should carefully divide the subject of our examinations

¹ MEYER, *Science of the Saints*, Vol. I, Lesson XIV.

in accordance with the different degrees of a virtue, so as not to cover the whole field, but merely those acts that more exactly correspond to our individual needs. Thus, as regards humility, one should practice, first, what may be called *self-effacement* or forgetfulness of self; speaking but little, giving others the opportunity to speak by means of discreet questions, loving to be unnoticed, to lead a hidden life, etc...

470. The manner of performing the particular Examen. ¹

St. Ignatius tells us that this particular examen involves three periods of the day and two examinations of conscience.

The first time is that in the morning, as soon as the man rises, he ought to purpose to be carefully on his guard against that particular sin, or defect, of which he wishes to correct and amend himself.

The second, after dinner, the man ought to beg of God what he wants, to wit, the grace to remember how often he has fallen into that particular sin or defect, and to amend himself in future; and thereupon let him make the first examen, taking account of his soul of that particular thing proposed, whereof he wishes to correct and amend himself, ranging through the time hour by hour, or period by period, beginning from the hour that he rose even to the hour and moment of the present examen; and let him score on the top line of the figure as many dots as are the times that he has fallen into that particular sin or defect; and afterwards let him purpose anew to amend himself until the next examen that he shall make.

The third time, after supper, the second examen shall be made also from hour to hour, beginning from the first examen until the present second examen; and let him score on the second line of the same figure as many dots as shall answer to the times that he has fallen into that particular sin or defect.

471. HERE FOLLOW FOUR ADDITIONS FOR THE SPEEDIER REMOVAL OF THAT SIN OR DEFECT.

The first Addition is that, as often as the man falls into that sin or particular defect, he puts his hand to his breast, grieving that he has fallen, — which may be done even in presence of company without their noticing what he is doing.

The second, since the first line of the figure represents the first examen, and the second the second examen, let him observe at night whether there is any improvement from the first line to the second, that is, from the first examen to the second.

The third; to compare the second day with the first, that is, the two examens of the second day with the other two of the day previous, and see whether from the one day to the other there has been improvement.

¹ From the translation of the Spiritual Exercises of S. Ignatius, by Father Joseph Rickaby, S. J.

The fourth Addition; to compare one week with another, and see whether there has been improvement in the present week upon the former.

We must observe that the first great _____ which follows signifies Sunday; the second smaller signifies Monday; the third Tuesday, and so of the rest.

{ _____

{ _____

{ _____

{ _____

{ _____

{ _____

{ _____

472. This method may, at first sight, appear somewhat complex; in actual practice, it proves less so. Should one be unable to devote to it such a notable space of time as indicated above, one can condense the essential features of these acts within a shorter period, for instance, ten minutes at night. If one foresees that it cannot be performed in the evening, a part of the time given to visiting the Blessed Sacrament may be set apart for it.

473. C) The Dispositions that should attend this examination. That the examination of conscience, general or particular, may be effective in uniting us more closely to God, it must be accompanied by sentiments or dispositions

that are, so to speak, its soul. We shall note the principal ones: *gratitude, sorrow, purpose of amendment, and prayer.*

a) First in order is a *lively sense of gratitude* toward God, Who all through the day has encompassed us about with His paternal Providence, protected us against temptation, and guarded us from innumerable sins. Without the aid of His grace, we should have fallen into many a fault. We should overflow with gratitude, thanking Him in a practical way — by putting His divine gifts to better use.

474. b) Such a sentiment will beget a *sincere sorrow*, all the more profound, as we have abused so many benefits received, offending so good and so merciful a Father. Out of this sorrow a *sincere humility* is born. Realizing from our own experience our frailty, our helplessness, our unworthiness, we accept with joy the *confusion* we feel at the sight of our repeated failures; we are happy to exalt the boundless mercies of a Father ever ready to forgive; and we rejoice that our misery serves to proclaim the infinite perfection of our God. These dispositions are not a passing mood; rather they abide with us through the spirit of penance, calling often to mind the thought of our faults: "*My sin is ever before me!*"¹

475. c) The firm *determination to atone* for sin and to *reform* our lives will follow: *to atone* by acts of penance, which we take care to impose upon ourselves in order to deaden in us the love of pleasure, the source of our sins; *to reform* our lives by determining the *means* we shall employ, in order to lessen the number of our faults. Such determination must carefully exclude *presumption*, which by having us rely too much on our own will and our own strength, would deprive us of manifold graces and expose us to additional imprudences and further falls. On the other hand, our determination must rest *confidently* upon the omnipotence and the infinite goodness of God, ever willing to come to our aid when we acknowledge our weakness.

476. d) It is to implore this divine help that we conclude the examination with a *prayer*, all the more humble, all the more earnest, now that the sight of our sins has made us more distrustful of self. Realizing that of ourselves we are incapable of avoiding sin and still more incapable of rising up to God by the practice of virtue, we rely on

the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and cry out to God from the depths of our wretchedness, to come unto us, to lift us from the mire of our sins, and to raise us up to Himself. It is through these dispositions rather than by a minute scrutiny of our faults that our souls are gradually transformed under the influence of grace.

CONCLUSION

477. In this way, then, the knowledge of God and of self cannot but promote the intimate and affectionate union between the soul and God. He is infinite perfection, and we are absolute poverty. Hence, there is between the two a certain contact. — He has all that we need, and we need what He has. He stoops down to us to surround us with His love and His favors, whilst we tend toward Him as toward the One Being Who alone can supply for our deficiencies, the One Who alone can make up for our weakness. Our thirst for happiness and for love is quenched only in Him, Who with His love satiates our heart and all its longings, giving us at once both perfection and bliss. Let us repeat these well-known words: "*May I know Thee, O Lord, that I may love Thee; may I know myself, that I may despise myself.*"

§ III. Conformity to the Divine Will :

478. The knowledge of God not only unites our mind to that of God, but it also leads to love, because all in God is lovable. By showing us the need we have of God, the knowledge of self makes us ardently long for Him and throws us into His arms. Conformity to the divine will, however, unites us even more intimately and directly to Him Who is the source of all perfection. In fact, it subordinates and unites our will to God, thus placing our ruling faculty at the service of the Sovereign Master. It may be said that our degree of perfection corresponds to the extent to which we conform to the will of God. In order that this be better understood we shall explain : 1° the nature of this conformity, 2° its sanctifying power.

¹ P. DE CAUSSADE, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, Part. I, l. 1; L'E GAUDIER *op. cit.*, p. III, sect. II; ST. F. DE SALES, *The Love of God*, Bks. VIII-IX; DESURMONT, *Œuvres*, t. II, sur *La Providence*; MGR. GAY, *Christian Life and Virtues*, XI, XIV; DOM V. LEHOUEX, *Le Saint Abandon*, 1^e Partie; TISSOT, *The Interior Life*, Part. II; DREXELIUS, *The Helicotropicum or Conformity of the Human will to the Divine*.

I. Nature of Conformity to the Will of God

479. By conformity to the divine will we understand the absolute and loving submission of our will to that of God, whether it be His "*signified will*" or His will of "*good pleasure*."

As a matter of fact, God's will manifests itself to us under a twofold aspect : a) as the *moral norm* of our actions, clearly intimating what we must do in virtue of His *commandments* or His *counsels*; b) as the ruling principle that *governs* all things with wisdom, directing the course of events so as to make them work together unto His glory and the salvation of men, and made known to us by the providential events that take place in or about us.

The first is called the *signified will* of God, since it proclaims in clear terms what we must do. The second is called the *good pleasure* of God in the sense that God's will is here manifested by providential events to which we must submit. In practice, then, conformity to God's will means *doing God's will* and *submitting to God's will*.

We shall explain : 1° what is the *signified will* of God; 2° what is His will of *good pleasure*; 3° what degree of submission this latter includes.

1° THE SIGNIFIED WILL OF GOD OR OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL

480. Conformity to God's *signified will* consists in willing all that God manifests to us of His intentions. Now, says St. Francis de Sales : "Christian doctrine clearly proposes unto us the truths which God wills that we should believe, the goods He will have us hope for, the pains He will have us dread, what He will have us love, the commandments He will have us observe and the counsels He desires us to follow. And this is called God's signified will, because He has signified and made manifest unto us that it is His will and intention that all this should be believed, hoped for, feared, loved and practiced."¹

This will of God, then, according to the holy Doctor² includes four things : the commandments of God and of the Church, the counsels, the inspirations of grace, and, for Religious, the Constitutions and the Rules.

481. a) God, being our Sovereign Lord, has the right to give us commands. Since He is infinitely wise and

¹ *Treatise of the Love of God*, Bk. VIII, c. 3, (Mackey's translation page 359).
² *Spiritual Conf.*, XV.

infinitely good, He commands nothing that is not conducive at once to His glory and our own happiness. We must, then, willingly and unquestioningly submit ourselves to His laws: the natural law, the positive divine law, ecclesiastical law, or a just civil law; for as St. Paul says, all lawful authority comes from God, and to obey Superiors within the limits of their authority is to obey God Himself, just as to resist them would be to offer resistance to Him: "*Let every soul be subject to higher powers. For there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation.*"¹ We do not inquire here in what cases disobedience to the various laws constitutes a grave or a light sin; this we have done in our treatise on *Moral Theology*. Suffice it to say that from the point of view of perfection, the more *faithful* and Christlike is our observance of law, the closer is our approach unto God, since law is the expression of His will. We may add that *duties of state* come within the category of commandments. They are, as it were, *particular precepts* incumbent upon us by reason of our special vocation and the special offices God has confided to us.

Sanctification, then, is impossible without the observance of the commandments and the fulfilment of the duties of our state. To neglect them under the pretext of performing works of supererogation is a dangerous illusion, a veritable aberration, for it is evident that commands take precedence over counsels.

482. b) The observance of the *counsels* is of itself not *necessary for salvation*, nor does it fall under a direct and explicit command. But, as we have already said in speaking of the obligation of striving after perfection (n. 353), in order to remain in the state of grace, we must at times perform certain good works over and above the strict requirements of the law, that is to say, exercise ourselves in the practice of the counsels. This constitutes an indirect obligation based upon the principle that he who wills the end, wills also the means.

When it is question of perfection, however, we proved in n. 338, that one cannot sincerely and effectively seek it without observing some counsels, such as are in accord with our condition in life. Thus, a married person

may not carry out in practice those counsels which would go counter to the discharge of marital or parental duties. A priest in the ministry may not lead the life of a Carthusian. However, when we aim at perfection, we must be resolved to do more than that to which we are strictly bound. The more generous we are in giving ourselves over to the practice of the counsels compatible with the duties of our state, the closer we draw unto Our Lord, for such counsels are the expression of His designs upon us.

483. c) The same must be said of the inspirations of grace, when they are clear and are submitted to the control of our spiritual director. One may say that these are so many *particular counsels* addressed to individual souls.

No doubt, care must be taken to refer them in the main to the judgment of our spiritual director lest we should become an easy prey to illusion. Ardent, passionate souls readily persuade themselves that they hear the voice of God, when in truth it is the voice of their own passions suggesting such or such a dangerous practice. Punctilious or scrupulous souls would mistake for divine inspirations what is but the product of a feverish imagination, or even a diabolical suggestion, calculated to induce discouragement. Cassian relates many such instances in his *Conferences on Discretion*,¹ and experienced directors of souls know how the imagination does at times suggest practices morally impossible and directly at variance with the fulfilment of the duties of state, all colored by the appearance of divine inspiration. Such suggestions create trouble. If we yield to them, we make ourselves ridiculous; we waste and make others waste much valuable time. If we withstand them, we think we rebel against God, we yield to discouragement and end by surrendering to laxness. A certain control, then, is necessary and the rule to follow is this: if it be question of *customary* things generally done by fervent persons living under the same circumstances as we do, of things that do not trouble the soul, we may do them without hesitation and later on mention them to our director; but if it is question, on the contrary, of things *extraordinary*, even in the least degree, of things not usually done by devout souls, let us wait till we have consulted our spiritual adviser and, in the meantime, fulfil with all generosity our duties of state.

¹ Rom., XIII, 1-2.¹ Second Conference, c. 5-8.

484. With this limitation, it is evident that any one seeking perfection ought to lend a ready ear to the voice of the Holy Ghost speaking within his soul: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me,"¹ and he should without delay and without sparing himself comply with God's demands: "Behold, I come to do thy will, O God."² This is nothing more than correspondence to grace, and it is precisely this willing and steadfast co-operation that makes us perfect: "And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain."³ This is, in fact, the very characteristic of perfect souls, that they hearken to and carry out in practice these divine inspirations: "I do always the things that please Him."⁴

485. d) As to those that live in communities, the more generously they obey their rules and constitutions, the more perfect they are. These rules are means of perfection which the Church has explicitly or implicitly approved and to the observance of which a Religious binds himself on entering the community. Undoubtedly, to fail through weakness in certain details of some rules does not of itself constitute a sin. However, often a more or less sinful motive enters into such wilful negligences, and the violation of rules, even when not sinful, certainly deprives us of a priceless opportunity for the acquisition of merit. It ever remains true that to observe one's rule is the safest means of accomplishing God's will and of living for Him: "He who lives by rule, lives unto God." To fail wilfully in this matter, with no good reason for it, is an abuse of grace.

Thus it is that obedience to God's signified will is the normal way of attaining perfection.

**2° CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL OF GOOD PLEASURE,
OR SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL**

486. This conformity consists in submitting oneself to all providential events willed or allowed by God for our own greater good, and chiefly for our sanctification.

a) It rests upon this basis, that nothing happens without God's order or permission, and that God, being infinite Perfection and infinite Goodness, cannot will or permit anything but for the good of the souls He has created, although this is not always apparent to our eyes. This is what Tobias said in the midst of his afflictions and the

reproaches of his wife: "Thou art just, O Lord... and all thy ways mercy and truth and judgment."¹ This is what Wisdom proclaims: "But thy Providence, O Father, governeth... She reacheth therefore from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly."² This is also what St. Paul teaches: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good."³

But in order to understand this teaching we must take the point of view of faith and of eternity, of the glory of God and the salvation of men. If we look only at the present life and its earthly happiness, we cannot understand the designs of God, Who has willed that we undergo trials here below in order to reward us in Heaven. All things are subordinated to this end. Present evils are but means of purifying our soul, of grounding it in virtue, and occasions of acquiring merits, all in view of God's glory, the ultimate end of all creation.

487. b) It is our duty, then, to submit ourselves to God in all the events of life, happy or unhappy, midst public calamities or private ills, whether we are lashed by the hand of nature or gripped by that of want and suffering, in sorrows or in joys, in the unequal distribution of gifts natural or supernatural, in failure or success, in desolation or in consolation, in sickness or in health, in life or in death with its attendant suffering and uncertainties. In the words of holy Job: "If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"⁴ Commenting upon these words, St. Francis de Sales⁵ cannot but admire their beauty: "O God! How this word is great with love! He ponders, Theotimus, that it was from the hand of God that he had received the good, testifying that he had not so much loved goods because they were good, as because they came from the hand of the Lord; whence he concludes that he is lovingly to support adversities since they proceed from the hand of the same Lord, which is equally to be loved when it distributes afflictions and when it bestows consolations." And, indeed, it is affliction that enables us to offer the more genuine proof of our love for God. To love Him when He lavishes His favors upon us is an easy task; but it is only a perfect love that accepts ills at His Hands, for they cannot be loved except for the sake of Him Who sends them.

¹ Job., III, 2. — ² Wisd., XIV, 3; VIII, 1. — ³ Rom., VIII, 28.

⁴ Job., II, 10.

⁵ The Love of God, Bk. IX, c. 2. (Mackey's translation, p. 370.)

¹ Ps. LXXXIV, 9. — ² Hebr., X, 9. — ³ I Cor., VI, 1. — ⁴ John., VIII, 29.

488. The duty of submission under trial to the *good pleasure* of God is a duty of *justice* and *obedience*, for God is Our Supreme Lord and Master, Who wields all authority over us. It is a duty inspired by *wisdom*, since it would be folly to wish to elude the action of Providence, whilst in humble resignation we find our *peace*. It is a duty urged by our own *interest*, because God's will merely puts us to the test that we may be exercised in virtue and acquire merit. It is a duty imposed, above all, by *love*, which is the gift of self, even to immolation.

489. c) To *facilitate* this submission to the divine will for souls who are not as yet schooled in the love of the Cross, it is always good to offer them some means of assuaging their sufferings. We can point out two remedies, the one *negative*, the other *positive*. 1) The first is *not to aggravate* sufferings by employing false tactics. There are persons who occupy themselves in gathering together in their minds all their ills, past, present, and to come, until their weight seems insupportable. It is the contrary that we must do : "*Enough for the day is the evil thereof.*"¹ Instead of reopening past wounds, we must never give them a thought, unless it be to note the profit derived from them : increase of merit, growth in virtue, more strength to bear pain. Thus is suffering soothed, for ills only vex us when we heed them : slander, calumny, injuries hurt us only as long as we brood over them.

As to *the future*, it is irrational to let it prey upon the mind. True, it is the part of wisdom to foresee it and provide for it, in the measure that we are able, but to brood in advance over the ills that may befall us, to be saddened by them, is a loss of time and sheer waste of energy. Such ills may never come to pass; if they do come, then will be the time to bear them with the help of grace which will be given us for that purpose. Just now, we have not such grace and, left to our own forces, we shall surely succumb under the weight of a self-imposed burden. Is it not wiser to abandon ourselves into the arms of Our Heavenly Father, and to drive out relentlessly any wicked thought or evil fancy that would force upon our minds the ills of the future and of the past?

490. 2) The positive remedy consists in reflecting, when we suffer, upon the great advantages of suffering. Pain is a *teacher* and a source of merit. As a *teacher*, it is a source

of *light*, a source of *power* : of light, for it reminds us that we are exiles on the way home and that we cannot entertain ourselves gathering the flowers of consolation, since our true bliss is in Heaven; of *power*, for while pleasure-seeking dulls activity, undermines courage, and leads to disgraceful surrenders, suffering, not indeed in itself, but by reason of the reaction it produces, tends to reinforce our energies, and develops in us manly virtues.

491. Suffering is also a *source of merit* for us and for others. Patiently borne for God's sake and in union with Jesus Christ, it merits for us an eternal recompense, a fact which St. Paul forever kept before the eyes of the early Christians : "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us...¹...that which is momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us an eternal weight of glory.*"² For the benefit of generous souls he adds that in suffering with Jesus, they fulfil what is wanting to His passion and contribute with Him to the welfare of the Church : "*I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church.*"³ This is a consequence of the doctrine of our incorporation into Christ (n. 142 and foll.). These thoughts, indeed, do not deliver us from pain, but they do lessen in no small measure its bitterness, by making us realize its fruitfulness.

Everything, then, invites us to conform our will to that of God, even in the midst of trials.

3° DEGREES OF CONFORMITY, OF SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

492. St. Bernard distinguishes three degrees of this virtue, corresponding to the three stages of Christian perfection : "*The beginner, moved by fear, patiently bears the Cross of Christ; the one who has already made some progress on the road to perfection, inspired by hope, carries it cheerfully; the perfect soul, consumed by love, embraces it ardently.*"⁴

A) *Beginners*, upheld by the *fear* of God, do not indeed love pain, but rather seek to escape it. However, they choose to suffer rather than to offend God and, though groaning under the weight of the Cross, they endure it in patience, they are resigned.

¹ Rom., VIII, 18. — ² I I Cor., IV, 17. — ³ Coloss., I, 24
⁴ I Serm. S. Andreae, 5

B) Those who have already made some progress, are sustained by the hope and the desire of heavenly things, and, though they do not yet seek the Cross, they willingly carry it with a certain joy, knowing that each new pang represents an additional degree of glory: "Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming, they shall come with joyfulness carrying their seed."¹

C) The perfect, led by love, go further. To glorify the God they love, to become more like our Lord, they go forth to meet the Cross, they long for it and embrace it lovingly, not because it is in itself lovable, but because it offers them the means of proving their love for God and for Christ. Like the Apostles, they rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. Like St. Paul, they rejoice in their tribulations.²

This last degree is called *holy abandonment*, to which we shall return later when we speak of the love of God.³

II. The Sanctifying Power of Conformity to the Will of God

493. From what has already been said, we reach the evident conclusion that conformity to God's will cannot but sanctify us, since it makes our will one with God's and, by that very fact, unites all our other faculties to Him, Who is the source of all sanctity. The better to realize this, let us see how it purifies us, reforms us, and make us like unto Jesus Christ.

494. ¹⁰ This conformity to the divine Will purifies us. Already in the Old Dispensation God often said that He is ready to forgive all sins and to restore the soul to the stainless splendor of its pristine purity, if it but undergo a change of heart or will: "Wash yourselves: be clean. Take away the evil of your devices from my eyes. Cease to do perversely. Learn to do well... If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow."⁴ Now, to conform our wills to that of God, is assuredly to cease to do evil, and to learn to do good. Is not this the meaning of that oft-repeated text: "For obedience is better than sacrifices."⁵ In the New Law, Our Lord declares from the very moment of His entry into the world that it is with obedience that

¹ Ps. CXXV, 6-7.

² Following of Christ, Bk. III, c. 17, Bk. II, c. XI-XII.

³ S. FR. DE SALES, *The Love of God*, Bk. IX, c. 15.

⁴ *Isaias*, I, 16-18.

⁵ *1 Kings*, XV, 22; cf. *Osee*, VI, 6; *Matth.*, IX, 13; XII, 7.

He will replace all the sacrifices of the Ancient Law: "Holoocausts for sin did not please thee. Then said I: Behold, I come... that I should do thy will, O God."¹ And, in truth, it is by obedience unto the immolation of self that He has redeemed us: "He was made obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."² In the same way, it is through obedience and through the acceptance of God-ordained trials in union with Christ that we shall atone for our sins and cleanse our soul.

495. ²⁰ This conformity works out our reformation. What has deformed us is the disordered love of pleasure, to which through malice or through weakness we have yielded. Conformity to the divine will cures this malice and weakness.

a) It cures our malice. This malice is the result of our attachment to creatures and, especially, of our attachment to our own judgment and our own will. Now, by conforming our will to that of God, we accept His judgments as the standard of ours, His commandments and His counsels as the rule of our will. Thus we wean ourselves from creatures and from self and rid ourselves from such attachments.

b) It cures our weakness, the source of so many failings. Instead of relying on our own frail selves, we make through obedience the Omnipotent God our support: He gives us His own strength enabling us to overcome even the severest temptations: "I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me."³ When we do His will, He takes His good pleasure in doing our own by granting our petitions and helping our weakness.

Thus freed from our malice and weakness, we no longer sin deliberately against God and we gradually effect the reformation of our lives.

496. ³⁰ Through this conformity, we make our wills one with Christ's. a) The truest, the closest, the most far-reaching union that can exist is that between two wills. Through conformity to the divine will, we unite our will to that of Jesus Christ Whose food was to do the will of His Father.⁴ Like Jesus and with Jesus we desire but what He wills and that all the day long. This is the fusion of two wills. We are one with Him, we adopt His views, His

¹ *Hebr.*, X, 6-7. — ² *Phil.*, II, 8. — ³ *Phil.*, IV, 13.

⁴ *John*, IV, 34; VI, 38; VIII, 29.

sentiments, His choices : " *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,*"¹ and soon we can make our own the word of St. Paul : " *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*"²

497. b) In submitting our will, we yield and unite to God all the other faculties which are under its sway; hence, we yield and unite unto Him our whole soul, which by degrees conforms itself to the will and wishes of the Master. Thereby the soul acquires one by one all the virtues of Our Lord. What we have said of charity, n. 318, can also be said of conformity to the divine will; that like charity it embodies all other virtues. In the words of St. Francis de Sales : " Abandonment is the virtue of virtues. It is the cream of love, the fragrance of humility, the merit, it seems to me, of patience and the fruit of perseverance."³ Hence, Our Lord calls by the tender names of brother and sister and mother those who do the will of His Father : " *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.*"⁴ He repeatedly declares that the true test of love is doing God's will : " *If you love me, keep my commandments... not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"⁵

CONCLUSION.

498. Conformity to the divine will, then, is one of the most effective means of sanctification. Hence, we cannot but end with these words of St. Theresa : " The sole concern of him who has but entered into the way of prayer, — keep it in mind, it is very important — must be to strive courageously to conform his will to that of God... Herein lies, whole and entire, the highest perfection to which we can attain. The more perfect this accord is, the more do we receive from the Lord and the greater is our progress."⁶ She adds that she herself had wished to live in this way of conformity without being raised to rapturous transports and ecstasies, so firm was her conviction that the path of conformity was all-sufficient to the most exalted perfection.

¹ *Philipp.*, II, 5. — ² *Galat.*, II, 20. — ³ Spiritual Conferences, XI.

⁴ *Matth.*, XII, 50. — ⁵ *John.*, XIV, 15; *Matth.*, VII, 21.

⁶ *Interior Castle*, Second Mansion.

§ IV. Prayer.

499. Prayer embodies and completes all the preceding acts. It is itself a *desire for perfection*, since no one would sincerely pray who did not wish to become better. It presupposes some *knowledge of God and of self*, since it establishes relations between the two. It *conforms our will* to that of God, since any good prayer contains, explicitly or implicitly, an act of submission to Our Sovereign Master. Prayer, moreover, *perfects* all these acts, by bringing us in all humility before the Majesty of God, in order to adore Him, and to implore new graces that will enable us to grow in perfection. We shall, then, explain : 1° the *nature of prayer*; 2° its *efficacy* as a means of perfection; 3° the *way* in which our lives are transformed into a *habitual prayer*.

I. The Nature of Prayer

500. We use the word prayer here in the widest sense of the term, as an elevation of the soul to God. We shall explain : 1° The *notion of prayer*. 2° Its various *forms*. 3° The perfect prayer, *The Lord's Prayer*.

1° WHAT PRAYER IS

501. In the Fathers we find three definitions of prayer that complete one another. 1) In its broadest signification it is, says *St. John Damascene*,² an *elevation of the soul to God*. St. Augustine had stated before him that prayer is *the soul's affectionate quest of God*.³ 2) In a narrower sense it has been defined as *the asking of seemingly things from God*.⁴ 3) To set forth the relations that prayer establishes between God and the soul, it has been represented as a *familiar conversation with God*.⁵ All these aspects of prayer are true and, by uniting them, we may define prayer as an *elevation of our soul to God to offer Him our homage and ask His favors, in order to grow in holiness for His glory*. This definition we shall explain.

¹ ST. THOM., II^a II^a, q. 83-84; SUAREZ, *De Religione*, Tr. IV, lib. I, *De Oratione*; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, I, III, lib. I; ST. ALPH. DE LIGUORI, *The Great Means of Prayer*; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. II; GROU, *How to Pray*; MESCH- LER, *Three Fundamental Principles of the Spiritual Life*, P. I, *Spiritual Combat*, c. 44-52; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, XXI; *Retreat for Priests* IX, X; P. MONSABRÉ, *La Prière*, *Philosophie et Théologie de la Prière*, 1917. References to Works on Mental Prayer will be given in the Second Part of this Work.

² *De Fide Orthodox.*, I, III, c. 24, P. G., XCIV, 1090.

³ *Serm.* IX, n. 3.

⁴ ST. JOHN DAMASCENE, *ibidem*.

⁵ S. GREG. NYS., *Orat.* I, de Orat. Domini, P. G., XLIV, 1124.

502. The term *elevation* is a metaphor indicating the effort we make to detach ourselves from creatures and from self in order to fix our thoughts on God Who not only surrounds us, but dwells in our inmost soul. As we are only too prone to let our faculties roam over a multitude of subjects, it requires an effort to snatch them away from these vain and alluring goods and center them on God. Such elevation is termed a *colloquy*, because prayer, whether it takes the form of worship or of petition, calls for an answer on the part of God and thus implies a sort of conversation with Him, even if it be of the briefest duration.

Our first act in this conversation, evidently, must be to render to God *religious homage*, just as we begin by saluting those persons with whom we hold converse. It is only after having acquitted ourselves of this fundamental duty that we may present our requests. Many forget it, and this is the reason why their petitions are less favorably answered. Even when we ask for the graces of sanctification and salvation, we must not lose sight of our principal purpose, *the glory of God*. Hence, the last words of our definition "*for His glory*."

2° THE VARIOUS FORMS OF PRAYER

503. A) Considering the twofold end of prayer, we distinguish the prayer of worship, and the prayer of petition.

a) **Prayer of Worship.** This includes adoration, due to God as our Sovereign Master; thanksgiving, because God is likewise our Benefactor; and reparation, because we have offended Him.

1) The first sentiment that imposes itself when we raise our soul to God is that of *adoration*, that is to say, an acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion and of our absolute dependence. All creation adores God after its own manner, but inanimate nature lacks both an intellect to grasp Him, and a heart to love Him. It must be content to display before our gaze its own harmony, its activities, its beauty: "It cannot see — it reveals itself; it cannot adore — it brings us to our knees, loath to have us ignore the God it cannot apprehend... But man, a breath divine within a body of clay, possessed of reason and intelligence and capable of knowing God, both through his natural powers and through the agency of creation, is urged by his own self and by all creatures to bow before God in humble adoration. For this reason is man, himself a microcosm, placed in this world, that contemplating this universe and,

as it were, gathering it all up in himself, he may refer himself and all things to God alone. So much so, that man is made to contemplate the visible things of this creation, only in order that he may adore the Invisible Being Who brought them out of nothing by the omnipotence of His power."¹ In other words, man is the *pontiff* of creation, upon whom it devolves to glorify God in his own name and in that of all creatures. This duty man fulfils by acknowledging "that God is perfection itself and hence incomprehensible; that God is Supreme; that God is Goodness... We are instinctively drawn to revere what is perfect,... to depend on that which is supreme,... to cling to what is good."²

504. Thus it is that mystics delight to adore in creatures the power, the majesty, the beauty, the activity, the fecundity of God hidden in them: "My God, I adore Thee in all Thy creatures, Thou the real, the sole strength that bears this mighty world. Without Thee, nothing would be; nothing does subsist outside of Thee. I love Thee, O my God, and praise Thy Majesty shown forth in all creation. All that I behold, O God, but reveals to me the mystery of Thy beauty unknown to mortal eyes... I adore the splendour of Thy glory, the grandeur of Thy majesty that outshines the noon day sun a thousand times. I adore the fecundity of Thy power, more wonderful by far than that disclosed by the starry skies."³

505. 2) Adoration is followed by *thanksgiving*. God is not merely Our Lord and Master but our great *Benefactor*, to Whom we owe all that we are, all that we have, whether in the order of nature or of grace. Therefore, He has a right to everlasting gratitude from us who forever receive new favors at His Hand. Hence, the Church daily calls upon us, just before the Canon of the Mass, to thank Almighty God for all His gifts, and chiefly for that which embodies all others, the Holy Eucharist: "*Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God. It is truly meet and just, right and salutary to offer thanks...*"⁴ Hence, the Church also places on our lips formulas of thanksgiving: "We give Thee thanks for the greatness of Thy glory."⁵ In so doing, she but follows the example of Christ, Who often gave thanks to the Father; she but carries out the instruc-

¹ BOSSUET, *Sermon sur le culte de Dieu*. — 2 BOSSUET, l. cit.

³ OLLIER, *Journales chéris*, II p.

⁴ Preface of the Mass. — 5 *Gloria in excelsis Deo*.

tions of St. Paul, who invites us to give thanks to the Most High for all His blessings: "In all things give thanks, for this is the will of God."¹ Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."² Generous souls need not be reminded of this duty. They feel themselves impelled by the thought of the divine favors to give vent again and again to the gratitude that overflows their heart.

506. 3) In our present state of fallen nature, a third duty forces itself upon us — that of *expiation* and of *reparation*. We have but too often offended God's infinite majesty, using His gifts to offend Him. This constitutes an injustice requiring as full a reparation as we are able to offer. It consists of three principal acts: the humble *acknowledgment* of our faults; a sincere *sorrow* for them; the *courageous acceptance* of the trials God in His goodness may see fit to send us. If we desire to act with generosity, we shall add thereto the *offering of ourselves* as expiatory victims in union with the Victim of Golgotha. Then we may humbly beg and hope for pardon and ask for further graces.

507. b) **The Prayer of Petition.** Asking of God for what we need is itself homage rendered to Him, to His power, to His goodness, to the efficacious operation of His grace; it is an act of confidence that honors Him to Whom it is offered.³ The reasons for prayer of petition are, on the one side, the love God bears His creatures, His children, and, on the other, the sore need we have of His help.

Inexhaustible source of all good, God longs to communicate it to souls: *goodness tends to communicate itself*. Being our Father, God desires nothing so much as to give us His life and increase it in our souls. The better to attain this purpose He sent to earth His Only-Begotten Son, Who came full of grace and truth purposely to fill us with His treasures. Nay more, He invites us to ask for His graces, and promises to grant them: "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."⁴ We are, therefore, certain of pleasing God by presenting our requests to Him.

508. Besides, we stand in *sore need* of God's help. Whether in the order of nature or in the order of grace, we are poor, steeped in poverty. Depending of necessity upon

God, even in the order of nature, we cannot so much as preserve the very existence He has given us; we are at the mercy of physical causes, themselves depending on God. In vain we may protest that we possess brain and sinews, and that we are well able with our strength and our energy to draw from the earth the things we need for our subsistence. That brain, those sinews, are sustained by God; they can work only with His concurrence. The earth flowers not, save when watered by the rain He sends; it produces nothing, save when quickened by the warmth of His glowing sun. And how many forces of destruction can wreck the fruit of man's work and man's care!

Our dependence upon God in the *supernatural* order is more absolute still. We need *light* to guide us, and who will give it to us if not the Father of lights? We need *courage* and *strength* to follow the light; who will give these except He Who is All-Powerful? What else then can we do but implore the help of Him Whose one desire is to succor us?

509. Let no one say that His omniscience is aware of all that is necessary and useful to us. St. Thomas answers that no doubt, out of pure liberality, God does bestow upon us innumerable benefits unasked, unsought, but that there are some which He will grant only at our request, and this for our own good, namely, that we should place our confidence in Him and come to acknowledge Him as the source and origin of all our goods.¹ When we pray, we cherish the hope of being heard and we are less exposed to forget God. As it is, we forget Him all too often; what would it be, if we should never feel the need of recurring to Him in our distress?

It is for very good reasons then that God demands of us prayer in the form of petition.

510. B) From the point of view of form, we can distinguish between *mental* and *vocal*, *private* and *public* prayer.

a) From the point of view of *expression*, prayer is *mental* or *vocal*, according as it takes place wholly within the soul, or is given outward expression.

1) Mental prayer is a silent intercourse of the soul with God. "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the

¹ *I Thess.*, V, 18. — ² *II Cor.*, IX, 15.

³ ST. THOMAS, *IIa IIæ*, q. 83, a. 3. — ⁴ *Matth.*, VII, 7.

¹ *Sum. theol.*, *IIa IIæ*, q. 83, a. 2, ad 3. — Cfr. MONSABRÉ, *La Priere*, 1906, p. 54-55.

understanding." ¹ Every interior act of the mind or of the heart that tends to unite us to God, such as recollection, consideration, reasoning, self-examination, the loving thought of God, contemplation, a longing of the heart for God — all these may be called by the name of mental prayer. All these acts, even our examination of conscience, the purpose of which is to make our soul less unworthy of Him Who dwells in it, raise us up to God. All of these deepen our convictions, exercise us in virtue, and constitute our training for that heavenly life that is nothing else but an eternal, loving contemplation of the Godhead. Mental prayer is likewise the very food and the soul of vocal prayer. ²

511. 2) Vocal prayer finds expression in *word and act*. It is frequently mentioned in our Sacred Books, which call upon us to proclaim God's praises by word of mouth, with lip and tongue: "*I have cried to the Lord with my voice... O Lord, thou wilt open my lips: and my mouth shall declare thy praise.*" ³ But why thus express our sentiments, since God reads them in the depths of our heart? It is in order to honor Him not only with the soul, but also with the body, and, above all, with that *word* which He has given us to express our thought. This is the teaching of St. Paul, who after showing that Jesus died for us outside the walls of Jerusalem, invites us to come out of ourselves and join our Mediator, in order to offer unto God a sacrifice of praise, the homage of our lips: "*By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is to say, the fruit of lips confessing to His name.*" ⁴ Vocal prayer, moreover, stimulates *devotion* by the very utterance of the words: "*That man may rouse himself by word of mouth to devout prayer.*" ⁵ Psychology, indeed, shows that gestures intensify the acts of the heart. Finally, it works unto the *edification of our neighbor*; for, seeing or hearing others pray devoutly increases our own devotion.

512. b) Vocal prayer may be *private or public*, according as it is offered in the name of an *individual* or of *society*. We have elsewhere proved that *society* as such owes God social homage, since it must acknowledge Him as its Sovereign Master and Benefactor. This is why St. Paul

¹ *I Cor.*, XIV, 15.

² In the Second Part of this work we shall return to the subject of mental prayer.

indicating which kind is in harmony with each of the three Ways.

³ *Ps.* III, 5; *L.*, 17. — ⁴ *Hebr.*, XII, 15.

⁵ ST. THOMAS, *In Libr. Sentent.*, distinct. XV, q. 4, a. 4.

urged the early Christians to unite, not only with one heart, but with one voice in praising God with Jesus Christ: "*That with one mind and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" ¹ Our Lord had already exhorted His disciples to come together in order to pray, promising to come to them and sponsor their requests: "*For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.*" ² If this is true of the gathering of one or two, how much truer is it when a multitude comes together to thank God in an official manner! St. Thomas says that the power of prayer is then irresistible: "*The prayers of the many cannot go unheeded, when they unite in one.*" ³ Just as a father who would not yield to the request of a son is moved by the united requests of all his children, so Our Heavenly Father cannot resist the sweet violence of the united prayers of a great number of His children.

513. It is important, therefore, that Christians should often join in common prayer and worship. This is why the Church calls them on the Lord's Day and on holy days to assist at the great public prayer, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and at other religious services.

514. Since, however, the Church cannot gather her faithful children every day, and since nevertheless God deserves perennial praise, she commits to her *priests* and *religious* the discharge of this grand duty of public prayer. This they fulfil several times a day through the recitation of the *Divine Office*, which they perform, not in a private capacity, but in the name of the entire Church, and on behalf of all mankind. Hence, it is important that they unite themselves to the perfect worship offered to God by the Incarnate Word, in order to give glory to God *through Him*, with Him, and in Him, and ask at the same time all the graces that the Christian people need.

3° THE LORD'S PRAYER

515. Among all the prayers we recite, *private or public*, there is none so beautiful as that taught us by Our Lord Himself — the *Our Father*.

A) We find therein, first of all, an appropriate introduction which ushers us into God's presence and excites our confidence: *Our Father Who art in Heaven*. The very first

¹ *Rom.*, XV, 6. — ² *Matth.*, XVIII, 20. — ³ *Commentar. in Matth.*, c. XVIII.

step in prayer is to draw nigh unto God. The word *Father* places us at once before Him, Who is pre-eminently the Father Who has adopted us as children. We face then the God Who surrounds us with the same love wherewith He loves His Son. And that Father is in Heaven; that is, He is all-powerful, He is the source of all graces, hence we are impelled to invoke Him with a filial trust that knows no bounds, for we are His offspring; all brethren, because children of the same God : *Our Father.*

516. B) The *object* of the prayer follows. We ask for all we desire, and *in the order* in which we should desire it : a) We place the *principal end* before all else — God's glory : "Hallowed be Thy Name," that is to say, may Thy Name be known and proclaimed blessed. b) Then comes the *secondary end* — the growth of God's kingdom within us, which is the preparation for our entry into the Kingdom of Heaven : "Thy Kingdom come." c) Next, we ask for the *essential means* for attaining this twofold end, that is, conformity to the Divine Will : "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

We ask, after that, for the *secondary means*. — This request constitutes the second part of the Our Father. d) First, the *positive means* — our daily sustenance, food for the body and food for the soul; we need one and the other, if we are to subsist and grow : "Give us this day our daily bread." e) Lastly, we beg the *negative means*, which comprise 1) the *remission of sin* — the only real evil, which is forgiven us in the measure that we ourselves pardon others : "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." 2) *The removal of trials and temptations* to which we could fall victims : "Lead us not into temptation." 3) *The removal of physical evils*, of the miseries of life so far as they constitute an obstacle to our sanctification : "But deliver us from evil. Amen."

A sublime prayer, since every word of it refers to God's glory, and yet so simple that it is within the reach of all; for whilst glorifying God, we ask for all the things that are most useful to us.

Hence, the Fathers and the Saints have taken delight in commenting¹ on this prayer, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent gives an extended and solid explanation of it.

¹ Many of these commentaries are found in HURTER'S, *Opuscula Patrum selecta*, t. II; cf. *Sum. Theol.*, II^a II^a, q. 83, a. 9; ST. THERESA, *The Way of Perfection*; P. MONSABRÉ, *La Prière Divine, le Père.*

II. The Efficacy of Prayer for Sanctification

517. The sanctifying power of prayer is such that the Saints never tired of saying that he lives well who prays well. Prayer produces three marvelous effects : 1) it *detaches* us from creatures, 2) it *unites* us entirely to God, 3) it gradually *transforms* us into God.

518. 1^o *It detaches us from creatures* in so far as they are an obstacle to our union with God. This effect of prayer follows from its very nature as an elevation of the heart to God. In order to be raised up to God we must first loosen the bonds that fasten us to creatures. Drawn by these, and by the alluring pleasures they hold out to us, dominated moreover by selfishness, we cannot free ourselves except by breaking the shackles that fetter us to earth. Nothing works this happy deliverance more effectively than the elevation of the soul to God through prayer, for in order to think of Him and of His glory, in order to love Him, we are constrained to forget self and creatures with their deceitful allurements. Once we are nigh unto Him, united to Him in intimate converse, then His infinite perfections, His loving kindness, and the sight of His heavenly riches, complete the liberation of the soul : "*How wretched the earth when I gaze upon the heavens!*" We hate mortal sin more and more, for it would turn us away altogether from God. We detest *venial sin* because it would impede our ascent towards Him, and we deplore even *imperfections*, since they would cool our intimacy with Him. We are likewise schooled to a more vigorous strife against the disordered inclinations latent within our nature, because of the realization that they tend to make us wander away from God.

519. 2^o Prayer moreover makes our union with God more complete and more perfect day by day.

A) *More complete.* Prayer lays hold of all our faculties, in order to unite them to God. a) It seizes the *higher* faculties of our soul: the mind, by absorbing it in the thought of divine things; the will, by directing it toward the Glory of God and the welfare of souls; the heart, by permitting it to pour out its love into a Heart ever open, loving, ever merciful, and enabling it to produce affections that cannot be but sanctifying. b) It seizes the *lower faculties* of the soul, by helping us to fasten upon God and Our Lord, our imagination, our memory, our emotions, and

even our passions in so far as they are capable of good. e) It *even* takes possession of *our body*, helping us to mortify our outward senses, which so often lead us astray, and to regulate our exterior according to the dictates of modesty.

B) More perfect. Prayer, as just described, produces in the soul acts of religion born of *faith*, sustained by *hope* and vivified by *love*: "*Faith believes, hope and love pray, but these could not exist without faith; hence it is, that faith also prays.*"¹ Is there anything nobler, anything more sanctifying than these acts of the theological virtues? Prayer, likewise, presupposes the performance of acts of humility, of obedience, of fortitude, of constancy, so that it is not difficult to see that the holy exercise of prayer unites our soul to God in a most perfect manner.

520. 3° No wonder, then, that through it, the soul is gradually transformed into God. Prayer causes, so to speak, a mutual exchange between us and God: whilst we offer Him our homages and our requests, He stoops down to us and bestows upon us His graces.

A) The mere consideration of His divine perfections, the mere fact of admiring them and taking in them a genuine delight, draws them into us through the desire we thus feel of sharing in them. Little by little our soul feels, as it were, all pervaded, possessed by that Simplicity, that Goodness, that Holiness, that Serenity which God would fain communicate to us.

521. B) Then God stoops down to hearken to our prayers and to bestow upon us His graces in abundance. The more we honor Him, the greater is His concern in sanctifying a soul that seeks His glory. We can ask a great deal, provided we do so with humility and confidence. He can refuse nothing to humble souls who care more for His interests than for their own. He gives them light to show them the emptiness, the nothingness of human things; He draws them to Himself by revealing Himself to them as the Supreme Good, the origin of all good; He strengthens and steadies their will that they may will nothing, love nothing, but what is worthy. We cannot but conclude with St. Francis de Sales²: "If prayer be a colloquy, a discourse or a conversation of the soul with God, by it then we speak to God, and He again speaks to us; we aspire to

Him and breathe in Him, and He reciprocally inspires us and breathes upon us." Happy exchange! It shall be altogether to our advantage, since its ultimate end is no other than the transformation of ourselves into God, by making us share in His thoughts and His perfections!

III. How We Can Transform Our Actions Into Prayers

522. Since prayer is such an effective means of sanctification, we should frequently and perseveringly make use of it. Our Lord said: "*We ought always to pray and not to faint.*"¹ St. Paul teaches the same doctrine both by word and example: "*Pray without ceasing... Making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing.*"² How are we, however, to pray without ceasing, the while we discharge our duties of state? Is not this impossible? We shall see that it is simple, once we have learned to regulate our lives. To accomplish it, two things are required: 1° that we perform a certain number of *spiritual exercises* in harmony with our state of life; 2° that we *turn* our ordinary actions *into prayer*.

523. 1° *Spiritual Exercises*. In order to foster a life of prayer, first of all, a certain number of spiritual exercises are necessary, the extent and duration of which will vary in accordance with our duties of state. Here we shall speak of such as are proper to priests and religious, leaving to directors of souls the care of adapting this program to the laity.

Three different sets of spiritual exercises school the priestly soul to prayer: in the morning, meditation and Holy Mass present to us *the ideal* we are to pursue and aid us to realize it; throughout the day, the Divine Office, devout readings and some great Catholic devotions help to keep up in the soul the *habit of prayer*; in the evening the examination of conscience will cause us to *note* and *correct* our failures.

524. A) *The morning exercises* are sacred in character. Priests and religious can not dispense with them without giving up real concern for perfection. a) It is *meditation*, the loving thought of God, that, above all, recalls to mind *the ideal* we must ever keep before our eyes and *pursue* with all our strength. This ideal is no other than the one pictured for us by the Divine Master: "Be you,

¹ St. AUGUSTINE, *Enchiridion*, VII.
² *The love of God*, Bk. VI, c. I. (Mackey's translation).

¹ *Luce*, XVIII, 1. — ² *1 Thess.*, V, 17; 1, 2.

therefore, perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect,"¹ So we must place ourselves in the *presence of God*, the source and exemplar of all perfection; in the presence of *Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Who has realized in the world this ideal of perfection and has merited for us the grace of imitating His virtues. After offering Him our homage, we draw Him unto us by becoming one with Him in thought, through the formation of deep-seated convictions regarding the special virtue we want to practice; we then draw this virtue from His heart into our own by earnest prayers that obtain for us the grace of actually practicing it. Finally, we humbly, but resolutely, co-operate with the grace received by making the *generous resolve* of practicing the said virtue during the course of the day.² **b**) Holy Mass confirms us in this disposition by placing before our eyes, in our hands, and at our disposal, the Sacred Victim we are to imitate. Holy Communion causes His thoughts, His sentiments, His interior dispositions, His graces and His Divine Spirit to penetrate our own souls there to abide the day long. We are priests, then, in order to act, and our action vivified by His influence will be an unceasing prayer.

525. B) That this be so, it is necessary that from time to time there be exercises renewing and promoting our union with God. **a**) This will be effected by the recitation of the *Divine Office*, so aptly styled by St. Benedict *God's Work*, wherein, in union with the perfect worship of God by Jesus Christ, we shall glorify Him and implore His graces for ourselves and for the entire Church. After the Holy Sacrifice, this is the most important act of the day. **b**) Another exercise fostering our union with God is the reading of Holy Scripture and the lives of the Saints, the perusal of which will once more place us in close contact with God and His Saints. **c**) Lastly come what may be called the *essential Catholic devotions* that nourish piety, such as the visit to the Blessed Sacrament — a heart-to-heart talk with Jesus — and the recitation of the beads, through which we are privileged to hold familiar conversation with Mary and to consider devoutly the mysteries of her life and her virtues.

526. C) At night, the two *examinations, general and particular*, will take place. These we shall turn into a

¹ *Mathth.*, V, 48.

² This we shall explain later when treating of the method of prayer.

humble and sincere confession to the Great High Priest, and into a means of seeing to what extent we have realized in the course of the day the ideal conceived in the morning. Alas! we shall ever find a discrepancy between our resolutions and their realization; but without any loss of heart, we shall retire to rest with a sense of trust in God, abandoning ourselves into His arms, determined to greater effort on the morrow.

Weekly, or at least fortnightly confession, together with the monthly retreat — a summary review of the month — will complete the work of our daily examination of conscience and be the occasion of a spiritual renewal.

527. ²⁰ This is the sum-total of spiritual exercises, that prevent us from losing sight of God's holy presence for any considerable time. What shall we do, however, to fill in the time between these various exercises and to transform all our actions into prayer? St. Paul answered this question when he wrote: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God... All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ St. Augustine and St. Thomas tell us how this can be done; the former tells us to convert our life, our actions, our occupations, our meals, even our repose, into a hymn of praise unto God's glory: "*Let the harmony of thy life ever rise as a song, so that thou mayest never cease to praise... If thou wilt give praise, sing, then, not only with thy lips, but sweep the chords upon the psalter of good works; thou dost give praise when thou workest, when thou eatest and drinkest, when thou liest to rest, when thou sleepest; thou givest praise even if thou holdest thy peace.*"² The latter briefly expresses the same thought: "*Man prays so long as he directs his whole life toward God.*"³

It is love that directs our whole life towards God. The practical means of giving all our actions this direction, is to offer each of them to the Most Blessed Trinity in union with Jesus Christ living in us, and in accordance with His intentions (n. 248).

528. Father Olier shows the importance of performing our actions *in union with Jesus*. He explains first how the Son of God is within us in order to sanctify us.⁴ "He dwells in us not only through His immensity, as the Word...

¹ *I Cor.*, X, 31, *Col.* III, 17. — ² *In Psalm.* CXLVI, n. 2.

³ *Comment. in Rom.*, c. 1, lect. 5.

⁴ *Catech. Int. Life*, Part. II, Lesson X. — CH. FATHER CHARLES, S. J. *Prayer for all Times*.

but also as the Christ, through His grace, in order to make us partakers of His unction and of His divine life. Jesus Christ is within us to sanctify both ourselves and our works and to fill all our faculties with His own Self. He wills to be the light of our mind, the fire of love in our hearts, the might and strength of all our faculties, in order that in Him we may have power to know and to fulfil the desires of God, His Father, whether it be to work for His honor or to suffer and endure all things unto His glory." Father Olier then explains how the actions we perform of ourselves and for ourselves are defective: "Because of our corrupted nature, our intentions and our thoughts tend toward sin and, should we decide to act of ourselves and follow the bent of our own sentiments, our works would be of sin."¹ His conclusion is, therefore, that we must renounce our own intentions so as to unite ourselves to those of Jesus: "You see thereby what great care you must take to renounce, upon undertaking any action, all your sentiments, all your wishes, all your own thoughts, all your desires, in order to enter, according to the word of St. Paul, into the sentiments and the intentions of Jesus Christ: *For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"²

When our actions endure for some time, it is useful to renew this offering by an affectionate gaze upon our Crucifix, or better, upon Jesus living within us, and to raise our soul to God through oft-repeated ejaculations.

In this manner our actions, even the most commonplace, will become a prayer, an elevation of the soul to God, and we shall thereby comply with the teaching of Jesus: "We ought always to pray and not to faint."³

529. Here then we have four interior means of perfection that tend at once to glorify God and perfect the soul. The desire to be perfect is, in fact, a first flight toward God, a first step toward holiness. The knowledge of God draws God down to us and helps us give ourselves to Him through love. The knowledge of self shows us the need we have of God and stimulates in us the desire of receiving Him in order to fill the void that exists within us. Conformity to His will transforms us into Him. Prayer lifts us up to Him while it draws unto us His perfections, making us share in them in order to render us like unto Him. All leads us to God, because all proceeds from Him.

¹ *Catech. of Int. Life*, P. II, Lesson VI.

² *Philipp.*, II, 5. — 3 *Luke*, XVIII, I.

ART. II. THE EXTERIOR MEANS OF PERFECTION

530. These means can be reduced to four principal ones: *spiritual direction* that provides safe guidance; a *rule of life*, which is the sequel and the complement of spiritual direction; *spiritual reading* and *devout exhortations*, which present to us the ideal to follow; the *sanctification of our social relations*, which enables us to supernaturalize our dealings with the neighbor.

§ I. Spiritual Direction

Two points, chiefly, are to be elucidated: 1° The *moral necessity* of spiritual direction; 2° the *means* required to insure its success.

I. Moral Necessity of Spiritual Direction

Direction, although not absolutely necessary for the sanctification of souls, is one of the *normal means* of spiritual progress. *Authority*, and *reason* based on *experience*, demonstrate this.

1° PROOF FROM AUTHORITY

531. A) God, Who established His Church as a hierarchical society, has willed that souls be sanctified through submission to the Sovereign Pontiff and to the Bishops in things external, and to confessors in things internal. When Saul was converted, Our Lord, instead of directly manifesting to him His designs, sent him to Ananias to learn from this man's lips what he was to do. Cassian, St. Francis de Sales and Leo XIII argue from this fact to show the necessity of direction. "God," says Leo XIII, "in His infinite Providence has decreed that men for the most part should be saved by men; hence He has appointed that those whom He calls to a loftier degree of holiness should be led thereto by men, 'in order that,' as Chrysostom says, 'we should be taught by God through men.' We have an illustrious example of this put before us in the very begin-

¹ CASSIANUS, *Collationes*, coll. II, c. 1-13; St. JOHN CLIMACUS, *L'Echelle de Paradiis*, 4^e Degré, n. 5-12; GODINEZ, *Praxis Theol. mysticæ*, lib. VIII, c. 1; SCHRAM, *Instit. theol. mysticæ*, P. II, cap. 1, § 327-353; St. Fr. DE SALES, *Intrad. to a Devout Life*, Part I, ch. 4; TRONSON, *Traité de l'obéissance*, II^e Partie; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, ch. XVIII; H. NOBLE, O. P., *Lacordaire apôtre et directeur des jeunes gens*, 1910; DESURMONT, *Charité sacerdotale*, § 183-225; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, *Direction*; F. VINCENT, *S. François de Sales, Directeur d'Ames*; ABBÉ D'AGNEL et Dr D'ESPINEY, *Direction de conscience*, 1922; V. RAYMOND, O. P., *Spiritual Director and Physician*, 1917.

ning of the Church, for although Saul, who was *breathing threatenings and slaughter*, heard the voice of Christ Himself, and asked from Him, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* he was nevertheless sent to Ananias at Damascus: *Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.* This manner of acting has invariably obtained in the Church. All without exception who in the course of ages have been remarkable for science and holiness have taught this doctrine. Those who reject it, assuredly do so rashly and at their peril."¹

532. B) Unable to quote all the authorities, we shall briefly review a few witnesses that can be considered representatives of ascetical theology. *Cassian*, who had spent long years among the monks of Palestine, of Syria, and of Egypt, has set down their teachings together with his own in two works. In the first, the *Book of Institutions*, he urgently exhorts the young cenobites to open their heart to the elder charged with the direction of their life; to disclose to him without false shame their most secret thoughts, and to submit themselves entirely to his decision as to what is good and what is evil.² He treats this point again in his *Conferences*, and, after showing the dangers to which those who do not seek counsel from their elders expose themselves, he affirms that the best means to overcome temptations even the most dangerous, is to disclose them to a wise counsellor. This he says on the authority of St. Anthony and the Abbot Serapion.³

What *Cassian* teaches to the Monks of the West, St. John Climacus instills into those of the East by his *Ladder of Paradise*. To *beginners* he says that those who wish to leave the land of Egypt for the Promised Land and subdue their disorderly passions, stand in need of another Moses to serve them as a guide. To those that are advanced he declares, that in order to follow Christ and enjoy the holy liberty of the children of God, one must humbly deliver the care of one's soul to a man that is the representative of the Divine Master; and that such a one must be chosen with care, because he must be obeyed in all simplicity, in spite of the shortcomings that may be detected in him; for the sole danger lies in following one's own judgment.⁴

¹ Apostolical Letter *Testam Benevolentiae*. Jan. 22, 1899. From The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII, P. 447.

² CASSIANUS, *De Cenobiorum institut.*, I, IV, c. 9; P. L. XLIX, 161.

³ *Id.* *Collationes*, II, 2, 5, 7, 10-11; P. L. XLIX, 526, 529, 534, 537, 542.

⁴ *Scala Paradisi*, Grad. I, IV; P. G. LXXXVIII, 636, 686-687.

533. For the period of the Middle Ages, two authorities will suffice. St. Bernard wants the novices to have a guide, a foster-father to enlighten them, direct them, console them, and encourage them.¹ To more advanced souls, like Ogier, the Canon Regular, he declares that whoever constitutes himself his own guide, becomes a disciple of a fool. He adds: "I know not what others think about themselves on this matter; for myself, I speak from experience and I hesitate not to say that I find it easier and safer to direct many others than I do to guide myself."² In the Fourteenth Century, the eloquent Dominican, St. Vincent Ferrer, stated that spiritual direction had ever been the practice of souls that wished to make progress, and he gave the following reason: "He who has an adviser whom he absolutely obeys in all things, will succeed much more easily and quickly than he could if left to himself, even if endowed with quick intellect and possessed of learned spiritual books."³

534. It was not only in communities that this need of a spiritual guide was felt, but likewise in the world. The letters of St. Jerome, of St. Augustine, and of other Fathers, to widows, virgins, and other persons living in the world, are ample proof of it.⁴ It is therefore with good reason that St. Alphonsus in explaining the *duties of a confessor* declares that one of the most important of these duties is that of *directing* devout souls.⁵

Besides, reason itself, enlightened by faith and by experience, shows us the necessity of a spiritual director in order to advance in the way of perfection.

2° PROOF FROM REASON BASED ON THE NATURE
OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

535. A) Progress in holiness is a long and painful ascent over a steep path bordered by precipices. To venture thereon without an experienced guide is highly imprudent. It is extremely easy to deceive oneself as regards one's own condition. We are unable to gaze eye to eye upon ourselves, says St. Francis de Sales; we cannot be impartial judges in our own case, by reason of a certain complacency, "so veiled, so unsuspected that the keenest insight alone can discover its existence; those who suffer from it are not

¹ *De Diveris*, sermo VIII, 7. — ² Epist., LXXXVII, 7.

³ *De Vita Spirituali*, II Part, ch. I.

⁴ See the instances given by FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XVIII.

⁵ *Praxis confessorii*, n. 121-127.

aware of it unless some one points it out to them." ¹ Hence, he concludes that we need a spiritual physician to make a sound diagnosis of our state of soul and to prescribe the most effective remedies: "Why should we wish to constitute ourselves directors of our own souls when we do not undertake the management of our bodies. Have we not noticed that physicians, when ill, call other physicians to determine what remedies they require?" ²

536. B) The better to understand this need, we have but to explain briefly the chief dangers one encounters in each of the three ways leading to perfection.

a) Beginners must be on their guard against relapses and, in order to avoid them, they must undergo a long and rigorous penance in proportion to the number and gravity of their faults. Some of them, soon forgetting their past, want to enter forthwith into the path of love. Such presumption is frequently followed by a withdrawal of sensible consolations, by discouragement and fresh falls. Others give themselves without discretion to bodily mortifications, take therein a vain complacency, impair their health, and then, under pretence of taking proper care of it, fall into a state of relaxation. It is, therefore, important that an experienced director hold the former to the spirit and the practice of penance, and check the latter in their impetuous ardor.

Another danger for beginners is *spiritual aridity*, following the withdrawal of sensible consolations. In this state a soul imagines itself abandoned by God, gives up its exercises of piety, which now appear useless, and falls a prey to lukewarmness. Who will be able to forestall this danger? Only a wise spiritual director, who, during the season of consolations, will give warning that these do not last forever, and, at the time of aridity, will comfort this soul by explaining that there is nothing better than such trials for the strengthening of virtue and the purifying of love.

537. b) In the *illuminative way*, a guide is still needed, in order to discern which are the virtues especially suited to this or that person in particular, as well as the means of practicing these virtues, and the proper method of self-examination. When a soul becomes a prey to that sense of weariness experienced upon the discovery that the way of perfection is longer and more arduous than imagined, it

is hard to see what can prevent this feeling from degenerating into lukewarmness, if not the fatherly affection of a director who will be able to recognize the difficulty, obviate discouragement, console the penitent, urge him to new efforts and make him discern the fruits to be gained from such a trial courageously borne.

538. c) Direction becomes even more necessary in the *unitive way*. To enter herein, one must cultivate the gifts of the Holy Ghost by a generous and constant docility to the inspirations of grace. But to distinguish divine inspirations from those that proceed from nature, or from the Evil One, the counsel of a wise and disinterested adviser is oftentimes required. This is all the more necessary when one undergoes the first *passive trials*, when aridity, weariness, fear of God's judgments, besetting temptations, inability to reason in meditation, and contradictions from without burst all together upon a desolate soul and cast it into the greatest turmoil. It is evident that a pilot is indispensable to guide the disabled craft to safety. A spiritual director is equally necessary for one enjoying the delights of contemplation. This state presupposes so much discretion, humility, docility and, above all, so much prudence in harmonizing *passivity* with *activity*, that it becomes morally impossible not to go astray without the advice of an expert guide. This is why St. Theresa used to open her soul with such candor to her spiritual directors; this is why St. John of the Cross often insisted on the necessity of disclosing to him everything. "God," says he, "so desires that man place himself under the direction of another, that He absolutely does not want to see us give full assent to the supernatural truths He Himself imparts, before they have issued out of the mouth of man." ¹

539. To sum up what has been said, we can do no better than quote the words of Fr. Godinez: "Hardly ten in a thousand called by God to perfection heed the call; of a hundred called to contemplation, ninety-nine fail to respond. It must be acknowledged that one of the principal causes is the lack of spiritual directors. Under God, they are the pilots that conduct souls through this unknown ocean of the spiritual life. If no science, no art, how simple soever, can be learned well without a master, much less can any one learn this high wisdom of evangelical perfection, wherein such great mysteries are found. This is the reason

¹ *Devout Life*, Part. III, c. 28.

² *Sermons recueillis*, pour la fête de N. D. des Neiges, t. IX, p. 95.

¹ *Sentences et avis spirituels*, n. 229, ed. Hoornaert, p. 372.

why I hold it morally impossible that a soul could without a miracle or without a master, go through what is highest and most arduous in the spiritual life, without running the risk of perishing."

540. It may be said, therefore, that the normal way to advance in the spiritual life is to follow the counsels of a wise spiritual adviser. As a matter of fact, fervent souls so understand it and seek direction in the tribunal of penance. When of late years a need was felt for a select body of truly devout and earnest Catholics, no better means of forming it was found than a strong direction given in Sodality, vacation-camps and above all in regular retreats. Direction, then, is one of the normal means of spiritual progress.

II. Rules to Insure the Success of Spiritual Direction

That spiritual direction be profitable, 1° its *object* must be clearly determined; 2° the *co-operation* of both *director* and *penitent* must be assured.

1° OBJECT OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

541. A) **General Principle.** The *object* of spiritual direction consists in all that has a bearing upon the spiritual formation of souls. Confession limits itself to the accusation of faults; direction goes far beyond this. It reaches the *causes* of sin, deep-rooted inclinations, temperament, character, acquired habits, temptations, imprudences. This, in order to discover the right *remedies*, such as go to the very roots of the evil. In order to combat defects the better, direction is also concerned with virtues opposed to them, the virtues *common* to all Christians and those *special* to each particular class of persons. It includes the *means* most apt to foster the practice of these virtues: *spiritual exercises* such as mental prayer, the particular examination, devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, which supply us with spiritual arms to force our way onward in the practice of virtue. It deals with *vacation*, and, once this question is settled, with the duties peculiar to each state of life. Hence, it is clear that the field of direction is very wide.

542. B) **Applications.** a) In order to guide a person wisely, the spiritual director must be acquainted with the chief features of his *past life*, his habitual faults, his efforts to correct them, the results obtained, so that he sees clearly

what is left to be done. He must, likewise, know his *present dispositions*, his likes and dislikes, the temptations he undergoes and the method employed to overcome them, the virtues he feels the greatest need of, and the means used to acquire them. The director must know all this in order to give proper advice.

b) Then it is that the director can more easily form a *plan of direction*, a *flexible* plan, adaptable to the actual condition of the penitent and calculated to foster his spiritual progress. It is impossible to lead all souls in the same way; a director must take them as they are, and lead them gradually through the various stages along the steep path of perfection. He must realize that some are more eager and more generous, others more calm, more slow, that all are not called to attain the same degree of perfection.

543. There is, however, a *progressive order* to be followed which gives a certain measure of unity to spiritual direction :

- 1) From the outset it is important that souls should be taught *to sanctify all their ordinary actions* by the practice of union with Our Lord (n. 248). This holds good for their whole life and the Director must insist on it again and again showing how such practice is grounded on the *spirit of faith* so indispensable in these days of rampant naturalism.
 - 2) The *purification* of the soul, through the practice of *penance* and *mortification*, should never cease altogether; penitents should be often brought back to it, taking into account their state of mind, so as to vary the exercise of these virtues.
 - 3) *Humility* is a fundamental virtue, which must be inculcated almost from the beginning, and penitents must be frequently reminded of it at all the stages of the spiritual life.
 - 4) *Fraternal charity*, because so often violated, even by devout people, should be insisted upon in the examinations of conscience and in confession.
 - 5) *Habitual union with Our Lord*, our model and co-worker, cannot be too frequently emphasized, for it is one of the most effective means of sanctification.
 - 6) A thing to be cultivated with care, because so necessary in this our day, is manliness or *strength of character*, based upon strong convictions, and with it, honesty and loyalty which cannot be separated from it.
 - 7) In an epoch of proselytism like ours, *zeal* is of paramount importance and a spiritual director should keep in view the formation of select souls who will be of help to the priest in the innumerable details connected with his ministry.
- As for the rest, one has but to bear in mind what we shall say when explaining the three ways.

2° DUTIES OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR AND OF THE PENITENT

Direction will not produce any profitable results, unless both director and penitent work together in all earnestness.

1) Duties of the Spiritual Director

544. St. Francis de Sales¹ declares that a spiritual director must have three principal qualities: "He must be full of *charity*, of *knowledge* and of *prudence*: if he lacks one of these, there is danger."

A) The *charity* wherewith he must be filled is a *supernatural* and *paternal* affection that makes him see in his penitents so many spiritual children confided to his care by God Himself so that he may cause Jesus Christ and His virtues to grow in them: "My little children of whom I am in labor again until Christ be formed in you."²

a) Hence, he surrounds them all with the same thoughtfulness and care, making himself all things to all, in order to sanctify all; spending his time, his efforts and himself to form in them the Christian virtues. In spite of himself, no doubt, he will at times feel drawn more to some than to others, but he will not allow his natural likes or dislikes to govern him, being careful to avoid sentimental affections that would tend to create attachments, at first innocent, then distracting and finally dangerous both to his good name and to his virtue. *Father Olier* rightly says that to wish to attach to oneself the hearts made to love God, constitutes a sort of treason: "Spiritual directors have been chosen by Our Lord to go forth to conquer kingdoms, that is to say, the hearts of men, which belong to Him, which He has bought by the shedding of His Blood, and in which He wants to establish His reign. What an ingratitude! What a fraud! What an outrage! What a betrayal! if instead of offering those hearts to Him as to their lawful sovereign, they constitute themselves their lords and masters."³ Such conduct would be equivalent to placing a well-nigh insurmountable obstacle in the way of one's own spiritual progress and in that of one's penitents, for God does not want a divided heart.

545. b) Kindness on the part of the spiritual director must not mean weakness. It must, on the contrary, be coupled with *firmness* and *frankness*. The director must have the courage to give sound, fatherly warnings, to point out to his penitents their defects, and *not allow himself to be directed by them*. There are persons very demure, yet very clever, who want to have a spiritual director, but on condition that he accommodate himself to their tastes and fancies. Such seek after approbation rather than guidance.

To be on guard against this abuse that might involve his own conscience, the spiritual director must not let himself be swayed by the schemes and manoeuvres of such penitents; he must remember that he represents Our Lord Himself, and resolutely render his decisions according to the rules of perfection and not according to the wishes of his penitents.

546. c) It is chiefly in directing women that one must be reserved and firm. A man of wide experience, Father Desurmont,¹ writes as follows on this subject: "Let there be none of those affectionate words, none of those tender expressions, no private talks except those absolutely indispensable. Let there be nothing savoring of feeling, either in manner or gesture, nor the least shadow of familiarity. As to conversions, no more than is necessary; as to dealings outside of matters of conscience, only those that have a recognized serious purpose. As much as possible, let there be no direction outside the confessional, and no correspondence. They must not be made even to suspect that one is personally interested in them. Their mentality is so constituted that if they be led to think themselves the object of a particular regard or affection, almost without fail, they descend to a natural plane, be it through vanity or sentimentality." The same author adds: "Generally speaking, it is best that they be not conscious of being directed at all. Woman has the defects of her qualities: she is instinctively pious, but she is likewise instinctively proud of her piety. The adornment of the soul affects her no less than that of the body. For her to know that one wishes to adorn her with virtues, ordinarily constitutes a danger." One should, then, direct them without acquainting them with the fact, and give them counsels of perfection as if it were the common ordinary thing for the welfare of souls.

547. B) In the spiritual director, devotedness must be accompanied by the *knowledge* of ascetical theology so necessary to confessors, n. 36. He will, therefore, never tire of reading and re-reading spiritual authors, correcting his judgments by their standards, and comparing his own method with that of the Saints.

548. C) Above all, *prudence* and a *sound judgment* are needed in order to direct souls not according to one's own ideas, but according to the motions of grace, the temperament and character of the penitents, and their supernatural attractions.²

a) *Father Libermann* rightly remarks that the spiritual director is but an instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost.³ He should, therefore, first of all, apply himself to gain through discreet questions a knowledge of the action this Divine Spirit has upon the soul.

¹ *La Charité sacerdotale*, t. II, § 196.

² This is exactly what *St. Francis de Sales* practiced as shown by F. VINCENT, *op. cit.*, p. 439-481.

³ *La direction spirituelle*, d'après les écrits et les exemples du *Vin. Libermann*, 3^e édit., p. 10-22.

¹ *Introduction to a Devout Life*, P. I, C. IV. — ² *Galat.*, IV, 19.

³ *L'Esprit d'un directeur des âmes*, p. 60-61. *Father Olier* often returns to this subject in this little work.

"I consider it a capital point in spiritual direction," he writes, "to discover the dispositions whereby a soul is animated,..., to perceive how far you can urge it, to allow grace full scope, to distinguish true from false attractions, and prevent souls from going astray or running to excesses." In another letter he adds: "The spiritual director having once ascertained God's action in a soul, has nothing else to do but to guide it that it may obey the promptings of grace... He must never attempt to inspire a soul with his personal tastes and individual attractions, nor lead it after his own way of acting, or his own peculiar point of view. A director that would thus act, would often turn souls from God's own guidance and oppose the action of divine grace in them."

He adds, however, that this applies to souls who work earnestly to attain perfection. As to those that are *sluggish* and *lukewarm*, the initiative must be taken by the director, who will, by his exhortations, his counsels, his rebukes, and all the means which his zeal suggests, strive to stir them out of their spiritual torpor.

549. b) The *prudence* in question here is, therefore, a *supernatural prudence*, fortified by the *gift of counsel*, which a spiritual director should ever beg of the Holy Spirit. He will invoke Him especially in difficult cases, repeating in his heart the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* before rendering any important decision. Having consulted the Holy Ghost, he will listen with attention and childlike simplicity to the answer whispered to his soul, and communicate it to his penitent: "*As I hear, so I judge. And my judgment is just.*"¹ In this wise, a director will in truth become the instrument of the Holy Spirit — a joint instrument with God — and his ministry will be fruitful.

This care to take counsel with the Most High will not hinder the director from making use of all the means prudence will place at his command to acquire a thorough knowledge of his penitent. For this knowledge, he will not rely merely on the penitent's words; he will study his conduct, and without subscribing to all his judgments, will weigh these in accordance with the rules of prudence.

550. c) Let prudence guide the spiritual director not only in giving counsel, but in all *matters* connected with the practice of direction. 1) He should devote no more time than is necessary to this duty of his ministry, important as it is. He should hold no protracted conversations, nor indulge in idle talk, nor ask indiscreet questions. He should limit himself to what is of real profit to souls. Brief advice to the point, the clear exposition of one of the means of perfection, will well occupy a penitent for a fortnight or a *month*. More, the director will strive so to lead souls that before long they may be, not indeed self-

sufficient, but may rest satisfied with briefer spiritual direction, and be able to resolve their ordinary problems by means of the general principles imparted to them.

2) Although the spiritual direction of youths and men can be carried on anywhere, that of women demands greater reserve. Ordinarily, it should be given only in the confessional, and this briefly, without allowing them to go into useless details. We belong to all; time is limited and should not be wasted. We must, no doubt, be patient, giving each soul all the required time, but bearing in mind the while that there are other souls who also need our ministrations.

2) The Duties of Penitents

551. Penitents will see in their spiritual director the person of Our Lord Himself. If it is true that all authority comes from God, it is more so of the authority the priest exercises over consciences in the confessional. The power of binding and loosing, of opening and closing the gates of Heaven, of guiding souls in the paths of perfection, is a divine power and cannot reside outside of him who is the lawful representative, the ambassador of Christ. "*For Christ's therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us.*"¹ This is the principle from which all duties toward a spiritual director flow — *respect, trust, docility.*

552. A) The director must be *respected* as the representative of God, clothed as he is with God's authority in what regards our most intimate and most sacred relations with God. Hence, if he has his shortcomings, let us not dwell on them, but simply regard his authority and his mission. A penitent will thus carefully avoid any *criticism* whereby the filial respect due his director is lost or lessened. He should likewise avoid excessive familiarity, hardly compatible with true respect. This respect will be tempered by an *affection* that is frank and genuine, but full of reverence, an affection of a child for his father, an affection that excludes the desire of being singularly loved, and the petty jealousies issuing from such desire. "In a word, this friendship should be strong and sweet, holy, all sacred, wholly divine and entirely spiritual."²

553. B) A second duty toward the spiritual director is *filial trust* and *perfect openness of heart*. "Open your heart to him with all sincerity and fidelity, manifesting clearly the state of your conscience without fiction or dissimulation;

¹ *III Cor.*, V, 20.

² ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, Part. I, C. IV.

¹ *John*, V, 30.

by this means your good actions will be examined and approved, and your evil ones corrected and remedied... Place great confidence in him, but let it be united with a holy reverence, so that the reverence may not diminish the confidence, nor the confidence the reverence."¹ We are to open our heart to him, then, with full confidence, making known to him *our temptations* and *our weaknesses*, that he may help us conquer the former and heal the latter; we must submit to his approbation our desires and resolutions; we must tell him of the good we strive to accomplish, that he may help us to do even more; of our good purposes that he may examine them, and suggest the means of realizing them; in a word of whatever has a bearing on the spiritual welfare of our soul. The better he knows us, the more will he be able to counsel us wisely, to encourage, comfort and fortify us, in such wise, that after taking leave of him, we can repeat the words of the disciples at Emmaus: "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke...?"²

554. There are persons who, though willing enough to be thus perfectly open, through a sort of timidity or reserve do not know how to make known their state of soul. Let them speak of this to their spiritual director, who will help them with pertinent questions and, if need be, have them read some book or other that will enable them to come to a better knowledge of themselves and to analyze the state of their souls. Once the ice is broken, such intimate communications will be made with greater ease.

Others there are who, on the contrary, are liable to talk overmuch and to turn spiritual direction into pious prattle. These must remember that a priest's time is limited, that others wait their turn and may grow impatient of delay. They should, therefore, set a limit and leave less important matters for some future meeting.

555. C) *Docility* in listening to and carrying out of a director's advice must accompany this frankness. There is nothing less supernatural than to wish him to enter into our views, nothing more hurtful to the welfare of our soul, for then it is not the will of God we seek, but our own, with this aggravating circumstance, that we abuse a God-given means in order to attain our selfish purposes. Our only desire must be to know God's will through the agency of our spiritual director and not to extort his approval through more or less clever devices. One may deceive a spiritual director, but not Him Whom he represents.

Doubtless, it is our duty to make known to him our likes and our dislikes, and if we foresee serious difficulties in

¹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, P. I, C. IV.

² *Life*, XXIV, 32.

carrying out his advice, we must candidly mention them to him. Once this has been done, we must submit to his decision, or if we think it unwise, seek another director. Strictly speaking, our spiritual director may be mistaken, but we make no mistake in obeying him, except, of course, were he to give counsel opposed to faith or morals.¹

556. D) Only a grave reason and mature reflection should determine us to seek another spiritual guide. There should be in direction a certain continuity that cannot exist if changes be frequently made.

a) Some persons tired of listening to the same counsels, especially if these bear upon things disagreeable to nature, or led through *curiosity*, change confessors in order to see what the attitude of another will be. Others do the same through *inconstancy*, finding it impossible to hold for any length of time to the same practices. Others are inspired by *vanity*, wishing to go to one who enjoys a greater reputation, or who is more in vogue, or to one who will probably flatter them. Some change through a kind of *restlessness* that causes them to be ever dissatisfied with what they have and to dream of an imaginary perfection. Again, some do so, through an ill-regulated desire of opening their soul to *different confessors*, so as to engage their interest or to be reassured. Lastly, some change through a *false shame*, to hide from their regular confessor some humiliating weaknesses. Evidently, these motives are not sufficient, and one must learn to brush them aside, if one wishes to make consistent progress in the spiritual life.

557. b) On the other hand, we must remember the growing insistence wherewith the Church safeguards the *freedom* individuals must enjoy in the choice of a confessor; hence, if there be good reasons to have recourse to another, one must not hesitate to do so. What are the chief reasons?

1) If in spite of all our efforts we cannot have towards our director the respect, the confidence, and the openness above-mentioned, even if there be little or no grounds for such state of mind;² for in such a case, we could derive no profit from his counsels. 2) Should we have any grounded fears that our director would deter us from perfection, because of his too natural views, or because of a too strong and too sentimental affection he has shown on some occasions. 3) If we should detect in him a lack of the necessary knowledge, prudence or discretion.

¹ "This obedience to our director is a stumbling-block to many of us. I cannot think it would be so if we had a clear idea of it or, which is the same thing, an exaggerated idea of it... A spiritual director is not a monastic superior... The superior's jurisdiction is universal, the director's only where we invite it or he asks it and we accord it... If we disobey a superior, we sin; it would require very peculiar and unusual circumstances to make disobedience to our director any sin at all." FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XVIII.

² P. LIBERMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Such cases are rare, it is true; but should they occur, we must remember that spiritual direction is productive of good only if there exist between director and penitent real co-operation and mutual trust.

§ II. A Rule of Life¹

558. A rule of life extends the influence of the director, by imparting to the penitent principles and rules that will enable the latter to sanctify all his acts through obedience, and that will provide him with a norm of conduct at once sound and safe. We shall explain: 1° its *utility*; 2° its *qualities*; 3° the *manner* of keeping it.

I. *Utility of a Rule of Life*

Useful even to laymen who seek holiness in the world, a rule of life is of still greater importance to members of religious communities and to priests in the ministry. It is no less conducive to *personal* sanctification than to the sanctification of the neighbor.

559. 1° *Its utility as a means of personal sanctification.* In order to sanctify ourselves we must *make good use of our time, supernaturalize* our acts, and follow a certain program of *perfection*. Now, a rule of life wisely made with the help of our spiritual director secures for us this threefold advantage.

A) It enables us to *make a better use of our time*. Let us actually compare the life of a person that follows a rule with that of another that does not.

a) He that lives *without a rule* inevitably wastes a great deal of time: 1) He hesitates as to what is the best thing to do. Time is spent in deliberation, in weighing the reasons for and against, and, as in many cases there are no decisive reasons on either side, he is liable to remain inactive; then, natural inclinations gain the upper hand and he runs the risk of being led by curiosity, pleasure or vanity. 2) He *neglects* a certain number of duties, for having neither *foreseen* nor *determined* the acceptable time and place for their fulfilment, he no longer finds time to perform them all. 3) These negligences engender *inconstancy*. At times he makes vigorous efforts to steady himself,

¹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introd. to A Devout Life*, Part. I, C. III; Part. III, C. XI; TRONSON, *Manuel du Séminaliste*; Id., *Traité de l'obéissance*, III^e Partie; RIBET, *L'Ascétique*, ch. XLI; KEATING, *The Priest, His Character and Work*, P. I, C. II; *The secret of Sanctity*, C. I.

while at other times he surrenders to his native indolence, and this, just because he has no fixed rule that would act as a corrective to the fickleness of his nature.

560. **b)** The man who holds to a *well-defined rule of life* saves considerable time: 1) He wastes no time in hesitation. He knows exactly what he is to do, and when he is to do it. Even if his schedule is not mathematically detailed, at least it sets off time-periods and lays down principles with regard to religious exercises, recreation, work, etc... 2) There is little or *nothing unforeseen*, for even should the unusual occur, he has already provided for it by determining beforehand exercises that may be shortened and the manner of making up for them. At all events, as soon as these exceptional circumstances cease to exist, he immediately comes back to his rule. 3) *Inconstancy* likewise vanishes. The rule urges him to do always what is prescribed, and that every day and at every hour of the day. Thus, habits are formed that, give continuity to his life and assure his perseverance; his days are full days, teeming with good works and merit.

561. **B)** A rule of life enables us to *supernaturalize* all our actions. **a)** They are performed through obedience, and this virtue adds its own special merit to that which is proper to every virtuous act. It is in this sense that the saying obtains, that he who lives by rule lives unto God; since it means the constant fulfilment of His holy will. Faithfulness to a rule has, besides, a decided *educative value*. Instead of caprice and disorder that run rampant in an ill-ordered life, duty and strength of will prevail, and as a consequence, order and system. The will submits to God, and our inferior faculties yield their obedience to the will. This is a gradual return to the state of original justice.

b) With a rule of life, it is easy to infuse *supernatural motives* into all our actions. The mere fact of conquering our tastes and whims puts order into our life and directs our actions towards God. Moreover, a good rule provides for a brief thought of God before every action of any importance, and for the forming of a supernatural intention. Thus each and every one of our actions is explicitly sanctified and becomes an act of love. What a great measure of merit can be thus gained each day!

562. **C)** A rule gives us a *program of sanctification*. **a)** What we have described already constitutes such a program, and by following it, we march on to perfection; it

is none other than the highway of conformity to the Divine Will so extolled by God's Saints (n. 493-498).

b) Moreover, no rule of life is complete that does not single out the virtues best adapted to the individual penitent's condition in life and to his state of soul. Of course, this program will be subject now and then to change by reason of new needs that arise, but all this will be done in agreement with the spiritual director.

563. ²⁰ A rule of life cannot but promote *the sanctification of the neighbor*. To sanctify others, we must join *prayer to action, make good use of the time* devoted to works of zeal, and give *good example*. This is exactly what is done by the man who is faithful to his rule.

A) In his well-regulated life he finds the practical means of combining prayer with action. Convinced that the soul of zeal is an interior life, he takes care that his rule devotes a certain portion of time to prayer, Holy Mass, thanksgiving, and all other exercises indispensable as spiritual food to the soul (n. 523).

This does not prevent him from devoting *a good measure of his time to works of zeal*. Having learned how to make a wise distribution of time (n. 560), he knows how to spare it whilst doing all things in an orderly and methodical manner. Fixed hours are devoted to the divers kinds of parochial work, like confessions and the administration of the Sacraments. The faithful, once they know these arrangements, readily abide by them, happy to know just when they may call on the priest in their various needs.

564. B) Furthermore, the faithful are edified by the example of *punctuality* and *regularity* which they observe in the priest. They cannot help thinking and repeating that he is a man of duty, ever faithful to the rules laid down by ecclesiastical authorities. When they listen to him urge from the pulpit or in the confessional obedience to the laws of God and of the Church, they feel drawn more by the force of his example than by his words, and they become in turn more faithful in their observance of the Commandments.

A priest that lives up to his rule sanctifies in this manner both himself and the neighbor. This is true also of those of the laity who devote themselves to works of zeal.

II. Qualities of a Rule of Life

That a rule be productive of these happy results, it must be devised with the help of our *spiritual director*; it must

be at once *flexible* and *firm*; it must *grade one's duties* according to their relative importance.

565. ¹⁰ It must be devised with the help of our *spiritual director*. *Prudence* and obedience require this: **a)** *prudence*, and experience are needed in order to see not only what may be good in itself, but also what is good for this particular individual; what is advisable in his case, what is beyond his strength, what is timely and what is not, considering his circumstances. Few, indeed, are those that can unaided settle all these things wisely. **b)** Besides, one of the advantages of a rule of life is to give us occasions to practice the virtue of obedience. This would never be the case if we were its sole framers and did not submit it to a lawful authority.

566. ²⁰ The rule must be firm enough to sustain the will, yet *elastic* enough to be adaptable to the various circumstances arising in real life, which not unfrequently foil our calculations.

a) It will have the necessary *firmness* if it embodies all that is needed to fix, at least in principle, the time and the manner of performing our spiritual exercises, of fulfilling our duties of state, and of practicing the virtues proper to our condition in life.

567. b) It will possess the required *elasticity* if, once these points have been determined, it leaves a certain freedom of action as to changes of time, substitution of practices not essential in themselves by their equivalents, and if it makes allowance even for the shortening of exercises at the demand of charity or of some other duty, the more so if the religious exercises be completed at some later time.

This elasticity should especially apply, according to the wise remark of *Saint John Eudes*,¹ to forms of prayer and the manner of offering our actions to God: "I beg you to notice that the practice of all practices, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions, is not to attach oneself exclusively to any one particular practice or exercise of devotion. Take care, on the contrary, in all your exercises and all your actions to give yourself up to the Holy Spirit of Jesus with humility, confidence, and detachment from all things, so that, finding you detached from your own spirit and from your own devotion and dispositions He may have full power and liberty to act in you as He desires, to inspire you with such dispositions and sentiments of devotion as He shall judge well, and to lead you by the ways which are pleasing to Him."²

¹ *The Reign of Jesus*, p. 148.

568. ³⁰ The rule must give *each duty its own relative importance* for there is a hierarchy in our duties : a) God must evidently hold the first place ; then come the welfare of our soul and the sanctification of the neighbor. Assuredly there is no real conflict between these duties ; on the contrary they will, if we desire it, blend most harmoniously ; for to glorify God means simply to know and love Him. But to know and to love God is to sanctify oneself, and also to sanctify others by making them know and love Him. If, however, one should devote his entire time to works of zeal to the detriment of the great duty of prayer, he would evidently be neglecting the most efficacious means of zeal. It is likewise evident that should any one neglect his personal sanctification, he would very soon be lacking in genuine zeal for that of others. So, if we are careful first to give to God the portion of time that should be consecrated to Him and to reserve the necessary time for our essential spiritual exercises, the means of working out our own sanctification, then our works of zeal will most assuredly bear abundant fruit. Therefore, the first and the last moments of the day should be devoted to God and to our soul. Then we can safely give ourselves to works of zeal, stopping however from time to time to raise our mind and heart to God. Our whole life will thus be divided between prayer and works of zeal.

b) However, in urgent circumstances we must be guided by another principle : that the more necessary comes first. A case in point would be that of an urgent sick call ; a priest leaves all else to attend to this. Still, while on the way he should strive to occupy his mind with holy thoughts, which will take the place of whatever spiritual exercise was then to be performed.

III. *The Manner of Keeping a Rule of Life*

569. That a rule be sanctifying, it must be observed *entirely and in a Christian manner.*

¹⁰ It must be observed in its **entirety**, that is to say, fully, in all its parts, and with punctuality. If we pick and choose among the various points of our rule, and thus without reasonable cause, we shall carry out those that cost us less and omit those that are more difficult. We should thus lose the chief advantages to be derived from the exact observance of a rule, for even in the points we should observe, we would be in danger of acting from caprice or self-will. The rule, then, must be kept in its totality and

to the letter, as far as possible. If for some grave reason this cannot be done, we must abide by the spirit of the rule and do all, that is, morally speaking, within our power.

570. There are two faults to be avoided here : *scrupulosity* and *laziness*. 1) Let there be *no scruples*. As long as there is a serious reason to dispense with a given point of the rule, to postpone it or to substitute an equivalent for it, let it be done without misgivings. Thus an urgent duty, a sick-call for instance, is sufficient to dispense from the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, should no time be left for it ; one may easily supply for it by communing with Our Eucharistic Lord on the way. The same may be said of a mother's care of her children ; it dispenses her from her regular communion, when it is impossible to harmonize this with the other duty. Spiritual communion, in that case, can take the place of sacramental communion.

2) Neither let there be *laziness*. A lack of mortification, the mere desire to prolong conversations without necessity, curiosity, etc., are not adequate reasons for deferring the performance of a given exercise, at the risk of omitting it altogether. Likewise, if the accomplishment of certain duties in the usual manner becomes impossible, we must strive to comply therewith in another way. Thus a priest who is obliged to take the Holy Viaticum during his time of meditation, will try to turn the fulfilment of this duty into an affective prayer, by offering his homages to the God of the Eucharist Who rests upon his heart.

571. Punctuality is an integral part of the observance of a rule of life. Not to begin an exercise at the prescribed moment, and that without a reason, already constitutes an act of resistance to grace, which admits of no delays ; it is to run the risk of omitting or at least shortening this exercise from lack of time. If it is question of some public exercise of the ministry, a delay often means considerable inconvenience to the faithful ; on the part of a teacher lack of punctuality sets before the students a bad example which they are but too prone to follow.

572. ²⁰ The rule must be observed in a **Christian manner**, that is to say, with supernatural motives, in order to do the will of God, and thus give Him the most genuine proof of our love. This singleness of purpose is the *soul* of a rule ; it gives to each of our actions its true worth, by transforming them all into acts of obedience and love. In order to practice this singleness of purpose, we must reflect a moment before acting, ask ourselves what our rule demands of us at the time, and then regulate our conduct thereby with the view of pleasing God : "*I do always the things that please Him.*" Thus the keeping of a rule will enable us to live constantly for God : "*He who lives by rule, lives unto God.*"

§ III. Spiritual Readings and Conferences :

573. Readings or conferences complete the spiritual direction of souls. A spiritual book is in reality a written direction. An exhortation is oral direction addressed to several. We shall explain : 1° their utility ; 2° the dispositions requisite to profit by them.

I. The Utility of Spiritual Readings and Spiritual Conferences

574. A) The Reading of Holy Scripture, especially of the New Testament, evidently holds the first place.²

a) Truly pious souls take their delight in the *Gospels*. Therein they find Our Lord's teachings and examples. Nothing schools them better to a solid piety ; nothing draws them more powerfully to the imitation of the Divine Model.

Should we ever have understood the meaning of humility, of meekness, of the bearing of injuries, of virginal chastity, of fraternal charity unto the immolation of self, had we not read and pondered the example as well as the instructions of the Master concerning these virtues? True, pagan philosophers, especially the Stoics, had written beautiful pages upon some of these ; yet how great is the contrast between their literary disquisitions and the persuasive call of the Master? Theirs, we feel, is the art of the rhetorician, and often the pride of the moralist, exalting himself above the masses : "*I loathe and hate the common herd.*" In Our Lord we behold perfect simplicity as He shrinks not from the lowly multitude, a perfect sincerity as He practices what He preaches and seeks not His personal glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him.

2) For devout souls, moreover, each act of the Master holds a special grace that facilitates the practice of the virtues they set before us. In reading the Gospels, such souls worship the Divine Word ; and they beg Him to enlighten them to make them understand, relish, and live His teachings. This sort of reading is a meditation, a loving conversation with Jesus, and souls emerge from it determined more than ever to follow Him Who is the object of their admiration and their love.

b) The *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Epistles* likewise supply food for our piety. They are the teachings of Jesus lived by His disciples, explained, commented upon, and adapted to the needs of the faithful by those to whose care He entrusted the perpetuation of His work. There is nothing more tender or more stimulating than this first commentary on the Gospel.

¹ St. BONAVENTURE, *De modo studendi in S. Scriptura* ; MABILLON, *Des études monastiques*, II^e Part., ch. II, III, XVI ; LE GAUDIER, *op. cit.*, p. V, sect. I ; TOLSON, *Manuel*, II^e Part., Ent. I, XV, XXVI ; RIBET, *Ascétique*, ch. XLIV ; D. COLUMBA MARMION, *Le Christ idéal du moine*, p. 519-524 ; St. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introd. to a Devout Life*, p. II, C. 17 ; FABER, *Spiritual Conferences*, A Taste for Reading ; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, c. XXX ; A. BARRY-O'NEILL, *Priestly Practice*, VI. — ² *The Following of Christ*, Book I, c. V.

575. e) In The Old Testament : 1) There are parts that should be in the hands of every one. Such are the Psalms, "*The Psalter*," says Lacordaire, "was our forefathers' manual of piety ; it was found on the table of the poor and it lay on the kneeling-bench of kings. Today, it is still in the hands of the priest a treasure whence he draws the inspiration that leads him to the altar, the Ark of Refuge wherewith he ventures into the perils of the world and into the desert land of meditation." It is the most excellent of Prayer-books wherein we find in a language that always lives and never grows old, the most beautiful expressions of admiration, adoration, filial reverence, gratitude and love, together with the most ardent supplications, midst situations the most varied and trying : the appeals of the just to God when harassed by persecution, the bitter cry of the repentant sinner from a broken and humbled heart ; the note of hope for a merciful pardon and the promises of a better life. To read and reread them, to ponder them and to make their sentiments our own is surely a highly sanctifying occupation.²

2) The *Sapiential Books* may likewise be read with profit by pious souls. They will find therein besides the urgent calls of Uncreated Wisdom to a worthier life the exposition of the great virtues we are to practice in our relations to God, the neighbor, and ourselves.

3) As for the *Historical and Prophetical Books*, to read them to advantage a certain preparation is required. We must see in them above all God's providential action over the chosen people in order to keep them from falling into idolatry and to recall them again and again, despite their estrangement, to the worship of the true God, to the hope of a Deliverer, to the practice of justice, of equity, of charity, especially towards the poor and the oppressed. Having been thus initiated, we find in these books most inspiring pages. If the weaknesses of the servants of God are therein recorded together with their good works, it is to remind us of the frailty of human nature and of God's wonderful mercy, so full of forgiveness to penitent sinners.

576. B) Spiritual writers, if we choose the best, especially from among the Saints, are for us masters and mentors.

a) They are *masters*, who having learned and lived the science of the Saints, can impart to us an understanding of and a taste for the principles and the rules of perfection. They strengthen in us the conviction of our obligation to aim at sanctity ; they point out to us the means to be employed, showing the effectiveness of these in their own lives ; they exhort, encourage, and induce us to follow in their footsteps.

They are all the more helpful, since they are ever available. With the help of our spiritual director we can choose those best suited to our state of soul and hold

¹ *Letters to Young Men*, and Letter.

² Numerous commentaries facilitate the understanding of the Psalms. Among the most recent are those of BOYLAN, C. FILLION, BARRY and HUGUENY, O. P., whose object is to give both the literal and spiritual sense in view of the devout recitation of the Divine Office.

converse with them *as long as we will*. We find excellent ones among them, adapted to the different states of soul and answering the needs of the moment. Our chief concern is to make a good choice and to read them with the earnest desire of profiting by them.

577. b) They are likewise most benevolent *mentors* who reveal to us our defects with great discretion and kindness. They do this by placing before us the *ideal* we are to follow, enabling us by the light of this *spiritual mirror* to recognize our good qualities and our defects, the stages we have reached and those we have yet to traverse in the pursuit of perfection. Thus we are easily led to self-examination and to generous resolutions.

No wonder, then, that the reading of spiritual books and of the lives of the Saints has brought about conversions such as those of Augustine and Ignatius Loyola, and led to the highest degrees of perfection souls that would have otherwise never risen above mediocrity.

578. C) **Spiritual Conferences** have a double advantage over the reading of spiritual books. a) Designed as they are for a special class of persons, they are better *adapted* to their peculiar needs. b) The *appeal* of the spoken word is stronger and, all things being equal, its *power* is greater than that of the written word, better calculated to carry conviction to souls : the eye, the living voice, the gesture, bring out the import of the thought expressed. But that this be so, the speaker has to drink at the purest sources, be deeply convinced of what he says and beg God Almighty to bless and vivify his words. His hearers, likewise, must be possessed of the right dispositions.

II. *Requisite Dispositions in order to Profit by Spiritual Readings and Conferences*¹

579. The real purpose of spiritual reading is to sustain in us the spirit of prayer. It is one of the forms of meditation, one of the ways of holding converse with God, with the writer or the speaker as interpreter.

580. 1^o To draw real profit from these readings and conferences a great **spirit of faith** is required, making us see God Himself in the writer or speaker : "*God as it were exhorting by us.*"² This will be easy if the author or

preacher is himself imbued with the teachings of the Gospel and can say in all truth that his doctrine is not his own, but that of Jesus Christ : "*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*"¹

Let the pious reader or the devout hearer offer up to God a fervent prayer asking Our Lord to vouchsafe to speak to his heart through the Holy Ghost. Let him, moreover, be on his guard against *curiosity*, which seeks to learn novelties rather than to profit spiritually. He must beware of *vanity*, which prompts one to seek acquaintance with things spiritual in order to be able to speak about them and thus gain a reputation. He must beware of *ensoriousness*, which prompts one to listen or read, not in order to gain profit, but to criticise the matter or the literary form of the discourses. His sole purpose must be his spiritual gain.

581. 2^o A second requisite is a **sincere desire to sanctify oneself**. The fact is that we derive advantage from such readings and conferences in the measure in which we seek therein our own sanctification. Hence we must :

a) hunger and thirst for perfection, listening or reading with an *alert mind* that yearns after the word of God ; a mind that applies to itself, not to others, what it reads or hears, the better to assimilate it and carry it out in practice. We then find abundant food for the soul whatever may be the subject treated, for all things hold together in the spiritual life. What applies directly to beginners can be easily adapted to the more advanced ; what is said for the latter constitutes the ideal of the former, and what has a bearing on the future enables us to form resolutions in the present, thus preparing ourselves for the duties that will fall to us later on. Thus victory over future temptations is prepared by the vigilance we exercise here and now. We can always draw profit in the present from whatever we hear or read, especially, if we hearken to the *inward voice* that speaks to our inmost soul, if we have ears to hear : "*I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.*"²

582. b) This is the reason why we should read *slowly*, as St. John Eudes advises :³ "Stop to consider, ponder, and relish the truths that make the greater appeal to you, in order to fix them in your mind, therefrom to elicit acts and affections." When this is realized, spiritual reading and conferences become a prayer ; little by little the thoughts

¹ J. GAUDERON, *La Lecture Spirituelle d'après les principes de S. Jean Eudes, Vie spirit.*, juin 1921, p. 185-202. — ² II Cor., V, 20.

³ *John*, VII, 16. — ² Ps. LXXXIV, 9. — ² *The Reign of Jesus*, P. II, § XV.

and sentiments we either read or hear penetrate the soul, and we form the desire and pray for the grace of putting them into practice.

583. ^{3°} A third requirement is the earnest effort to begin to practice what is read or heard. This was St. Paul's recommendation to his readers: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." ¹ St. Paul but comments here on the words of the Master Who in the parable of the Sower declares that they profit by the word of God "who in a good and perfect heart hearing the word, keep it and bring forth fruit in patience." ²

We should, then, imitate St. Ephrem, of whom it is said: "*He reproduced in his life what he had read in the sacred pages.*" ³ Light is given to us for action, and our first act should be an effort to live according to the instruction received: "*Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only.*" ⁴

§ IV. The Sanctification of Our Social Relations

584. Thus far we have spoken of the soul's relations with God, under the guidance of a spiritual director. It is clear, however, that our relations extend to many other persons as well, to our relatives, to our friends, and to those with whom we come in contact by reason of our position in life and of the share we take in works of zeal. All these relations can and should be sanctified and thus contribute to strengthen our spiritual life. In order to facilitate the sanctification of these relations, we shall explain the *general principles* that should govern them and we shall point out some of the principal applications.

I. General Principles

585. ^{1°} In God's initial plan, creatures were designed to raise us up to God by reminding us that He is the Author and the *Exemplary Cause* of all things. Since the Fall, however, creatures so attract us that if we are not on our guard they will turn us away from God, or at least retard our progress towards Him. We must then react against this tendency, and by the spirit of faith and of sacrifice make use of persons and things as *means* to reach God.

586. ^{2°} Among the relations we have with others, there are those that are willed by God, such as those born

of family-ties or imposed by our duties of state. These relations must be *maintained* and *supernaturalized*. One is not relieved from duties imposed by the natural law because one aspires to perfection; on the contrary, one is thereby obliged to fulfil them in a more perfect manner. These relations must, however, be supernaturalized by being directed toward our last end, God. The best way to accomplish this is to look upon those with whom we come in contact as the children of God, our brethren in Christ, respecting and loving them because they possess qualities which are the reflection of the divine perfections, and because they are destined to share in God's life and in His glory. In this way, it is God Whom we esteem and love in them.

587. ^{3°} There are, on the other hand, relations which are *dangerous* or *bad*, which tend to lead us into sin either by stirring up within us the spirit of the world or by creating in us an inordinate attachment to creatures by reason of the sensible or sensuous pleasure we find in their company. It is our duty to flee from such occasions as far as we can, and, if it be impossible to avoid them, it is incumbent upon us to *remove them morally* (to make the danger remote) by fortifying our will against the disordered attachment to such persons. To act otherwise is to hazard our sanctification and our salvation, for "*he that loveth danger, shall perish in it.*" ¹ The greater our desire for perfection, the more must we flee from dangerous occasions, as we shall explain later when speaking of faith, charity, and the other virtues.

588. ^{4°} Lastly, there are relations which in themselves are neither good nor bad. They are merely *indifferent*. Such are visits, conversations, recreations. These may by reason of circumstance and motive be rendered useful or harmful. A soul striving after perfection will by *purity of intention* and by a spirit of *moderation* turn all such relations into good. First of all, we must seek those only which are truly *conducive* to the glory of God, the welfare of souls, or to the relaxation which health of body and mind requires. Then, in the enjoyment of these we must exercise prudence and reserve, and thus conform all our relations to the order willed by God. Hence, we must not indulge in long, idle conversations which constitute a loss of time and an occasion of fostering pride and lessening brotherly love, nor must we

¹ Rom., II, 13. — ² Luc., VIII, 15. — ³ ENNODIUS, in ejus vita. — ⁴ James, I, 22.

¹ Eccli., III, 27.

give ourselves to protracted and violent amusements that fatigue the body and depress the spirit.¹ In short, let us ever keep before us the standard laid down by St. Paul: "*All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*"²

II. Sanctification of Family-Relations

589. Nature is not destroyed, but perfected by grace. Family ties are God-given. He has willed that men increase and multiply through the sanctioned and indissoluble union of man and woman and that this bond be further strengthened by their offspring. Hence, the most intimate and most tender relations between husband and wife, parent and child. These the sacramental grace of marriage helps to supernaturalize.

1° THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE³

590. By His presence at the marriage-feast of Cana, and by raising Christian wedlock to the dignity of a Sacrament, Our Lord taught husband and wife that their union *can* be sanctified, and He merited for them that grace.

A) Before marriage, a truly Christian love, a tender and ardent love, pure and supernatural, has made their hearts one, and prepared them to bear bravely the heavy burdens of parenthood. The flesh and the devil will no doubt attempt to inject into this love a sensual element that might threaten virtue. However, the betrothed sustained by the reception of the Sacraments, learn to control such influences and to supernaturalize their mutual affection by realizing that every worthy sentiment comes from God and should be referred to Him.

591. B) The sacramental grace of marriage, whilst uniting their hearts in an indissoluble bond, refines and purifies their love. They will ever keep in mind the words of St. Paul admonishing them that their union is the image of the mysterious union between Christ and His Church.

¹ Concerning the sanctification of visits, conversations, recreations, journeys, cf. TRONSON, *Particular Exam.* LXXXVIII-XC.

² *Coloss.*, III, 17.

³ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part. III, C. XXXVIII, XXXIX; GERRARD, *Marriage and Parenthood*; D'HULST-CONWAY, *The Christian Family*, KANE S. J., *The Plain Gold Ring*.

"Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the savior of his body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ: so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it: that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies... Nevertheless let everyone of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear her husband."¹ Hence, there should be between husband and wife a mutual respect and a mutual love that reproduce as far as possible the love of Christ for the Church. The wife must render *obedience* to the husband in all things lawful. The husband is bound to *cherish* and *protect* the wife. These are the duties outlined by the Apostle for the Christian husband and wife.

592. C) When God blesses them with children, they receive these as a sacred trust from His hand, loving them not merely as their own offspring, but as *children of God, Christ's members, heirs-to-be of eternal glory*. They ever surround them with their devoted care and solicitude. They give them a Christian education, intent upon forming in them the very virtues of Christ. With this aim in view, they exercise the authority committed to them by God, with tact, thoughtfulness, strength and meekness. They do not lose sight of the fact that they are God's representatives, and they avoid that weakness which would spoil their children, that selfishness which would delight in children as in so many playthings and fail to inure them to labor and virtue. With God's help and the aid of carefully chosen teachers, they will help them to grow to the fulness of Christian manhood, thus exercising a sort of priesthood within the sacred precincts of the home. Thus, they will be counted worthy of the blessing of God Almighty and of the gratitude of their offspring.

2° DUTIES OF CHILDREN TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS

593. A) The grace that hallows the relations of Christian parents perfects, likewise, and supernaturalizes the duties of

¹ *Ephes.*, V, 22-33.

respect, love and obedience which children must render to them.

a) That grace makes us see in our parents the *representatives of God* and His authority. To them, under Him, we owe our life, its preservation, its guidance. Our respect for them, therefore, reaches *veneration*. We revere in them their participation in the Fatherhood of God, "of whom all *paternity in heaven and earth is named*."¹ In them we pay homage to His authority, to His perfections, to God Himself.

b) Their attachment, their kindness, their solicitude are for us a reflection of the divine goodness, and our *filial love* in turn grows in intensity, rising to such perfect devotedness, that we are ready to sacrifice ourselves in their behalf and, if need be, lay down our lives to save them. Hence, we give them, to the full extent of our resources, all the temporal and spiritual *assistance* they need.

c) Seeing in them the representatives of the divine authority, we do not hesitate to render them *obedience* in all things, following the example of Our Lord, Who during thirty years of His life on earth was subject to Mary and to Joseph.² This obedience knows no other bounds than those set by God Himself: we must obey God rather than men, and hence, in what regards our soul and particularly in what pertains to our *vocation*, we must rather follow the advice of our confessor, after acquainting him with home conditions. In this again we but follow Our Lord's example, Who, to His Mother's question of why He had remained in Jerusalem, made answer: "*Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?*"³ Thus the rights and duties of each are safeguarded.

594. B) By entering the ranks of the clergy we quit the world and, in a sense, the family. This, in order to form part of the great ecclesiastical family and to consecrate ourselves henceforward, and before all else, to the glory of God, the good of souls and the welfare of the Church. The interior sentiments of respect and love for our parents are not suppressed; rather they are refined. Their outward expression, however, from now on is subordinated to our duties of state. We must not, in order to please our parents, do anything that would interfere with our ministry. Our first duty is to busy ourselves with the things of God.

¹ *Ephes.*, III, 15. — ² *Luke*, II, 51. — ³ *Luke*, II, 49.

Hence, if their views, their words, their demands go counter to the claims of our service to souls, we shall sweetly and lovingly, yet firmly, make them understand that in what relates to our duties of state we are dependent on God and our ecclesiastical superiors.¹ We shall continue, however, to honor, to love, and to aid our parents to the full extent compatible with the duties of our office. These principles apply all the more to those who enter a religious order or congregation.²

III. Sanctification of Friendship

Friendship can become a means of sanctification or a serious obstacle to perfection accordingly as it is supernatural or merely natural and sentimental in character. We shall treat, then: 1° of *true friendship*, 2° of *false friendship*, 3° of that friendship wherein there is an *admixture of the supernal and the sentimental*.

1° TRUE FRIENDSHIP³

We shall explain its *nature* and its *value*.

595. A) **Its Nature.** a) Friendship being an interchange, a mutual communication between two persons, it receives its character chiefly from the variety of the communications themselves and from the diversity of the things communicated. This is very well explained by St. Francis de Sales: "The more exquisite the virtues are, which shall be the matter of your communications, the more perfect shall your friendship also be. If this communication be in the sciences, the friendship is very commendable; but still more so, if it be in the moral virtues: in prudence, discretion, fortitude and justice. But should your reciprocal communications relate to charity, devotion and Christian perfection, good God, how precious will this friendship be! It will be excellent, because it comes from God; excellent, because it tends to God; excellent, because its very bond is God; excellent, because it shall last eternally in God. Oh how good it is to love on earth as they love in heaven; to learn to cherish each other in this world, as we shall do eternally in the next!"

¹ A. CHEVRIER, *Le Véritable Disciple*, 1922, p. 101-112.

² RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection*, P. II, Treatise V.

³ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part. III, C. 17-22; RIBET, *Ascétique*, ch. XLIII, p. 437-441, 448-451; AD. A. DENDERWINDEKE, *Comp. Theol. ascétique*, 1921, n. 437-439; ROUZIC, *De l'Amicitia*; MARCETTEAU, *The Young Seminarian's Manual*, p. 401-411.

⁴ *Devout Life*, Part. III, C. 19.

In general, then, true friendship is an intercourse between two souls with the purpose of procuring each other's good. It stays within the limits of *moral goodness* if the good mutually shared belongs to the natural order. *Supernatural* friendship, however, stands on a far superior plane. It is the intimate intercourse of two souls, who love each other in God and for God with a view of aiding each other to attain the perfection of that divine life which they possess. The ultimate end of this friendship is God's glory, the proximate end their own spiritual progress, and the bond of union between the two friends is Our Lord. This was the thought of the Blessed Ethelred: "We are two, you and I, and I trust a *third One* is with us, *Christ*." Lacordaire thus renders this thought: "I can no longer love any one without reaching the soul behind the heart and having Jesus Christ as our common possession." ¹

596. b) Thus, supernatural friendship instead of being passionate, all-absorbing, exclusive after the manner of sentimental friendship, is marked by *calm reserve* and *mutual trust*. It is a *calm*, self-possessed affection precisely because it is rooted in the love of God and shares in His virtue. For the same reason it is *unwavering*; it grows, unlike the love that is founded on passions and which tends to grow cool. With it goes a *prudent reserve*. Instead of seeking familiarities and endearments like sentimental friendship, it is full of respect and reserve, for it seeks nothing but spiritual good. This reserve does not exclude *confidence*. Because there is mutual esteem and because one sees in the other a reflection of the divine perfections, there arises a strong mutual trust. This leads to an intimate intercourse since each longs to share in the spiritual qualities of the other, thus establishing an exchange of thoughts, of views, and a communication of holy desires for perfection. Because such friends desire each other's perfection they do not fear to point out their respective defects and to offer mutual help for their correction. This mutual confidence excludes all suspicion and uneasiness and does not allow the friendship to become all-absorbing or exclusive. One does not take it amiss that one's friend should have other friends, but one is rather glad of it for his sake and the sake of others.

597. B) The *value* of such friendship is evident. **a)** It has been praised by the Holy Ghost: "A faithful friend is a strong defence: and he that hath found him hath found

a treasure... A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality." ¹ Our Lord Himself has given us an example in His friendship for St. John, who was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." ² St. Paul had friends to whom he was deeply attached; he sorrowed at their absence; meeting them again was his sweetest consolation; and he was comfortless because, contrary to his expectation, he failed to find Titus: "*Because I found not Titus my brother*." ³ He rejoiced upon finding him again: "*God comforted us by the coming of Titus... we did the more abundantly rejoice for the joy of Titus*." ⁴ We see also the affection he had for Timothy, whose very presence did him so much good and helped him to do good unto others. Thus he called him his "fellow laborer," ⁵ his "dearest son," ⁶ his "brother," ⁷ his "beloved son." ⁸ Christian antiquity, likewise, furnishes us with illustrious examples, among which one of the best known is that of St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen. ⁹

598. b) True friendship has three important advantages, especially for the priest in the ministry.

1) A friend is a protection for virtue, a *strong defence*. We must needs open our hearts to an intimate confidant. At times our spiritual director answers the purpose, but not always; his friendship, *paternal* in nature, is not the fraternal intimacy we crave. We need an *equal* to whom we can speak with perfect freedom. If we do not find such a one, we are liable to be betrayed into indiscreet disclosures to persons unworthy of our trust, and such confidences have their dangers for those who make and for those who receive them.

2) A friend is also a *sympathetic counsellor* to whom we willingly bring our doubts and offer our difficulties in order that he may help us to reach a solution. He is likewise a *mentor*, prudent and devoted, who observing our ways and aware of what is said of us, will tell us the truth and save us from many an act of imprudence.

3) Lastly, a friend is a *comforter* who will listen with sympathy to the story of our sorrows, and who will find in his heart words of comfort and encouragement.

599. The question has been asked whether or not such friendships should be encouraged in *communities*. It may

¹ *Eccles.*, VI, 14-16. — ² *John*, XIII, 23. — ³ *II Cor.*, II, 13. — ⁴ *II Cor.*, VII, 6, 13. — ⁵ *Rom.*, XVI, 21. — ⁶ *I Cor.*, IV, 17. — ⁷ *II Cor.*, I, 1. — ⁸ *I Tim.*, I, 2. — ⁹ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *loc. cit.*, c. 19, refers to many others.

be feared that they will be detrimental to the affection which should unite all the members and that they will be the cause of jealousies. Assuredly, care must be taken that such friendships do not interfere with the charity due to all, that they be supernatural and be kept within the limits set by Superiors. With these provisions, friendship retains in communities all the advantages described above, since religious as well as others need the counsel, comfort and protection that a friend alone can give. However, in communities more than elsewhere, all that savors of false friendship must be avoided with jealous care.

2° FALSE FRIENDSHIP

We shall speak of its *nature* and *dangers*, and of the *remedies* to be applied.

600. A) Its Nature. a) False friendship has for its foundation external or shallow qualities, and for its purpose the enjoyment of the sight and charms of its object. Hence, fundamentally it is but a sort of masked egotism, since one loves the other because of the pleasure he finds in his company. Undoubtedly, he is ready to be of service to him, but this again in view of the pleasure he experiences in drawing the other closer to himself.

b) St. Francis de Sales distinguishes three types of false friendships: *carnal* friendship in which one seeks voluptuous pleasure; *sentimental* friendship, based mainly on the appeal outward qualities make to the emotions, "such as the pleasure to behold a beautiful person, to hear a sweet voice, to touch, and the like;" ¹ *foolish* friendship, which has no other foundation than those empty accomplishments styled by shallow minds virtues and perfections, such as graceful dancing, clever playing, delightful singing, fashionable dressing, smiling glances, a pleasing appearance, etc.

601. c) These various kinds of friendship generally begin with adolescence and are born of the instinctive need we feel of loving and being loved. Often they are a kind of deviation of sexual love. In the world such friendships arise between young men and women and go by the name of "fond-love."² In cloistered communities they exist between persons of the same sex and are styled particular friendships. Such affections are at times kept up in mature life; thus there are men who feel sentimental affection

toward boys because of their youthful and attractive appearance, their frankness and openness of character, and the charm and winsomeness of their manner.

602. d) The *characteristics* whereby sentimental friendships may be recognized are gathered from their *origin, development, effects*.

1) Their *origin* is *sudden* and *vehement* because they proceed from a natural and instinctive sense of sympathy. They rest upon exterior and showy qualities. They are attended by strong and, at times, passionate feelings.

2) Their *development* is fostered by conversations at times insignificant but affectionate, at others, fond and dangerous. In certain communities furtive glances take the place of familiar conversations.

3) These friendships are impetuous, all-absorbing and exclusive; the illusion that such affection will last forever is often brusquely destroyed by separation and the forming of new attachments.

603. B) The *dangers* of such friendships are apparent.

a) They constitute one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual progress. God Who does not want a divided heart begins by making interior reproaches to the soul and, if it hearkens not to His voice, He gradually withdraws, leaving the soul without light and inward consolations. In proportion as the attachments grow, the spirit of recollection is lost, peace of soul vanishes, as well as relish for spiritual exercises and love of work.

b) Hence a great *loss of time*: the absorbing thought of the friend hinders both mind and heart from devoting themselves to piety and to serious work.

c) All this ends in dissatisfaction and *discouragement*; sentimentality gains control over the will, which loses its strength and languishes.

d) It is at this point that dangers threatening purity arise. One would wish, indeed, not to trespass the bounds of propriety, yet fancying that friendship confers certain rights, one indulges in familiarities of a more and more questionable character. Now the descent is swift, and he who risks the danger will end by perishing in it.

604. C) The *remedies* against such friendships are:

a) To resist them in their beginnings. It is all the easier then, for the heart is not yet deeply attached. A few energetic efforts succeed, especially if one has the courage to mention the matter to one's director and to accuse oneself of the least failings in that regard. If one waits too

¹ ST FRANCIS DE SALES, loc. cit., C. 17. — ² ST FRANCIS DE SALES, loc. cit., C. 18.

long, the process of disentangling the heart will prove far more difficult.¹

b) To root out these affections successfully, radical measures must be taken: "You must cut them, break them, tear them; amuse not yourself in unravelling these criminal friendships; you must tear and rend them asunder."² So it is not enough to renounce intercourse with one to whom we are thus attached, but we must not even deliberately think of him; and should it be impossible to avoid all association with him, we shall on these occasions show courtesy and charity, but never indulge in any confidences or bestow any special marks of affection.

e) The better to insure success, positive means must be used. Let one's activities be wholly devoted to the fulfilment of the duties of state, and when, in spite of all, the object of such affections presents itself unsought to the mind, this should be made the occasion of eliciting acts of love toward God: "*One is my beloved, One is my troth forever.*" We thereby profit by temptation itself to increase within us the love of Him Who alone is worthy to possess our hearts.

3° FRIENDSHIP AT ONCE SUPERNATURAL AND SENTIMENTAL

605. At times it happens that there is in our friendships a *mixture of the sentimental* with the morally good and the *supernatural*. One truly desires the supernatural good of a friend and at the same time craves the joy of his company and his words, sorrowing overmuch at his absence. This is well described by *St. Francis de Sales*: "They begin with virtuous love, with which, if not attended to with the utmost discretion, fond lovewill begin to mingle itself, then sensual love, and afterwards carnal love; yea, there is even danger in spiritual love, if we are not extremely on our guard; though in this it is more difficult to be imposed upon because its purity and whiteness makes the spots and stains which Satan seeks to mingle with it more apparent and therefore when he takes this in hand he does it more subtly, and endeavors to introduce impurities by almost insensible degrees."³

606. Here again we must watch over the heart and take effective means so as not to be carried as it were insensibly down this dangerous grade.

¹ The following is Ovid's remark in *De Remediis Amoris* :

"*Principiis obita, sero medicina paratur
Cum malo per longas invaluere moras.*"

² *Devout Life*, loc. cit., C. XXI. — *3 Devout Life*, loc. cit., C. XX.

a) If it is the *good* element that *predominates*, one may continue such a friendship whilst *purifying* it. For this, one must first of all forego what would foster sentiment, like frequent and affectionate conversations, familiarity, etc. From time to time one must deny oneself meetings otherwise in order, and be willing to shorten conversations that cease to be useful. In this way one gains control of sentiment and wards off danger.

b) If the element of *sentiment* predominates, one must for a considerable period of time renounce any special relations with the said friend beyond the strictly necessary, and when one must meet him one should abstain from speaking in terms of affection. Sentiment is thus allowed to cool; one waits for a renewal of relations until calm is restored to the soul. The renewed association then takes on a different character. Should it be otherwise, it must be severed forever.

e) In any case the results of our examination must be put to profit so that they may redound to a further strengthening of our love for Jesus Christ. We must protest that we want to love only in Him and for Him, and we should read frequently chapters VII and VIII of the second book of the Following of Christ. It is thus that temptations will become for us a source of victory.

IV. Sanctification of Social and Business Relations 1

607. Professional relations are a means of sanctification or an obstacle to our spiritual progress, according to the view we take of our duties of state and the manner in which we discharge them. In reality the duties imposed by our calling are in themselves in harmony with the will of God. If we fulfil them with the intention of obeying God and of regulating our life according to the laws of prudence, justice and charity, they are an aid to our sanctification.² If, on the contrary, we have no other end in view than to secure position and wealth by the discharge of our professional duties in defiance of the laws of conscience, such relations become a source of sin and scandal.

A) A first duty then is to *accept* the profession to which God's Providence has led us as the expression of His will

¹ A. DESURMONT, *La sainteté dans les relations sociales*, Œuvres, t. XI, p. 272 and foll.; *Charité Sacerdotale*, t. II, § 205-213.

² BOURDALOUE in his second sermon *for the Feast of All Saints* shows how the Saints have sanctified their professions in life and profited by their condition to arrive at a high degree of perfection.

and to abide therein as long as we have no reasons justifying a change. It is part of the divine economy that there should be a diversity of arts, trades, and professions, and when we have found a place in any of them through a series of providential happenings, we may rightly believe that we are where God wills us to be. We make an exception when for prudent and lawful reasons we are convinced that it is our duty to effect a change, for whatever is in harmony with right reason lies within God's providential scheme. Therefore, whether we be employers or employees, industrialists or merchants, whether farmers or financiers, our duty is to carry on our activities so as to do the will of God, and conduct them according to the rules of justice, equity and charity. After this, nothing prevents us from sanctifying our actions by *directing* them to the *ultimate end*, a fact which does by no means exclude the *secondary end* we have in view, namely that of earning enough to provide for ourselves and those dependent upon us. As a matter of fact, Saints have sprung from each and every situation in life.

608. B) Our numberless activities and relations tend of themselves to fill our mind and thus to turn our thoughts from God. Hence, oft-renewed efforts are required on our part to offer to Him and so supernaturalize our ordinary actions. This we have noted above, n. 248.

609. C) Besides, since we move in a *rather dishonest* world, where regardless of the laws of justice man greedily vies with man for honor and for gain, it is important that we remind ourselves of the fact that we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and use for the attainment of our purposes only *legitimate means*. The best standard for judging what is permissible and what is not, is to observe the behavior of honorable Christian men of the same profession. There are *accepted ethics* in every profession. We cannot change them without incurring and causing others to suffer considerable damage.

Standards generally followed by good Christian men in the profession can be followed safely until by common agreement a change for the better can be effected without compromising lawful interests.¹ But we must never be led into imitating the practices and following the counsels of traders or producers who, *devoid of conscience*, mean to

¹ Thus, standard wages for the same kind of work in the same locality are determined by norms which an employer could not set aside without incurring such losses that would soon bring his business to a stand-still.

attain to wealth at any cost, even at the expense of justice. Their success does not justify us in employing similar, unlawful means. A Christian who would follow in their footsteps would be a stumbling block to others. We must seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things shall be added unto us.¹

610. D) Thus understood and thus fulfilled, professional duties will prove a great aid to our spiritual progress, since they take up most of our time and most of our activity each day. Our Lord has shown us by His example that the most homely occupations, such as manual labor, can contribute to our personal sanctification and the spiritual welfare of our brethren. Therefore, if a laborer or a business man observes the rules of prudence, of justice, of fortitude, of temperance, of equity and of charity, numberless opportunities are offered to him daily for the practice of all the Christian virtues, the acquisition of all manner of merit, as well as for the edification of the neighbor. This is what has happened in the past, what is done today by fathers and mothers in the home, by employers and employees, by young and old, who by honesty in their work and in their dealings, elicit respect for the religion they profess and use their influence in the exercise of zeal.

V. Sanctification of Works of Zeal

611. That works of zeal may be for us a means of sanctification is not difficult to understand. However, there are those who find therein a cause of distraction, of spiritual loss, even an occasion of sin and a source of reprobation. Let us recall the words of a social worker to Dom Chautard: "It is my overeagerness that has brought on my fall."² There are persons who allow themselves to become so absorbed by an active life, that they no longer find time for their most essential spiritual exercises. Hence, a moral break-down giving the *passions* a new lease of life and paving the way for lamentable surrenders. In every case where the interior life is lacking, little personal merit is acquired, whilst outward activities secure but meager results since God's grace cannot render fruitful a ministry from which prayer has all but disappeared. Outward works must needs be vivified by the *spirit of prayer*.

612. A) The first thing to remember is that *the means employed in the exercise of zeal differ in effectiveness and*

¹ *Matth.*, VI, 33 — ² *The True Apostolate*, p. 67.

importance; there exists among them a hierarchy, the most effective being prayer and sacrifice. Example follows next in order, word and action holding the last place. The *example of Our Lord* is enough to convince us of this. His whole life was one of continual prayer and sacrifice. He began by practicing what He taught others, leading a hidden life for thirty years before He would give Himself to a public ministry of but three years' duration. Let us bear in mind the course taken by the Apostles, who committed to deacons the discharge of sundry works of charity, that they might give themselves more freely to prayer and the preaching of the Gospel: "*But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*"¹ Let the words of St. Paul resound in our ears: "*Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.*"²

Prayer, then, will hold the first place in our life (n. 470). We shall make no surrender of the *essential* exercises of piety such as meditation, thanksgiving after Mass, the devout recitation of the Divine Office, examination of conscience, the explicit offering of our actions to God, fully persuaded that we thereby render greater service to souls than if we gave ourselves entirely to works of zeal. A shepherd of souls will be, as S. Bernard says, a *reservoir* not a *mere conduit*. The latter merely passes on what it receives, the former, being first filled, gives constantly of its overflow: "*If thou hast wisdom, thou shalt prove a fountain-spring and not a channel.*"³

613. B) To aim at creating a chosen group of devout souls without, however, neglecting the multitudes, will likewise help us to keep before our minds the absolute need of an interior life. We feel that we cannot succeed in this unless we are interior men. The study we make of the spiritual life, the advice we give to others, the virtuous practices we try to inculcate, will perforce lead us to a life of prayer and of sacrifice. But to attain our end, we must be generous enough to live by the advice we give to others. Then we need not fear laxity and lukewarmness. In fact, not a few priests have been brought to live an interior life, through their interest in leading chosen souls to strive after perfection.

614. C) In the doctrinal or moral instructions we give our flock, we must follow a definite plan enabling us to present the whole field of Christian truth and Christian virtue. The preparation of such instructions will nourish our piety, for what we preach to others that we shall aspire to practice.

¹ *Acts*, VI, 4. — ² *I Cor.*, III, 7.

³ ST. BERNARDUS, *In Cantica*, sermo XVIII, 3.

615. D) Lastly, in the ordinary course of our parochial ministry, on the occasion of baptisms, marriages, funerals, sick-calls, visits of condolence and even social calls, we must ever remember that we are priests and apostles, that is to say, servants of souls. Therefore, after a few expressions of good will, we should not hesitate to raise minds and hearts towards God. Priestly conversation must always suggest the higher, the nobler things of life.

These are the various means whereby our interior life is preserved and strengthened. Our ministry vivified by grace yields fruit a hundred-fold: "*He that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.*"¹

Thus, all our relations with our neighbor can and must be supernaturalized. All become then the occasion of further growth in virtue and of a development within us of that divine life of which we have received abundantly.

GENERAL SUMMARY

616. We have reached the end of the first part of our work, namely, *The Principles of the Supernal Life*. All we have said flows logically from the truths of our faith; all can be reduced to unity: *God is our end, Jesus-Christ is our Mediator* and the Christian life is the *gift of God* to the soul and the gift of the soul to God.

¹⁰ It is *God's Gift to the Soul*. From all eternity the Most Holy Trinity has loved us and predestined us to that supernatural life which is a participation in the life of God. This Adorable Trinity living in our souls is both the *efficient* and the *exemplary* cause of that life, whilst the supernatural organism that enables us to elicit Godlike acts, is the work of the same Triune God.

The *Incarinate Word*, however, is the *meritorious* cause as well as the most perfect *model* of our supernatural life. Conformed to our weakness, He is man like unto us, without ceasing to be God. He is our friend, our brother, nay more, the Head of a mystic body whose members we are. Because Mary, associated as she is in the work of our Redemption, cannot be separated from her Son, she stands as the first stepping stone to Jesus, just as Jesus is the necessary Mediator with the Father. The Saints and Angels who form part of God's vast family aid us by their prayers and their example.

¹ *John*, XV, 5.

617. 2° In order to correspond to God's loving kindness, we give ourselves entirely to Him, fostering that life so freely bestowed. We develop it by struggling against the concupiscence that remains in us; by eliciting supernatural acts which besides meriting an increase of divine life cause us to acquire good habits, that is, virtues; and by receiving the Sacraments, which add to our merits a sanctifying power that comes from God Himself.

The very essence of perfection is *the love of God unto the immolation of self*. To fight and annihilate within us the old Adam, that the new Adam, Jesus Christ, may live in us, is the task before us. In pursuing this work, that is, in making use of the means of perfection, we *tend constantly toward God through Jesus Christ*.

The desire for perfection is, fundamentally, but the generous answer of the soul to God's tender love. Such a desire brings us to the *knowledge* and the *love* of Him Who is all love, "God is love"; to a *knowledge of self*, that we may all the more forcibly feel the need we have of God and may entrust ourselves into His merciful arms. This love is shown by a *conformity*, to the full extent of our powers, to the will of God as manifested by His laws and His counsels, as made known by the events of life, propitious or adverse, all of which help us to love God the more. This love is, likewise, shown by *prayer* which becoming habitual constantly elevates the soul toward God. Even the *exterior* means lead us to God, for spiritual direction, a rule of life and spiritual reading are calculated to bring us into compliance with His will, whilst the relations by which we are brought into contact with others in whom we see a reflection of the divine perfections bring us to Him Who is the Source and Centre of all things. Since in the employment of all these means we constantly have before our eyes Jesus, our Model, our Co-worker, our Life, we are transformed into Him, into true *Christians*, for a true Christian is another Christ.

Thus is gradually realized the ideal of perfection outlined by Father Olier for his disciples at the beginning of the "Pietas Seminarium": "*To live wholly unto God in Christ Jesus Our Lord, in such wise, that the Spirit of His Son may enter into our inmost soul,*" and that we, like St. Paul, may have a right to say: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."

END OF THE FIRST PART

SECOND PART

The Three Ways

PRELIMINARY REMARKS †

618. The general principles explained in the *first part* of this work apply to all souls, and already constitute a body of *motives* and of *means* calculated to lead us to the highest form of perfection. But as we have stated above (n. 340-343) there is a *diversity of degrees* in the spiritual life — *different stages to traverse*. Hence, the importance of *adapting the general principles to the individual needs of souls*, taking account not only of their peculiar characters, their various attractions and their different callings, but also of the degree of perfection they have so far attained, in order that the spiritual director may guide them in the most suitable manner.

The *purpose* of this second part is to follow a soul in its gradual ascent from the moment it first conceives a sincere desire of advancing in the spiritual life, on to the loftiest heights of perfection — a long road indeed, but one wherein the soul tastes the sweetness of the choicest consolations!

Before entering upon the description of the *three ways* we shall explain: 1° the *basis* of this distinction, 2° the *practical way to employ* it wisely, 3° the importance of the study of the three ways.

I. BASIS OF THE DISTINCTION OF THE THREE WAYS

619. We make use of the expression, the *three ways*, to conform to traditional usage. We must note however that it is not question here of three *parallel* or *divergent* ways, but rather of three different *stages*, of *three marked degrees*, which souls who generously correspond to divine grace traverse in the spiritual life. Each way in turn has many *degrees* which spiritual directors must take into account, the

† S. THOM., II^a II^e, q. 24, a. 9; q. 183, a. 4; THOM. DE VALLGORNERA, *Myst. theol.*, q. II, a. II; LE GAUDIER, *De Perf. vitæ spir.*, II^a Pars, sect. I, cap. I; SCARAMELLI, *Directorio ascetico*, Traité II, Intrad.; SCHRAM, *Instit. theol. myst.*, XXVI; SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, Preface; DESURMONT, *Charité Sacerdotale*, 138-140; *Cursum Asceticum*, Vol. I. Prolegomena.

most notable of which we shall indicate. Likewise, there are in the various *stages* many *forms* and *variations* dependent upon the character, the vocation, and the providential mission of each soul.¹ But, as we have said, following St. Thomas, we way reduce these degrees to three, accordingly as a soul *begins, advances* or reaches the *goal*. (n. 340-343) This is the *general sense* in which we make a threefold division based upon authority and reason.

620. ¹⁰ This doctrine is based on the **authority** of *Scripture* and *Tradition*.

A No doubt, many texts could be found in the *Old Testament* suggesting the triple distinction.

Thus Alvarez de Paz makes it rest upon the following passage, which provided him with his division of the spiritual life: "*Turn away from evil and do good: seek after peace and pursue it.*"² *Turn away from evil*: avoid sin; this is the purification of the soul or the *purgative way*. *Do good*: practice virtue; this is the *illuminative way*. *Seek after peace*: that peace which intimate union with God alone can give; here we have the *unitive way*. This interpretation of the text is ingenious, but we must not see therein a conclusive proof.

621. B) In the *New Testament*: **a**) Among others, one could cite the following words of Our Lord which sum up Christian spirituality as described in the Synoptics: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"³ Self-denial, self-renouncement — *let him deny himself* — behold the first degree. The carrying of one's cross already presupposes the positive practice of virtue, or the second degree. *Follow me* is, in reality, intimate union with Jesus, union with God, and, hence, the *unitive way*. Here, again, we have the basis for a real distinction, but not a rigorous proof of the three stages.

622. b) Neither does St. Paul explicitly make any such distinction, yet he gives a description of three states of soul which later on gave origin to this classification.

1) Recalling what athletes did in striving after a perishable crown, he compares himself to them, for he also strives to run and struggle, but instead of beating the air he buffets his body and brings it into bondage lest he sin and be rejected: "*I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air. But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.*"⁴ These are indeed, penitential exercises, practises of mortification inspired by a wholesome

¹ Thus in the *unitive way* two distinct *forms* are generally distinguished as we shall later on explain: the *simple unitive way*, and that which is accompanied by *infused contemplation*.

² Ps. XXXIII, 15. — ³ Luke, IX, 23. — ⁴ I Cor., IX, 26-27.

fear in order to subject the flesh and purify the soul. How often does he not remind Christians of the necessity of putting off the Old Adam and of crucifying their flesh with its vices and lusts? This corresponds with what we call the purgative way.

2) Writing to the Philippians he declares that he has not yet reached perfection, but that he tries, following His Master, to attain it, and that without looking back he forges ahead toward the goal: "*Forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press toward the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus.*"² He adds that whoever would seek after perfection must do in like manner: "*Let us therefore as many as are perfect, be thus minded.... be ye followers of me, brethren....*"³ And in another place: "*Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.*"⁴ These are the distinguishing marks of the *illuminative way*, wherein the principal duty is imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

3) As to the *unitive way*, he describes its two forms, the *simple unitive way* by the constant effort to have Jesus live in him: "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me;*"⁵ and the *extraordinary unitive way* which is accompanied by ecstasies, visions, and revelations: "*I know a man in Christ: above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven.*"⁶

In St. Paul, then, as in the Gospels, we find that a true Christian must purify his soul, practice virtue, and strive after union with God, yet it is not clear that these constitute three *successive* stages of the spiritual life rather than three aspects of one process that goes on *simultaneously*.

623. Tradition gradually worked out this distinction, basing it at times upon the difference that exists between the three theological virtues, at others, upon the various degrees of love.

a) Clement of Alexandria is one of the first to employ the first of these methods. To become a gnostic or a perfect man, many stages must be traversed: to shun evil through *fear*, and to mortify the passions; then, under the influence of *hope*, to do good or practice virtues and lastly, to do good out of *love* for God.⁶ Cassian, from the same point of view, arrived at the differentiation of three degrees in the soul's ascent toward God: *fear*, peculiar to *slaves, hope*, fit for mercenaries working for a reward, and *love*, becoming the *children of God*.⁷

b) St. Augustine takes another point of view: perfection consisting in *love*, it is in the practice of this virtue that he discerns four degrees: *incipient love, growing love, full-grown love*, and perfect love.⁸ Since the last two degrees relate to the unitive way, his doctrine is, at bottom, the same as that of his predecessors. — St. Bernard also perceives three degrees in the love of God: after showing that the genesis of human love is love of self, he adds that man, realizing his own insufficiency, begins through faith to seek for God and to love Him on account of *His gifts*; this intercourse leads him then to love

² Phil., III, 13-14. — ³ Phil., III, 15-17. — ⁴ I Cor., IV, 16. — ⁵ Gal., II, 20.

⁶ I Cor., XII, 2. — ⁷ Stromata, VI, 12. — ⁸ Confer., XI, 6-8.

⁹ De natura et gratia, cap. LXX, n. 84.

Him both because of His benefits and *for His own sake*; finally, he comes to love God with an altogether *disinterested* love.¹ Lastly, St. Thomas, perfecting the teaching of St. Augustine, shows clearly the existence of three degrees in the virtue of love that correspond to the three ways or stages, n. 340-343.

624. ²⁰ Reason shows the correctness of this division.

A) It is evident that before arriving at an intimate union with God, the soul must first of all be *purified* of its past faults and be strengthened against future ones.

Purity of heart is, on the authority of Our Lord, the first essential condition for seeing God, for seeing Him as He is in the next life, and also for seeing Him now imperfectly and obscurely but truly, and for uniting ourselves with Him: "*Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.*"² But this purity of heart presupposes a cleansing from former faults by means of a sincere and rigorous expiation, an earnest and relentless fight against sinful tendencies and the practice of prayer, meditation and such other spiritual exercises as are required for the strengthening of our will against temptation — in a word, all those means that tend to purify the soul and ground it in virtue. The sum-total of these means is what is called the *purgative way*.

625. B) Once the soul has been thus purified and reformed, it must be *adorned with Christian virtues*, virtues of a *positive character*, that will make it more like unto Christ. Its task then is to follow the Master step by step and gradually reproduce Christ's interior dispositions by the concurrent practice of both the *moral* and *theological* virtues. The former mold and strengthen the soul; the latter already initiate its union with God. Both are practiced simultaneously according to the needs of the moment and the attractions of grace. The better to attain this end, the soul perfects its own form of prayer, which becomes more and more *affective*, and strives to love and to imitate Jesus Christ. It thus advances toward the *illuminative way*, for to follow Jesus is to walk in the light: *He who followeth me, walketh not in darkness.*

626. C) A moment comes when the soul, purified from its faults, made strong and docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, longs but for an *intimate union with God*. It seeks Him everywhere, even in the midst of the most absorbing occupations; it clings to Him and enjoys His

presence. Mental prayer grows in *simplicity*; it becomes a lingering, loving thought of God and of things divine, under the influence, latent or conscious, of the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*. This is the *unitive way*.¹

Within these three great stages there are indeed many degrees and diversities of "*the manifold grace of God.*"² We shall describe a few. An acquaintance with the others may be obtained by studying the lives of the Saints.

II. THE PRACTICAL WAY TO EMPLOY THIS DISTINCTION WISELY

627. To make a right use of this distinction, great tact and intelligence are required: one must indeed study the principles explained here, but still more, study *each soul* in particular, with its characteristic traits, taking cognizance of the special action of the Holy Ghost upon it. In order to aid the spiritual director, a few remarks will not be amiss.

628. A) There can be nothing absolute or mathematical in the distinction of the three ways. a) A soul passes imperceptibly from one to the other, for there are no well-defined boundary lines dividing one sharply from the other. To decide, therefore, whether a soul is as yet within the limits of the purgative way, or has already crossed the borders of the illuminative way, is often impossible; for there is between the two a common ground, the exact bounds of which cannot be determined. b) Besides, the soul's progress is not always a sustained advance; it is a vital action, with its ebb and flow; at times the soul presses onward, at times it recedes; at others, it actually seems but to mark time making no apparent headway.

629. B) There is in each of the three ways a number of different degrees. a) Among *beginners*, there are those who have a heavy burden of sin to expiate; others there are who never lost their baptismal innocence. It is evident, all things being equal in other respects, that the former must undergo a longer course of penance than the latter. b) Be-

¹ I *Péter*, IV, 10.

² St. John of the Cross, and after him a number of authors, use a special terminology with regard to the three ways, a knowledge of which is important. He styles beginners those on the threshold of obscure contemplation or the "night of the senses"; he calls the advanced those already within the realm of passive contemplation; and the perfect, those that have passed through the "night of the senses" and the "night of the soul". Cf. HOORNAERT, note on the *Darè Night*, t. III, des Œuvres spirituelles, (p. 5-6).

sides, there are differences arising from temperament, degree of earnestness and constancy. There are souls that eagerly embrace penitential practices, whilst others, on the contrary, do so with reluctance; some are generous and would refuse Almighty God nothing; some respond to His advances only half-heartedly. Undoubtedly, among such souls, all as yet in the purgative way, a marked difference will be in evidence ere long. **c)** Nay, there is a considerable distance between those who have devoted but a few, short months to the purification of their souls, and those who have already consecrated *many years* to this task. **d)** Likewise, and above all, account must be taken of *the action of grace*. Some souls seem to receive it in such an abundance that we can look to a swift advance toward the heights of perfection; others receive it in far smaller measures and their progress is slower. A spiritual director must bear in mind that his action must be subordinated to that of the Holy Ghost, n. 548.

He must not imagine that there are such things as *moulds* into which all souls must be poured. On the contrary, he must proceed on the assumption that each soul possesses peculiarities of which account must be taken, and that the outlines traced by spiritual writers must be elastic enough to be adapted to each case.

630. C) In the direction of souls there is a twofold danger to avoid. Some would, *by a forced march*, rush through the early stages, the sooner to arrive at divine love; others, on the contrary, but *mark time* and, through their own fault, tarry in the lower levels because of a lack of generosity or a lack of method. A spiritual director must frequently remind the *former* that to love God is, indeed, an excellent thing, but that we do not attain to a pure and effective love, except through self-abnegation and penance, (n. 321). The *latter* he must encourage and advise, in order to stir them to action and aid them in perfecting their method of prayer or of self-examination.

631. D) When spiritual writers speak of a particular *virtue* as being proper to this or that of the three ways, the statement is to be accepted with a great deal of caution. The truth is that all fundamental virtues belong to each of the three ways, varying only in degree. Thus *beginners* must, assuredly, exercise themselves especially in the virtue of *penance*, but they cannot do so without the practice of the theological and cardinal virtues, though in a different way from that of the more advanced souls. Beginners

practice these virtues chiefly in order to purify their souls through self-denial. These same virtues must be practiced in the *illuminative* way, but to a different degree, in a more positive fashion, and with a view of resembling all the more the Divine Model. The same must be done in the *unitive* way, but to a higher degree still, as an earnest of love for God, and under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

In like manner, the *perfect*, whilst exercising themselves above all in the practice of the love of God, do not give up the purification of their souls through penance and mortification; but a purer and more intense love mellows their penitential practices, and gives them greater effectiveness.

632. E) A similar remark must be made with regard to the *different kinds of prayer*. Thus, discursive meditation is, generally speaking, suitable for beginners; affective prayer, adapted to advanced souls; and the prayer of simplicity and contemplation, proper to the unitive way. Yet, experience shows *the degree of prayer does not always correspond to the degree of virtue*; that owing to temperament, training or custom, some persons linger in the exercise of discursive meditation or affective prayer, who are the while intimately and habitually united to God; and that others possessed of greater insight and more affectionate natures, readily practice the prayer of simplicity without having as yet attained that height of virtue which the unitive way demands.

It is important that from the outset we bear in mind these observations so as not to place the virtues in imaginary, air-tight compartments. In the exposition of each virtue, we shall accordingly note carefully the degrees that are in keeping with beginners, with advanced souls, and with those that have attained perfection.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF THE THREE WAYS

The foregoing remarks show how useful and how necessary is the intelligent study of the Three Ways.

633. 1^o To *spiritual directors* this study is a real necessity. It is obvious, in fact, "that beginners and perfect souls are not to be guided by the same rules,"¹ for, as Father Grou² says, "the grace given to beginners is not that bestowed on souls already advanced, nor is the one

¹ *Articles d'Issy*, n. XXXIV. — ² *Manual for Interior Souls*.

granted these the same as that received by those who have reached the heights of perfection."

Thus, discursive meditation, necessary to beginners, would paralyze the efforts of more advanced souls. Likewise, with regard to the virtues, there is a manner of practicing them adapted to the purgative way, another to the illuminative, another to the unitive. A spiritual director who has not delved into these questions is liable to guide almost all souls after the same fashion and to counsel each according to what has answered his own purpose: because he finds affective, simplified prayer of great avail to himself, he will be led to prescribe the same method to all his penitents, unmindful of the fact that, as a rule, this is reached by gradual stages; if he finds in the habitual practice of the love of God all that he needs for his own sanctification, he will be inclined to recommend to all the ways of love, forgetting that fledglings are unable to fly to such heights; should he have never been himself initiated into that form of prayer which consists in a lingering, loving thought of God, the prayer of simple regard, as it is called, he will blame those who exercise themselves therein, claiming that this is but spiritual sloth. The director, on the other hand, who has carefully studied the gradual ascent of earnest souls, will know how to give competent counsel and to impart effectual guidance adapted to the actual state of his penitents and calculated to produce the greatest measure of good in their souls.

634. 2° The faithful themselves will profit by the study of these various stages of the spiritual life. To be sure, they will be guided by the advice of their spiritual directors; yet, if through well-chosen readings they come to grasp — at least in the main — the differences that exist between the three ways, they will understand better the counsels given them and will turn them to greater profit.

We shall then take up successively the study of the *three ways*, bearing in mind, however, that there are no clean-cut divisions between them and that each admits many varieties and forms.

BOOK I

The Purification of the Soul or the Purgative Way

INTRODUCTION

635. The characteristic of the *purgative way*, or the *state of beginners*, is the *purifying of the soul* in view of attaining to *intimate union with God*.

We shall therefore explain 1° what is meant by *beginners*, and 2° the *end* these must strive to attain.

I. WHO ARE CALLED BEGINNERS?

636. 1° **Essential Characteristics.** In the spiritual life, *beginners* are those that habitually live in the state of grace and have a certain desire for perfection, but who have still attachments to venial sin and are exposed to fall now and then into grievous faults. We shall explain these three characteristics:

a) *Beginners live habitually in the state of grace*: hence, they generally struggle successfully against grave temptations. We therefore rule out of the class of beginners those that frequently commit mortal sin and do not avoid its occasions; who would no doubt wish to be converted, but lack the necessary firm and efficacious purpose. Such are not on the way to perfection. They are sinners, worldlings, who must first of all be helped to sever their attachment to mortal sin and to part with the occasions of sin.²

b) *They have a certain desire for perfection* or for progress, even if this desire be as yet feeble and imperfect. Thus we exclude from the category of beginners those wordlings — all too numerous — alas! whose highest purpose is to escape

¹ A. SAUDREAU, *The Degrees of the Spiritual Life*, the Purgative Way, I-II; SCHRYVERS, *Les principes*, II^e Part., ch. II.

² No doubt, there are authors who with FR. MARCHETTI, (*Rev. d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, Jan. 1920, p. 36-47), are of the opinion that sinners must be included in the purgative way in order to convert them, yet he admits that in this he does not follow the common teaching. The conversion of sinners and the means to be suggested to them that they may persevere in the state of grace, belong rather to the province of *Moral* than of *Ascetic* theology. We may say, however, that the motives we shall soon propose as deterrents from mortal sin will be a confirmation of those given by Moral theology.

mortal sin, but who have no earnest desire of advancing further. As we have shown above, n. 414, the desire for perfection is the first step on the way.

e) They have, however, *some attachment to deliberate venial sin* and, therefore, they frequently fall. This distinguishes them from souls already advancing along the way of perfection, who although they may from time to time commit some wilful venial sins, yet earnestly strive to avoid them. The existence of these attachments is due to the fact that their passions are not as yet subdued; hence, they yield to temptations of sensuality, pride, vanity, anger, envy, jealousy, and uncharitableness in word and deed. How many persons called devout retain attachments of this kind, which cause them to commit deliberate, venial sins which expose them to fall from time to time into grievous faults!

637. 2^o Different Categories. There are *different categories* of beginners: —

a) *Innocent souls* desiring to grow in the spiritual life — children, young men and young women who, not content with the mere avoidance of mortal sin, wish to do something more for God and want to become perfect. The number of these would be greater were priests active in arousing this desire for perfection in Sunday school, at the meetings of Sodalties and parochial organizations. (cf. 409-430.)

b) *Converts* from sin, who after having transgressed grievously, return to God with all sincerity and who, in order to withdraw further from the brink of the abyss, want to press forward in the ways of perfection. Here again we may say that these would be far more numerous if confessors would take heed to remind their penitents that in order not to fall back they must advance, and that the safest means of avoiding mortal sins is to tend to perfection. (cf. 354-361.)

c) The *lukewarm*, those who after having given themselves once to God and having advanced in the way of perfection have fallen into a state of remissness and tepidity. These, even if they had once reached the illuminative way, need to return to the austere practices of the purgative way and begin once more the work of perfection. To aid their efforts, one must carefully put them on their guard against the dangers of carelessness and lukewarmness and teach them to combat their causes, which are generally frivolity or fickleness, listlessness and a sort of sluggishness.

638. 3^o Two classes of beginners. Some show *greater generosity*, others *less*. Hence the two classes into which they are divided by St. Teresa.

a) In the first mansion or the Castle of the Soul, she gives a description of those souls that have good desires, are faithful to recite some prayers, but who are taken up with the world and have their minds filled with a thousand and one things which absorb their thought. The while they retain these many attachments, they strive from time to time to free themselves from them. Through such efforts they gain an entrance into the first and lower halls of the *Castle*: with them, however, enter a multitude of mischievous animals (their own passions) which hinder them from gazing at the beauty of the castle and abiding peacefully therein. To have entered this mansion, although it is the lowest, is already a singular good-fortune; nevertheless the machinations and subtrefuges employed by the devil in order to prevent such souls from advancing are ruthless. The world, likewise, wherein they are yet immersed, allures them with its pleasures and honors; hence, they are easily conquered, even though they want to avoid sin and do perform good works.¹ In other words, these souls strive to *harmonize piety and worldliness*. Their faith is not sufficiently enlightened, their will is not strong enough, not generous enough to determine them to renounce not merely sin, but sundry dangerous occasions; they have little realized the need of frequent prayer, of rigorous penance, or mortification; still, they want not only to work out their salvation, but also to grow in the love of God by making some sacrifices.

639. b) The other class of beginners is described by the Saint in her *second mansion*. They are souls already *initiated in the practice of mental prayer*, who understand the necessity of sacrifice as a means of perfection, but who through lack of courage retreat at times to the first mansion, exposing themselves once more to the occasions of sin. They love as yet the pleasures of the world and its allurements, and occasionally fall into some grave fault; but harkening to God's call to penance, presently rise again. In spite of the appeals made to them by the world and the devil, they meditate on the emptiness of the world's false goods and on death that shall soon take these away. They grow apace in the love of Him from Whom they receive so many proofs of love; they realize that apart from Him they shall find neither peace nor safety, and wish to avoid the wanderings of the Prodigal. This, then, is a state of struggle in which such souls have much to suffer from the manifold temptations that assail them, but wherein also God deigns to comfort and fortify them. By acting in conformity with God's holy will, which is the great means of perfection, they will finally emerge from the mansions wherein creep such venomous creatures, and they will pass to the other mansions beyond the reach of their poisonous sting.²

640. We shall not treat separately of these two classes, because the means to be suggested to each are practically the same. Let the spiritual director however bear this division in mind when giving advice. Let him draw the attention of souls of the first class to the consequences

¹ *Interior Castle*, First Mansion.

² *Interior Castle*, Second Mansion.

of sin, the necessity of avoiding its occasions, and awaken in them a longing for prayer, penance and mortification. Souls of the second class he will advise to give more time to meditation, and to take the offensive against the capital vices, those deep-seated tendencies which are the source of all our sins.

II. THE END TO PURSUE

641. We have stated (n. 309) that perfection consists essentially in *union with God through love*. But because God is holiness itself, we cannot be united to Him unless we are *clean of heart* — a state implying a twofold condition: *atonement for the past and detachment from sin and the occasions of sin for the future*.

The first task, then, of beginners is **purification of the soul**.

We may add that the union of the soul with God will be the more intimate as the soul grows in purity and detachment. The purification is more or less perfect according to the *motives* that inspire it and according to the *effects* produced by it.

A) The purification remains *imperfect*, if it is inspired chiefly by motives of *fear* and *hope* — fear of hell, and hope of heaven and heavenly gifts. The results of such a purification are incomplete. The soul, indeed, renounces mortal sin, which would deprive it of heaven, but it does not renounce venial faults, even deliberate ones, since these do not deprive it of its eternal welfare.

B) There is, then, a more perfect purification, which, though not excluding fear and hope, has for its ruling motive the love of God, the desire to please Him and hence to avoid whatever would constitute even a slight offence. Here is verified the word of the Savior to the sinful woman: "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much."¹

It is at this second purification that souls should aim; still, the spiritual director must remember that for many a beginner it is not possible to rise thereto at the outset, and whilst speaking to such of the love of God, he will not forget to offer them the motives of hope and of fear which make a stronger impression.

DIVISION OF THE FIRST BOOK

642. Once we know the end, we must determine the means necessary for its attainment. Fundamentally, they may be reduced to two: **prayer**, through which grace is obtained, and **mortification** through which we correspond to grace. Mortification assumes different names according to the point of view from which we consider it. It is called *penance* when it prompts us to atone for our past faults; *mortification properly so called*, when it sets upon the love of pleasure in order to reduce the number of faults in the present and obviate their recurrence in the future; it is called *warfare against the capital sins*, when it combats those deep-rooted tendencies that incline us toward sin, and *warfare against temptation*, when practiced by way of resistance to the onslaughts of our spiritual enemies. Hence the five following chapters:

- Chapter I. — The **Prayer** of Beginners
- Chapter II. — **Penance**, to atone for the past
- Chapter III. — **Mortification**, to safeguard the future
- Chapter IV. — **Warfare** against the **capital sins**
- Chapter V. — The **Warfare** against **temptation**

All these means clearly presuppose the practice in some degree of the *theological* and the *moral* virtues. No one can pray, no one can do penance and mortify himself, without a firm belief in revealed truth, without the expectation of a heavenly reward, without love of God, without the exercise of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. We shall speak of these virtues when we treat of the *illuminative way* wherein they attain their full development.



¹ Luke, VII, 47.

CHAPTER I

The Prayer of Beginners¹

643. We have already explained (n. 499-521) the nature and the efficacy of prayer. After beginners have been reminded of these notions, they must : 1° be instructed as to the necessity and the conditions of prayer; 2° they must be gradually introduced to the practice of such *spiritual exercises* as befit them; 3° they must be taught *mental prayer*.

Article I. — Prayer in general	} Necessity of Prayer Conditions of Prayer
Article II. — Principal Spiritual Exercises	
	} General Notions Advantages and Necessity The Mental Prayer of Beginners The Principal Methods
Article III. — Mental Prayer	

ARTICLE I. NECESSITY AND CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

§ I. Necessity of Prayer

644. What we have said regarding the twofold end of prayer, *worship* and *petition* (n. 503-509), shows us clearly its necessity. It is evident that as creatures and as Christians we are bound to glorify God through adoration, thanksgiving and love; that as sinners we must offer Him reparation (n. 506). Here it is question of prayer chiefly as *petition*, and of its absolute necessity as a means of salvation and perfection.

645. The necessity of prayer is based on the *necessity of actual grace*. It is a truth of faith that without such grace we are utterly incapable of obtaining salvation and, still more of attaining perfection (n. 126). Of ourselves, no

matter how we use our freedom, we can do nothing positive that would prepare us for conversion to God, nor can we persevere for any length of time, much less until death : "Without me you can do nothing.... Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves.... For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish." ¹

Now, barring the first grace, which is gratuitously given us since it is itself the principle of prayer, it remains ever true that prayer is the *normal*, the *efficacious*, and the *universal* means through which God wills that we obtain all actual graces. This is the reason why Our Lord insists so frequently upon the necessity of prayer : "Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find ; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." ² Almost all commentators add that it is as if He said : "Unless you ask, you shall not receive ; unless you seek, you shall not find." On this necessity of prayer Our Lord constantly insists, especially when it is question of resisting temptation : "Watch ye and pray that you enter not into temptation : the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." ³ St. Thomas asserts that confidence not based on prayer is presumption, for God, Who is not in justice bound to grant us His grace, has not pledged Himself to give it except through prayer. God, assuredly, does know our spiritual needs without our exposing them to Him, yet He wills that prayer be the spring that sets in motion His loving mercy, so that we may acknowledge Him as the Author of the gifts He bestows on us. ⁴

646. This is likewise the way in which tradition has understood the teaching of Our Lord. The Council of Trent, making its own the teaching of St. Augustine, tells us that God does not command the impossible, for He commands us to do what we can and to ask His help for what we cannot do, His grace helping us to ask for it. ⁵ This manifestly implies that there are things which without prayer are impossible. Such is the conclusion the Roman Catechism draws : "Prayer is the *indispensable* instrument given us by God in order to obtain what we desire : there are things, in fact, impossible to obtain without the aid of prayer." ⁶

¹ John, XV, 5; 11 Cor., III, 5; Phil., II, 13.

² Math., VII, 7-8. — 3 Math., XXVI, 41.

⁴ Sum. theol., II^a II^e, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3.

⁵ Sess. VI, ch. II. — 6 Catech. Trident., P. VI, c. I, n. 3.

¹ ST. THOM., II^a II^e, q. 83 and his Commentators; SUAREZ, *De Religione*, Tr. IV, lib. I, *De Oratione*; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, t. III, lib. 1; TH. DE VALLEORNERA, q. II, disp. V; SUMMA THEOL. MYSTICA, I^a Pars, Tract. I, discursus III; L. DE GRADANA, *Traité de l'Oraison et de la Méditation*; ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI, *Prayer*; P. MONSABRÉ, *La Prière*; P. RAMIÈRE, *L'Apostolat de la prière*; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part II; *Spiritual Combat*, C. 44-52; RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, I, Treat 5; GROU, *How to Pray*; MESCHLER, *Three Fundamental Principles of the Spiritual Life*; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, XXI.

647. Advice to the spiritual Director. This truth must be emphasized with beginners. Many, unknown to themselves, are saturated with Pelagianism or Semi-pelagianism, and imagine that by sheer strength of will they can accomplish all things. Soon, however, experience brings them to the realization that their best resolves often fall short despite their efforts. The spiritual director should at such times remind them that it is only through grace and through prayer that they can succeed. This personal experience will go far to strengthen their convictions on the necessity of prayer.

§ II. Essential Conditions of Prayer

648. Having already proved the necessity of *actual grace* for all the acts bearing on salvation (n. 126), we must infer its necessity for prayer. St. Paul clearly states this necessity: "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For, we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings."¹ We may add that this grace is offered to all, even to sinners; hence, all are able to pray.

Although the *state of grace* is not necessary in order to pray, it increases the value of prayer, since it makes us the friends of God and the living members of Jesus Christ.

We shall now inquire into the requisite conditions of prayer 1° on the part of the *object* of prayer, and 2° on the part of the one who prays.

I. Conditions on the Part of the Object

649. The most important condition regarding the object of prayer is to ask for those things only which lead unto life everlasting: for *supernatural graces* in the first place, and then, for *temporal goods*, in the measure in which they are conducive to salvation. This rule was laid down by Our Lord Himself: "*Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.*"² We have said (n. 307-308), that man's happiness as well as his perfection consists in the possession of God, and as a consequence in the possession of the means necessary to that end. We must, then, ask for nothing that is not in harmony with it.

1° *Temporal goods in themselves* are far too inferior, too inadequate to satisfy our heart's aspirations, and bring us

true happiness; they cannot, therefore, be the chief object of our prayers. However, since in order to live and to secure our salvation we need some temporal goods, we are allowed to ask for our daily bread, the bread for the body as well as for the soul, subordinating the former to the latter. It happens at times that this or that particular good, wealth for instance — desirable in our estimation — would prove a danger to our salvation. Hence, we may not ask for such, except in subordination to the goods that are eternal.

650. 2° Even when it is question of such or such *particular grace*, we must not ask for it, except in conformity with the will of God. God in His infinite Wisdom knows better than we do what is suitable for each soul in accordance with its condition and degree of perfection. As St. Francis de Sales rightly remarks, we must desire our salvation after God's own way, and hence we must desire such graces as He dispenses to us and cling to them with a firm purpose, for our will must harmonize with His.³ When it is question of particular graces, like one or other form of prayer, such and such consolations or trials, etc... we must not make any unqualified request, but rather refer all to the good pleasure of God.² God dispenses His graces, giving consolation or aridity, peace or struggle, according to the designs of His Wisdom and the needs of our soul. We have, therefore, but to leave in His Hands the choice of the graces which will prove most beneficial to us. True, we are permitted to express a wish, but in humble submission to the will of Our Heavenly Father. He will always answer our prayer if we ask as we should. If at times He gives us, in place of what we ask, something greater and better, far from complaining we should bless and thank Him.³

II. Conditions on the Part of the Subject

The most essential conditions to ensure the efficacy of our prayers are: *humility, confidence and attention*, or at least the earnest effort to be attentive.

¹ *The Love of God*, Book VIII, ch. IV.

² The reason why our petitions are not answered, says BOURDALOUE, is because we make use of prayer "in order to ask for whimsical, needless graces — graces according to our taste and fancy... We pray and ask for the grace of penance, the grace of sanctification — graces for the future, not for the present — graces that would do away with all difficulties, that would leave no room for effort, leave no obstacles to overcome — miraculous graces that would carry us as they did St. Paul, not those that would merely help us to walk.... graces which would alter the whole order of Providence, and revolutionize the whole scheme of salvation."

³ In "*Le Saint Abandon*," P. III, of DOM V. LEHOUBEY, most apt details are given on the subject.

651. ^{1o} The need of **humility** flows from the very nature of prayer. Since grace is a free gift of God to which we have no right whatever, we are as St. Augustine says, but beggars in relation to God, and we must implore of His mercy what we cannot demand as a right. It was thus that Abraham prayed, considering himself but dust and ashes in the presence of the Divine Majesty: "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes." ¹ Thus did Daniel pray when he asked for the deliverance of the Jewish people, relying not on his merits and virtues, but on God's overflowing mercies: "*It is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before thy face, but for the multitude of thy tender mercies.*" ² Thus prayed the publican, who was also heard: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner," ³ whilst the proud Pharisee saw his prayer rejected. Jesus Himself gives us the reason: "*Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*" ⁴ His Disciples understood this well. St. James insists that: "*God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*" ⁵ This is mere justice: the proud man attributes to himself the efficacy of his prayer, whilst the humble man attributes it to God. Now, can we expect that God will hear us to the detriment of His own glory, in order to flatter our vain complacency? The humble soul, on the contrary, sincerely acknowledges that all it has is from God, and hence God in hearkening to his prayer procures His own glory as well as the welfare of him who prays.

652. ^{2o} Humility in turn begets **confidence**, a confidence based, not upon our merits but upon the *goodness of God* and upon the *merits of Jesus Christ*.

a) Faith teaches us that God is *merciful* and that because He is merciful, He turns to us with greater love the more we acknowledge our miseries, for misery appeals to mercy. To call upon Him with confidence is in reality to honor Him, to proclaim Him as the source of all gifts, and as desiring nothing so much as to bestow them upon us. In the Scriptures He affirms again and again that He hearkens to those who hope in Him: "*Because he hoped in me I will deliver him.... He shall cry to me and I will hear him.*" ⁶ Our Lord invites us to pray with confidence, and in order to inspire us to do so He resorts not only to the most

¹ Gen., XVIII, 27. — ² Dan., IX, 18. — ³ Luke, XVIII, 13.

⁴ Luke, XVIII, 14. — ⁵ James, IV, 6.

⁶ Ps. XC, 14-15. Those who recite the Divine Office know that the predominant sentiment expressed by the Psalms is that of trust in God.

pressing exhortations, but to the most touching parables. After having affirmed that he who asks receives, He adds: "What man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone?.... If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." ¹ At the Last Supper He comes back to the same thought: "Amen, amen, I say to you... whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do... In that day you shall ask in my name; and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me." ² ³ To lack a whole-hearted trust in prayer would amount to mistrusting God and His promises, to underrating the merits of Jesus Christ and His all-powerful mediation.

653. b) It is true that God at times appears to turn a deaf ear to our prayer. This He does in order that we may more fully fathom the depths of our wretchedness and realize better the value of grace. But on the other hand, He shows us in His treatment of the Cananean woman, that even when He seems to repel us, He is well-pleased at the sweet insistence of our repeated requests. Behold, a woman of Canaan comes and asks Jesus to deliver her daughter, vexed with a devil. But the Master answers her not a word. She beseeches the Disciples and cries after them, so that they come and ask the Lord to send her away. Christ turns to the woman and answers that He was not sent but to the children of the house of Israel. Undaunted, the poor woman worships Him, saying: "Lord, help me." Jesus replies, with seeming harshness, that it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. — "Yea, Lord," she says, "for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." — Conquered by such a humble, unflinching trust, Jesus grants her request: "And her daughter was cured from that hour." ⁴ Could the Lord do more to make us understand that no matter what ill success seems to attend our prayers, we can be sure that they will be answered if we persevere in humble confidence.

654. ^{3o} To this persevering confidence we must join **attention**, or at least the serious effort to realize and to

¹ Matth., VII, 7-11. — ² John, XIV, 12, 13, 14.

³ John, XVI, 26-27. — ⁴ Matth., XV, 24-28.

mean what we say to God. *Involuntary distractions* do not constitute an obstacle to prayer as long as we strive to overcome them or reduce their number, for by these very efforts our soul keeps on its course toward God. They constitute indeed a loss though not a sin, but this loss may be made good in a measure by our efforts to pray attentively. On the contrary, *voluntary distractions*, those we freely and deliberately entertain, or which we but faintly repel, or the causes of which we are unwilling to suppress, are venial sins, since they constitute a lack of due respect towards God. Prayer is an audience which our Creator is kind enough to grant us; a conversation we hold with Our Heavenly Father, wherein we beg Him to vouchsafe to hearken to our words and heed our request: "*Give ear, O Lord to my words.... Hearken to the voice of my prayer.*"¹ Through voluntary distractions we do no less than refuse to make a serious effort to understand what we say and to be attentive to the divine voice; and this, at the very moment we ask the Almighty to hear us and to speak to us! Do we not deserve the reproach Our Lord cast upon the Pharisees: "*This people honoreth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me?*"² Does this not constitute a glaring inconsistency as well as a lack of religion?

655. We must, then, *strive seriously to repel promptly and firmly* the distractions that present themselves to our mind; we must readily humble ourselves when they occur and unite again our prayer with the perfect prayer of Jesus. We must, likewise, reduce the number of such distractions by a vigorous fight against their causes: habitual dissipation of mind, the habit of day-dreaming, the preoccupations and attachments that absorb the mind and the heart. We must also accustom ourselves little by little to recall frequently to mind God's presence, by offering up to Him our actions, as well as ardent ejaculatory prayers. Once we have taken these means, there is no cause for worry concerning such involuntary distractions as run through our minds or disturb our imagination. These are but trials, not faults, and once we have learned to profit by them, they but increase our merits and the value of our prayers.

656. The attention we can bring to bear upon our prayers may be of a threefold kind. 1) When we apply ourselves to the correct pronunciation of the words we give *verbal* attention which presupposes an effort to think of

what we say. 2) If we try to understand the *meaning of the words*, our attention is called *literal or intellectual*. 3) Should the soul, disregarding the literal meaning, rise toward God to worship Him, bless Him, unite itself to Him, or to enter into the spirit of the mystery it considers, attention becomes *spiritual or mystical*. This last is hardly adapted to beginners, but rather to advanced souls. The first two should be recommended to those who begin to relish prayer.

ART. II. THE EXERCISES OF PIETY OF BEGINNERS

657. Prayer is one of the great means of salvation. Hence, the spiritual director should gradually initiate beginners into the practice of such spiritual exercises as form the framework of an earnest Christian life, taking account of their age, their vocation, the duties of their state, their character, supernatural attractions, and the progress they have made.

658. 1^o The **objective** in view is to train souls gradually in the habitual practice of prayer in such a way that their whole life becomes in a measure a life of prayer (n. 522). It is evident that much time and prolonged efforts are required to approach this ideal, which is not within the reach of beginners, but which the spiritual director must know for the better guidance of his penitents.

659. 2^o Besides morning and night prayers, which good Christians do not fail to say, the following are the chief spiritual exercises that render our lives a constant prayer:

A) The morning *meditation*, of which we shall soon treat, Holy Mass and Communion show us the ideal we are to pursue, and help us realize it (n. 524). There are persons, however, who are prevented by their duties of state from assisting daily at the Holy Sacrifice. They should make up for this by a spiritual communion to be made either at the end of meditation or even whilst engaged in manual labor. At all events, they must be taught how to profit from attendance at Holy Mass and the reception of Holy Communion. The Director does this by adapting to their capacity what we have said in n. 271-289. They must also be taught to follow intelligently the liturgical services of Sundays and Holy days. The sacred Liturgy well understood is one of the great helps to perfection.

660. B) Besides the oft-renewed offering of their actions to God, they must be advised to recite during the

¹ Ps. V, 2-3. — ² *Mathth.*, XV, 8.

course of the day some ejaculatory prayers, to do some devout reading suited to their state of soul on such fundamental truths as the end of man, sin, mortification, confession, and the examinations of conscience, adding thereto the lives of Saints who were noted for the practice of the virtue of penance. Such reading will be a light to the mind, a stimulus to the will, and a great help to mental prayer. The recitation of some decades of the *beads*, with meditation upon the mysteries of the Rosary, will be productive of an increased devotion to the Blessed Virgin and will strengthen the habit of union with Our Lord. A visit to the Blessed Sacrament, varying in duration according to their occupations, will reanimate within them the spirit of piety. For these visits they may use with profit the *Following of Christ*, especially the Fourth Book, and *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* by St. Alphonsus Liguori.

661. C In the evening, a serious *examination of conscience*, followed by the *particular examen*, will help beginners to note their failings, to foresee the remedies and to muster the strength of will needed to renew their purpose of amendment, thus preventing them from falling into indifference or lukewarmness. Here one must recall what we have said anent the examinations of conscience (460-476), and regarding confession (n. 262-269), and remember that the examination of beginners must bear chiefly upon deliberate venial sins. Such watchfulness is the best means of avoiding mortal sin and of repairing any grave sin committed in an unguarded moment.

662. 3° Advice to the spiritual director. A The director should see to it that his penitents do not burden themselves with *too many* spiritual exercises that might hinder the fulfilment of their duties of state or be detrimental to true devotion. Less prayers and more attention is preferable. Our Lord Himself gives us this advice: "And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like them: for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask him." ¹ After speaking these words He taught His Disciples that short and all-embracing prayer which embodies all our possible requests, the Our Father (n. 515-516). There are beginners who readily imagine that they grow in piety as they multiply their vocal prayers. A great

service will be rendered them by recalling this teaching of the Master, and by showing them that a short attentive prayer is of greater worth than one lasting twice as long, and filled with more or less willful distractions. To help them fix their attention, the spiritual director should remind them that a few seconds spent in placing themselves in the presence of God and in uniting themselves with Our Lord will do much to make their prayers truly effective.

663. B To help them avoid the routine that is liable to creep into the repetition of the same formulas of vocal prayer, it is well to give them a *method*, at once easy and simple, of holding their attention. For instance, in the recitation of the Rosary they may meditate on the Mysteries with the twofold purpose in view of honoring the Blessed Virgin and of drawing unto themselves the particular virtue corresponding to each Mystery. This practice will be found very profitable; it will make the recitation of the Rosary a short meditation. But in this case it is well to recall that, generally speaking, we cannot at the same time pay attention both to the literal sense of the *Hail Mary* and to the meaning of the Mystery and that therefore either one suffices.

ART. III. THE MENTAL PRAYER OF BEGINNERS ¹

We shall explain: 1° Some *general notions* concerning meditation; 2° Its *advantages* and *necessity*; 3° The *distinguishing characteristics* of meditation — the mental prayer of beginners; 4° The *chief methods* of meditation.

§ I. General Notions

664. 1° Definition and Essential Elements of Mental prayer. We have said (n. 510.) that there are two kinds of prayer: *vocal* prayer, expressed by word or by gesture, and *mental* prayer which takes place wholly within the soul.

¹ JOAN MAUBURNUS, *Roetum exercitiorum spiritualium et sacramentum meditationum*; GARCIA DE CISNEROS, *Exercitatorio de la oración espiritual*; ST. IGNATIUS, *Spiritual Exercises*; and *Commentaries*; also the *Bibliothèque des Exercices de St. Ignace*, published under the direction of FATHER WATRIGANT, RODRIGUEZ, *Practique of Christian Perfection*, V. Treatise, On Prayer; L. DE GRANADA, *Traité de l'oraison et de la méditation*; A. MASSOULIÉ, *Traité de la véritable oraison*; ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA, *La oración y meditación*; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, Part I, ch. 1-11; BRANCATI DE LAUREA, *De oratione christianâ*; CRASSET, *A Key to Meditation*; SCARAMELLI, *op. cit.*, I. Treatise, art. 5; COURBON, *Familiar Instructions on Mental and Affective Prayer*; V. LIBERMANN, *Écrits spirituels*, p. 82-147; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, ch. XVI; R. DE MAUMIGNY, *Pratique de l'oraison mentale*, t. 1; DOM LEHOUEY, *The Ways of Mental Prayer*, P. I and II; LETOURNEAU, *La Méthode d'oraison mentale de S.-Sulpice*; CLARE, S. J., *Science of the Spiritual Life*.

² *Matth.*, VI, 7-8.

The latter is defined as a *silent elevation and application of our mind and heart to God in order to offer Him our homages and to promote His glory by our advancement in virtue.*

It comprises five elements : 1) The *religious duties* rendered to God, or to Our Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Saints; 2) *considerations* bearing upon God and our personal relations with Him, in order to deepen and strengthen our convictions; 3) examination of conscience, in order to determine how we stand in relation to the subject of meditation; 4) *prayer* of petition by which we ask of God the graces necessary for exercising ourselves more perfectly in this or that particular virtue; 5) *resolutions* to do better in the future. These various acts need not follow in the order just described, nor must they all, of necessity, have a place in every meditation. Moreover, mental prayer must *be prolonged* over a notable period of time to deserve the name of meditation and to be distinguished from mere ejaculatory prayers.

As souls advance in perfection and acquire convictions which are easily renewed, they gradually devote less time to considerations and examinations, and give more to affections and petitions. These in turn become more and more simple, and at times mental prayer consists in a simple and loving gaze upon God. — This we shall explain later.

665. The **Origin** of Mental Prayer. We must carefully distinguish between *mental prayer in itself* and *methodical mental prayer*.

A) Meditation, or mental prayer, has always been practiced in one form or another. The books of the Prophets, the Psalms, the Sapiential Books are all full of meditations to nourish the devotion of the Chosen People. Our Lord, by insisting on the worship of God in spirit and truth, by spending whole nights in prayer, by the long prayer He offered at Gethsemane and upon Calvary, prepared the way for those saintly souls who through all ages to come would withdraw to the inner sanctuary of their hearts, therein to pray in secret to their God. Meditation or mental prayer, even in its highest forms, such as contemplation, is explicitly treated in the writings of Cassian and St. John Climacus, not to speak of the works of the Fathers. It may be said that St. Bernard's treatise *De Consideratione* is in reality a treatise on the necessity of reflection and of meditation. The School of St. Victor lays emphasis on meditation in order to arrive at contemplation,¹ and we know how strongly St. Thomas recommended it as a means of growing in the love of God and of giving ourselves to Him.²

¹ Cf. HUGH OF S. VICTOR, *De modo dicendi et meditarii*; *De Meditando seu meditando artificio*, P. L. CLXXVI, 877-880; 993-998.

² *Sum. theol.*, 11^a II^a, q. 82, a. 3.

666. B) Meditation as a methodical prayer dates from the XV Century. We find it explained in the *Rosetum* of John Mauburnus : and in the Benedictine writers of the same epoch. St. Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* gives several methods of meditating, at once precise and varied. St. Theresa gives by far the best description of the different kinds of mental prayer. Her disciples have sketched the rules of systematic meditation.³ St. Francis de Sales does not fail to trace a method of mental prayer for Philothea, and the French School of the XVII Century soon had its own method, perfected by Father Olier and Father Tronson, called today the method of St. Sulpice.

667. **Meditation and Mental Prayer.** The terms meditation and mental prayer are often interchanged. When differentiated, the former is applied to that form of mental prayer wherein considerations and reasonings predominate and which, owing to this, is called *discursive meditation*. The latter name is chiefly applied to those forms of mental prayer wherein pious affections or acts of the will are predominant. Discursive meditation itself, however, already contains affections, and affective prayer is ordinarily preceded or accompanied by some considerations, excepting the case when the soul is seized by the light of contemplation.

668. The kind of prayer generally suited to beginners is *discursive* meditation. They need it in order to acquire convictions or to strengthen them. There are, however, some souls who from the outset give considerable place to affections. But all must be taught that the best part of mental prayer lies in the acts of the will.

§ II. The Advantages and the Necessity of Mental Prayer

I. The Advantages

669. Meditation, as we have described it, is most helpful for the attainment of salvation and perfection.

1° It detaches us from sin and its causes. — When we sin, it is through *thoughtlessness* and *lack of will-power*. This twofold defect, however, is corrected by meditation.

2° It *enlightens* us as to the *malice of sin* and its fearful consequences, by showing it to us in the light of God, of eternity, and of what Jesus Christ did in order to atone for it. "It is meditation," says Fr. Crasset, 3 "that leads us in spirit into the hallowed solitudes wherein we find God

¹ H. WATRIGANT, *La Méditation méthodique*, Rev. d'Ascétique et de Myst., Jan., 1923, p. 13-29.

² V. P. JEAN DE JÉSUS MARIE, *Instruction des novices*, 3^e Partie, chap. II, § 2.

³ *Instructions sur l'Oraison*, Méthode d'oraison, ch. I, p. 253-254. Read the whole passage — *Engl. Transl.* A Key to meditation, p. 85-95.

alone — in peace, in calm, in silence, in recollection. The same it is that in spirit makes us descend to hell, therein to see our place; that brings us before the grave to see our last abode; that takes us up to Heaven to see our throne of glory; that carries us to the Valley of Josaphat to see Our Judge; to Bethlehem to see Our Savior; to Mount Thabor to see Our Love and to Calvary to see Our Model." Meditation, likewise, detaches us from the *world* and its *false pleasures*. In reminds us of the instability of worldly goods, the anxiety they bring, the void, the ennui in which they plunge the soul. It forearms us against a false and corrupt world and makes us realize that God alone can constitute our bliss. Above all it detaches us from our pride and from our sensuality, by placing us before God Who is the fulness of being, and before our nothingness; by making us understand that sensual pleasure reduces us to the level of the brute, whilst godly joys ennoble us and make us soar unto God.

b) Meditation strengthens our will, not merely by providing us with strong convictions, as we have just said, but also by gradually healing our languor, our cowardice, and our fickleness. God's grace alone, our own efforts helping, can cure such infirmities. Now, meditation makes us ask for this grace all the more insistently, as it brings home to us through reflection our helplessness; whilst the acts of sorrow, of contrition that we perform, the firm purpose of amendment we conceive during meditation, together with the resolutions we take, already constitute an active co-operation with grace.

670. 2^o Meditation makes us also *practice all the great Christian virtues*. 1) It enlightens our *faith* by bringing before our eyes the eternal truths; it sustains our *hope* by giving us access to God to obtain His help; it enkindles our *love* by exposing to our view the beauty and the goodness of God. 2) It makes us prudent by supplying us with considerations to be taken into account before we act; it makes us *just* by having us conform our will to that of God; it renders us *strong* by making us share in God's own power; and temperate by cooling the ardor of our passions. There is no Christian virtue which we cannot acquire by daily meditation. Through it we hold fast to the truth, and truth, freeing us from our vices, makes us practice virtue: "*You shall know the truth: and the truth shall make you free.*"¹

671. 3^o Meditation therefore *initiates* our union with God, nay more, our *transformation* into Him. It is, in fact, a conversation with God which from day to day becomes more intimate, more tender, and longer, since it continues the day long, even in the midst of our activities, n. 522. By virtue of daily intercourse with the Author of all perfection, we drink of His fulness, and are permeated by it, like the sponge by the water. We are transformed like the iron in the furnace that kindles, softens, and assumes the properties of living fire.

II. The Necessity of Mental Prayer

672. 1^o **For the Laity.** A) Systematic meditation is a highly effective means of sanctification; however, *it is not necessary for the salvation of most Christians*. What is necessary is prayer by which we render homage to God and obtain grace. Evidently, this cannot be done without attention on the part of the mind and desire on the part of the heart. No doubt, to prayer must be joined the consideration of the great Christian truths and of the great Christian duties, together with self-examination. But we accomplish all these without the practice of systematic meditation, by simply listening to the religious instruction given in Church, by pious reading, and by the examination of conscience.

673. B) Meditation, however, is most *useful* and most *profitable* to all for salvation and perfection; to beginners, as well as to more advanced souls. It may be even said that it is the most *effective means of assuring one's salvation* (n. 669). This is the teaching of St. Alphonsus, who gives the following reason, that whilst habitually practicing the other exercises of piety, like the Rosary, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, fasting, etc.... one may, unfortunately, still continue to live in mortal sin, whilst the habitual practice of mental prayer cannot suffer one to remain long in such a state. One either relinquishes mental prayer or relinquishes sin.¹ How could we day by day go into the presence of God, the source of all holiness, while conscious of mortal sin, and not determine, with the help of grace, to break with sin and to seek in the Tribunal of Penance that pardon the supreme need of which we recognize? But, if we have no appointed time and no practical method for the consideration of the great religious truths, we allow ourselves

¹ John, VIII, 32.

¹ *Praxis Confessarii*, n. 122.

to be carried away by dissipation of mind and the example of the world, until we lapse into sin and live in sin.

674. 2^o The Moral Necessity of Mental Prayer for Diocesan Priests. We do not speak here of those *Regulars*, who in the devout and prolonged recitation of the Divine Office, in their readings and in the prayers they offer may find the equivalent of mental prayer. Nevertheless, we call attention to the fact that even in the Orders where the Office is recited in choir, the rule prescribes at least a half-hour of mental prayer, because meditation is the soul of all vocal prayers and insures their fervent recitation. It should also be said that religious congregations dating from the XVI century insist even more upon mental prayer, and that the New Code directs superiors to see that all religious, unless they have a legitimate excuse, devote a certain amount of time each day to this exercise.¹

But speaking of *diocesan priests*, absorbed in the activities of the ministry, we say that *the habitual exercise of mental prayer at an appointed time is morally necessary to their perseverance and to their sanctification.* Their duties are many and heavy, and they are at times subjected to serious temptations, even while exercising their ministry. Now, in order to resist these temptations and to fulfil all their duties with fidelity and in a supernatural way, they need deep convictions and choice graces, which as every one must admit are obtained through daily meditation.

675. A) Nor let it be urged that the offering of the Holy Sacrifice and the recitation of the Divine Office replace mental prayer. It is true that the Mass and the Breviary, attentively and devoutly said, are effective means of perseverance and progress in the spiritual life; yet, experience shows that priests absorbed in their ministerial work do not, as a matter of fact, acquit themselves well of these important duties, unless they develop in daily meditation the spirit of prayer and of interior recollection. If a priest disregards this holy exercise, how can he, encompassed and pressed by labors, find the time to recollect himself and renew his sense of the supernatural? If he fails in this, distracting thoughts invade his soul, even whilst he is engaged in the holiest occupations; his convictions weaken, his energy dwindles, his negligences and his failings grow, and lukewarmness ensues. Should a serious, persistent, and

besetting temptation make its appearance, the strong convictions needed to repel the enemy are no longer clear to his mind, and he runs the risk of falling.¹ "If I meditate," says Dom Chautard, "I am as it were clothed in steel armor, and *impervious* to the shafts of the enemy. Without mental prayer, I shall surely be their target." The devout, learned and prudent Father Desurmont, one of the most experienced retreat-masters for priests, declares that "for the priest in the world, it is either meditation or a very great risk of damnation." Cardinal Lavigerie writes in the same strain: "For an apostolic laborer, there is no alternative between holiness, if not acquired, at least desired and pursued (especially through daily meditation) and progressive perversion."²

676. B) For the priest, it does not suffice to avoid sin. In order to fulfil the duties of *glorifying* God and *saving* souls he must be habitually united to Jesus Christ the Great High Priest, through Whom alone he can give glory to God and save men. Yet, how can the priest unite himself to Christ in the midst of the occupations and preoccupations of his ministry, if he does not set apart sufficient time to think leisurely and lovingly on that Divine Model, to draw unto himself through prayer His spirit, His dispositions, and His grace? Through this union the priest's energies are multiplied, his confidence increased, the fruitfulness of his ministry assured, for it is not he who speaks, but Jesus Who speaks through his lips: "*God as it were exhorting by us*";³ it is not he who acts; he is but an instrument in God's hands. Because he strives to imitate the virtues of our Lord, his example wins souls even more than his words. If he gives up meditation, he loses the spirit of recollection and of prayer and he is but "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."⁴

677. Hence, Pope Pius X. of holy memory, has proclaimed in clear terms the necessity of meditation for the priest: "*It is of the first importance that a certain time should be allotted every day for medi-*

¹ Let us ponder the following words of a priest reproduced by DOM CHAUTARD: "It is my overeagerness that has brought on my fall! My excessive devotion to the active life and my love for the same filled me with great joy at my success, and this together with the deceits of Satan led me to be so absorbed in laboring for others, as to neglect my own spiritual wants, prayer and meditation; and then when temptation came, I yielded in the weakness caused me by my lack of spiritual nourishment." *The True Apostolate*, p. 67. All that this excellent writer says about the need of an interior life, applies to mental prayer which is one of the most effective means to foster this life.

² *L'âme de tout-apostat*, p. 179-180. Engl. Transl. *The True Apostolate*, p. 143-144.

³ *I Cor.*, V, 20. — ⁴ *I Cor.*, XIII, 1.

tation on the things of eternity. No priest can omit this without being guilty of serious negligence, to the detriment of his soul."¹ The New Code bids Bishops to see that priests devote each day a certain time to the exercise of mental prayer,² and that students in seminaries do likewise.³ Are not such prescriptions equivalent to a proclamation of the moral necessity of meditation for ecclesiastics?

To advise priests absorbed in the parochial ministry to omit meditation so as to say their Mass and Office more devoutly is nothing less than a total ignorance of psychology. Experience shows that, when mental prayer is absent, the devout recitation of the Office becomes well-nigh impossible; it is said at odd moments with many attendant interruptions, and with the mind filled with the thoughts of other things. It is, in fact, the morning meditation that guarantees the devout celebration of the Holy Sacrifice and that enables a priest to recollect himself before beginning his Office and to make its recitation a real prayer.

678. What we say of the priest, can be said also to a certain extent of those *devoted men* and *women* who dedicate part of their time to works of zeal. If they want their apostolate to be fruitful, it must be vivified by the spirit of recollection and by prayer. Let it not be urged that the time consecrated to this exercise is taken from works of zeal. It would be to approach closely to the error of Pelagius to imagine that action is more necessary than grace and prayer, whereas in reality works of zeal are all the more fruitful, as they are inspired by a life of greater interior recollection, which is in turn nourished by mental prayer.

§ III. General Characteristics of the Meditation of Beginners

We have already said that the mental prayer of beginners is chiefly a *discursive* prayer, wherein, though the affections have their place, reasoning predominates. We now explain: 1^o the ordinary *subjects* of their meditation, and 2^o the *obstacles* they meet.

I. The Subjects upon which Beginners Meditate

679. They must, in general, meditate upon whatever is calculated to inspire them with a *growing horror* for sin, upon the *causes* of their own faults, upon *mortification* that removes such causes, upon the *principal duties of their state*, upon *fidelity* to grace and its *abuse*, upon *Jesus Christ*, a *model for penitent sinners*.

680. 1^o In order to acquire a *growing horror for sin*, they must meditate: a) on the *end* of man and of the Christian, and hence upon

the *creation* of man, his *elevation* to the supernatural state, his fall and his redemption (n. 59-87); upon the *rights of God* as Creator, Sanctifier, and Redeemer; upon such of the divine attributes as would inspire them with a horror for sin, for instance, God's *immensity*, whereby He is present to all creatures and especially to the soul in the state of grace; upon His *holiness* whereby He is bound to hate sin; upon His *justice* which punishes it; upon His *mercy* that moves Him to forgive it. All these truths tend to make us flee from sin, the one obstacle to the attainment of our end, the one enemy of God, the destroyer of that supernatural life given to us by God as the great proof of His love for us, and restored to us by the Redeemer at the price of His Blood.

b) Upon *sin*: its origin, punishment, malice, and frightful consequences, n. 711-735; upon the *causes* leading to sin: the world, the flesh, and the devil, n. 193-227.

c) Upon the means of *expiating* and *preventing* sin: penance, n. 705, and the mortification of our different faculties, of our evil tendencies, and chiefly of the seven capital vices. From our meditations on these points we shall draw the conclusion that there is no safety as long as we have not uprooted or at least controlled all these disordered inclinations.

681. 2^o Beginners must also choose for the subject of meditation all the *positive duties of the Christian*: 1) *General* duties of religion toward God, of charity toward the neighbor, of mistrust of self on account of our helplessness and wretchedness. What will impress beginners most will be the external acts of these virtues; but this will be a preparation for the more perfect practice of the same virtues in the illuminative way. — 2) *Particular* duties, according to age, condition, sex, state of life. The fulfilment of these duties will prove to be the best kind of penance.

682. 3^o Since *grace* plays an all-important rôle in the Christian life, beginners must be gradually instructed in this doctrine. The spiritual director, then, will explain to them in a familiar and easy way the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our souls, of our incorporation into Christ, of habitual grace, of the virtues and of the seven gifts. At first, no doubt, they will grasp but the mere elements of these great truths, but even the little they will understand will not fail to exert a powerful influence on their spiritual formation and their spiritual progress. It is when we think of what God has done and incessantly does for us, that we are prompted to further generosity in His service. We should not forget that St. Paul and St. John preached these truths to pagan neophytes who were but beginners in the spiritual life.

683. 4^o Then it will be easy and practical to propose *Jesus* as the *model for true penitents*: Jesus condemning Himself to a life of poverty, of obedience and of toil that He might be unto us an example; Jesus, doing penance for us in the desert, in the Garden of Gethsemane, in His cruel passion; Jesus dying for us upon the Cross. This series of meditations, presented to us by the Church in the yearly cycle of the liturgy, will have the advantage of making us practice penance in union with Jesus with

¹ *Exhortation to the Clergy*, Aug. 4, 1908. — ² *Can. 125, 2^o*. — ³ *Can. 1367, 1^o*.

the heart invade the soul at the very time of meditation. The help of the spiritual director is here of capital importance.

a) He should first of all remind them of the distinction between *wilful*¹ distractions and those that are not, bidding his penitents to concern themselves merely with the former in order to diminish their number. To succeed in this: 1) they must repel such distractions *promptly, vigorously and persistently, as soon as they become aware of them*. Even if these distractions are many and grievous, they are not culpable unless they are voluntary; the effort made to repel them is a meritorious act. Should they recur a hundred times and be a hundred times repulsed, the meditation will be excellent and worth far more than one made with fewer distractions but with little effort.

687. 2) They must humbly acknowledge their weakness, explicitly unite themselves to Our Lord, and offer to God His worship and His prayers. If need be, a book may be used, the better to fix the attention.

b) It is not enough to drive off distractions. In order to reduce their number, we must *attack their causes*. Many of them proceed from a lack of preparation or from an habitual dissipation of mind. 1) Beginners thus troubled with distractions should, therefore, be urged to prepare their meditation more carefully on the night before, not by merely reading the points, but by trying to see how the subject of the meditation is of practical advantage to them personally, and by thinking about it before falling asleep, instead of letting their mind become a prey to useless or unwholesome reveries. 2) Above all, beginners must be taught the means of controlling the imagination and the memory. In proportion as the soul grows in the practice of habitual recollection and detachment, distractions become less numerous.

§ VI. The Principal Methods of Mental Prayer

688: Since mental prayer is a difficult art, the Saints have ever been eager to offer counsel on the means of succeeding therein. One finds excellent advice in Cassian,

¹ Distractions are voluntary *in themselves* when they are deliberately willed, or when, aware that our mind wanders, we do nothing to prevent its vagaries. They are voluntary *in their cause*, when we foresee that such or such all-absorbing reading or occupation will be a source of distractions, and none the less we indulge in it.

greater generosity, with a greater love, and hence with greater efficacy.

II. The Obstacles Encountered by Beginners

The special difficulties encountered by beginners in meditation arise from their *inexperience*, their *lack of generosity*, and chiefly from the many *distractions* to which they are subject.

684. A) On account of their *inexperience* they are liable to turn their mental prayer into a sort of philosophical or theological *thesis*, or into a kind of *sermon* to themselves. This is not, indeed, a complete loss of time, since even this kind of meditation makes them give thought to the great truths of religion and strengthens their convictions. They would, however, derive greater profit if they proceeded in a more *practical* and in a more *supernatural* way.

This a spiritual director must teach them. He should point out to them: a) that considerations, if they are to bear practical fruit, must be made more personal, be applied to themselves and be followed by an examination in order to see to what extent the truths on which they meditate influence their lives, and what must be done in order to live by these truths during the course of the day; b) that the most important part of meditation is found in the acts of the will: acts of adoration, thanksgiving and love toward God; acts of humility, of sorrow, of firm purpose of amendment; acts of petition to obtain the grace of correcting their faults; and finally, firm and frequently repeated resolutions of doing better throughout the day.

685. B) Their *lack of generosity* exposes them to *discouragement* when they are no longer upheld by the sensible consolations God graciously bestowed on them at the outset in order to draw them unto Himself. Obstacles and the first spells of aridity dishearten them, and thinking themselves abandoned by God, they drift into carelessness. Hence, they must be made to see that what God asks is *effort* and *not success*, that perseverance in prayer, despite difficulties, is so much the richer in merit, and that God having proved Himself so generous towards them, to turn back when effort is required, would be an act of cowardice. These directions should be tempered by the mildness with which they are given and by paternal words of comfort.

686. C) The greatest obstacle, however, comes from *distractions*. Since in the first stages of the spiritual life, our imagination, our feelings and our attachments are far from being mastered, worldly and oftentimes dangerous fancies, useless thoughts and the divers emotional movements of

St. John Climacus and other spiritual writers. It was not, however, until the XV Century that *methods* properly so called were elaborated, which have since guided souls in the ways of mental prayer.

Because at first sight these methods appear rather *intricate*, it is well, before introducing beginners to their use, to prepare them by what may be called *meditative reading*. They should be told to read some devout works, like the First Book of the *Following of Christ*, the *Spiritual Combat* or some work containing brief, solid meditations; and they should be taught to follow up this reading by asking themselves the following questions: 1° Am I thoroughly convinced that what I have just read is useful and necessary to the welfare of my soul? How can I strengthen this conviction? 2° Have I up to the present exercised myself in such an important practice? 3° What must I do today in order to improve? If an earnest prayer is added asking for the grace that one may carry out the resolutions taken, all the essential elements of a real meditation will be contained in such reading.

I. Points Common to all Methods of Mental Prayer

We find in all the various methods certain common traits which are manifestly the most essential; hence, attention must be called to them.

689. 1° There is always a *remote*, a *proximate*, and an *immediate preparation*.

a) The *remote* preparation is nothing more than the effort to make our daily life harmonize with prayer. It comprises three things: 1) the mortification of the senses and of the passions; 2) habitual recollection; 3) humility. These are, in fact, excellent dispositions for a good meditation. At the beginning they are imperfect; still, they suffice to enable us to meditate with some profit, and later on they will become more and more perfect in proportion as progress is made in mental prayer.

b) The *proximate* or, as others call it, the less remote preparation, includes three principal acts: 1) to select the subject of meditation on the preceding evening; 2) to revolve it in our mind in the morning upon awakening, and to excite in our heart corresponding sentiments; 3) to approach meditation with earnestness, confidence, and humility, desiring to give glory to God and to improve our life. In

this way the soul is placed in the best dispositions to enter into conversation with God.

e) The *immediate* preparation, which is in reality the beginning of meditation itself, consists in placing ourselves in the presence of God Who is present everywhere especially within our heart, in acknowledging ourselves unworthy and incapable of meditating, and in imploring the aid of the Holy Ghost that He supply our insufficiency.

690. 2° Within the **body of the meditation**, the different methods likewise contain more or less explicitly the same fundamental acts:

a) Acts of worship rendering to the Majesty of God the *religious homage* due to Him.

b) *Considerations*, to convince ourselves of the necessity or the great importance of the virtue we want to acquire, so that we may all the more earnestly pray for the grace of practicing it, and firmly determine to make efforts necessary to co-operate with grace.

c) *Self-examinations*, to see our failings in this regard and survey the progress yet to be made.

d) *Prayers or petitions*, asking for the grace of growing in the said virtue and of using the means conducive thereto.

e) *Resolutions*, whereby we determine from that very moment to practice that virtue.

691. 3° The **conclusion**, which brings the meditation to a close, includes: 1) an *act of thanksgiving* for the favors received; 2) a *review* of the manner in which we have made our meditation with the view to improve thereon the following day; 3) a final *prayer* asking the blessing of Our Heavenly Father; 4) the selection of some impressive thought or some telling maxim, which will during the day recall to our mind the ruling idea of our meditation.

The different methods are reduced to two principal types called respectively the method of *St. Ignatius* and the method of *St. Sulpice*.

II. The Method of St. Ignatius¹

692. In the *Spiritual Exercises* St. Ignatius presents several methods of mental prayer, according to the subjects

¹ *Spiritual Exercises*, 1st Week, 1st Exercise; (Translation by Father Rickaby, S. J.); See CLARE, S. J. *The Science of the Spiritual Life*; CRASSET, *A Key to Meditation*; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XX.

meditated upon and the results desired. The one best adapted to beginners is the one called *the exercise of the three faculties*, so named because it consists in the exercise of the memory, the understanding and the will, the three chief faculties of the soul. It is explained in the First Week of the Exercises in connection with the meditation on sin.

693. 1° The Beginning of the Meditation. It begins by a *preparatory prayer* in which we beg of God that our intentions and all our actions be solely directed to the service and honor of the Divine Majesty.

Two preludes follow: a) *the first*, which is the *composition of place*, has for its purpose to center the imagination and fasten the attention upon the subject of the meditation, the more easily to banish distractions. 1) If the object *falls under the senses*, for instance if it is one of the mysteries of Our Lord, it is presented to the mind as vividly as possible, not like an event having taken place in the distant past, but as if one were actually witnessing the facts and taking part in them. 2) If the object does not fall under the senses, e. g. sin, "the *composition of place* will consist in picturing and considering my soul imprisoned in this mortal body, and myself, that is, my body and my soul, in this vale of tears, exiled, as it were, midst animals devoid of reason"; in other words, one considers sin in some of its effects in order to conceive a horror for it.

b) *The second prelude* consists in asking God what we want and desire, for example, shame and confusion at the sight of our sins. As can be seen, the practical purpose of the meditation — the resolution — is clearly pointed out from the very outset: *In all things look to the end.*

694. 2° The Body of the Meditation. This consists in the application of the three faculties of the soul, the *memory*, the *understanding*, and the *will*, to each point of the meditation. *Each faculty is in turn applied to each point*, unless one point furnishes adequate matter for the meditation. It is not necessary in every meditation to make all the acts; it is good to dwell upon the affections and sentiments which the subject suggests.

a) The exercise of the *memory* is performed by recalling the first point of the meditation, not in detail, but as a whole; thus, says St. Ignatius: "This exercise of the memory as regards the sin of the Angels consists in calling to mind how they were created in a state of innocence; how they refused to employ their freedom in rendering their Creator and Master the homage and obedience due to Him; how pride, taking possession of them, they passed from the state of grace to a state of reprobation, and were cast from Heaven into Hell."

b) The exercise of the *understanding* consists in reflecting in detail upon the same subject. St. Ignatius proceeds no further, but Father Roothaan supplements his teaching by explaining that the office of the *understanding* is to make reflections upon the truths the memory has

proposed, to make application thereof to the soul and the soul's needs, to draw therefrom practical conclusions, to weigh the motives for resolutions, to consider how we have heretofore conformed our conduct to the truths upon which we meditate, and how we must conduct ourselves with regard to them in the future.

e) *The will* has two duties to fulfil: to conceive *devout affections* and to form *good resolutions*. 1) *The affections*, indeed, must find a place in all parts of the meditation, at least they must occur very frequently, since it is these that make the meditation a real prayer; but it is chiefly toward the end of the meditation that they are to be multiplied. One must not be concerned about the manner of expressing them; the simpler the manner, the better they are. When some good sentiment spontaneously lays hold of us, it is well to entertain it as long as we can and until our devotion is satisfied. 2) *The resolutions* should be *practical*, designed to improve our life, and therefore *particular*, accommodated to our *present condition*, and capable of being carried out that very day; they must be based upon *solid motives*. They must be humble and therefore accompanied by prayers to obtain the grace of carrying them into execution.

695. 3° The Conclusion. This comprises three things: a *summary view* of the various resolutions already taken; devout *colloquies* with God the Father, Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin or some Saint; and lastly, the review of the meditation, or the examination upon the way we have made it, in order to note its imperfections and to seek a remedy for them.

deration of the motives, it does not minimize the *role of grace*, since one begs for it from the very outset, and again in the colloquies at the conclusion.

e) It is most suitable to *beginners*, for it states precisely, to the minutest details, what must be done from the preparation to the conclusion and thus prevents the faculties from wandering. Besides, it does not presuppose a deep knowledge of dogma, but only the contents of the Catechism, and hence adapts itself easily to the laity.

d) When *simplified*, this method is just as well suited to the *most advanced* souls; in fact, if one limits it to the main outline traced by St. Ignatius, it can be easily transformed into an *affective* prayer, which allows a wide scope to the inspirations of grace. The important thing is to know how to make an intelligent use of it under the wise guidance of an experienced spiritual director.

e) It has at times been criticized on the score that it does not give due prominence to Our Lord Jesus Christ. True, in the exercise of the three faculties Our Lord's place is but incidental; but St. Ignatius has given us other methods, in particular, that of the contemplation of Mysteries and the application of the senses wherein Our Lord becomes the central object of the meditation.¹

There is nothing to hinder beginners from employing one or the other. The objection, therefore, has no foundation if the Ignatian methods are thoroughly followed.

III. *The Method of St. Sulpice* 2

697. A) **Origin.** This method, coming after several others, has been influenced by them as to the details; but its underlying idea and broad lines originated with Cardinal de Bérulle, Father de Condren, and Father Olier, whilst the supplementary details are the work of Father Tronson.

a) The *underlying thought* is that of union with the Incarnate Word in order to render through Him the religious homage due to God and to reproduce in ourselves the virtues of Jesus Christ.

b) The three *essential acts* are: 1) *Adoration*, wherein we consider one of the attributes or one of the perfections of God, or else some virtue of Our Lord as the model of that virtue we are to practice. Then we offer to God or to Our Lord, or to God through Our Lord,

¹ We shall explain these methods when we treat of the *illuminative way*.
 = G. LETOURNEAU, *La Méthode d'oraison mentale du Sém. de S.-Sulpice*, Paris, 1903, especially p. 321-332; FABER, *Growth in Holiness*, C. XV.

To give a clearer understanding of the method, we add the following synoptic table of the *preludes*, of the *body of the prayer*, and of the *conclusion*.

I. Preludes {
 1° A rapid recall of the truth to be considered
 2° The composition of *place* through the imagination
 3° The petition for a special grace in harmony with the subject

1° The *Memory* by {
 A representation of the subject as a whole together with the chief circumstances
 1° What should I consider in this subject?
 2° What practical conclusions should I draw from it?
 3° What are my motives in drawing these conclusions?
 2° The *Understanding* by asking :
 4° How have I heretofore lived up to this?
 5° What must I do in the future the better to conform my life thereto?
 6° What obstacles must I remove?
 7° What means must I employ?

3° The *Will* by {
 1° Affections produced during the entire course of the meditation, especially at the end
 2° Resolutions taken at the end of each point: practical, personal, sound, humble, full of trust

1° Colloquies : with God, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the Saints

III. Conclusion {
 2° Review {
 1° How have I made this meditation?
 2° Wherein and why have I failed, or succeeded?
 3° What practical conclusions have I drawn? What requests have I made? What resolutions have I formed? What lights have I received?
 4° Choice of a thought as a reminder of the meditation.

696. **Advantages of this method.** As may be readily observed, this method is highly *psychological* and highly *practical*. a) It lays hold of all the faculties, the imagination included; applies them one after the other to the subject of meditation, and thus introduces an element of *variety* that makes it possible to consider a truth under its different aspects, to revolve it in our mind so as to assimilate it, to form convictions, and above all to draw therefrom practical conclusions for the present day.

b) Whilst this method lays emphasis upon the *important part played by the will*, which acts only after lengthy consi-

our religious homage in the form of adoration, admiration, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy or compassion. By thus paying our duties to the Author of grace we render Him propitious to our prayers.

2) *Communion*, whereby through prayer, we draw unto ourselves the perfection or the virtue which we have adored and admired in God or in Jesus Christ. 3) *Co-operations*, wherein under the influence of grace we determine to practice that virtue by forming at least one resolution which we strive to put into practice that very day.

This is the broad outline found in Cardinal de Bérulle, Father de Condren and Father Olier. As found in these writers it is rather a method of affective prayer, cf. n. 994-997.

698. B) The additions of Father Tronson. It is evident that this meagre outline, sufficient to souls already advanced, would prove inadequate for *beginners*. This was readily perceived at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, and whilst preserving the spirit and the essential elements of the original method, Father Tronson added to the second point, the communion, the *considerations* and *self-examinations* so indispensable to those that begin to meditate. Thus, once convinced of the importance or necessity of a virtue and realizing their lack of it, they ask for it with more earnestness, humility and perseverance. In this method, then, *prayer* is stressed even for beginners as the chief element of meditation. Hence, the name given to the third point — *Co-operation* — to remind us that our good purposes are more the effect of grace than of our own volitions, but that on the other hand grace works nothing in us without our co-operation, and that all the day long we are to work with Jesus Christ in striving to reproduce that virtue which has been the subject of our meditation.

699. C) A Summary of the Method. The following table will give an adequate idea of the method. We omit the *remote* preparation which is the same as the one explained in n. 689.

Proximate or Less Remote	1° To choose the subject of the meditation the night before and determine what we are to consider in Our Lord; to foresee in particular, the considerations and requests we are to make and the resolutions we are to take.
	2° To remain henceforth in great recollection and keep in our mind the subject of the meditation whilst going to sleep.
	3° Upon rising in the morning, to avail ourselves of the first free time to make our meditation.
Immediate	1° To place ourselves in the presence of God, present everywhere and especially in our heart.
	2° To humble ourselves before God at the sight of our sins. Contrition. Recitation of the <i>Confiteor</i> . Act of union with Our Lord.
	3° To acknowledge ourselves incapable of praying as we ought. Invocation of the Holy Ghost: recitation of the <i>Veni, Sancte Spiritus</i> .

Ist point, Adoration; Jesus before our Eyes	1° To consider the subject of our meditations in God, in Our Lord, or in one of the Saints:	His sentiments, words, actions.	
	2° To offer our homage: adoration, admiration, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy, or compassion.		
	1° To convince ourselves of the necessity or importance of the virtue through motives of faith, through reasoning or through a detailed examination.		
2nd point, Communion: Jesus in our heart	2° To reflect on our conduct with sorrow for the past, confusion for the present, and desire for the future.		
	3° To beseech God to grant us the virtue upon which we are meditating. (It is chiefly through this prayer that we participate in the virtues of Our Lord). — To beg also of God whatever else we need, to pray for the needs of the Church, and of all those for whom we are bound to pray.		
	1° To form a resolution: particular, present, efficacious, humble.		
3rd point, Co-operation: Jesus in our hands	2° To renew the resolution relative to our particular examination.		
	1° To thank God for the many graces He has bestowed upon us during the course of our meditation.		
	2° To beg His pardon for our faults and negligences during this holy exercise.		
III. Conclusion	3° To beseech Him to bless our resolutions, the present day, our life, our death.		
	4° To select some striking thought that impressed us during our meditation in order to remember it during the day and thus recall our resolutions.		
	5° To place ourselves and the fruit of our meditation in the hands of the Blessed Virgin.		
	Sub tuum præsidium		
	<p>700. D) Characteristics of this method. a) The method is based upon the doctrine of our <i>incorporation into Christ</i> (n. 142-149), and upon the resultant obligation of reproducing in ourselves His interior dispositions and His virtues. To succeed therein we must, as Father Olier puts it, have <i>Jesus before our eyes</i>, in order to gaze upon Him as our model and offer Him our homage — adoration; we must have Him <i>in our heart</i>, drawing unto us through prayer His sentiments and His virtues — communion; we must have Him <i>in our hands</i>, sharing with Him in the work of repro-</p>		

ducing His virtues — co-operation. An intimate union with Jesus, then, is the soul of this method.

b) It places the duty of *religion* (reverence and love towards God) before that of petition. God comes first! The God it places before us is not an abstract, philosophical concept, but a concrete, personal God, the living God of the Gospels, the Most Blessed Trinity living in us.

c) In asserting the need both of grace and of our co-operation, it lays the *emphasis upon grace* and hence upon *prayer*, whilst at the same time it demands the energetic and persevering effort of the will, of specific, pertinent, oft-renewed resolutions on the keeping of which we examine ourselves at the end of the day.

701. d) It is a method of affective prayer supported by *considerations*. It begins with religious sentiments in the first point; the *considerations* in the second are designed to elicit from the heart acts of faith in the supernatural truths on which we meditate, acts of hope in the Divine mercy, acts of love towards God's infinite goodness; the *self-examinations* are accompanied by sorrow for the past, confusion for the present, and a firm purpose of amendment for the future; the aim of all these acts being to prepare a humble, confident and persevering *prayer*. In order to prolong this petition, the method furnishes various motives, explained at length, and further suggests a prayer for the whole Church and for certain souls in particular. The resolutions are to be made with distrust of self, absolute confidence in Jesus Christ, and accompanied by a prayer that we may be enabled to put them into effect. Lastly, the conclusion is but a series of acts of gratitude, of humility and further petitions. Thus we avoid giving a too philosophical turn to our reasoning and to our considerations, and prepare the way for affective prayer and for prayer of simplicity; for the method tells us that it is not necessary always to perform all these acts, or in the order prescribed, but that we should rather abandon ourselves to the affections that God excites in us, and repeat frequently those to which we feel particularity attracted by the Holy Ghost. No doubt, beginners as a rule give more time to reasoning than to other acts, yet they are constantly reminded by the method that affections are preferable, and thus they gradually give to them a larger place in their meditation.

e) This method is especially suited to *priests and seminarians*. It continually reminds them that being other Christs by virtue of their character and their powers, they

should be so likewise in their dispositions and virtues, and that all their perfection consists in causing Jesus to live and to grow in their souls.

702. These two methods, then, have their respective excellence according to the special object they have in view. The same may be said of all the other methods, which more or less approach one of these two types.¹ It is well that there are many of them, so that each one may with the advice of his director choose, according to his own supernatural attractions, the method that suits him best.

As Father Poulain² says, these methods are like the numerous rules of rhetoric and logic; beginners must be taught these, but once they have been so schooled in them that they possess their spirit and their elements, they need but follow the broad lines of the method, and then, without ceasing to be active, they give greater heed to the movements of the Holy Ghost.

CONCLUSION: THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

703. From what we have just said, we may easily infer how helpful and how necessary mental prayer is for the purification of the soul. a) In the prayer of *worship*, we offer God the homage due to Him: we admire, praise and bless His infinite perfections — His holiness, His justice, His goodness, His loving mercy. He in turn lovingly stoops down to forgive us, to inspire us with a deep horror of sin which offends Him, and to protect us against fresh faults. b) In *meditation*, we form, under the influence of divine light and of our own reflections, strong convictions on the malice of sin, on its frightful consequences in this life and in the life to come, on the means of expiating it and avoiding it in the future. Our heart is then filled with sentiments of shame, of humiliation, of love of God, of hatred of sin, together with purpose of amendment, and thus our faults are washed away more and more in penitential tears and in the Blood of Christ. Our will is fortified against the slightest surrenders, and we embrace generously the practice of penance

¹ We make special mention of the method of St. Francis de Sales, *Devout Life*, II Part. ch. II-VII; of that of the Discalced Carmelites, *Instruction des Novices* by V. P. J. de Jésus-Marie, III Part. ch. II; Aurelianus a SS. Sacramento, *Cursus Asceticus* Vol. I, dispart. III, sect. I; of that of the Reformed Cistercians, *Directoire Spirituel* by Dom Lehoudey, 1910, sect. V, ch. IV; of that of the Dominicans *Instruction des Novices*, by Fr. Cormier.

² *Études*, 20 mars 1898, p. 782, note 2.

and self-denial. e) In the prayer of *petition*, supported by the infinite merits of Christ, we are the recipients of abundant graces to practice humility, penance, trust and love; these graces complete the cleansing of our soul, strengthen it against temptation, and ground it in virtue, chiefly in the virtues of penance and *mortification*, which complete the work of prayer.

704. Advice to spiritual directors. Mental prayer cannot be too strongly urged upon those who want to advance in the way of perfection. Spiritual directors should instruct them in its practice as early as possible. They should, likewise, have their penitents give an account of the difficulties they encounter in this exercise, in order to help them to overcome them, to show them how they can improve their method of meditation, and above all how they may avail themselves of this exercise to correct their faults, practice the contrary virtues, and gradually acquire the spirit of prayer, which, along with penance, will effect the transformation of their souls.

CHAPTER II

Penance

We shall briefly state the *necessity* and the *notion* of penance; then we shall explain: 1° The *motives* that should prompt us to *hate* and *avoid* sin; 2° the *motives* and the *means* of atoning for sin.

Necessity and Notion of Penance.

Art. I. — Hatred of sin { mortal
venial

Art. II. — Atonement for sin { motives
means

THE NECESSITY AND NOTION OF PENANCE¹

705. Penance is, after prayer, the most effective means for *cleansing the soul of past faults* and even for guarding it against future ones.

¹ St. THOM. III, q. 85; SUAREZ, *De Penitentia*, disp. I et VII; BILLUART, *De Penit.*, disp. II; AD. TANQUEREY, *Synop. Theol. Mor.*, t. I, n. 3-14; BOSSUET, *Serm. sur la nécessité de la pénitence*, édit. Lebarcq, 1897, t. IV, 596, t. V, 419; BOURDALOUE, *Carême, pour le Lundi de la deuxième Semaine*; NEWMAN, *Disc. to Mixed Congregations*, Neglect of Divine Calls; FABER, *Gravault in Holiness*.

1° When Our Lord is about to begin His public ministry, He has His Precursor proclaim the necessity of penance: "*Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"¹ He Himself declares He has come to call sinners to repentance: "*I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.*"² This virtue is so necessary, that unless we do penance we shall perish: "*But except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*"³ So well was this doctrine understood by the Apostles, that from the very first they insisted on the necessity of penance as a condition preparatory to Baptism: "*Do penance: and be baptized every one of you.*"⁴

For the sinner penance is an act of justice; for having offended God and violated God's rights, he is bound to make reparation for the outrage. This he does through penance.

706. 2° Penance is *defined as a supernatural virtue, allied to justice, which inclines the sinner to detest his sin because it is an offence against God, and to form the firm resolve of avoiding sin in the future, and of atoning for it.*

Hence, it includes four chief acts, the origin and inter-relation of which may be readily perceived. 1) In the light of reason and of faith, we see that sin is an evil, the greatest evil, in truth the only evil, and this because it offends God and deprives us of the most precious gifts. This evil we *hate* with our whole soul: "I have hated iniquity." 2) Moreover, conscious that this evil is ours since we have sinned, and that, even once forgiven, its traces remain in our soul, we conceive a lively *sorrow*, a sorrow that weighs upon and crushes the soul, a sincere *contrition*, a deep sense of humiliation. 3) To avoid in the future this heinous evil we form the *firm resolve* or the *firm purpose* of avoiding it, by carefully shunning dangerous occasions and by fortifying our will against the allurements of sinful pleasures. 4) Lastly, realizing that sin constitutes an act of *injustice*, we determine to *atone* for it, to *expiate* it by sentiments and works of penance.

ART. I. MOTIVES FOR HATING AND AVOIDING SIN⁵

Before explaining these motives,⁶ we shall explain what mortal sin is and what venial sin is.

C. XIX and XX; TISSOT, *Profiting by Our Faults*; MANNING, *Sin and Its Consequences*, *The Love of Jesus for Penitent Sinners*; HEDLEY, *Retreat*, C. VII; MEYER, *Science of the Saints*, C. XIII; ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Devout Life*, P. I, C. V-VIII, 1 *Math.*, III, 2; — 2 *Luke*, V, 32; — 3 *Luke*, XIII, 5; — 4 *Acts*, II, 38.

⁵ ST. THOMAS, 1^a II^a, q. 85-86; SUAREZ, *De Peccatis*, disp. 1-111; disp. VII-VIII; PHILIP. A. S. TRINITATE, *Sum. theol. mystica*, 1^a P., tr. II, discursus I; ANTON. A. SPIRITU S., *Directorium mysticum*, disp. I, sect. III; TH. DE VALLGORNERA, *Mystica theol.*, q. II, disp. I, a. III-IV; ALVAREZ DE PAZ, T. II, P. I, De Abiectione peccatorum; BOURDALOUE, *Carême mercredi de la 5^e sem.*, sur l'état du péché et l'état de grâce; TRONSON, *Ex. Part.*, CLXX-CLXXX; MANNING, *Sin and its Consequences*; MGR. D'HULST, *Carême 1892*; *Retraite*; P. JANVIER, *Carême 1903*, 1^e Conf.; *Carême 1908*, entirely. — See other references, no. 705.

⁶ We develop the treatment of these motives somewhat at length, in order that the reader may be able to *meditate* on them. Once a lively horror of sin is conceived progress in the spiritual life is assured.

707. Notion and Species of Sin. Sin is a *wilful transgression of the law of God*. Hence, it is an act of *disobedience to God*, an *offence against Him*; for it is the choice of our own will in preference to His, and thereby a violation of the sovereign right God has to our submission.

708. a) Mortal Sin. When, with full advertence and with full consent we transgress in grave matter a law that is important, necessary to the attainment of our end, the sin is *mortal*, because it deprives us of habitual grace which is the supernatural life of the soul (n. 105). This is why St. Thomas defines mortal sin as "*an act whereby we turn away from God, our last end, willingly attaching ourselves in an inordinate manner to some created good.*" By the loss of habitual grace, which unites us to God, we turn away from Him.

709. b) Venial Sin. When the law we violate is not necessary to the attainment of our end, or when we violate such a law, but in a slight matter, or if the law is grave in itself, but we transgress it either without full advertence or without full consent, the sin is but *venial* and does not deprive us of the state of grace. Our soul still remains in union with God, since we want to do His will in all things necessary, to abide in His friendship and attain our end. Still, venial sin is truly a violation of God's law, constituting an offence against the majesty of the Law-giver.

§ I. Mortal Sin

710. If we would pass sound judgment on grave sin, we must consider: 1° What it is *in the sight of God*; 2° What it is *in itself*; 3° What are its *baneful effects*. If through meditation we realize thoroughly these teachings of faith we shall conceive an invincible hatred of sin.

I. What Mortal Sin is in the Sight of God

To form an idea of what mortal sin is in God's eyes, let us see how He *punishes* it and how He *condemns* it in Holy Writ.

711. 1° How God punishes mortal sin. A) In the rebel angels. These committed but a single sin, an interior sin, a sin of pride; and God, their Creator and Father, God, Who loved them, not only as the work of His hands, but as

His adopted children, punished their rebellion by casting them into Hell, where through all eternity they will remain separated from God and deprived of all bliss. And withal, God is just and punishes no one beyond his deserts; He is merciful even in His punishments, and tempers the rigors of His justice with His goodness. Sin, then, must be something abominable to merit such a terrible sanction.

712. B) In our first parents. They had been endowed with all manner of gifts, natural, preternatural and supernatural, n. 52-66; but having likewise committed a sin of disobedience and pride, they were directly despoiled, along with the life of grace, of all the free gifts that had been bestowed upon them; were banished from Paradise and left to bequeath their posterity that dismal heritage of original sin, the sad consequences of which actually weigh upon us all (n. 69-75). Still, God bore our first parents the love of a father and allowed them the joy of intimacy with Him. If an all-just and all-merciful God visited such a severe punishment upon them and their posterity, it is because sin is a frightful evil, an evil which we can never sufficiently detest.

713. C) In the person of His Son. In order not to let man perish forever and in order to safeguard the rights both of justice and of mercy, the Eternal Father sends His Son into the world, makes Him the Head of the human race and lays upon Him the charge of atoning for and expiating sin in our stead. And what is the price of this redemption? Three and thirty years of humiliation and pain, ending in the unspeakable torture of body and mind at Gethsemane, before the Sanhedrim, in the Pretorium, upon Calvary! If we would learn what sin is, let us follow the Savior of the world, step by step, from the Stable to the Cross, through that *hidden* life of obscurity, of submission, of poverty, of toil; through His *apostolic* life of fatigues and failures, midst the ill-will and persecutions He was made to endure; through His *suffering* life, wherein He underwent such anguish of body and soul from friend and foe, so that He could well be called *the Man of Sorrows*. If we would know what sin is, let us face this truth: "*He was wounded for our iniquities: He was bruised for our sins.*"¹ Then we shall not be at a loss to understand that sin is the greatest of evils.

714. 2° How God condemns sin. Holy Scripture describes sin as the most odious and the most criminal thing in existence.

a) It is an act of *disobedience* to God, a transgression of His orders, which is justly punished with the utmost severity, as we witness in our

¹ St. IGNATIUS, *Spiritual Exercises*, 1st Week, 1st Exercise; See also his numerous commentators.

first parents.¹ In the people of Israel, God's chosen portion, this disobedience is regarded as a revolt, a rebellion.² b) It is an act of *ingratitude* toward our greatest Benefactor, an unnatural lack of filial piety toward the most loving of fathers: "I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me."³ c) It is unfaithfulness, a species of *adultery*, since God is the spouse of our souls and rightly demands inviolable fidelity: "But thou hast prostituted thyself to many lovers."⁴ d) It is an *injustice*, since by sin we openly violate the rights God has over us: "Whosoever committeth sin committeth also iniquity. And sin is iniquity."⁵

II. Mortal Sin in Itself

Mortal sin is an evil, the only real evil, since all other evils are but its consequences or its punishment.

715. ¹⁰ **In relation to God**, mortal sin is a crime *against the majesty of the Godhead*; it is an assault upon all of God's attributes, but chiefly an attempt against Him as our *first beginning*, our *last end*, our *Father*, and our *benefactor*.

A) God, the *first cause* of our being is our Maker, from Whom we hold all we are and all we have; He is thereby our Supreme Lord and Master to Whom we owe an absolute obedience. By mortal sin we disobey Him; we affront Him by preferring our own will to His, by preferring a creature to the Creator! Nay more — we *revolt* against Him, since by the fact of creation, we are subject to Him as we can be to no earthly power. a) This rebellion is all the *more grave*, since this Master is infinitely wise and infinitely good, and commands nothing that is not conducive to our own happiness as well as to His glory; whilst our will is weak, frail, liable to error. In spite of this, we prefer it to that of God! b) This defiance is all the *more inexcusable*, since we know well what we do; for from the days of our childhood, we have been taught by Christian parents and have a clear and precise knowledge of God's rights over us and of the malice of sin. c) And why do we thus betray Our Lord and Master? We do so for a vile pleasure that debases us, from a stupid pride whereby we arrogate unto ourselves glory that belongs to God alone, for paltry interests, for a transient gain, to which we sacrifice a good that is eternal.

716. B) God is also our *last end*. He created us, and created us for Himself alone. He could not have done

otherwise, for He is the Supreme Good, and outside Himself we could neither realize our perfection nor find our bliss. Besides, having come forth from God, we should and we must return to Him; being the work of His hand, we are His own and we must revere, praise, serve, and glorify Him; ¹ being the object of His love we should love Him with our whole soul — and it is in the love of Him and in the worship of Him, that we find our perfection and our happiness. Hence, He has a *strict right* that our whole life with all its thoughts, all its longings, all its acts be directed unto Him, unto His glory.

By mortal sin, however, we turn away from God in order to take our delight in some created thing; we do Him an injury when we choose one of His creatures, or rather our own selfish satisfaction in preference to Him, for at bottom, it is not so much the creature which we seek as the pleasure we find therein. This is flagrant *injustice*, since it constitutes an attempt to strip the Almighty of His supreme rights over us, of that outward glory we are bound to promote; it is a sort of *idolatry*, the setting up in the heart's sanctuary of an idol over against the One True God; it is *scorning* the fountain of living water, which alone can quench the soul's thirst, to go, as Jeremias vigorously puts it, after the slimy waters that reek within abandoned wells: "For my people have done two evils: *They have forsaken me the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*"²

717. C) God is to us also a Father, Who has adopted us as His children and Who bestows on us the thoughtful care of a parent (n. 94); He heaps upon us His choicest favors, endowing us with a supernatural organism, in order that we may live a life like unto His; He showers upon us abundant actual graces that we may make good use of His gifts, and thus by good works increase our spiritual life. Now, by mortal sin we scornfully fling aside those gifts, nay we fling them back at the Giver, our Benefactor, our Father; we spurn His grace at the very moment He overwhelms us with His bounty. Is not this *ingratitude*? Ingratitude all the more culpable because we have received so much, ingratitude that cries out for vengeance!

¹ This is the thought developed by St. IGNATIUS at the outset of the *Spiritual Exercises*, beginning with these words: "Man was created to this end, that he glorify and worship the Lord his God, and that by serving Him he attain salvation."
² Jeremias, II, 13.

¹ Gen., II, 17; III, 11-19. — ² Jeremias, II, 4-8. — ³ Isaias, I, 2.
⁴ Jeremias, III, 1. — ⁵ I John, III, 4.

718. ²⁰ In relation to **Jesus Christ**, our Redeemer, mortal sin is a sort of *deicide*. a) It is sin that has caused the sufferings and death of the Savior: "*Christ suffered for us...*" ¹ *And washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" ² That this thought make an impression upon us, we must think of the personal share we have had in Christ's bitter Passion. It is I who betrayed my Master with a kiss, and at times, for even less than the thirty pieces of silver. It is I who caused violent hands to be laid upon Him, and a sentence of death to be passed on Him. I was with the rabble that cried out: "Not this man, but Barabbas... Crucify him." ³ I was with the soldiers, lashing Him through my self-indulgence, crowning His head with thorns through my interior sins of pride and sensuality, laying the heavy beam upon His shoulders and nailing Him to the Cross. As Father Olier so well explains it, "our niggardliness crucified His all-embracing charity, our ill temper His meekness, our intolerance His patience, our pride His humility. Thus our vices rack and strangle, and quarter the Christ that lives in us." ⁴ What hatred should we bear a sin that has so cruelly fastened Our Savior to the Cross!

b) Of course, we can no longer visit fresh tortures upon Him, since He can suffer no more, but our present faults do offer Him fresh insults; for when we wilfully commit them, we scorn His love and favors; as far as we are concerned, we render void the Blood He shed in such profusion; we hold back from Him that love, that gratitude, that obedience to which He is entitled. What is this, if not repaying love with black ingratitude, and thereby calling down upon our heads a dreadful punishment?

III. *The Effects of Mortal Sin*

God has given the law a sanction; He has made happiness the reward of virtue and suffering the wages of sin. Seeing then the effects of sin in this life and in the next, we can in a measure judge of its guilt.

719. ¹⁰ To realize the dire effects of mortal sin in **this life**, let us remember what a soul in the state of grace is. It is the dwelling-place and the delight of the Most Blessed Trinity. The Three Divine Persons adorn it with divine graces, divine virtues, divine gifts. Under the influence of actual grace, the good acts such a soul performs

merit eternal life. Such a soul possesses the holy liberty of the children of God, shares in His power and virtue, and enjoys, especially at certain times, a happiness which is a foretaste of celestial bliss. And what does mortal sin do?

a) It *expels God from our soul*, and because the possession of God is already the beginning of heavenly joy, the loss of Him is, at it were, a prelude to eternal loss; for the loss of God is likewise the loss of all the goods of which He is the source.

b) Losing God we lose *sanctifying grace*, whereby our soul lived a life similar to that of the Godhead; hence, mortal sin is a sort of *spiritual suicide*. Together with sanctifying grace we lose that glorious galaxy of *virtues and gifts* that go with it. If in His infinite mercy God leaves us in possession of Faith and Hope, these virtues are no longer vivified by Love and now abide with us merely to infuse a wholesome fear and inspire us with an earnest desire of atoning and doing penance. In the meantime they show us the sad plight of our soul and excite the pangs of remorse.

720. c) The merits we have earned in the past with so much effort are likewise lost by mortal sin; we can only regain them by penance. Moreover, whilst we remain in the state of mortal sin, we can acquire no merits for heaven. What a waste of the supernatural!

d) To all this we must add the *tyrannical yoke of servitude* the sinner must from now on bear. Instead of "the liberty of the children of God,"¹¹ behold him now in the slavery... of sin, of evil passions now unloosed by the loss of grace, of habits soon formed after repeated falls — falls so difficult to avoid! "*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*"¹² Little by little the moral strength of the soul is sapped, actual graces become rarer, discouragement and at times despair ensue. This poor soul is lost unless God in His exceeding great mercy comes with His grace and rescues it from the abyss.

721. ²⁰ If unfortunately the sinner remains obdurate to the end in his resistance to grace, then follows hell with all its horrors. A) First there is the well-deserved pain of loss. Grace had ever pursued the culprit, but he willingly died in his sin, that is he willingly died without God, and since his soul's dispositions can no longer change, he remains forever separated from Him. As long as he lived on earth absorbed in business or pleasure, he gave no time, no thought to the horror of his plight. But now there is neither business nor

¹ *I Peter*, II, 21. — ² *Apoc.*, I, 5. — ³ *John*, XVIII, 40, XIX, 6.
⁴ *Cat. for an Int. Life*, P. I, lesson II.

¹¹ *Rom.*, VIII, 21. — ¹² *John*, VIII, 34; *I Peter*, II, 19.

pleasure, and he faces constantly the harrowing reality. By the very constitution of his nature, by the cravings of his mind and of his heart, by the urge of his entire being, he is now uncontrollably driven towards Him, Who is his first beginning and last end, his one principle of perfection and only source of bliss; drawn towards that loving Father, so worthy of love, Who had adopted him as His offspring; toward the Redeemer of his soul, Who had so loved him as to die upon the Cross for him. Yet, a ruthless force beyond his power, the force of sin, his own sin, hopelessly thrusts him back upon himself. Death has forever stayed his spirit, irretrievably fixed his dispositions. Having rejected God the very moment death overtook him, he remains estranged from Him forever. Happiness and perfection are everlastingly beyond his quest; he remains attached to his sin and through sin to all that defiles and all that degrades: "*Depart from me, ye cursed.*"

722. B) To this pain of loss, by far the most terrible, is added the pain of *sense*. The body, a partner in sin, will share the torment of the soul; the everlasting despair which will torture the reprobate soul, will producé in the body an unquenchable thirst that nothing can assuage. Besides, the damned will be tormented by a *real fire* different indeed from our material fire, but the instrument of divine justice to punish the flesh and the senses. In fact, it is but just that wherein a man sins, therein also he be punished: "*By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented;*"¹ and since the evildoer willed to take inordinate delight in creatures these will prove the instruments of torture. This fire enkindled and applied by a knowing hand will torture its victims with that same measure of intensity with which they once entered into their wicked delights.

723. C) There will be no end of this double woe, and this everlastingness is what fills the measure of the punishment of the lost; for if a slight discomfort by its persistence becomes well nigh unbearable, what shall we say of those pangs, of themselves so racking, which outlast millions of ages only to begin afresh!

And withal, God is just, God is good even in the sanction He is bound to inflict upon the damned. Mortal sin, then, must be an abomination to be thus punished! It must be the one real evil, the only evil. Hence, *better to die than be defiled* by a single mortal sin.

¹ *Wisdom*, XI, 17.

§ II. Deliberate Venial Sin

From the point of view of perfection there is a great difference between venial faults of *surprise* and those committed with full deliberation, with full consent of the will.

724. Faults of surprise. The Saints themselves at times commit such by allowing themselves to be momentarily betrayed though thoughtlessness or weakness of will into some carelessness in prayer, into imprudences, rash judgments, words against charity, or little lies to cover up a fault. No doubt, these faults are to be deplored, and fervent souls do deplore them sincerely; however, such faults are not an obstacle to perfection. Almighty God, Who knows our weakness, readily condones them. Besides, almost invariably fervent souls make amends on the spot through acts of contrition, of humility, of love — acts that endure longer and are more voluntary than are their sins of frailty.

All we have to do as regards these faults is to lessen their number and ward off discouragement. **a)** We diminish their number through *vigilance*, by striving to reach and suppress their causes. This we do without anxiety or over eagerness, relying more on the grace of God than on our efforts. We must, above all, endeavor to destroy all attachment to venial sin; for as St. Francis de Sales remarks, "if the heart clings thereto devotion loses for us its sweetness, and all devotion vanishes."

725. b) We must carefully avoid *discouragement*, the vexation of those who "are angry for having been angry, and vexed to see themselves vexed."² Such feelings proceed from self-love; one is cast down and troubled at seeing oneself so imperfect. To escape this defect, we must look upon our faults with the same eye of tolerance with which we behold those of others; indeed, we must detest our faults and our failings, but with a calm hatred, highly conscious of our own weakness and misery, and firmly determined to make them an occasion of giving glory to God by bringing more love and more fidelity to the fulfillment of our present duties.

It is otherwise with deliberate venial sins, which are a very great hindrance to our spiritual progress, and which must be vigorously combated.

¹ *Devout Life*, Bk. I, C. XXII. — ² *Devout Life*, Part III, C. IX.

thy whole mind."¹ Now, we do not make the entire gift of ourselves to Him, we hold something back, and the while we want to keep His friendship, we are niggardly with ours, offering Him but a divided heart. This is evidently inconsiderate; it shows a lack of generosity, a smallness that cannot but alter our intimate relations with God.

II. The Effects of Deliberate Venial Sin

729. 1° In this life. Frequent deliberate venial sin deprives the soul of many graces, gradually lessens its fervor, and predisposes it to mortal sin.

A) Venial sin does not, indeed, take from the soul sanctifying grace or divine love, but it deprives it of the new graces, the increase of divine love and of the corresponding degree of glory that it could have acquired and that God meant to give. Is not this an enormous loss, the loss of a treasure worth far more than the entire world?

730. B) It causes a *diminution of fervor*, that is to say, a waning of that generosity whereby we give ourselves without reserve to God. This generosity presupposes a *high ideal* and an *unrelenting effort* to pursue it; but these two dispositions are incompatible with habitual venial sin.

a) Nothing so *lowers our ideal* as attachment to sin: instead of being ever ready to serve God in all things and to aspire to the highest, we purposely halt half-way along the road to relish some forbidden pleasure. We thus waste precious moments, turning away our gaze from the lofty peaks to linger and gather a few flowers that are soon to wither. We feel then the weariness of the way, and heights of perfection that God wants us to reach seem far too remote and too forbidding. We say to ourselves that it is not necessary to aim so high; that we can obtain our salvation on more reasonable terms; and the ideal which once shone before our eyes no longer moves us. We say to ourselves that after all this little self-complacency, these trifling, sensual gratifications, these sentimental friendships, these uncharitable words are unavoidable. **b)** This lowering of our ideals necessarily paralyzes effort towards perfection. Before, we marched joyously on, sustained by the hope of reaching the goal; now, we begin to feel the heat and the burden of the day, and when we want to resume our ascent, our attachment to venial sin holds us back. Even as the bird held by cords to the ground tries in vain to take its flight and falls back bruised, so our souls, held by ties we will not break, fall very soon, harmed in some degree by the fruitless attempt to rise. At times, indeed, it seems as if we were to regain our strength, but alas! other ties hold us and we lack the steady purpose that would tear them asunder. Hence, there ensues a cooling of charity that becomes alarming.

¹ *Matth.*, XXII, 37.

I. The Malice of Deliberate Venial Sin

726. Deliberate venial sin is a moral evil. In reality, it is, mortal sin excepted, the greatest evil. It does not actually turn us from our end, but it checks our progress, robs us of time beyond price, and constitutes an *offence against God*. It is in this that its malice consists.

727. It is an *act of disobedience to God*, in a slight matter it is true, but willed after reflection. Regarded in the light of faith, it is something truly hateful, since it challenges the infinite majesty of God.

A) It is a wrong, an indignity offered to God; for placing God and His glory over against our whims, our pleasure, and our vanity, we dare to choose the latter. What an outrage! A will infinitely wise and righteous sacrificed to our own, the slave of error and caprice! "It is," says St. Theresa, "as if we said: 'Lord, I know full well this action displeases you, yet I shall do it none the less. I am not unaware that your eyes see it, I know perfectly well you do not want it, but I will rather follow my bent and fancy than your will. Can this be of little consequence? As for myself, no matter how slight the fault might be in itself, I find on the contrary that it is grave and very grave.'"

728. B) Hence, there results through our own fault, a *diminution of God's external glory*; for we have been created in order that by a perfect and loving obedience to His law we may procure His glory. Now, by refusing to obey, even in slight matter, we withhold from Him a measure of that glory; instead of proclaiming with Mary our readiness to exalt Him in all our acts, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," we positively refuse to glorify Him in this or that particular.

C) This, of itself, is an act of *ingratitude*. Loaded by God with numberless favors, raised to friendship with Him, and knowing that in return He claims our love and gratitude, we begrudge Him a small sacrifice. Instead of striving to please Him, we dare to displease Him. Hence, inevitably, a certain coolness in God's friendship towards us. God loves us without stint and asks us in return that we love Him with all our soul: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with*

¹ *Way of Perfection*, ch. XLI.

731. C) The great danger that confronts us then is that of gradually drifting into mortal sin. Our tendencies toward forbidden pleasure gather strength, our will becomes weaker and God's graces are reduced. Then a moment comes when any surrender may be feared.

a) Our tendencies toward forbidden pleasures gather strength; the more we yield to this treacherous and insatiable enemy, the more it demands.

Today sloth makes us shorten our meditation by a few brief minutes; tomorrow it demands twice as many. Today sensuality but asks for some slight gratifications; tomorrow it becomes bold and asks for more. Where shall we stop on this downward grade? We try to reassure ourselves by saying that such faults are only venial, but alas, step by step they come nearer and nearer to grievous sins; imprudences recur and stir the imagination and the senses more deeply than before. This is the fire that lies smouldering beneath the ashes and which may at any given moment be the source of threatening flames; this is the reptile that we warm in our bosom and which makes ready to bite and poison us. — The danger is all the more imminent since familiarity has partly dispelled our fear; we let fall one after the other the barriers that guarded the stronghold of the heart and an hour comes when with added fury in the assault, the enemy gains entry into the citadel of the soul.

732. b) This is the more to be dreaded, as God's graces are as a rule reduced in proportion to our infidelities. 1) It is the law of Divine Providence that graces are given us according to our own dispositions and our own co-operation. This is the sense of the Gospel words: "For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but to him that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath." 1) By our attachment to venial sin we offer resistance to grace, we hamper its action in our soul and therefore receive it in smaller measure. If, then, even with a greater abundance of grace we failed to make a stand against the disordered tendencies of our nature, shall we succeed in restraining them now with less grace and less strength? 2) Besides, a soul lacking recollection and generosity hardly feels the promptings of the graces it receives; these are soon stifled by the turmoil of awakening passions. 3) Lastly, grace cannot sanctify us except through the sacrifices it demands of us, whilst the habits of pleasure we have acquired by our attachment to venial faults render such sacrifices all the more difficult.

773. We can, therefore, conclude with Father Lallemand: "The multiplication of venial sins is the destruction of souls, causing the

¹ *Mathth.*, XIII, 12. — ² *Spiritual Doctrine*, Principle III, c. II, art. II.

diminution of those divine lights and inspirations, those interior consolations, that fervor and courage, which are needed to resist the assaults of the enemy. Hence follow blindness, weakness, frequent falls, an acquired habit of insensibility of heart; because, when once an affection to these faults is contracted, we sin without feeling that we are sinning."

734. 2° The effects of venial sin in the next world¹ show us how much we should dread it. It is in order to expiate venial sin that many souls spend a long time in purgatory.

A) There they endure the most unbearable of sufferings, the privation of the vision of God. This torture, it is true, will not last forever, differing in this from the pains of hell; nevertheless, for a time measured by the number and seriousness of their faults, these souls who love God and who, now removed from the pleasures and distractions of earth, think of Him constantly and long to see His face, are prevented from seeing and possessing Him, and therefore suffer indescribable anguish. They now realize that outside of God there is no solace and no bliss; and still before them looms, like insurmountable barriers, that host of venial sins they have not as yet sufficiently expiated. They are, moreover, so alive to the necessity of the purity required to contemplate the Almighty face to face, that their very shame would not allow them to appear before Him as they are, nor would they ever consent to enter Heaven as long as there remains upon them the least stain of venial sin.² They find themselves, therefore, in a state of torture the more excruciating as they realize that it is fully deserved.

735. B) Moreover, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, a subtle fire hinders their activity and makes them experience physical sufferings whereby they may expiate the guilty pleasures to which they gave consent. This trial, no doubt, they most willingly accept as they realize the need of it in order to effect their union with God.

"Seeing," says St. Catherine of Genoa,³ "that purgatory is designed to cleanse them of their stains, souls throw themselves into it, deeming it an unspeakable token of mercy that they are offered a place wherein they can rid themselves of what prevents their union with God."

¹ We do not speak of the temporal punishments of venial sin. Holy Writ repeatedly makes mention of them. When it is questioned, however, of determining whether a particular punishment is the chastisement for a venial sin, one is reduced to conjectures.

² "If the soul could discover another purgatory still more terrible than that which it endures, urged on by its love for God, it would eagerly plunge into it, the more speedily to be freed of all that separates it from the Sovereign Good." (ST. CATHERINE of Genoa, *Purgatory*, c. IX.) — ³ *Op. cit.*, c. VIII.

Such willing acceptance, however, does not do away with their great sufferings: "This resignation of the souls in purgatory does not relieve them of one whit of their torments; far from it, love pent up causes their woe, and their woe increases in proportion to that perfection of love of which God has made them capable."¹

And yet, God is not only just but merciful as well! He bears those souls a love that is real, tender, fatherly; He longs to give Himself to them for all eternity. If He does not do so, it is because there can be no possible fellowship between His infinite holiness and the least venial sin. Therefore, we can never hate venial sin too much, we can never undergo enough in order to avoid it, we can never endure enough to repair it.

ART. II. MOTIVES AND MEANS FOR EXPIATING SIN

I. *Motives of Penance*

Three principal reasons oblige us to do penance for our sins. The first is a motive arising from a duty of justice toward God; the second, a duty consequent upon our incorporation into Christ; the last is a duty imposed by charity to ourselves and to our neighbor.

1° A DUTY OF JUSTICE TOWARD GOD

736. Sin is a real *injustice*, since it deprives God of a portion of that eternal glory which is His due. Sin, then, requires a *reparation* which consists in rendering God, to the extent in which we are able, that honor and that glory of which, through our fault, we have defrauded Him. The offence, inasmuch as it is offered to the Infinite Being, is in this respect at least infinite and can never be adequately repaired. Therefore, our expiation of sin must extend over the full span of our life; and this obligation is the more far reaching, as we have been the recipients of more favors and have been guilty of graver and more numerous faults.

Bossuet remarks on this point: "Have we not good reason to fear that God's goodness so fully outraged be turned into implacable wrath? If His just punishment of the Gentiles was so severe, will not His anger be more dreadful towards us? Does not a father feel more keenly the faithlessness of his children than the wickedness of his servants?" We must then, he adds, take sides with God against ourselves: "Thus if we side with divine justice as against ourselves, we oblige divine mercy to take sides with us against divine justice. The more we regret the plight wherein we have fallen, the sooner we

shall regain the good we have lost. God's loving kindness will accept the sacrifice of the broken heart we offer Him as satisfaction for our crimes; and looking not to the inadequate reparation we offer, this good Father will but regard the good will of the offerers." Besides, we can make our penance more effective by uniting it to the atonement of Christ.

2° A DUTY CONSEQUENT UPON OUR INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST

737. Through Baptism we have been incorporated into Christ (n. 143), and since we share His life we are to share His sentiments. Although impeccable, Jesus has taken upon Himself, as the head of a mystical body, the burden of our sins and, so to speak, assumed responsibility for them: "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."¹ Behold the reason for His life of suffering from the moment of His conception to His death on Calvary. Knowing that the holocausts of the Ancient Law could not propitiate the Father, He gives Himself as an offering in the place of all victims. All His acts constitute an immolation through obedience, and after a lifelong martyrdom, He dies on the Cross, the victim of obedience and of love: "He was made obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And He wills that His members, in orders to be cleansed from their sins, be with Him victims of expiation: "He willed to become a victim that He might become the Savior of mankind. But since His mystical body is one, if the head be immolated, the members likewise become living victims."² It is evident that if Jesus, being innocent, atoned for our sins through His passion and death, we the guilty must share in His sacrifice, in proportion to our guilt.

738. To move us to comply with this duty, the atoning Christ comes through His Divine Spirit, to live within us with all His sentiments of victim.

"Thus in reading the Psalms" says Father Olier,³ "we must honor that spirit of penance that was David's and revere in silent adoration the interior dispositions of Christ's Spirit, the fountain-head of penance, as diffused in David's soul. Humbly, insistently, ardently, and perseveringly we must ask the Holy Ghost to give us this spirit of penance, trusting that He will grant our request." We may not be aware of the operations of the Holy Spirit, for He often works in an imperceptible manner; but if we invoke Him with humility, He will hear us and infuse into our hearts the dispositions of the Heart of Jesus towards sin, and thus enable us in union with Him to detect and

¹ *Op. cit.*, ch. XII. Read entire treatise.

² *Premier Panegyrique de S. Fr. de Paul.*

³ *Levias* LIII, VI. — ² BOSSUET, *Premier Sermon pour la Purification.*

³ *Introduction*, ch. VII.

greater security for the future.¹ Hence, to do penance is charity towards ourselves.

740. B) Penance is also an act of charity toward the neighbor. **a)** In virtue of our incorporation into Christ we are all brethren, all members of the same body of Christ (n. 148). Since our works of satisfaction can contribute to the welfare of others, will not our charity prompt us to do penance not only for ourselves, but likewise, in behalf of our brethren? Is not this the best means of obtaining their conversion or, if they have turned to God, their perseverance? Is not this the best service we could possibly render them, a benefit worth infinitely more than all the temporal goods we could confer upon them? Thus, to atone for our neighbor's faults is but to carry out the will of God, Who having adopted us as His children, commands us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

741. b) This duty of reparation devolves more particularly upon *priests*. For them it is a duty to offer sacrifices not only for themselves but for the souls committed to their charge, "*First for his own sins, and then for the people's.*"² We do find, however, outside the priestly state *generous souls*, who, in the cloister or in the world, feel drawn to offer themselves as expiatory victims for the sins of others. A high calling that associates them with Christ's redeeming work! A call they should fearlessly answer, taking counsel from a wise spiritual director as to the appropriate works of reparation to which they should devote themselves.³

742. Let us say in conclusion that the *spirit of penance* is not a duty imposed merely upon beginners and only for a short period of time. Once we have understood what sin is, what an infinite offence it gives to God, we are obliged to do penance *all through life*, since a whole lifetime is but too short to make reparation for an infinite offence. Hence, we must never cease to do penance.

This point is so important that Father Faber, after giving much thought to the reason why so many souls make but little progress, came to the conclusion that the cause was "the want of *abiding sorrow* for sin."⁴ To this the example of the Saints bears witness; they never ceased expiating the faults, at times very slight, into which they had formerly lapsed. God's attitude toward the souls whom He wants

¹ This is the teaching of the Council of Trent (Session XIV, C. VIII).
² *Hebr.*, VII, 27.

³ P. PLUS, *The Ideal of Reparation*, Book III; L. CAPELLE, *Les Ames Généreuses*.

⁴ This he explains at length in *Growth in Holiness*, C. XIX, and he adds: "Just as all worship breaks down, if it is not based on the feelings due from a creature to his Creator. . . just as all penances come to nought which do not rest on Christ. . . so in like manner all holiness has lost its principle of growth if it is separated from abiding sorrow for sin. For the principle of growth is not only love, but *forgiveness love*."

expiate our sins. Then our penance will become more efficacious since it is no longer we alone who atone, but Christ atoning in us and with us. "All exterior penance," says Father Olier,¹ "that has not its source in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is not true and genuine penance. One may inflict upon oneself rigors, even the most harsh, but if these proceed not from the atoning Christ within us, they cannot be acts of Christian penance. It is through Christ alone that we can do penance. He initiated it here on earth in His own person and He continues it in us, infusing into our soul sentiments of abasement, of confusion, of sorrow, of detestation of self and of fortitude, to fulfil in us the sufferings and the measure of that satisfaction which God the Father wills to receive from Jesus Christ in our flesh." This union with Jesus, then, does not exempt us from the exercise of the spirit of penance nor from the works thereof; its effect is that of conferring upon them a greater worth.

3° A DUTY OF CHARITY

Penance is a duty of *charity* both to ourselves and to our neighbor.

739. A) A duty to ourselves. Sin leaves in the soul baneful consequences against which it is necessary to react. **a)** Even when the *guilt* or fault has been remitted, there generally remains a temporal punishment varying according to the gravity and number of our sins, and according to the fervor of our contrition at the moment of our return to God. This punishment must be undergone either in this life or in the next. By far the most advantageous course is to make satisfaction in this life. The sooner and the more perfectly we acquit ourselves of this debt, the better fitted our soul becomes for union with God. Moreover, expiation on earth is easier, since this is the acceptable time for mercy; it is more fruitful, since the acts wherewith we make satisfaction are also meritorious, a source of grace and greater glory (n. 209). Therefore, personal interest and love for our own soul are best served by a prompt and whole-hearted penance.

b) Moreover, by the fact that sin intensifies in us the disordered love of pleasure and weakens our will, it bequeathes to us a pernicious facility to commit fresh faults. Nothing so well rectifies this disorder as the virtue of penance. By having us bear with fortitude the afflictions sent by Providence, by inflaming our desire for privations and austerities compatible with our health, it gradually weakens within us the love of pleasure, and inspires us with a fear of sin which exacts such amends. By inuring us to the exercise of such acts of virtue as are opposed to our evil habits, it helps us to correct them and thus gives us

¹ *Op. cit.*, c. VIII.

to raise to contemplation likewise confirms it; after they have striven for a long time to purify themselves through active exercises of penance, God sends them, in order to complete their purification, those *passive trials* which we shall describe in the unitive way; for only perfectly pure or perfectly purified hearts can attain to the sweetness of the divine union: "Blessed are the clean of heart because they shall see God!"

II. The Practice of Penance

The more perfectly to practice penance, we must unite ourselves to the atoning Christ, and ask Him to dwell within us with His dispositions of *victim* (n. 738); then, we must enter into His *sentiments* and join in His *acts* of penance.

SENTIMENTS OF PENANCE

743. These sentiments are most aptly expressed in the Psalms and particularly in the *Miserere*.

a) First comes *abiding* and *sorrowful remembrance* of our sins: "My sin is always before me."¹ No doubt, it is not expedient to recall them to mind in detail; this might stir the imagination and be a source of new temptations. Yet, we must always bear in mind that we have sinned and above all we must entertain a sense of *sorrow* and *humiliation*.

We have offended God in His sight: "*I have done evil before thee,*"² before that God Who is holiness itself, and Who hates iniquity, before that God Who is all love and Whom we have outraged by dishonoring His gifts. Nothing is left to us but to appeal frequently to His mercy and implore His forgiveness: "*Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy.*"³ Indeed, we cherish the hope of having been pardoned; still, longing for a more complete forgiveness, we humbly beg God to cleanse us even more in the Blood of His Son: "*Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*"⁴ To effect a more intimate union with Him, we want our sins wiped out and their traces removed; we want our spirit and our heart renewed, and we want the joy of a good conscience restored to us.⁵

744. b) This sorrowful remembrance is accompanied by an abiding sense of shame: "*Shame hath covered my face.*"⁶ We stand in confusion before God like Christ Who bore before His Father the infamy of our sins, especially at Gethsemane and on Calvary. We carry our shame before the men, seeing ourselves as criminals in the assembly of the Saints. We bear the opprobrium in our own hearts, and unable to stand the reproach, to suffer the disgrace, we

¹ Ps. L. — ² Ps. L, 6. — ³ Ps. L, 3. — ⁴ Ps. L, 4. — ⁵ Ps. L, 10-14.
⁶ Ps. LXVIII, 8.

utter the sincere cry of the Prodigal: "Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee;"¹ we repeat with the publican: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."²

745. c) Of this a *wholesome fear* of sin is born, a horror for all the occasions that might lead us into it; for despite our good will we ever remain exposed to temptation and liable to fall.

Hence, a great distrust of self follows, whilst from our hearts we are prompted to repeat the prayer of St. Philip Neri, "My God, beware of Philip; otherwise he will betray Thee," or the concluding petition of the Our Father, "Lead us not into temptation." This distrust makes us *foresee* the dangerous occasions that might bring a fall and the positive means that will ensure our perseverance; it keeps us *on our guard* against the least imprudence. Such diffidence, however, harbors no *saint-heartedness*. The more we are conscious of our weakness, the more we place our confidence in God, convinced that through the power of His grace we shall conquer.

III. Works of Penance

746. No matter how painful these *works* may be, they will seem of light account if we keep constantly in mind this thought: I am a *fugitive from hell, a fugitive from purgatory*, and, were it not for the mercy of God, I would be there now, undergoing the well-merited punishment of my faults; therefore, I can consider nothing as humiliating me overmuch or grieving me above measure.

The chief works of penance we must perform are:

747. 1° The *submissive, willing, and joyful* acceptance of all the crosses Providence may see fit to send us. The Council of Trent teaches us that it is a great token of God's love for us that He deigns to accept as satisfaction for our sins³ the patient endurance wherewith we suffer the temporal ills He visits upon us. Therefore, should we have any physical or moral trials to undergo, arising from the uncontrolled forces of nature or from reverses of fortune, from failure or from humiliation, let us, instead of breaking into bitter complaint as our tendencies would suggest, accept all such suffering in a spirit of gentle resignation, persuaded that they are the just wages of sin, and that patience in adversity is one of the best means of atoning for it. This acceptance, a mere resignation at first, will gradually grow into a manful, nay, a joyous endurance of ordeals, as we see our woes thereby assuaged and made fruitful. We should be glad thus to shorten our purgatory,

Luke, XV, 18. — ² Luke, XVIII, 13. — ³ Sess. XIV, C. IX.

to become more like Our Crucified Master and to glorify the God we have outraged. Then patience will bear all its fruits and cleanse our soul because it will be a work of love: "*Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.*"¹

748. ²⁰ To patience we shall add the faithful discharge of our *duties of state* in a spirit of penance and reparation. The most acceptable sacrifice we can offer God is obedience: "*Obedience is better than sacrifices.*"² Now, the duties of our state are the manifest expression of God's will in our regard. To fulfil them as perfectly as we can is to offer God the most perfect sacrifice within our giving, a perpetual holocaust, since this duty rests upon us from morning until night. This is assuredly true for such as live in community: faithful obedience to their rule, general or particular, and the courageous accomplishment of the orders or directions of their superiors multiply their acts of obedience, of sacrifice and of love, and enable them to repeat with St. John Berchmans: "*My greatest penance is community life.*" Such perfect discharge of the duties of state is likewise the best means of doing penance for persons in the world. Fathers and mothers who loyally observe all their obligations as husbands and wives and as parents have many occasions of offering God sacrifices that will work unto the purification of their souls. The one thing necessary is that they acquit themselves resolutely of their duties in a Christian manner, for God's sake, and in a spirit of expiation and penance.

749. ³⁰ There are other works of penance recommended in Holy Writ, such as *fasting* and *almsgiving*.

A) Fasting was, in the Old Dispensation, one of the great means of making atonement; it was called "to afflict the soul;"³ but to be acceptable it had to be accompanied by sentiments of sorrow for sin and mercy towards others.⁴ Under the New Law, fasting is an earnest of grief and of penance. The Apostles do not fast as long as the Bridegroom is with them, but they will fast when He is gone.⁵ Our Lord, wishing to expiate our sins, fasted forty days and forty nights, and taught His Apostles that certain evil spirits cannot be cast out except by prayer and fasting.⁶ True to His teachings, the Church has established the Lenten Fast, that of the Vigils and of the Ember Days to offer her children the opportunity of making expiation for their

faults. Many a sin takes its rise directly or indirectly in the craving for pleasure, in excess in eating and drinking, and nothing is so effective in making atonement as mortification in eating, reaching as it does the very root of the evil by mortifying the craving for sensual pleasure. This is why the Saints have made a practice of fasting even outside the seasons appointed by the Church. Generous Christian souls imitate them and, if they cannot keep the strict fast, forego some food at each meal in order thus to curb their sensuality.

750. B) *Almsgiving* is both a work of mercy and a privation; from this double title it derives great power of atoning for our sins: "*Redeem thou thy sins with alms.*"¹ When we deprive ourselves of some good to give it to Jesus Christ in the person of the poor, God does not allow Himself to be outdone in liberality, and He willingly remits part of the punishment due to our sins. The more generous we are, each according to his means, and the more perfect our intention in almsgiving, the more fully are our spiritual debts cancelled. What we say of almsgiving with regard to the things that minister to the body holds true even more of spiritual almsgiving, which is calculated to promote the welfare of souls and thereby the glory of God. Thus it is one of the penitential acts the Psalmist promises to perform in reparation for his sin: "*I will teach the unjust thy ways: and the wicked shall be converted to thee.*"²

⁴⁰ Lastly, there come the *voluntary privations* and the acts of *mortification* we impose upon ourselves in expiation for our faults, particularly those that reach the heart of the evil, by punishing the faculties that have had part in our sins. This we shall treat in the following chapter on mortification. The priest after absolving the penitent sums up in striking words the means by which we can atone fully for our sins and cleanse our souls from the remains of forgiven sins: "May whatever good you do and whatever ill you bear be to you unto the remission of sins..."

¹ Luke, VII, 47. — ² I Kings, XV, 22. — ³ Leviticus, XVI, 29, 32; XXIII, 27, 32. — ⁴ Isa., LVIII, 3-7. — ⁵ Matth., IX, 14-15. — ⁶ Matth., XVII, 20.

¹ Dan., IV, 24. — ² Ps., L, 15.